

VA.gov Content Style Guide Working Group

1/31/2018 agenda

Agenda

- -Work in progress
- -Design system update: buttons
- -Title/sentence casing

Left over from last meeting:

- Style guides inventory – primary; outdated; deprecated; missing?

Work in progress – excuse the mess

<https://department-of-veterans-affairs.github.io/vets-design-system-documentation/content-style-guide/>

https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/vets-design-system-documentation/tree/master/src/_content-style-guide

Word list

<https://department-of-veterans-affairs.github.io/vets-design-system-documentation/content-style-guide/word-list.html>

Examples:

sign in, sign out

service member

VA.gov

Buttons: design system > components

<https://department-of-veterans-affairs.github.io/vets-design-system-documentation/components/buttons.html>

Guidance

- Buttons can be applied to `<button>`, which are used for actions, or `<a>`, which is used for hyperlinks to destinations. Read more about usage under [accessibility](#).
- Generally, use primary buttons for actions that go to the next step and use secondary buttons for actions that happen on the current page.
- Style the button most users should click in a way that distinguishes from other buttons on the page. Try using the “large button” or the most visually distinct fill color.
- Make sure buttons should look clickable—use color variations to distinguish static, hover and active states.
- Avoid using too many buttons on a page.
- **Use sentence case for button labels.**
- Button labels should be as short as possible with “trigger words” that your users will recognize to clearly explain what will happen when the button is clicked (for example, “download,” “view” or “sign up”).
- Make the first word of the button’s label a verb. For example, instead of “Complaint Filing” label the button “File a complaint.”
- At times, consider adding an icon to signal specific actions (“download,” “open in a new window”, etc).

Let's geek out

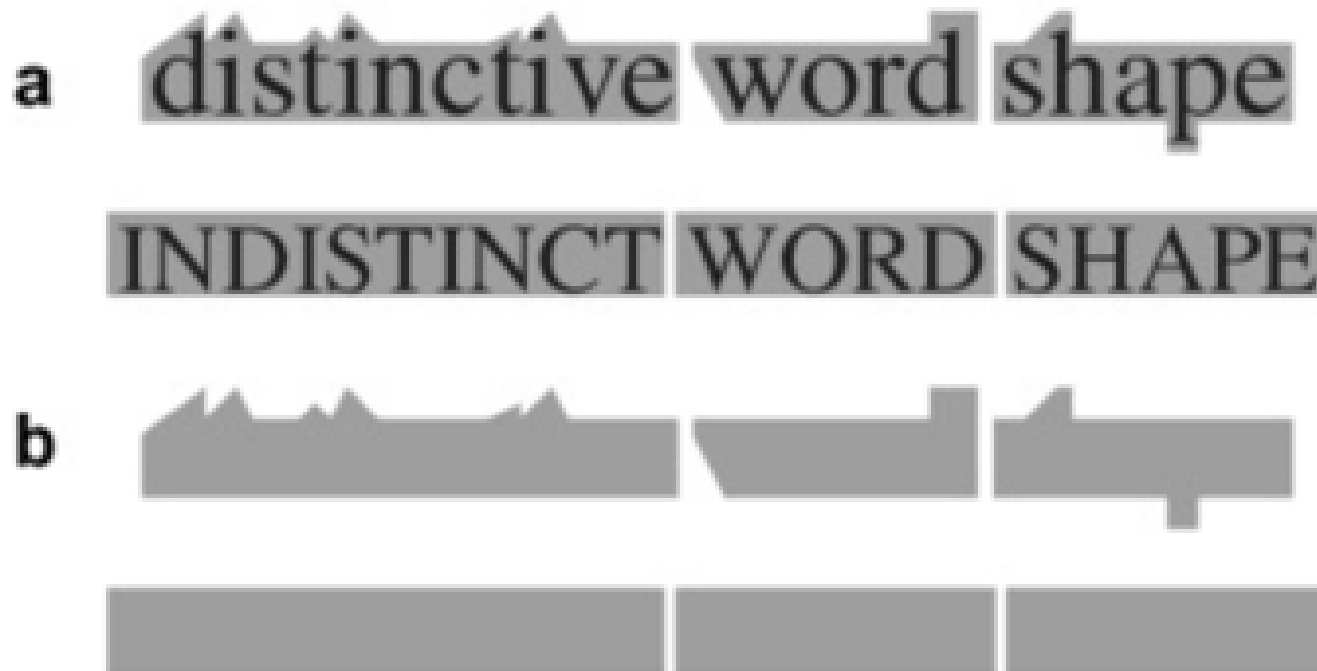
This Is An Example Of Title Case.

And This Is an Example of Title Case, Too.

This is an example of sentence case.

HERE'S AN EXAMPLE OF ALL UPPER CASE—SOMETIMES IT CAN WORK AS A DESIGN ELEMENT, BUT LET'S NOT GO THERE.

Studies on scannability, reading speed, comprehension, eye tracking, fatigue, etc.



<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0042698907002830>

“Letter case and text legibility in normal and low vision. It is thought by cognitive scientists and typographers alike, that lower-case text is more legible than upper-case.”

TL;DR – surprise: bigger font size generally better for all readers, including visually impaired!

Capitalized nouns really help speed and cognitive processing... (for Germans reading German)

Eye Movements Reveal Interplay Between Noun Capitalization and Word Class During Reading

Sven Hohenstein, Department of Psychology, University of Potsdam, Karl-Liebknecht-Str. 24/25, 14476 Potsdam, Germany

Reinhold Kliegl, Department of Psychology, University of Potsdam, Karl-Liebknecht-Str. 24/25, 14476 Potsdam, Germany

Abstract

Subjects' eye movements were recorded while they read sentences for comprehension. Sentences were presented with capitalized nouns—in agreement with German spelling rules—or completely in lowercase. Overall reading speed was not influenced by the manipulation of capitalization, but fixation durations were affected by the interplay between capitalization and the word classes of the fixated and the succeeding word. As expected, fixations were shorter for capitalized than lowercase nouns, but unexpectedly they were longer when the upcoming word was also a noun. This modulation was reduced when all words were printed completely in lowercase. We interpret the results as evidence for distributed processing across several words.

Keywords: eye movements; reading; corpus analysis; capitalization; parafoveal processing

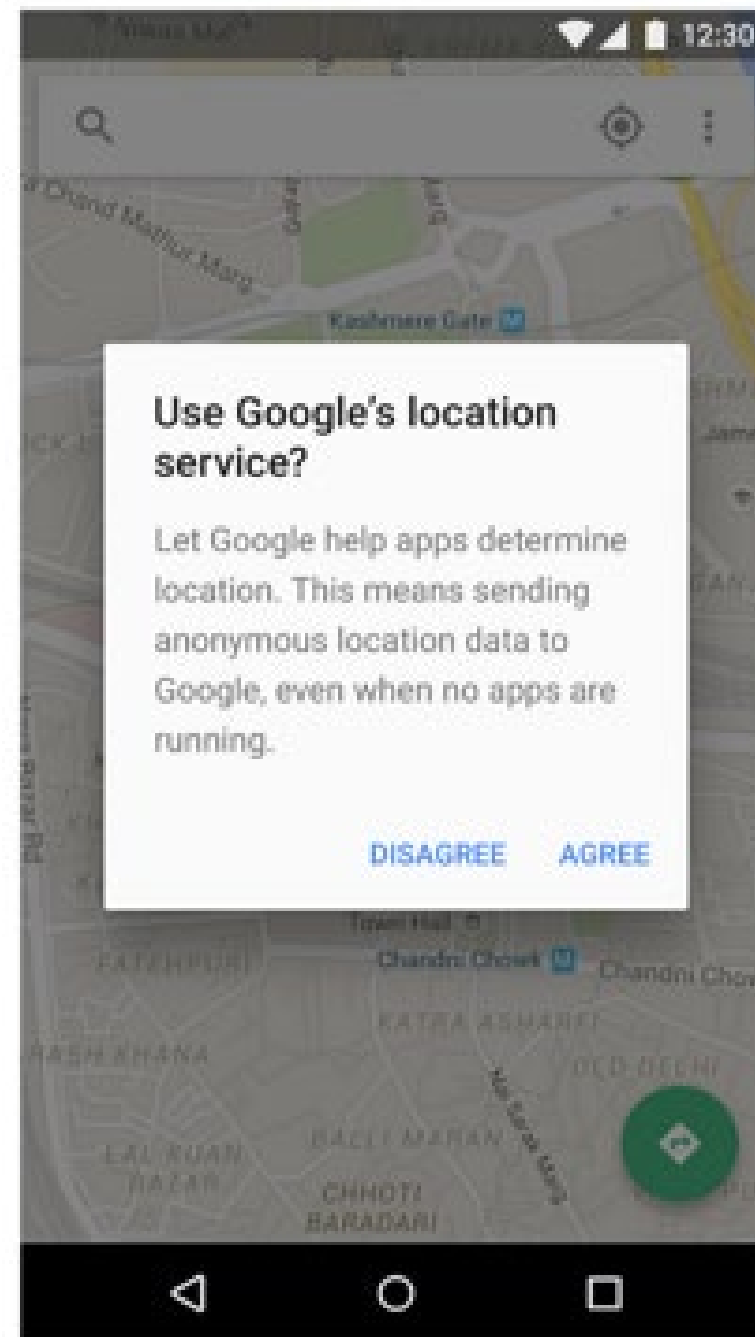
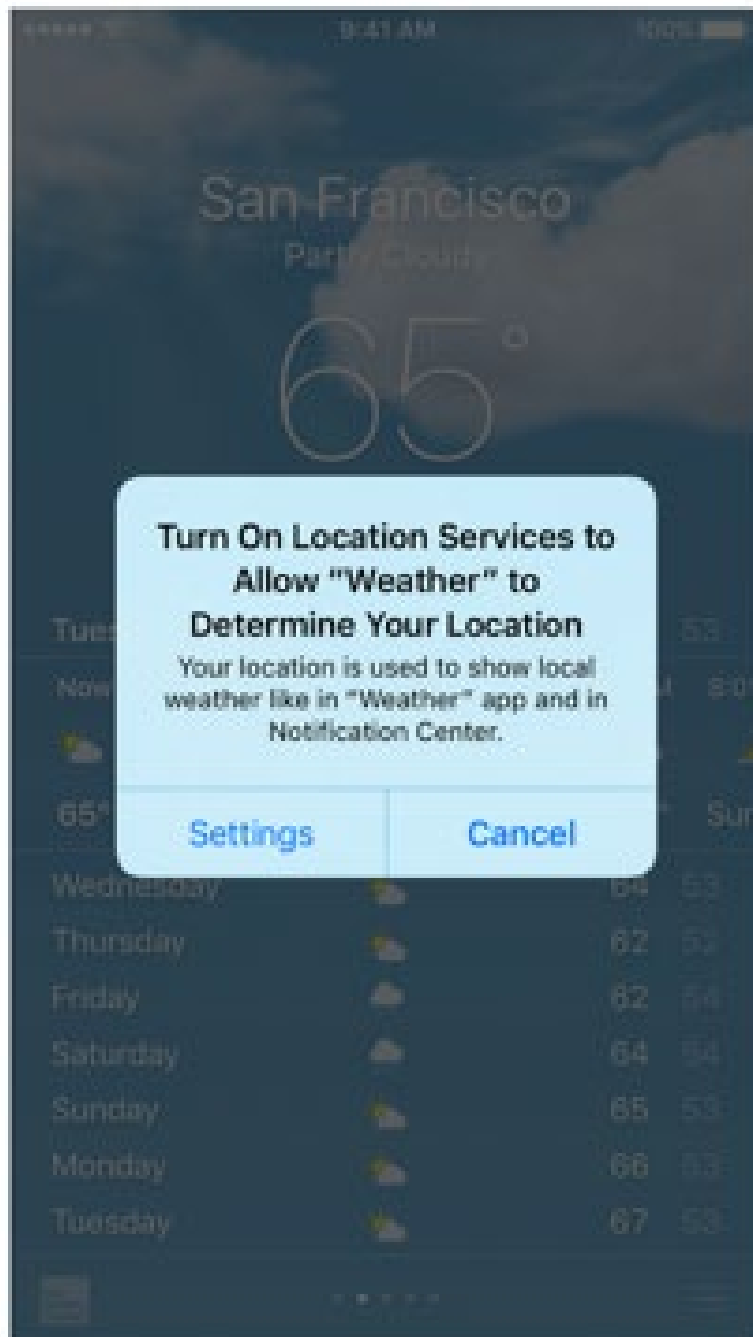
A case for both (womp, womp)

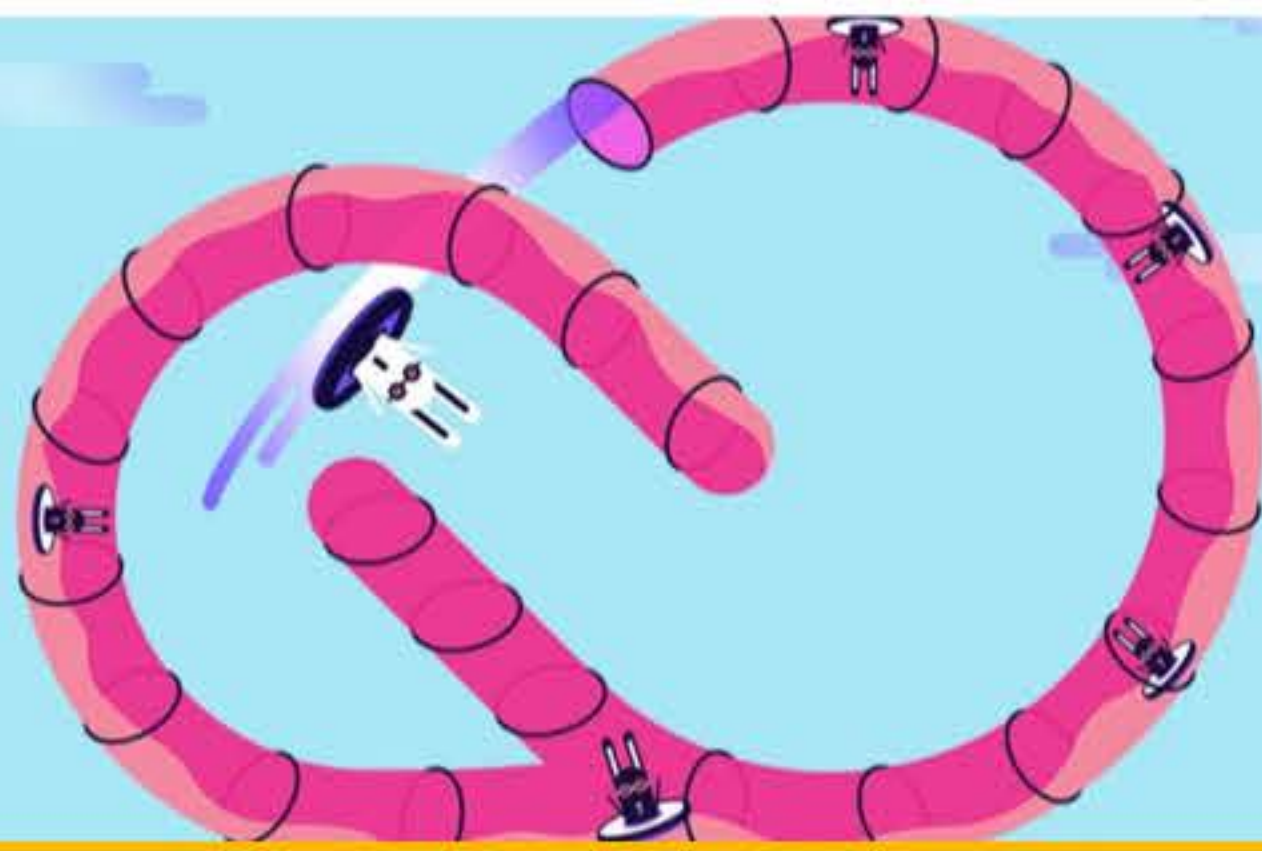
Title Case

- Looks more official, formal, serious.
- Helps text stand out as 'important.'
- Harder to tell what's the brand name or proper noun (every word in the label/headline gets capped).
- Has visual symmetry.
- Great for Germans.
- 19th century written style.
- More complex rules around what words and parts of speech get capitalized and when, based on the style book.

Sentence case

- Looks more conversational, natural.
- Easier to spot proper nouns and branded terms.
- Provides directional cues to people with dyslexia.
- More modern written style.
- Easier to remember and apply.





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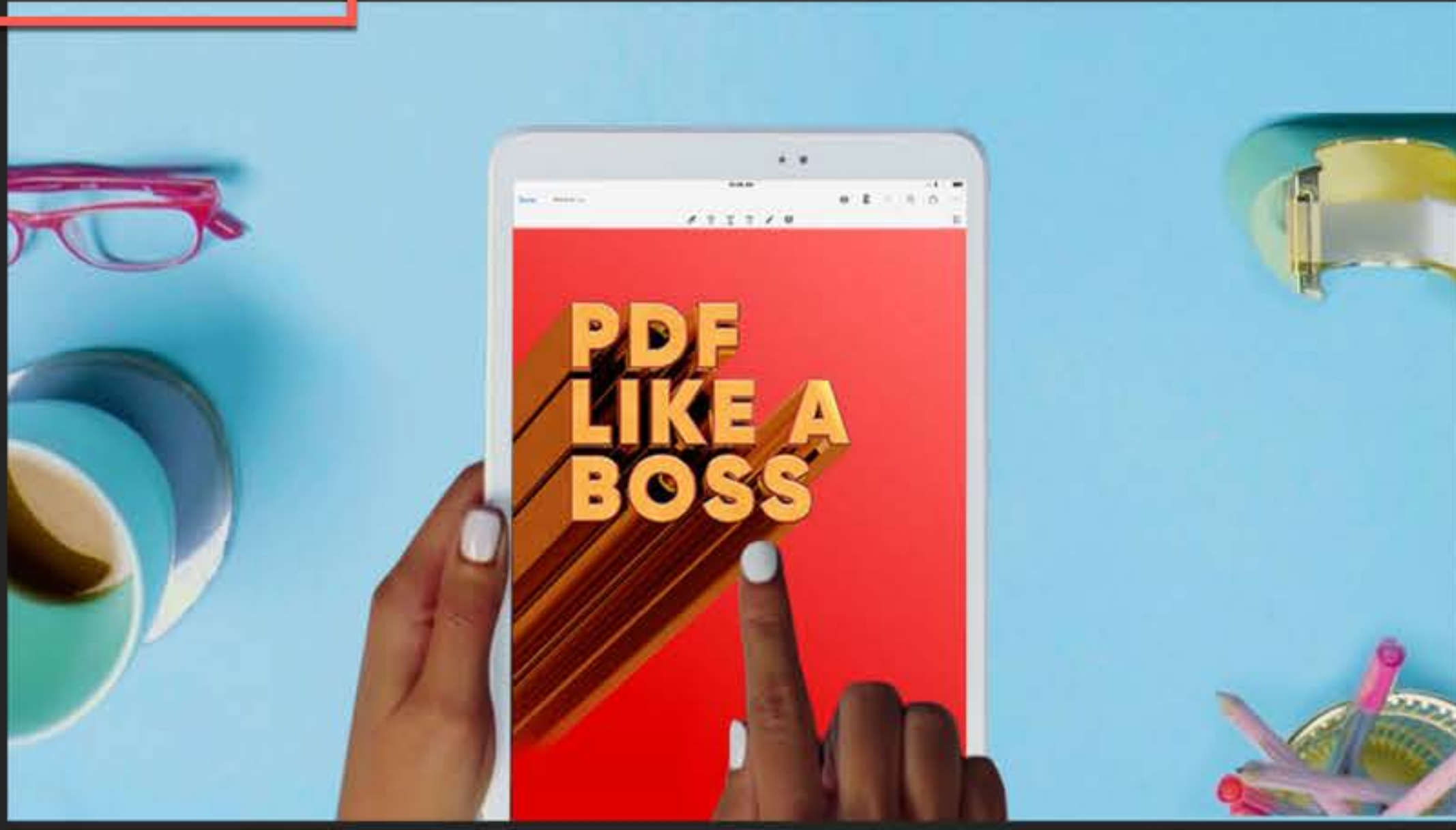


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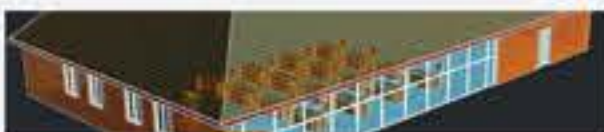
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- Newsroom
- Suppliers
- Affiliate Program
- Referral Program

pm

Your Tuesday Evening Briefing
Here's what you need to know at the end of the day.

Listen to 'The Daily'
A visit to one of the deadliest places in the U.S. for migrants.



In the 'Smarter Living' Newsletter
5 cheap(ish) things to combat winter cabin fever.

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U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

U.S. Intelligence Chiefs Contradict Trump on North Korea and Iran

North Korea is "unlikely to give up" its nuclear stockpiles and Iran is not actively trying to make a bomb, according to a new intelligence assessment.

The findings are a direct contradiction of two top tenets of President Trump's foreign policy.

1h ago



Christopher A. Wray, the F.B.I. director, Gina Haspel, the C.I.A. chief, and Dan Coats, the Director of National Intelligence, appeared before the Senate Intelligence Committee.
Sarah Silbiger/The New York Times

Opposition Leader, and Oil, Become Focus of Venezuela-U.S. Struggle

After the Trump administration handed control of Venezuela's U.S. assets to the opposition leader, President Nicolás Maduro's government struck back fiercely.

13m ago

Opinion >



The Editorial Board What Keeps the Spies Up at Night

Trump isn't entirely wrong about the dangers America faces.

12m ago

Frank Bruni The Super Bowl That Trump's America Deserves

The post-truth era has found its post-truth sport.

40m ago

Thomas L. Friedman Warning! Everything Is Going Deep: 'The Age of Surveillance Capitalism'

Joseph Turow and Chris Jay Hoofnagle

Mark Zuckerberg Doesn't Understand What People Want

Leila Salazar-López Your 401(k) Could Finance the Plunder of the World's Largest Rainforest

Ross Douthat The Trump Doctrine

Gail Collins and Bret Stephens It'll Be a While Before Anyone Underestimates Nancy Pelosi Again

Bob Litterman The Very High Costs of Climate Risk

Alyssa Leader When College Rapists Graduate

EXTREME WEATHER

Midwest Freezes While Australia Burns: Welcome to the Age of Weather Extremes

Chicago may see its coldest day ever while wildfires rage in Australia's record-breaking heat.

A hotter planet makes extreme weather more frequent and more intense, scientists say. And it compels us all to face an Earth we are not accustomed to.

1m ago



'I'm Cold and I'm Afraid': Homeless Await Deep Freeze Across Midwest

As health officials issued warnings about the dangers of frostbite and hypothermia, homeless people in the Midwest faced potentially devastating circumstances.

15m ago

Cold hard facts about the polar vortex: It will be warmer in Antarctica than in Iowa. It could feel like minus 65 in Minneapolis.

5m ago

The Lake Michigan shore in Chicago on Tuesday. Overnight temperatures in the city were forecast to be near the lowest ever recorded.

Joshua Lott for The New York Times

U.S. POLITICS

Can Kamala Harris Repeat Obama's Success With Black Voters?

Senator Kamala Harris, the most high profile and politically connected black woman to run for president, is well positioned to secure the support that buoyed former President Barack Obama in 2008.

Yet interviews in early primary states like South Carolina and her home state, California, show the challenges she faces with a core constituency.

48m ago



Senator Kamala Harris attended the Pink Ice Gala hosted by the local chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority in Columbia, S.C., on Friday. It was one of her first public appearances after announcing her presidential candidacy.

Travis Dove for The New York Times

Stacey Abrams to Deliver State of the Union Response for Democrats

Ms. Abrams, who nearly won Georgia's governorship last year and is considering other bids for office, takes on a task that has damaged other rising stars.

1h ago

The Senate is advancing a pro-Israel bill as Republicans search for divisions in the Democratic Party.

Sports



Redskins

Nationals

Capitals

Wizards

D.C. United/Soccer

High School Sports

Proper nouns and names of things - title case

Headlines, page titles, subheads, buttons - sentence case

Perspective

When will Bryce Harper and Manny Machado get their big offers? Maybe never.

The bidding war for superstar free agents is starting to feel like an uneasy truce.

By Thomas Boswell

Maryland basketball falls apart vs. Illinois and has its first losing streak

Plagued by turnovers, the No. 13 Terps were outscored 25-10 in the last 8:39 of a loss to a team that had dropped seven of its previous eight games.

By Emily Giambalvo · 27 minutes ago

Washington Wizards seek a rare accomplishment: Two road wins in row

Washington won its sixth road game of the season in Orlando to remain two games out of eighth place in the East. Next up: San Antonio, where it has lost 18 straight.

By Candace Buckner · 46 minutes ago



The Rams' \$5 billion stadium complex is bigger than Disneyland. It might be perfect for L.A.

The privately financed stadium and entertainment complex scheduled to open in 2020 is being studied as a possible new model for the NFL and its team owners, who have long relied on public financing for its new venues.

By Liz Clarke

- **'The state of Louisiana is outraged': Senator brings Saints-Rams debate to Senate floor**

National Sports



When it comes to James Harden, what's good for Rockets might not be good for basketball



Kendall Coyne Schofield becomes first woman to compete in NHL All-Star skills event



Perspective
Tubby Smith didn't come to High Point to retire



Analysis
Remember Kentucky basketball? It could be time to start paying attention again.



Dogs and cats, living together: Bill Walton's 'Ghostbusters' claim apparently is true

Best of Post Sports



Dan Kolko and Bo Porter will replace Johnny Holliday, Ray Knight on MASN's Nats broadcast



Warriors skip the White House, meet with former president Barack Obama instead



Julius Campbell, a key player from the T.C. Williams 'Remember the Titans' team, dies at 65

Featured



Perspective
What's wrong with the Capitals? They have a week to figure it out.



'When everything is bad in the world, Gritty is good': A Philadelphia love story

The Latest

At Last Track to Philly meet, a rare chance for high schoolers to compete in racewalking

Jadon Davis, a senior at Baltimore Polytechnic Institute, is part of a family of racewalkers who are trying to attract others to the event.



Most Read Sports

- 1

Warriors skip the White House, meet with former president Barack Obama instead
- 2

The Rams' \$5 billion stadium complex is bigger than Disneyland. It might be perfect for L.A.
- 3

Perspective
When will Bryce Harper and Manny Machado get their big offers? Maybe never.
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Maryland basketball falls apart vs. Illinois and has its first losing streak
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Analysis
When it comes to James Harden, what's good for Rockets might not be good for basketball

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Visas, asylum and sponsorship

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Includes holidays and finding a job

25

Ministerial departments

385

Other agencies and public bodies

The websites of all [government departments](#) and many other agencies and public bodies have been merged into GOV.UK.

Here you can see all [announcements](#), [publications](#), [statistics](#) and [consultations](#).

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The Brexit Deal explained

[Brexit Deal Explained](#)

Read the Withdrawal Agreement and [Political Declaration on the future relationship between the UK and the EU](#).

UK LEAVES THE EU 29.03.19

[EU Exit](#)

The UK will leave the EU on 29 March 2019. [Find out more.](#)

Grenfell Tower support

[Grenfell Tower fire](#)

Find out about the support available.

More on GOV.UK

Most active

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UK bank holidays

Check the dates for [bank holidays](#) in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Is this page useful? [Yes](#) [No](#)

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AtoZ

Citizenship and living in the UK

British citizenship

Becoming a citizen, Life in the UK test and getting a passport



Charities, volunteering and honours

Nominating someone for an honour, setting up a charity, community participation



Living in the UK, government and democracy

Petitioning the government, government statistics, national emergencies and terrorism



Voting

Register to vote, getting on the electoral register and voting by proxy



Apple's house capitalization style

Title style capitalization. Capitalize every word except:

- Articles (*a, an, the*)
- Coordinating conjunctions (*and, or*)
- Prepositions of four or fewer letters, except when the preposition is part of a verb phrase, as in "Starting Up the Computer."

However, always capitalize the first and last word, even if it is an article, a conjunction, or a preposition of four or fewer letters.

Quick – does Apple capitalize the word “after”?

How many letters are in “after”?

Did that matter?

Wait... what?

Help.

Vets.gov capitalization rules

Headline capitalization for the main title or name of the page.

All subsequent subheads on that page should be sentence-style capitalization.

Except...

More Vets.gov capitalization rules

Bread Crumbs

This IA element shows the Veteran the path to the current page or where the page lives in the IA (not all pages follow a path). Bread crumb text should be headline capped.

Buttons

Text for buttons should be headline capped.

Title of Page

The name of each page should be headline capped.

Top Nav

Text for the top nav should be sentence capped.

VA Benefits and Health Care ^

About VA v

Find a VA Location

Health Care >

[View All in Health Care >](#)

Disability >

Education and Training >

Careers and Employment >

Pension >

Housing Assistance >

Life Insurance >

Burials and Memorials >

Records >

Get Health Care Benefits

[About VA Health Benefits](#)

[How to Apply](#)

[Family and Caregiver Health Benefits](#)

[Apply Now for Health Care](#)

Manage Your Health

[Refill and Track Your Prescriptions](#)

[Send a Secure Message to Your Health Care Team](#)

[Schedule and View VA Appointments](#)

[View Your Lab and Test Results](#)

[Order Hearing Aid Batteries and](#)

VA Tele

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Access and manage your VA benefits and health care

Health Care

[Refill and track your prescriptions](#)

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[View your lab and test results](#)

[Apply now for VA health care](#)

Disability

[Check your claim or appeal status](#)

[View your payment history](#)

[Upload evidence to support your claim](#)

[File for a VA disability increase](#)

[File a claim for compensation](#)

Education

[Check your Post-9/11 GI Bill® benefits](#)

[View your payment history](#)

Records

[Get Veteran ID cards](#)

[Get your VA medical records](#)

More information about your benefits

Health Care Benefits Eligibility

Not sure if you qualify? Find out if you can get VA health care benefits.

How to Apply for Health Care Benefits

Ready to apply? Get started now.

Health Needs and Conditions

Find out how to access VA services for mental health, women's health, and other specific needs.

Disability Benefits

Have an illness or injury that was caused—or made worse—by your active-duty service? Find out if you can get disability compensation from VA.

Post-9/11 GI Bill Benefits

Post-9/11 GI Bill

If you need help paying for school or job training and you've served on active duty after September 10, 2001, find out if you can get education benefits through the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

Transfer Your Post-9/11 GI Bill Benefits to Your Spouse and Dependents

If you have unused Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits, find out if you can transfer your benefits to your spouse or dependent children.

Benefit Rates and Ways You Can Use Your Benefits

Rates

Learn more about education benefit rates for tuition and books for qualifying Veterans and their family

Style rules shouldn't be so confusing that it makes you feel like this



Because if ***we*** can't keep track, we won't be consistent....

...and if we're not consistent, then the content on VA.gov won't be consistent...

Using words consistently inspires **trust** and **confidence** in our customers.

It creates a feeling that we're competent, professional, and act on our customers' behalf as a unified organization.

Inconsistency = cognitive chaos, visually noisy,
don't know what to trust

Consistency = invisible, quiet, silently supports
the feeling of security

Simplified, easier to remember, looks more consistent

Sentence case for all VA.gov things except proper nouns and branded names, “Veterans,” and global nav (top labels only)

VA Benefits and Health Care ▾

About VA ▾

Find a VA Location

get education benefits through the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

Simpler, easier, looks more consistent

Sentence case for all VA.gov things except proper nouns and branded names, “Veterans,” and global nav (top labels only)

- Looks more conversational, natural.
- Easier to spot proper nouns and branded terms.
- Provides directional cues to people with dyslexia.
- More modern written style.
- Easier to remember and apply.