Be sure to review the entire AP Stylebook. Once you’re finished, this tip sheet will help you identify some of the most common errors.

**Entry: Abbreviations and acronyms**
**Problem:** Dan Goldin was the previous CEO of the National Aeronautics Space Administration
**Corrected:** Dan Goldin was the previous CEO of NASA.
**Explanation:** “NASA” is one of several government bodies that get abbreviated on first reference (as well as “FBI” and “CIA”).

**Entry: Addresses**
**Problem:** The Blvd before 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue is not far from 1st St.
**Corrected:** The boulevard before 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. is not far from First Street.
**Explanation:** Abbreviations of street names in addresses depend upon whether they are part of a numbered address; numeric street names get treated just like numerals, not part of addresses.

**Entry: Adverbs**
**Problem:** Janet Jackson worked close with her producers to record another mediocre album.
**Corrected:** Janet Jackson worked closely with her producers to record another mediocre album.
**Explanation:** Words modifying verbs are adverbs. Most (but there are exceptions) end in “-ly.” Some words in different forms can be adjectives. Ex. Janet Jackson’s close friend produced her album.
**Recast:** Janet Jackson recorded another mediocre album. (“working with producers” is an inessential concept, since almost all major recording artists use producers.)

**Entry: Among/between**
**Problem:** The audience had to choose among either another rerun or a lame reality show.
**Corrected:** The audience had to choose between either another rerun or a lame reality show.
**Explanation:** “between” is for two items, “among” is used for three or more.

**Entry: Average, mean, median**
**Problem:** The median is the average.
**Corrected:** The mean is the average.

**Entry: Blond/blonde**
**Problem:** The blond agonized over coloring her hair.
**Corrected:** The blonde agonized over coloring her hair.
**Explanation:** “Blonde” works as a pronoun for a woman with blond hair, while “blond” does the same for a man with similarly-colored tresses, as well as an adjective for the general hair color.

**Entry: Bible**
**Problem:** The King James bible is the most widely read version.
**Corrected:** The King James Bible is the most widely read version.
**Explanation:** The Bible is the proper title for the best-selling book. AP has more info about how to deal with specific sections and authors.
Entry: Brand names; United States
Problem: Tiger Woods lost his cool at the Federal Express United States Open.
Corrected: Tiger Woods lost his cool at the U.S. Open.
Explanation: Only use brand names when absolutely necessary. Corporate sponsorships of events generally don’t fall into that category. Abbreviate United States to U.S. when used as an adjective.

Entry: Co-
Problem: The co-ed co-operative was a cosigner of the new dorm policy.
Corrected: The coed cooperative was a co-signer of the new dorm policy.
Explanation: Lots of exceptions to this one. Unless you are absolutely sure, look it up.

Entry: Collective nouns
Problem: The committee are considering a new law. The jury were split.
Corrected: The committee is considering a new law. The jury was split.
Explanation: Collectives are tricky. Normally the verb agreement treats them like an individual, but when they are acting two different ways (spilt jury decision, committee vote), then they get treated like two disagreeing individuals.
Rewrite: The committee will vote today on the law. The jury couldn’t return a unanimous decision to the judge.

Entry: Company names
Problem: His angst seemed quite unusual when interviewing for the headhunter position at Manpower International, incorporated.
Corrected: His angst seemed quite unusual when interviewing for the headhunter position at Manpower International Inc.
Explanation: “Inc.” doesn’t get a comma before it in company names, and “Inc.” is abbreviated when part of a formal company name.

Entry: Composition titles
Problem: I named my dressmaker dummy after a character in the Sun Also Rises.
Corrected: I named my dressmaker dummy after a character in "The Sun Also Rises."
Explanation: Lots of exceptions here. Be sure to note whether books are works of reference or not. If not, they don’t get quotes, just italics.

Entry: Compared with/compared to
Problem: Compared with Hemingway, Dan Brown writes like an amateur.
Corrected: Compared to Hemingway, Dan Brown writes like an amateur.
Explanation: The use of “with” or “to” with “compare” depends upon whether emphasizing similarities or differences. In this case, we use “to” because we are emphasizing that Hemingway is a much better writer than Brown.
Rewrite: Ernest Hemingway writes like a professional, while Dan Brown writes like an amateur.

Entry: Compound modifiers
Problem: Iron jawed and granite fist ed Harvey Keitel plays Jerry Springer.
Corrected: Iron-jawed and granite-fisted Harvey Keitel plays Jerry Springer.
**Explanation:** Compound and serial modifiers are tricky. One test: if the two words alone can sensibly modify the noun, then, no hyphen. In this case, “Iron Harvey and jawed Harvey and granite Harvey and fisted Harvey” obviously make no sense. So, hyphenate to “tie” them together. Do not hyphenate compound modifiers when the first word ends in -ly.

**Entry: Comprised/composed/constitute**
**Problem:** The committee is comprised of faculty members.
**Corrected:** The committee is composed of faculty members.
**Explanation:** Each of these words has specific uses and meanings. “Composed,” for example, means to make something from many parts; composers compose symphonies from many notes. Think of “comprise” as synonymous with “include,” e.g. The committee comprises faculty members.

**Entry: County**
**Problem:** Because of my illness, I won’t have a weekend holiday in the sun of Door county. Instead I’ll be stuck correcting problems.
**Corrected:** Because of my illness, I won’t have a weekend holiday in the sun of Door County. Instead I’ll be stuck correcting problems.
**Explanation:** Capitalize “county” when part of a formal county name. Do not use “county of.”

**Entry: Courtesy titles**
**Problem:** Ms. Susan Smith became Dr. Smith when she earned her MD.
**Corrected:** Susan Smith became Dr. Smith when she earned her MD.
**Explanation:** Courtesy titles are generally unnecessary, but in this case the “Dr.” is essential to the meaning of the sentence.

**Entry: Dangling modifiers**
**Problem:** Harsh and grueling, the graduate student found academic life disheartening.
**Corrected:** The graduate student found academic life harsh, grueling and disheartening.
**Explanation:** Make sure words are closest to what they are meant to modify. We intend to say academic life is harsh and grueling, not the graduate student.

**Entry: Dashes**
**Problem:** My favorite story the one about a break up is called “The end of something.”
**Corrected:** My favorite story – the one about a breakup – is called “The End of Something.”
**Explanation:** Dashes are great for material meant to be an “aside.” The sentence still must make sense if you remove the inessential clause between the dashes. Note also the changes in the composition title and “breakup.”

**Entry: Data**
**Problem:** The data are useful for making a well-informed decision.
**Corrected:** The data is useful for making a well-informed decision.
**Explanation:** The AP default for “data” is plural, but in this case, it is considered a single body (“collective noun”), so it gets the singular verb “is.”
**Recast:** Good data makes for a well-informed decision.

**Entry: Datelines**
**Problem:** Milwaukee, Wis., has been touted as a great city on a great lake.
Corrected: Milwaukee has been touted as a great city on a great lake.
Explanation: “Dateline” rules about what cities don’t need a state name also apply to cities within the story’s body, not just in the dateline.
Rewrite: The Wisconsin Department of Tourism once proclaimed Milwaukee “a great city on a great lake.” [says who did the “touting”]

Entry: Department
Problem: The Department of Health and Human Services and Defense devour much of the U.S. domestic budget.
Corrected: The departments of Health and Human Services and Defense devour much of the U.S. domestic budget.
Explanation: With departments, “department” gets lowercased, but the rest of the name stays uppercase. This prevents you from needing to write the cumbersome “The Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Labor.”

Entry: Directions and regions
Problem: Because she lived in British Columbia, she had to travel Southeast to get to the pacific northwest.
Corrected: Because she lived in British Columbia, she had to travel southeast to get to the Pacific Northwest.
Explanation: Directions are lowercase, and regions are uppercase.

Entry: Dollars
Problem: Nolan Ryan’s no-hitter earned him a $1,000,000 bonus.
Corrected: Nolan Ryan’s no-hitter earned him a $1 million bonus.
Explanation: For amounts more than thousands, use initial numerals plus words instead of excessive zeroes and commas, e.g., 10,000 and 10 million and 10 billion.

Entry: Each
Problem: Each man was responsible for their own destiny.
Corrected: Each man was responsible for his own destiny.
Explanation: “Each” makes “man” singular, therefore the object of the preposition “for” must agree.

Entry: Either/or; neither/nor
Problem: Either the voters or the politician are right about public responsibility.
Corrected: Either the voters or the politician is right about public responsibility.
Explanation: The compound subject closest to the “or/nor” determines the verb.
Recast: Either the politician or the voters are right about their responsibility.

Entry: Essential clauses, nonessential clauses
Problem: Spielberg’s newest movie that he calls a labor of love is the stunning Schindler’s List.
Corrected: Spielberg’s newest movie, which he calls a labor of love, is the stunning “Schindler’s List.”
Explanation: The sentence makes sense without the clause “…calls a labor of love.” Therefore the clause is independent, meaning it gets set off by commas and introduced by a “which.” Remember “that” is dependent.
**Entry: Extra-**

**Problem:** The extra-marital affair led to extra large legal woes.

**Corrected:** The extramarital affair led to extra-large legal woes.

**Explanation:** Even though both “extra” constructions act as compound modifiers (generally meaning hyphenation), there are some exceptions. As with all suffixes and prefixes, double-check if you aren’t sure.

**Entry: Fahrenheit**

**Problem:** Water freezes at 32 Fahrenheit in most conditions.

**Corrected:** Water freezes at 32 F in most conditions.

**Explanation:** Remember to provide a space and no period with temperatures. This entry also includes a handy conversion table.

**Entry: Felt**

**Problem:** The clumsy martial arts expert felt bad for his sword.

**Corrected:** The clumsy martial arts expert felt badly for his sword.

**Also correct:** She felt bad when the flu hit. She felt bad for hurting his feelings.

**Explanation:** When “felt” refers to physical touching ability use badly. When referring to physical well-being, use bad.

**Rewrite:** The arthritic martial arts expert groped for his sword. (Both the original and corrected sentences are weak. Go for a stronger verb, such as “groped.”)

**Entry: Geographic names**

**Problem:** Saint Paul, Minnesota is prettier than Minneapolis.

**Corrected:** St. Paul, Minn., is prettier than Minneapolis.

**Explanation:** When a state name is more than five letters, abbreviate it according to AP style, not postal abbreviations. Check the “state names” entry and individual state and city entries. Set state names off with commas.

**Entry: Governmental bodies**

**Problem:** The state department of the U.S. has many big responsibilities.

**Corrected:** The U.S. Department of State has many responsibilities.

**Explanation:** Always check if you are unsure. On second reference in this case, you can say State Department.

**Entry: Good, well**

**Problem:** The Milwaukee Bucks played good, but still lost.

**Corrected:** The Milwaukee Bucks played well, but still lost.

**Explanation:** “Good” can’t be used as an adverb; in this case the modifier connects to “played,” a verb, so use the proper adverb form. See also “bad/badly.” These are both tricky, with several exceptions.

**Entry: Half-, half**

**Problem:** The half-hearted half-back made a halfbaked block at half time.

**Corrected:** The half-hearted halfback made a half-baked block at halftime.

**Explanation:** As with all suffixes and prefixes, look it up. As an extra bonus, for this one, consult the “Sports” entry for “halfback” and “halftime.”
Entry: Historical periods and events
Problem: The founding fathers didn’t have public relations firms to package their revolution. They wrote their own sound bites: “Give me liberty or give me death.” The Boston tea party, a major media event, was carried off without the help of corporate sponsorship.
Corrected: The Founding Fathers didn’t have public relations firms to package their revolution. They wrote their own sound bites: “Give me liberty or give me death.” The Boston Tea Party, a major media event, was carried off without the help of corporate sponsorship.
Explanation: Major known historical figures and events get capitalized. Some have their own entries, but others don’t.

Entry: Holidays and holy days
Problem: Martin Luther King, Jr. day is not observed by everyone.
Corrected: Martin Luther King Jr. Day is not observed by everyone.
Explanation: “Day” in formal holidays gets capped. Note that there’s no comma between “King” and Jr.”
Rewrite: Some people ignore Martin Luther King Jr. Day. (This gets rid of the unnecessary negative, which is confusing. It also uses an active verb—in this case, the opposite of “observe,” to remove the negative construction.

Entry: House of Representatives
Problem: The house and senate both left the capital without finishing the U.S. budget.
Corrected: The U.S. House and Senate both left the Capitol without finishing the budget.
Explanation: Formal legislative bodies get capped when specified. In this case, we are talking about the U.S. bodies, so they both go “up.” Note also that “capital” should be “Capitol” (for the building where the House and Senate vote).

Entry: -in, in-
Problem: The in-sufferable walkin closet provided indepth storage.
Corrected: The insufferable walk-in closet provided in-depth storage.
Explanation: Like all prefixes and suffixes, look up when unsure, as exceptions abound.

Entry: Internet
Problem: The internet can be described as a series of tubes.
Corrected: The Internet can be described as a series of tubes.
Explanation: Internet is always “up” (until AP changes its mind).
Rewrite: A senator once described the Internet as “a series of tubes.”

Entry: Islam
Problem: The Iowa islam immigrants intervened over the Imam’s internet site.
Corrected: The Iowa Muslim immigrants intervened over the imam’s Internet site.
Explanation: There are now many Islam-based entries in AP. Although “Islam” is an extensive one, see also Ramadan, Imam and Quran as well.

Entry: Island
Problem: Atlantic Islands tend to be rocky and isolated.
Corrected: Atlantic islands tend to be rocky and isolated.
Explanation: In this case, “island” is not part of a proper name. If you mention specific islands (generally a better approach), then capitalize, e.g., Prince Edward Island.
Entry: Its, It’s
Problem: For the pet, its imperative that its needs be met.
Corrected: For the pet, it’s imperative that its needs be met.
Explanation: Possessive form has no apostrophe. This goes for “who,” as well (whose).
Recast: Meet the pet’s needs.
Rewrite: If you own a pet, you must care for it.

Entry: Lay/Lie
Problem: After class yesterday, she lay her work down, laid down and went to sleep.
Corrected: After class yesterday, she laid her work down, lay down and went to sleep.
Explanation: This is often confused and often looked up. But before you do, ask yourself: Is a form of “lay/lie” the best verb? Often it’s not. They are both active, but “weak active,” meaning they carry little visual punch about how the person or object got horizontal or was placed upon a surface.
Rewrite: After class yesterday, she plunked down her work, tumbled into bed, then drifted asleep.

Entry: Legislative titles
Problem: U.S. Representative Nancy Pelosi is no longer speaker of the house.
Corrected: Rep. Nancy Pelosi is no longer House Speaker.
Explanation: This is an exhaustive entry and the first place to look, rather than “House,” “Senate,” etc. Note the capitalization of “Speaker,” since it is a formal designation.

Entry: Lists
Problem: She craved a banana, an orange, and an apple.
Corrected: She craved a banana, an orange and an apple.
Explanation: AP style does not use a comma before the “and” in lists unless the list items are so confusing the reader cannot understand the meaning without the comma.

Entry: Military titles
Problem: Former Manitowoc police Sergeant Erik Walters testified Wednesday.
Corrected: Former Manitowoc police Sgt. Erik Walters testified Wednesday.
Explanation: Rank titles for both police and fire department personnel follow the same style as military titles.

Entry: Nicknames
Problem: Even though John Wayne was a classically trained actor, most people remember him by his cowboy moniker the duke.
Corrected: Even though John Wayne was a classically trained actor, most people remember him by his cowboy moniker, “The Duke.”
Explanation: When nicknames are used along with someone’s “real” name, the nickname should be in quotes.

Entry: Non-
Problem: “Caddyshack” ends with one of the most famous non-sequiturs in movie history.
Corrected: “Caddyshack” ends with one of the most famous non sequiturs in movie history.
Explanation: “non” rarely gets hyphens. As with all unclear prefixes and suffixes, look it up if you have any questions. Also remember to check the “prefixes” and “suffixes” entries.
**Entry: Numerals**

**Problem:** 55 people were at the poetry reading, but only 9 really listened to the eleven poets.

**Corrected:** Fifty-five people were at the poetry reading, but only nine really listened to the eleven poets.

**Explanation:** Spell out any number that begins a sentence ("Fifty-five"). Spell out numbers less than 10 ("nine"). Use numerals for numbers 10 and up ("11"). Always check the numerals entry for other specific cases, e.g. ages always get numerals.

**Recast** (to avoid starting out with a numeral): Of the 55 people at the poetry reading, only nine really listened to the 11 poets.

**Entry: -out, out-**

**Problem:** The Milwaukee Bucks out-scored the Dallas Mavericks in the fourth quarter, causing the visiting team to fade-out.

**Corrected:** The Milwaukee Bucks outscored the Dallas Mavericks in the fourth quarter, causing the visiting team to fade out.

**Explanation:** As always, check prefixes and suffixes. Sometimes with words like this, you will find the noun form is one word (Whiteout is a threat during blizzards) while the verb form is two words (She had to white out half his copy). Adjective forms often take a hyphen (The team went into fade-out mode).

**Entry: -over, over-**

**Problem:** He got paid over the previous employee’s salary, a hold-over of poor human resources practices.

**Corrected:** He got paid more than the previous employee’s salary, a holdover of poor human resources practices.

**Explanation:** Use “more than” (or a better phrase, more suited to the situation) rather than “over” unless one thing is physically over another. For “holdover,” see entry, as with all prefixes and suffixes.

**Entry: Party affiliation**

**Problem:** When the Republicans take over Congress, the new speaker of the house will be John Boehner (R-Ohio).

**Corrected:** When the Republicans take over Congress, the new Speaker of the House will be John Boehner (Ohio).

**Explanation:** The “R” is unnecessary because the context already tells us he’s a Republican.

**Entry: Police department**

**Problem:** The Madison police department detests patrolling State Street on Halloween.

**Corrected:** The Madison Police Department detests patrolling State Street on Halloween.

**Explanation:** On first reference, this is “up” because it is the formal name of the department.

**Entry: Possessives**

**Problem:** The minister said neither the black’s or the white’s should object to the county’s desegregation plan.

**Corrected:** The minister said neither blacks nor whites should object to the county’s desegregation plan.

**Explanation:** Some people often confuse plurals with possessives, especially in stores offering “CD’s” for sale. Ask yourself what the apostrophe entity is possessing. If the answer is “nothing,” you should ditch the apostrophe. Also note removal of the article “the.” This often can sound offensive by making a group seem homogenous and separate. Not all “the whites” may feel the same.
Entry: Post-
Problem: The post-doctoral fellow issued a postmortem on her training experience.
Corrected: The postdoctoral fellow issued a post-mortem on her training experience.
Explanation: Another prefix that usually doesn’t get hyphens, with some exceptions.
Rewrite: The postdoctoral fellow provided feedback about her research training experience.

Entry: Pre-
Problem: The pre-arranged marriage predisposed the bride-to-be to a bout of depression.
Corrected: The prearranged marriage predisposed the bride-to-be to a bout of depression.
Explanation: See prefixes.
Recast: The prearranged marriage depressed the bride-to-be. (Notice how changing the noun “depression” into a verb helps eliminate prepositional phrases and “activates” the sentence.)

Entry: Prefixes
Problem: The police department co-ordinated a revision to the pre-existing plan.
Corrected: The police department coordinated a revision to the pre-existing plan.
Explanation: General prefix rule says hyphenate when the same vowels “bump together.” However, “coordinate” is one exception. Remember to check common prefix entries as well.

Entry: Prison/jail
Problem: The federal charge of murder for the hit-and-run meant he would spend the rest of his life in jail.
Corrected: The federal charge of murder for the hit-and-run meant he would spend the rest of his life in prison.
Explanation: “Prison” and “jail” are not interchangeable; “prison” is for felons serving time; “jail” is for misdemeanors or for people awaiting sentencing. In this case, the sentence gives you a clue (federal murder charge = prison).

Entry: Punctuation
Problem: She boarded the plane, and crossed her fingers.
Corrected: She boarded the plane and crossed her fingers.
Explanation: You should review the entire punctuation section for a refresher, but this is likely the most common problem with commas. In this sentence, the “and” is a conjunction (the others are: or, nor, for, but, yet, so). Conjunctions are preceded by a comma only in specific cases. If you have a complete sentence on either side of the conjunction, use a comma. So, “She boarded the plane, and she crossed her fingers.” Both clauses have a subject and verb and could stand alone as their own sentence. That equals comma. But “She boarded the plane and crossed her fingers” is lacking a subject for the second clause, so it doesn’t get a comma.

Entry: Quotations
Problem: “Winning isn’t everything”, Vince Lombardi said. “It’s the only thing”. That led me to wonder, “Will I be a winner”?
Corrected: “Winning isn’t everything,” Vince Lombardi said. “It’s the only thing.” That led me to wonder, “Will I be a winner?”
Explanation: With quotations, periods and commas always go inside the quote marks. For question marks and exclamation points, you need to figure out what the mark applies to before deciding whether
it goes inside or outside the quote marks. In this example, only the piece of the sentence inside the quote marks is the question, so the question mark goes inside. If the whole sentence were a question, it would go outside, e.g. Would I ever be a “winner”?

**Entry: Race**

**Problem:** The African-American boy crossed the street.

**Corrected:** The boy crossed the street.

**Explanation:** If race is not relevant, don’t mention. In this case, it is not (would you say “A Caucasian boy crossed the street”?).

**Entry: Re-**

**Problem:** The re-upholsterer recovered the chair after the leather seat ripped.

**Corrected:** The re-upholsterer re-covered the chair after the leather seat ripped.

**Explanation:** “Re-upholsterer” follows the general “two vowel” rule under both “prefixes” and the “Re-” entry. “Re-covered” is an interesting exception, because “recovered” means something different than “re-covered.” The guy may have RECOVERED the chair from the Dumpster, but RE-COVERED it with leather after discovering a rip.

**Entry: Reference works**

**Problem:** The AP stylebook and Bartlett’s familiar quotations are valuable guides to young writers.

**Corrected:** The *AP Stylebook* and *Bartlett’s Familiar Quotations* are valuable guides to young writers.

**Explanation:** Reference works get slightly different treatment than other “composition titles.” They get italicized, but no quotes, while “regular” books get both italics and quotes.

**Rewrite:** Young writers often turn to the *AP Stylebook* and *Bartlett’s Familiar Quotations*. (“... are valuable” is a banal construction).

**Entry: Religious movements, references, titles**

**Problem:** The Fundamentalist groups apply the Bible literally.

**Corrected:** Fundamentalist groups apply the Bible literally.

**Explanation:** “Fundamentalist” when applied to a particular group, is considered pejorative (if you don’t know what that means, look it up). In this case, it’s OK, because the sentence basically defines what the term means. But, if we are writing about a particular group’s fundamentalist approaches, we need to be careful, as in the rewrite example that follows.

**Rewrite:** Evangelical Christian groups tend to interpret the Bible literally.

**Entry: Semicolons**

**Problem:** Hemingway once lived in Boise Idaho Key West Florida and Paris France among other places.

**Corrected:** Hemingway once lived in Boise, Idaho; Key West, Fla.; and Paris – among other places.

**Explanation:** Semicolons are useful to keep compound lists clear. Remember to use a semicolon after the conjunction because this shows continuation. Be careful of semicolons in any other uses. Many editors do not like them.

**Entry: Should, would**

**Problem:** This summer we should consider getting jobs.

**Corrected:** This summer we will seek jobs.
**Explanation:** “should” and “shall” mean determination; the “should consider” above hints that the subject has a rather lackadaisical approach to job-hunting. Better to rewrite the sentence to emphasize the sense.

**Rewrite:** This summer, we might look for jobs—if the surf is less than satisfactory.

**Entry:** State names

**Problem:** The U.S. Supreme Court issued an injunction against the state of Pennsylvania.

**Corrected:** The U.S. Supreme Court issued an injunction against the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

**Explanation:** Pennsylvania is one of four legal commonwealths in the U.S. Only use this designation for formal matters—as in this case, a lawsuit, or when talking about Pennsylvania elections.

**Entry:** Sub-

**Problem:** The sub-standard sub sandwich made me sick.

**Corrected:** The substandard sub sandwich made me sick.

**Explanation:** “Sub-“ rarely gets hyphens.

**Rewrite:** I felt nauseous after devouring the substandard sub sandwich. (Make the person the subject not the sandwich.)

**Entry:** Temperatures

**Problem:** The coldest it got during break was five below zero.

**Corrected:** The coldest it got during break was 5 below zero.

**Explanation:** The “numeral” rules for figures under 10 change for temperatures.

**Rewrite:** During winter break, the temperature dipped to 5 below zero. (This sentence order establishes time first in the opening clause and also uses “dipped” to activate the verb and emphasize the drop in temperature.)

**Entry:** That/which

**Problem:** The argument, which Hemingway is chauvinistic, doesn’t resonate for me.

**Corrected:** The argument that Hemingway is chauvinistic doesn’t resonate for me.

**Explanation:** Essential clauses control the meaning of a sentence. If you delete them, the sentence does not mean the same thing. Essential clauses get the word “that” and are not set off by commas. In this example, if we don’t have the clause, we don’t know which argument doesn’t resonate. Non-essential clauses are “extra” in a sentence. Pull them out and the sentence retains its meaning. They get commas and “which.” (The Hemmingway book, which was the first one I read, seemed chauvinistic.)

**Rewrite:** I reject claims that Hemingway was a chauvinist.

**Entry:** Titles

**Problem:** The Managing Editor took the credit for “The Boston Globe’s” Pulitzer prize.

**Corrected:** The managing editor took the credit for The Boston Globe’s Pulitzer Prize.

**Explanation:** The “managing editor” doesn’t come before a particular name, so it doesn’t get capitalized. If it had been “Managing Editor Bob Smith claimed credit,” capitalize the title because it appears before a name.

**Entry:** Time

**Problem:** My wretched fit of coughing kept me up until three AM this morning.

**Corrected:** My wretched fit of coughing kept me up until 3 a.m.
**Explanation:** Use numerals for times. Put periods in a.m. and p.m. Note that “this morning” is redundant.

**Entry: Weather terms**

**Problem:** Although hurricanes are common, category five storms remain rare.

**Corrected:** Although hurricanes are common, Category 5 storms remain rare.

**Explanation:** Weather terms contain exceptions to the standard numeral rules. This entry goes for several pages and provides detailed information about almost every kind of storm or weather condition.

**Entry: Who, whom**

**Problem:** The exercises will provide benefits to whoever does them.

**Corrected:** The exercises will provide benefit to whomever does them.

**Explanation:** In general, “Who” is used for a subject, while “whom” is used as an object. Get in the habit of always looking this one up or writing around the issue.

**Rewrite:** Everyone who does the exercises benefits from them.

**Entry: -Wide, Wide-**

**Problem:** The city-wide golf tournament kept spectators wide eyed.

**Corrected:** The citywide golf tournament kept spectators wide-eyed.

**Explanation:** As the stylebook says, “-wide” is seldom hyphenated, while “wide-“ is often hyphenated. As always, if you are unsure, look up specific entries in AP, and, if that fails, consult a dictionary.

**Entry: Word selection**

**Problem:** The shirking violet was adverse to change, accept when it provided more comfort.

**Corrected:** The shrinking violet was averse to change, except when it provided more comfort.

**Explanation:** Beware the evil of relying on spellcheck. In the first sentence, every word is spelled correctly, but the three in bold are not what the writer intends to use. They have completely different meanings from the correct words. Spellcheck is great but only a writer’s own review and revision can catch problems like these or errors of fact.