



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on October 6, 2020

## AP Stylebook: Don't Upset Rioters and Looters With Accurate Terms

The Associated Press has declared itself the information ministry for Antifa and Black Lives Matter, the two revolutionary groups rioting, burning, and looting American cities, and, in some cases, attacking or [murdering Trump supporters](#).

In a series of tweets last week, AP explained the manner in which its reporters should use such words as “riot,” “revolt,” or “protest.” Those words, AP avers, can disguise the unhappiness of the people who are rioting, burning, and looting American cities.

And so reporters must be careful not to upset the rioters, arsonists, and looters.

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Whether AP fears that rioters, arsonists, and looters will raze its headquarters at 200 Liberty Street in New York, or whether it sympathizes with them, the result is the same. AP is manipulating its reporting to hide the truth from the public.

But the latest is nothing new. The wire service has been fiddling with words for years.

New guidance on AP Stylebook Online:

Use care in deciding which term best applies:

A riot is a wild or violent disturbance of the peace involving a group of people. The term riot suggests uncontrolled chaos and pandemonium. (1/5)

— APStylebook (@APStylebook) [September 30, 2020](#)

### The Tweets

The stylebook delivered a series of five tweets that were labeled “New guidance on AP Stylebook Online,” and opened with this admonition: “Use care in deciding which term best applies: A riot is a wild or violent disturbance of the peace involving a group of people. The term riot suggests uncontrolled chaos and pandemonium.”

Then came four reasons why AP reporters should not use the term “riot” when they witness radical leftists [burning buildings](#), [attacking police](#), or [trying to murder 17-year-old lifeguards](#).

“Focusing on rioting and property destruction rather than underlying grievance,” the next tweet opined, “has been used in the past to stigmatize broad swaths of people protesting against lynching, police brutality or for racial justice, going back to the urban uprisings of the 1960s.”



YouTube



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Focusing on rioting and property destruction rather than underlying grievance has been used in the past to stigmatize broad swaths of people protesting against lynching, police brutality or for racial justice, going back to the urban uprisings of the 1960s. (2/5)

— APStylebook (@APStylebook) [September 30, 2020](#)

Message: AP reporters should ignore their lying eyes, and put rioters, arsonists, and looters on the couch to dig up the “root cause” of their unhappiness.

Furthermore, the thread continued, a milder term is required when hundreds of cars are set ablaze, or [“protesters” seize](#) an entire section of a major city.

“Unrest is a vaguer, milder and less emotional term for a condition of angry discontent and protest verging on revolt,” AP continued:

Protest and demonstration refer to specific actions such as marches, sit-ins, rallies or other actions meant to register dissent. They can be legal or illegal, organized or spontaneous, peaceful or violent, and involve any number of people.

Revolt and uprising both suggest a broader political dimension or civil upheavals, a sustained period of protests or unrest against powerful groups or governing systems.

Protest and demonstration refer to specific actions such as marches, sit-ins, rallies or other actions meant to register dissent. They can be legal or illegal, organized or spontaneous, peaceful or violent, and involve any number of people. (4/5)

— APStylebook (@APStylebook) [September 30, 2020](#)

Revolt and uprising both suggest a broader political dimension or civil upheavals, a sustained period of protests or unrest against powerful groups or governing systems. (5/5)

— APStylebook (@APStylebook) [September 30, 2020](#)

The latest manipulation of language that AP calls “guidance” continues what it began in May to hide the truth about looters:

Feels like a good time to post AP’s guidance on the word looting:  
[pic.twitter.com/hjxQWbSYAx](https://pic.twitter.com/hjxQWbSYAx)

— Kimberlee Kruesi (@kkruesi) [May 31, 2020](#)

The AP reporter who tweeted that “guidance” did not identify the “some” who “have long viewed the word as carrying some racial overtones.”

## Other Changes

After the line on looting, AP decided that “black” gets an uppercase B in describing a black person:

AP’s style is now to capitalize Black in a racial, ethnic or cultural sense, conveying an essential and shared sense of history, identity and community among people who identify as



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Black, including those in the African diaspora and within Africa.

— APStylebook (@APStylebook) [June 19, 2020](#)

These changes align with long-standing capitalization of other racial and ethnic identifiers such as Latino, Asian American, and Native American.

The “w” in white, of course, remains lowercase, [AP explained](#).

Just before the “guidance” on looting, AP ordered reporters to stop using the term “mistress” to describe an adulteress to take up with a married man because it is “archaic.”

We now say not to use the archaic and sexist term "mistress" for a woman in a long-term sexual relationship with, and financially supported by, a man who is married to someone else.

Instead, use an alternative like companion or lover on first reference. Provide details later.

— APStylebook (@APStylebook) [May 8, 2020](#)

And two years ago, AP reminded reporters about the correct use of the word “illegal” in referring to illegal aliens:

Except in direct quotes essential to the story, use "illegal" only to refer to an action, not a person: illegal immigration, but not illegal immigrant. Acceptable variations include living in or entering a country illegally or without legal permission.

— APStylebook (@APStylebook) [June 26, 2018](#)

AP banned “illegal immigrant” in 2013, three years after calling it the “preferred term” to describe an illegal alien.

AP Style tip: [@AP](#) no longer sanctions the term "illegal immigrant." Here's why: <http://t.co/uKOKjuE3tb>

— APStylebook (@APStylebook) [April 2, 2013](#)

Illegal immigrant is the preferred term for someone who has entered the country illegally. Do not use an illegal. [#apstyle](#)

— APStylebook (@APStylebook) [July 1, 2010](#)

**H/T:** [Legal Insurrection](#)



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