



How to Write Dateline AP Style Checklist

Writing a dateline in AP Style requires attention to detail and adherence to specific guidelines. Here's a comprehensive checklist to ensure your datelines are always accurate and professional:

AP Style Dateline Checklist

1. City Names

Capitalize Fully: Write the city name in all capital letters.

Example: NEW YORK

Recognized Cities: Use only the city name for cities that are well-known and listed in the AP Stylebook.

Example: LOS ANGELES, CHICAGO, PARIS, LONDON

Lesser-Known Cities: Include the city and the state or country for cities that are not widely recognized.



Example: NASHVILLE, Tenn. or OMAHA, Neb.

2. States and Countries

U.S. States: Use standard postal abbreviations for states.

Example: ATLANTA, Ga. (not ATLANTA, Georgia)

Foreign Cities: Use the city name followed by the country.

Example: TOKYO, Japan (Note: some major international cities like TOKYO, PARIS, LONDON don't require a country name)

3. Formatting

Comma After City: Place a comma after the city name.

Example: SAN FRANCISCO,

Include Date: Follow the city name with the date of the report, formatted as month and day.



Example: SAN FRANCISCO, May 29

No Abbreviation for Months: Do not abbreviate months when writing dates in datelines.

Example: May 29 (not May 29th)

4. Dates and Times

Reporting Date: Use the date the story is reported, not necessarily the event date.

Example: NEW YORK, April 3 — (for a story reported on April 3, regardless of the event date)

Time of Day: Include time of day if reporting an ongoing or evolving story (optional but useful for real-time updates).

Example: NEW YORK, April 3, 3:00 PM —

5. Be Precise and Concise



Avoid Extra Information: Stick to the city, state/country, and date. Do not include additional details like event names or specific locations.

Example: WASHINGTON, April 10 — (not WASHINGTON, White House, April 10)

6. Adapt for Different Mediums

Print and Digital: Use the standard format for both print and digital articles.

Example: LOS ANGELES, March 5 —

Broadcast: Adapt for conversational tone if necessary but maintain the essence of the dateline.

Example: “Reporting from LOS ANGELES on March 5th, this is [Your Name].”

7. Consistency



Uniform Style: Maintain consistent formatting throughout all articles to ensure professional and reliable presentation.

Examples of Proper AP Style Datelines

Domestic Story: NEW YORK, Jan. 15 —

International Story: LONDON, May 10 —

Less Known Domestic City: DES MOINES, Iowa, Aug. 23 —

Less Known International City: LISBON, Portugal, July 4 —

By following this checklist, you can ensure your datelines are clear, professional, and in accordance with AP Style guidelines.