

# Secretary

## Chairman's Guide

**Texas**  
**PTA**<sup>®</sup>  
*everychild.one voice.*<sup>®</sup>

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This item is for PTA use only.

Item #L-6201

## **The Mission of PTA**

The mission of the PTA is three-fold:

- to support and speak on behalf of children and youth in the schools, in the community and before governmental agencies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children;
- to assist parents in developing the skills they need to raise and protect their children; and
- to encourage parent and public involvement in the public schools of this nation.

## **The Purposes of PTA**

- To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, community and place of worship.
- To raise the standards of home life.
- To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.
- To bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth.
- To develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social and spiritual education.

# Secretary's Guide

## Overview

### **Purpose**

The secretary is responsible for keeping accurate records of the proceedings of the association. The prime qualifications are promptness, accuracy and a thorough knowledge of the PTA Purposes, bylaws, policies and methods; an understanding of parliamentary law; and a sincere desire to help the president conduct a businesslike meeting.

This guide will familiarize you with the responsibilities required and opportunities available to be an effective secretary.

### **How to Use**

Use this guide to acquaint yourself with duties, responsibilities and general information you will need to know in order to keep accurate records, reports, lists and minutes.

**This Secretary's Guide will answer these questions:**

- What goes into the minutes?
- Does a secretary have to know shorthand?
- How does a secretary correct the minutes?
- Is there a special book for minutes?
- Should executive board and association minutes be kept in the same official numbered-page book?
- Who prepares the agenda?
- Can a PTA have more than one secretary?
- How is correspondence answered for a PTA?
- How can a secretary get help?

### **Who Should Use**

Secretary chairman

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# PTA Plan of Work

(Plan de Trabajo)

Officer/Chairman Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Nombre de Oficial/ Presidente de Junta)

Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Posición) (Año)

*Reproduce as needed for the appropriate number of goals.*  
 (Se puede reproducir para metas adicionales.)

<b>Responsibilities/Duties:</b> (Responsabilidades)			
<b>Goal:</b> (Meta)			
	<b>Specific Action Steps</b> (Proceso Especifico de Acción)	<b>Start Date</b> (Fecha de Empiezo)	<b>Completion Date</b> (Fecha de Terminación)
<b>Budget:</b> (Presupuesto)			
<b>Resources:</b> (Recursos)			
<b>Evaluation Process:</b> (Proceso de Evaluación)			
<b>Committee Members:</b> (Miembros del Comité)			

# Procedure Book

## **A Procedure Book:**

- is vital to the effectiveness of an on-going chairmanship,
- is a record of a year's plans and activities, and
- makes easier the task of those who follow you.

## **How to Compile a Procedure Book:**

- Use a loose-leaf folder or notebook.
- Separate sections with tabbed dividers.
- Include Suggested Table of Contents (see below).

*Note:* Be sure to turn over the procedure book to the new chairman at the completion of your term in office.

## **Suggested Table of Contents**

### **Directory**

- Your name, address, telephone number and year served
- Address of Texas PTA Office and telephone number
- Address of National PTA Office and telephone number
- Name, address and telephone number of unit president
- Names, addresses and telephone numbers of council, area and state chairmen with comparable responsibilities
- Names, addresses and telephone numbers of committee members
- Resource people, related agencies and organizations in the community

### **Goals**

- List overall goal of chairmanship (see Texas PTA Handbook).
- List specific goals for your term of service.

## **Plan of Work**

### **Events, Projects, Programs**

- List on separate pages each event, project and/or programs including dates, responsibilities, expenses and an evaluation form.
- Include Texas PTA calendars and the school district calendars in order to plan your activities. This also helps you avoid any conflicts with activities planned by your Principal and school district.

### **Materials**

- Materials received from Texas PTA
- Notes from workshops, area and state events
- Correspondence
- Materials distributed from your office, such as: news releases, calendar of events, etc.
- Keep a copy of your bylaws in your procedure book. Any changes that come from the National or state offices will need to be added promptly.
- Always keep the bylaws diskette available in order to help you make the appropriate changes to your bylaws
- Include the officer rosters from your councils and areas (districts).

### **Reports**

- **Reports** - include reports given by your office (list each title separately).
- **Forms** - include all forms sent by your office for awards at council, area, state or national levels.

### **Evaluations**

- What were your successes? Why?
- What projects failed? Why?
- What persons, groups, materials were most helpful?

### **Recommendations for Future Committees**

## **Major Duties of a Secretary**

1. The secretary may be asked to give a report of the executive board meeting, its actions and recommendations, at the next regular meeting. When recommendations are contained in the report, it is necessary for the secretary to move the adoption of each recommendation.
2. A secretary may vote like any other member. The secretary may also make motions, nominate people or enter into discussion. The secretary may be asked to help count the standing vote when requested by the president.
3. The secretary should have: the minutes record books, state-approved bylaws and standing rules, a current membership list (in alphabetical order), a listing of all current committees including members' names, a copy of the approved budget and a copy of the agenda. The secretary may also be asked to maintain other lists, i.e., names and dates officers completed the Texas PTA Leadership Course and lists of items purchased for PTA and for the school by PTA.
4. The secretary promptly gives to his successor all minutes, records, reports, procedure book and other pertinent materials (including his telephone number).
5. The secretary records all business transacted at each meeting of the association as well as meetings of the executive board. The secretary always sits close to the president and rises to read the minutes. (Minutes of the preceding meeting may be printed and distributed or posted they must say DRAFT across them.)
6. The secretary acts as corresponding secretary if none is provided for in the bylaws. When there are two secretaries, the recording secretary is usually referred to as the secretary, and the corresponding secretary is referred to by his full title.
7. Usually, the secretary is the person designated in the bylaws to contact executive board members and remind them of the

executive meetings. This may be done by telephone, fax, electronic mail or mail.

8. If acting as the corresponding secretary, he reads correspondence as requested by the president. In reading correspondence, first read the name of the person and/or organization, and then proceed with the body of the letter or note.
9. The secretary should also maintain a roll call record. At executive meetings, the general method of roll call is by voice. At regular meetings, the general method is to have the members sign in. This procedure is required in order to adhere to a bylaw requirement of establishing a quorum.

## **Major Duties of a Corresponding Secretary**

1. The corresponding secretary conducts the correspondence of the association. Local PTAs who have the corresponding secretary as an officer in their units must list that officer's duties in the bylaws.
2. The corresponding secretary reads communications at meetings. (When reading a communication, always read the name of the writer before the message.) Sometimes, the corresponding secretary is asked to serve as newsletter chairman.
3. It is often the responsibility of the corresponding secretary to write thank-you notes to someone who gave a presentation to your PTA meeting; however, this responsibility may be assigned to some other office or committee. When thanking a program participant:
  - a. Be prompt in expressing appreciation.
  - b. Date your letter. In an informal note of appreciation, it may be written below and to the left of your signature.
  - c. Quote a worthy comment made by the presenter.
  - d. Reaffirm the group's appreciation for the time and thought the speaker gave to the presentation.
  - e. Sign the PTA's name followed by your signature. Be sure to identify your

relationship to the PTA, i.e., Jane Smith, Corresponding Secretary.

4. Some local units ask the corresponding secretary to take care of “sympathy/sunshine” notes. When writing notes to members concerning grief, illness, a new baby, etc.:
  - a. Keep in mind that the message is from the PTA, not the writer.
  - b. Recognize the specific reason for writing.
  - c. Express the group’s interest and reaction to what has happened to the member.
  - d. End on an appropriate note.
  - e. Date your letter.
  - f. Sign the PTA’s name and your name as corresponding secretary.

## **Resources**

- Texas PTA Resources
- Suggested Bylaws for Local Units
- Parliamentary Pointers
- Secretary’s Guide
- Texas PTA Web site: <http://www.txpta.org>

## **Recommended Tools**

- Secretary’s Record Books (2) — may be purchased through the Texas PTA.
- Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised (2000 Edition)

## **National PTA Resources**

National PTA provides advocacy support, training opportunities, and resources for its PTA units and members. Each year, PTA units receive an annual mailing called the Annual Resources. This resource contains information on bylaws and unit operations, financial management, membership and program development, leadership skills, as well as marketing and communications. The Annual Resources mailing is shipped to local unit presidents each spring — this means the resource often is sent to the outgoing president, who is responsible for passing this resource on to the new officers for planning purposes.

Other information is sent to PTA units from National PTA throughout the year. Each PTA unit receives a subscription to National PTA’s leadership magazine, *Our Children*, which is issued six times per year. In addition, National PTA maintains an award-winning Web site — [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org) — as well as a special password-protected Web site designed exclusively for PTA members. To access the PTA members’ Web site, use the URL printed on the back of your membership card and follow the instructions to receive your user name and password.

## **The Secretary (Flash Fact)**

### **Just for the Record...**

Every organization must have at least two officers — a presiding officer (president) and a recording officer, **the secretary** — in order to function properly.

The office of secretary is a very important one, and the responsibilities are numerous.

### **Qualities of a Good Secretary**

A secretary should have the qualities of accuracy, dependability, and promptness, and a thorough knowledge of PTA Purposes, bylaws, policies and methods.

### **Duties of the Secretary**

- Keeps an accurate record of all proceedings of the association — called the minutes. The documentation of these proceedings is referred to as the minutes.
- Keeps all committee reports on file.
- Keeps a current membership list.
- Keeps a copy of the bylaws with each revision clearly dated and stamped as approved by Texas PTA. Also keeps a copy of standing rules and any amendments with dated and stamped approval of Texas PTA.
- Brings to each meeting all pertinent records of the association, copy of bylaws, standing rules, lists of committees, membership and other documents that may be needed.
- Keeps an up-to-date list of all committees and members.
- Keeps signed and up-to-date record books.
- Signs, with the president, all vouchers and orders on the treasury, if so directed.
- Calls the roll when directed or required.
- Prepares order of business for the presiding officer on all pending matters known in advance, if so directed by the president.
- Notifies members of meetings, unless this duty is otherwise assigned.
- Calls the meeting to order if the president and vice president(s) are absent and presides until a temporary chairman is elected by the assembly.

- Notifies officers, committee members and delegates of their election or appointment.
- Writes correspondence, as directed.
- Prepares for the president, a copy of the minutes of a meeting as soon as possible after each meeting.
- Counts a rising vote when requested by the presiding officer.
- Performs any other duties that may be required by the bylaws.
- Assists the president in any way possible to run a business-like meeting.
- Stands when reading minutes, reporting executive board recommendations, and when counting standing votes or show of hands.
- May request, through the chair, that motions be in writing.

Any member has a right to examine the minutes of the association, but this right should not be abused. If a committee needs records held by the secretary, the secretary should turn them over to the committee chairman after consulting with the president.

Executive board minutes are read only at executive board meetings.

Each unit should keep two minutes record books — one for the executive board and one for the association.

### **The Corresponding Secretary**

A PTA unit may divide the secretarial responsibilities between two persons, a recording secretary (referred to as *the* secretary) and a corresponding secretary. The bylaws should outline the specified duties of the corresponding secretary.

The duties of the corresponding secretary may include the responsibility for issuing notices of meetings and conducting the general correspondence of the association. A corresponding secretary does not automatically take the place of the secretary when that officer is absent.

## Writing the Minutes

It is highly recommended that minutes be recorded in an official minutes record book. This book, also called a ledger, can be a hardbound ledger but must have **numbered** pages. They should be typed or written legibly in permanent ink and signed by the secretary. This is recommended to avoid alteration or removal of pages.

Minutes should be as brief as possible and should be reported in the order in which the business was presented in the meeting. They should record action taken by the group, including:

1. The exact wording of motions as stated by the chair. (The presiding officer can require any main motion or amendments to the motion to be in writing before it will be stated by the chair. The secretary can request the presiding officer to require that this be done.)
2. The name of the member who moved the adoption of a motion, but not the name of the individual who “seconds” the motion, unless the assembly orders that it also be included.
3. The action taken on the motion.

Personal opinions and details of debate or discussion are not included. What is done by the assembly, not what is said by the members, should be recorded.

Minutes are read (or printed and distributed) and approved or corrected immediately after the call to order, opening ceremonies and after a quorum has been established.

Minutes may be corrected whenever the error is noticed, regardless of the time that has elapsed. To correct minutes after they have been approved requires a 2/3 vote. Corrections are made in ink by drawing a line through the information with the correction above (if space allows) or written in the margin. Red ink is preferred to indicate a correction. Never use “white-out” to make a correction. Nothing is ever erased. It is advisable to use either a black or blue ink for the minutes.

Minutes of a regular meeting may not be approved at a special meeting.

## Contents of Minutes

1. First paragraph
  - a) Kind of meeting (regular, special, adjourned).
  - b) Name of association.
  - c) Date, place and time of meeting.
  - d) Quorum established.
  - e) Presence and names of president and secretary or names of their substitutes.
  - f) Details of whether minutes of previous meeting were read (or printed and distributed) and approved (or approved as corrected).

Names of members present (usually in board or committee meetings with 20 or less members) may be included.

2. Treasurer’s report
  - a) Beginning balance (ending balance at last meeting)
  - b) Total receipts (since last meeting)
  - c) Total disbursements (since last meeting)
  - d) Ending balance (current meeting date)
3. Communications reading
4. Reports of executive board, standing committees, special committees (copies of reports may be attached to minutes)
5. Separate paragraph for each subject covered
  - a) All main motions (except those withdrawn), name of maker of motion, disposition of motion, whether adopted or not adopted
  - b) Announcement of previous notice of motions to be made at a later meeting
  - c) Points of order and appeals, whether sustained or lost
  - d) Number of votes for and against on a vote by ballot or a counted vote
6. Program topic, method of presentation, names of participants
7. Time of adjournment
8. Signature, typed or printed name and title of secretary (“Respectfully submitted” is not used in signed minutes)

## Sample Minutes

**Minutes are the permanent record of all action taken by the association; they are a legal document. The following sample is offered as a guide for the recording secretary. Wording in *italics* provide an example of how the minutes should be stated.**

\_\_\_\_\_ PTA/PTSA  
*(General/Executive Board) Meeting*  
*(Month, day), 20\_\_*

*The (regular/special) meeting of the (name) PTA/PTSA was called to order on (month, day), 2\_\_ at (time) (a.m./p.m.) in the (place meeting held) by president, (name), the secretary being present or (name) acting as secretary. A quorum was (established/not established). (Name) presented the invocation and (name) led the pledge or (name) led the pledge and (name) presented an inspirational thought. The minutes of the (previous date and type of meeting) were: (Read and approved) or (read and approved as corrected) or (approved as distributed, posted, or published) or (approved as corrected). The treasurer's report showed: (beginning balance, receipts, disbursements, ending balance). The treasurer's report was filed for audit.*

Reports from officers would follow any correspondence and should be read after the treasurer's report. If votes on the reports are necessary, the minutes should state:

*(Name) moved the adoption of the (name of the committee/executive board) recommendation to (state exact wording). After discussion, the motion (carried/failed).*

Reports from the standing committee would follow in the order given. State who presented the report for each committee and include a summary of the facts and action taken, if any. If the report is very long, it is permissible to attach the report to the official copy of the minutes (with a notation in the minutes to refer to the attachment).

If a member of the association makes a motion, minutes should state who made the motion and the exact wording of the motion. The name of the person who seconded the motion is not included, but the minutes should indicate that the motion was seconded and the action taken. For example:

*(Name) moved that (exact wording of the motion). The motion was seconded and (carried/failed).*

If a motion is amended, the minutes should not include the amendment(s) or the name(s) of the person(s) making the amendment. The minutes should only state the motion's final approved wording.

If the motion requires a two-thirds (2/3) vote, such as an amendment made to the bylaws or standing rules, the minutes should state that *the amendment carried by a 2/3 vote.*

If an election is held, the minutes should state the names of the nominees and the results of the election. After unfinished business, new business, programs, and announcements have been noted in the minutes, the adjournment is recorded.

*The meeting was adjourned at (time) (a.m./p.m.).*

*(Signature)*

*(Name), Secretary (or Secretary Pro-tem)*

*Approved (or Approved as Corrected) (Month, day), 20\_\_ (Initials of Secretary)*

Any corrections should be written on the minutes in the correct place and initialed by the secretary.

## Minutes

Minutes are not a report, but a record of the business of the association. They should contain a record of what is done, not what is said. Personal opinions are not recorded. Minutes should specify in the first paragraph the date, place, time, type of meeting and the names and presence and of the presiding officer and secretary or names of their substitutes. Accuracy is the keynote of a good secretary.

The minutes should contain a record of all action taken by the group, including the exact wording of every motion, the name of the maker of the motion and the action taken on the motion. Personal opinion and/or discussion are not included in the minutes.

Minutes should be complete, concise and accurate. They should be as brief as possible, but include all necessary information.

Action must be recorded in the order in which it took place.

Minutes should be recorded in an official minutes record book with numbered pages. Corrections are made in ink either above the information (if space allows) or in the margin. Draw a line through incorrect information or indicate an addition. Red ink is preferred. One minutes record book should be kept for executive board meetings and one minutes record book should be kept for regular meetings. Minutes are read only to the body creating them, i.e., executive board minutes for the executive board, and regular meeting minutes for the next regular meeting.

Minutes are signed by the secretary, using the secretary's given name. Example: Sue Jones, Secretary. The words "Respectfully submitted" represent an older practice that is not essential in signing the minutes.

After the minutes have been read (or distributed) and approved, the secretary writes "Approved as read (or printed)" or "Approved as corrected," the date of approval and the secretary's initials. If your minutes are approved by a committee (e.g. your last meeting of the school year), an audit committee is appointed by the president to approve the minutes. Each committee member will sign and date the minutes after reading and making necessary corrections.

Corrections are suggested without motion or vote. They may be made whenever an error is discovered, regardless of the time that has elapsed. However, after minutes have been approved, a 2/3 vote is required to correct. Be grateful for corrections to the minutes. At least someone was listening closely enough to detect an error, and his corrections enable you to keep a more accurate record for your association.

The minutes must not be released from the custody of the secretary except upon written order of the president. If the secretary is not present at a meeting, the president should appoint a secretary pro-tem, who then enters the minutes he takes in the official minute's record book and signs his given name with the words "Secretary Pro-tem."

It is permissible to mail printed copies of the minutes after they have been approved by the association. This should be done upon order of the president or general consent of the membership.

For help or questions, please call your council's secretary, the area secretary or the state secretary (the names and telephone numbers will be listed and mailed to your president at the first of the school year).

## **Suggested PTA Meeting Agenda**

To be well run, a meeting must be well planned. The secretary, as keeper of the official records of the association, can be of much help to the president in planning an order of business. By referring to the bylaws and minutes of previous meetings, he can help the president to see that all regular business is included at the proper time and on the proper date. By checking the minutes of the previous meeting, he can make sure that no “unfinished business” will be forgotten.

**The Texas PTA suggests the following model agenda:**

### **Item**

#### **Call to Order**

The president, as the Chair, stands, raps the gavel once and calls the meeting to order.

#### **Opening Ceremonies**

An invocation, the Pledge of Allegiance, or a poem, song or inspirational message is conducted.

#### **Reading and Approval of Minutes**

Secretary stands, addresses the Chair and reads the minutes, unless they have been posted or distributed.

#### **Report of Treasurer**

No motion is needed for adoption of report unless report is audited.

#### **Letters or Communications**

Communications are read by the secretary and are acted upon as read if action is required.

#### **Report of Executive Board**

A summary report (not the minutes) is read for the information of the members. Recommendations should be voted upon one at a time, the secretary moving the adoption of each.

### **Sample Statements**

“The meeting will please come to order.”

“The secretary will read the minutes of the previous meeting. Are there any corrections? The minutes stand approved as read, posted or distributed.” **OR** “The minutes stand approved as corrected.”

“We will have the treasurer’s report. Are there any questions? The report will be filed for audit.”

“Are there any communications?”

“We will hear the report of the Executive Board by the secretary. You have heard the recommendation. Is there discussion?”  
(Follow steps of a motion.)

### **Reports of Standing Committees**

The Chair calls for the report of the committee, not the chairman's report. The person making the report moves the adoption of any recommendation. If no recommendation is made, no motion is needed. The committee chairman need not be recognized if there is no report.

"We will hear the report of the \_\_\_\_\_ Committee given by Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, chairman. Are there any questions regarding the report? If not, the report will be filed." Or "By direction of the \_\_\_\_\_ Committee I move the adoption of the recommendation to \_\_\_\_\_." (Follow steps of a motion.)

### **\*Special Committee and/or Special Orders**

#### **Unfinished Business**

Minutes of the previous meeting will indicate any unfinished business.

"The Chair knows of no unfinished business, therefore the next business in order is that of new business."

#### **New Business**

The Chair or members may bring new business before the association. A motion is necessary before discussion and vote.

"Is there any new business to come before this association?"

#### **Program**

The Chair introduces Program chairman, who presents the program. The meeting is not "turned over" to the Program chairman, nor does the Program chairman "turn the meeting back to the Chair."

"The program will be presented by Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, Program chairman."

"Mr. President, this concludes the program."

#### **Announcements**

Date of the next meeting and important activities should be announced. If there is a social time following the meeting, this should be announced.

"Are there any announcements?"

#### **Adjournment**

No motion is necessary to adjourn.

"If there is no objection, the meeting will now adjourn (pause). Since there is no objection, the meeting is adjourned."

### **\* Election of Nominating Committee**

#### **Ad Hoc Committee Report**

#### **Election of Officers**

## **Tips for Secretaries**

### **Preparation**

If you are required to take the minutes of the meeting, bring along pens, writing paper, a tape recorder, blank cassettes and blank motion forms. Arrive at the meeting site early to ensure that everything is ready. To take the minutes, you should have plenty of materials (paper, forms, cassettes, and so on) to get through a possibly lengthy session. Make sure you have a copy of the agenda, as well as any reports, financial statements, or other documents that may be referred to during the meeting.

### **What to Record**

The most difficult part of taking minutes is deciding what information has to be written down verbatim, what can be paraphrased, and what is nonessential for the official record. Minutes are meant to be concise, factual and objective records of what has happened during the meeting. Therefore, you cannot allow personal preferences to influence your note-taking, and you cannot give more weight to what certain people say while not recording the pertinent remarks of others. You must be able to interpret statements for what is truly being said, not what you hear by way of the deliverer's voice inflections, intonations or mannerisms.

It can be very difficult to discriminate from among all the opinions and facts just what should be recorded in the minutes, and to record the proceedings fairly, it is necessary to take a disinterested position. As a recorder you must listen carefully and take down information even when more than one person is talking at the same time, making sure that you attribute all statements to their correct sources.

It is necessary to record motions verbatim as well as names of the individuals those who made them. You may want to have blank copies of motion forms to use for this purpose.

*Recording Guidelines.* To begin your note-taking, follow these guidelines.

- Write down the date, location and time the meeting begins.
- Record the names of those present and absent (usually if the number is 20 or less). A quorum check is necessary for larger meetings.
- Identify the type of meeting (such as regular, executive, special, adjourned).
- Identify the presiding officer and secretary or their substitutes.
- Record the action. When the meeting begins, key your notes to match numbered items on the agenda. When you type your notes, you simply refer to your agenda to transcribe the key.
- You may want to number the motions as you receive them in order to place them correctly as the action occurred.
- When you receive the copy of the motion, make sure it contains the name of the person who made the motion, whether there was a second, the date, and whether the motion was made in the executive or general meeting.
- Remember- If a motion is withdrawn, it is as though it never happened.
- If you decide to personalize a template to help you record the minutes for your meetings, make sure your template is consistent with the agenda that is drafted for your meetings. You may want to bullet your entries in order to facilitate the recording of all actions.
- You may want to consider making a template for the order of business and make it available for the audit committee. They will be able to follow the proceedings as well.
- Record the time of adjournment.

Since the minutes serve as the official records of your meetings, it is imperative that they be objectively recorded and conscientiously transcribed into a final document.

### **Drafts**

When you sit down at your computer or typewriter, you should have the following materials accessible:

- The agenda
- Your notes and recorded cassettes
- *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*
- Any reports or other documents distributed at the meeting
- Verbatim copies of motions
- Copy of your bylaws

*Format Guidelines.* Prepare a draft according to these general guidelines. To determine the specific format, examine previous copies of the minutes in your files, and follow the format established for your PTA unless it has been determined that you will use a new format.

- Double space the draft, even if the final version will be single spaced, so that handwritten corrections can be made between the lines.
- Number the pages consecutively at the top or bottom of the pages.
- Identify the meeting and date at the top of the page.
- Identify the participants (if 20 or less — according to the guidelines established for your PTA) and the presiding officer and

secretary in the first paragraph, and state when the meeting was called to order.

- Make sure that you indicate there was a quorum present in order to proceed with the order of business.
- Use subheads for different topics if warranted by the length and complexity of the minutes.
- Conclude with the time of adjournment.
- Assemble all attachments for inclusion with the final copy.

*Copy Distribution.* It is good practice to present the president with a printout of the draft. He will be able to help you find misinterpretations or sensitive material that should not be printed.

### **Final Copy**

The final copy may be single or double spaced. Check copies of previous minutes for your PTA's preferred style. Most minutes are written in a narrative style.

You should have an official minutes record book for executive board minutes and a separate minutes record book for regular meeting minutes.

# Sample Motion Form

1. **I move:**

---

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

---

## **For Secretary's Use**

Meeting \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Motion Number \_\_\_\_\_

Carried \_\_\_\_\_

Amended \_\_\_\_\_

Failed \_\_\_\_\_

Withdrawn \_\_\_\_\_



# Texas PTA Stylebook



# **The Texas PTA Stylebook**

(Developed in accordance with The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual.)

One of the most important ways an organization can unify the efforts of its various departments is to create consistency within the communication system. This stylebook was not designed to create a complex web of rules and regulations, but rather to establish consistency in the writing style of all Texas PTA memorandums, letters, reports, newsletters, articles, brochures, news releases and other materials that reflect Texas PTA's level of professionalism to its members and to the community.

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# Texas PTA Style

(Revised 2001)

## Texas PTA

- The Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers should be referred to as Texas PTA on all references.
- If *Texas Parent Teacher Association* is used, *parent teacher* should not be hyphenated.
- The abbreviation PTA does not contain periods.
- *PTA*, *Parent Teacher Association*, and *PTSA* are registered service marks of the National PTA.
- *Parent-Teacher-Student Association* should be hyphenated.
- Delete “state” from references to the Texas PTA Office, Texas PTA Board of Directors, etc.
- When referring to the Purposes of PTA, always capitalize the “P” in *purposes*.

## Internal Elements

- Lowercase references to internal elements of an association when they have names that are widely used generic terms: board of directors, local units, councils, areas, etc.
- Capitalize internal elements of an association when they have names that are not widely used generic terms or when they are made proper nouns. **Examples:** Texas PTA Board of Directors, Area 1, Austin City Council of PTAs, etc.

## Titles

- In general, confine capitalization to formal titles used directly before an individual’s name.
- A title standing alone or separated by commas should be lowercased unless it refers to a high official and special respect is intended.

### Examples:

- The area presidents met at the Texas PTA Office May 3-4. The Area I president is Sue Jones.
- The PTA president attended all area conferences. Treasurer Sue Jones is from Area 14.

- Within the Arlington ISD Council, there are approximately 51 local units.
- Sue Jones is a council president. The Arlington ISD Council president is Sue Jones.
- The Region I president is Sue Jones. All regional vice presidents did a super job.
- The parliamentarian for Texas PTA is Sue Jones. The crowd welcomed President Sue Jones.
- Sue Jones, Texas PTA president, attended the meeting.

## Names of Committees

- Capitalize *committee* names, including committee if it is part of the proper name.

### Examples:

- The Parenting Committee is chaired by Sue Jones. Sue Jones, Cultural Arts chairman, attended the meeting. Sue Jones, chairman of Cultural Arts, attended the meeting.
- Cultural Arts Chairman Sue Jones attended the meeting. Sue Jones is chairman of the Legislative Action Committee. The following committees met after the board meeting: Educational Relations, Resources and Youth Protection.

## References to PTA Publications

- Italicize (or underline when italics are not possible) formal references to PTA publications.  
**Examples:** *Texas PTA The Voice*, *Texas PTA Handbook*, *Texas PTA Legislative News*
- Italicize *The Voice* when mentioned informally without including *Texas PTA*.
- Do not italicize or capitalize references to PTA publications if formal titles are not used.  
**Examples:** The handbook, Texas PTA’s legislative newsletter

## PTA Events

- Capitalize events and awards that are specific to PTA.  
**Examples:** Phoebe Awards, Summer Leadership Seminar, Texas PTA Annual Convention

## **Texas PTA Memorandum** **Format**

Texas PTA memorandums should be typed on Texas PTA letterhead stationery and typed in 11 point Times New Roman. Left and right margins should be 1.5 inches and 1 inch unless margins need to be reduced to fit text onto one page.

MEMORANDUM should be typed in all capital letters and justified left. Two spaces should separate MEMORANDUM from the first line of the heading. MEMORANDUM and the heading should be emphasized with bold-face type and should be formatted in the following manner:

### **Memorandum**

**TO: Person's Name, Title (When memo is addressed to a group of individuals and the committee name and individuals are listed, use all capitals to name the group. List the members' names in caps/lowercase. Otherwise, simply use caps/lowercase.)**

**Example:**

**OFFICE COMMITTEE**  
**MEMBERS**  
**Sue Jones, Chairman (Place the name and title of the committee head first.)**  
**Sally Johnson**  
**Jane Sanders**  
**Kim Dandy**

**FROM: Person's Name, Title**

**DATE: Month Day, Year**

**RE: Subject of Memo**

The text is written in block form and single spaced.

Memorandums may be initialed next to the sender's name in the heading, but they should not be signed at the bottom of the page.

It is important to remember that a memo is a reminder and not a report. Come straight to the point in the opening sentence. The beauty of a memo is its brevity and clarity.

If creating a memo for another person, close the memo with a stenographic reference: sender's initials in capital letters followed by a colon and the typist's initials lowercased. Stenographic reference initials should appear one double space below the last line of the text. If applicable, enclosures and copies notation should be placed one space below the stenographic reference initials or two spaces below the last line of the text. List the enclosures or simply indicate how many have been included. List the names of the persons to whom you have sent copies of the memo. **Example:**

JS: hh  
Enclosures: Map  
Brochure  
Car Rental  
cc: John Smith

## **Texas PTA Letter Format**

Letters regarding Texas PTA business should be typed in 11 point Times New Roman on Texas PTA letterhead. Never send a letter to the membership on plain paper. Texas PTA letters should be typed in a full-block format. All elements are flushed left. Left and right margins should be 1.5 inches and 1 inch unless margins need to be reduced to fit copy onto one page. The date should be placed no closer than one inch from the Texas PTA logo. The inside address should begin four spaces below the date. Copy is to be single spaced with double spaces separating paragraphs and elements within the letter. Four spaces should separate the complimentary closing from the typed signature. If applicable, stenographic initials and/or enclosures or copies notation should be placed two spaces below the typed signature.

### **Example:**

April 8, 1999

Ms. Sonja Hernandez  
Director of Education Policy  
Sam Houston Building  
P.O. Box 12428  
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Ms. Hernandez:

Thank you for talking with us last week about the concerns we all have for education in Texas. It was encouraging to hear you speak so enthusiastically about the importance of parent involvement.

Please call on us if we can be of service to you or to Gov. Bush in promoting quality education for all children. We are eager to work with you personally on committees or task forces or to share information, training and opportunities with our membership.

Sincerely,

Sue Jones  
Texas PTA President

SJ: hh  
Enclosures: (5)  
cc: John Smith  
Kim Dandy

The stenographic reference initials consist of the sender's initials (in capital letters) followed by a colon and the typist's initials lowercased. Stenographic reference initials appear one double space below the last line of the typed signature. If the sender types his/her own letter, reference initials are not necessary. Enclosures and copies notation are placed one space below the stenographic reference initials or two spaces below the typed signature. List the enclosures or simply indicate how many have been included.

For copies, list the names of the persons receiving copies of the letter.

## Nonsexist Language Tips

Instead of overusing the generic “he,” “his,” or the awkward “he/she,” or the impossible “s(he)”:

1. Use job titles or descriptions instead of pronouns.
2. Use plural nouns and pronouns. **Examples:**

<b>Instead of:</b>	<b>Use:</b>
Teach the student to think for himself.	Teach students to think for themselves.

A good manager tries to keep his staff happy.	Good managers try to keep the staff happy.
---	--

3. Eliminate the pronoun. **Example:** Good managers try to keep employees happy.

4. Replace pronouns with articles.

<b>Instead of:</b>	A good secretary keeps his filing up-to-date
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<b>Use:</b>	A good secretary keeps the filing up-to-date.
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5. Instead of using “Dear Sir” when you don’t know the sex of the person addressed, use “Dear Sir or Madam,” or use the person’s job title, “Dear Administrator.”

## Punctuation Guidelines

### **Ampersand (&)**

- Use the ampersand when it is part of a company’s formal name: *Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, Newport News Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Co.*
- Do not use the ampersand to mean *and*.

## **Apostrophe (’) with Possessives**

- In general, to make a word ending in “s” possessive, add an apostrophe only. If the word ends in any letter besides an “s,” add “s.” Exceptions follow: words ending in an “s” sound and are followed by a word beginning with an “s”: *for appearance’s sake, for conscience’s sake, for goodness’s sake.* Otherwise: *appearance’s cost my conscience’s voice.*

**Examples:** *the horse’s food, the horses’ food, the girl’s toy, the girls’ toys, Texas PTA’s image, all Texas PTAs’ members, two deer’s tracks, fox’s den, Xerox’s expense, Bayless’ charge*

### **Pronouns**

- Personal interrogative and relative pronouns have separate forms for the possessive. None involve an apostrophe: *mine, ours, your, yours, his, hers, its, theirs, whose.*
- Caution — If you are using an apostrophe with a pronoun, make sure that the meaning calls for a contraction: *you’re (you are), it’s (it is), there’s (there is), who’s (who is).*

### **Compound Words**

- Apply the general rule to the word closest to the object possessed: *the major general’s decision, the major generals’ decisions, anyone else’s attitude, John Adams Jr.’s father*

### **Joint Possession**

- Use a possessive form after only the last word if ownership is joint: *Fred and Sylvia’s apartment (They live together.)*
- Use a possessive form after both words if the objects are individually owned: *Fred’s and Sylvia’s books. (Fred has books and Sylvia has books.)*

### **Descriptive Phrases**

- Do not add an apostrophe to a word ending in “s” when it is used primarily in a

descriptive sense: *a teachers college, a Teamsters request, a writers guide.*

- Memory Aid: The apostrophe usually is not used if for or by rather than of would be appropriate in the longer form: *a college for teachers, a request by the Teamsters, a guide for writers.*

### Omitted Letters

- Use an apostrophe to show omission of letters: *I've (I have), don't (do not), 'Tis the season to be jolly (It is the season to be jolly).*

### Omitted Figures

- '62, '90s, *The Spirit of '76. The '50s.* Do not place an apostrophe after the year.

### Plurals of Single Letters:

- *Mind your p's and q's. He learned the three R's and brought home a report card with four A's and two B's. The Oakland A's won the pennant.*

## Colon (:)

- The most frequent use of a colon is at the end of a sentence to introduce lists, tabulations, texts, etc.
- **Capitalize the first word after a colon only if it is a proper noun or the start of a complete sentence.** *He promised this: The company will make good all the losses. There were three considerations: expense, time and feasibility.*
- The colon can be effective in giving emphasis: *He had only one hobby: eating.*
- Colons go outside quotation marks unless they are part of the quotation itself.

## Comma (,)

### In a Series

- Use commas to separate elements in a series, but do not put a comma before the conjunction in a simple series: *The flag is red, white and blue. He would nominate Tom, Dick or Harry.*

- Put a comma before the concluding conjunction in a simple series if an integral element of the series requires a conjunction: *I had orange juice, toast, and ham and eggs for breakfast.*
- Always use a comma before the concluding conjunction in a complex series of phrases: *The main points to consider are whether the athletes are skillful enough to compete, whether they have the stamina to endure the training, and whether they have the proper mental attitude.*

### Equal Adjectives

- Commas are used to separate a series of adjectives equal in rank. If the commas could be replaced by the word and without changing the sense, the adjectives are equal: *a thoughtful, precise manner; a dark, dangerous street.*
- Use no comma when the last adjective before a noun outranks its predecessors because it is an integral element of a noun phrase, which is the equivalent of a single noun: *a cheap fur coat, (the noun phrase fur coat); the old oaken bucket, a new, blue spring bonnet.*

### Non-Essential Clauses

- A non-essential clause must be set off by commas. This means that it is additional information and could be eliminated from the sentence without changing the meaning of the sentence.
- Essential clauses are not set off by commas.
- **NON-ESSENTIAL PHRASES**
- A non-essential phrase must be set off by commas. An essential phrase must not be set off from the rest of the sentence by commas.

### Introductory Clauses and Phrases

- A comma is used to separate an introductory clause or phrase from the main clause: *When he had tired of the mad pace of New York, he moved to Austin.*
- The comma may be omitted after short introductory phrases if no ambiguity would result: *During the night he heard many noises.*

- But use the comma if its omission would slow comprehension: *On the street below, the curious gathered.*

### With Conjunctions (and, but, for, or, nor)

- When a conjunction such as *and*, *but* or *for* links two clauses that could stand alone as separate sentences, use a comma before the conjunction in most cases: She was glad she had looked, for a man was approaching the house.
- As a rule of thumb, use a comma if the subject of each clause is expressly stated: *We are visiting Washington, and we also plan a side trip to Williamsburg. We visited Washington, and our senator greeted us personally.*
- Do not use a comma when the subject of the two clauses is the same and is not repeated in the second: *We are visiting Washington and plan to see the White House.*
- The commas may be dropped if two clauses with expressly stated subjects are short. In general, however, favor use of a comma unless a particular literary effect is desired or if it would distort the sense of a sentence.

### Introducing Direct Quotes

- Use a comma to introduce a complete one-sentence quotation within a paragraph: *Wallace said, “She spent six months in Argentina and came back speaking English with a Spanish accent.”*
- Do not use a comma at the start of an indirect or partial quotation: *He said his victory put him “firmly on the road to a first-ballot nomination.”*

### Before Attribution

- Use a comma instead of a period at the end of a quote that is followed by attribution: *“Rub my shoulders,” Cauley suggested.*
- Do not use a comma, however, if the quoted statement ends with a question mark or exclamation point: *“Why should I?” he asked.*

### Hometown and Ages

- Use a comma to set off an individual’s hometown when it is placed in apposition to a name:
  - *Mary Richards, Minneapolis, and Maude Findlay, Tuckahoe, N.Y., were there.*
  - *Mary Richards, 36, of Minneapolis and Maude Findlay, 48, of Tuckahoe, N.Y., attended the party.*

### Separating Similar Words

- Use a comma to separate duplicated words that otherwise would be confusing: *What the problem is, is not clear.*

### In Large Figures

- Use a comma for most figures higher than 999. Exceptions are numbers in street addresses, broadcast frequencies, room numbers, serial numbers, telephone numbers and years.

### Placement with Quotes

- Commas always go inside quotation marks.

### Dash (—)

#### Abrupt Change

- Use dashes to denote an abrupt change in thought in a sentence or an emphatic pause: *We will fly to Paris in June — if I get a raise. Smith offered a plan — it was unprecedented — to raise revenues.*

#### Series Within a Phrase

- When a phrase that otherwise would be set off by commas contains a series of words that must be separated by commas, use dashes to set off the full phrase: *He listed the qualities—intelligence, humor, conservatism, independence—that he liked in an executive.*

#### Attribution

- Use a dash before an author’s or composer’s name at the end of a quotation: *“Who steals my purse steals trash.” —Shakespeare.*

## Ellipsis (...)

- In general, treat an ellipsis as a three-letter word, constructed with three periods and two spaces, as shown here.
- Use the ellipsis to indicate the deletion of one or more words in condensing quotes, texts, and documents.
- Be especially careful to avoid deletions that would distort the meaning.

## Exclamation Point (!)

### Emphatic Expressions

- Use the mark to express a high degree of surprise, incredulity or other strong emotion.

### Avoid Overuse:

- Use a comma after mild interjections. End mildly exclamatory sentences with a period.

### Placement with Quotes

- Place the mark inside quotation marks when it is part of the quoted material: *“How wonderful!” he exclaimed. “Never!” he shouted.*
- Place the mark outside quotation marks when it is not part of the quoted material: *I hated reading Spenser’s “Faerie Queene”!*
- Do not use a comma or a period after the exclamation mark:
  - Wrong: *“Halt!”*, *the corporal cried.*
  - Right: *“Halt!” the corporal cried.*

## Hyphen (-)

- Hyphens are joiners. Use them to avoid ambiguity or to form a single idea from two or more words.

### Avoid Ambiguity

- Use a hyphen whenever ambiguity would result if it were omitted: *The president will speak to small-business men. (Businessmen is normally one word. But the president will speak to small businessmen is unclear.)*

- Others: *He recovered his health. He re-covered the leaky roof.*

## Compound Modifiers

- When a compound modifier—two or more words that express a single concept—precedes a noun, use hyphens to link all the words in the compound except the adverb very and all adverbs that end in -ly: *a first-quarter touchdown, a bluish-green dress, a full-time job, a well-known man, a better-qualified woman, a know-it-all attitude, a very good time, an easily remembered rule.*
- When a modifier that would be hyphenated before a noun occurs instead after a form of the verb to be, the hyphen usually must be retained to avoid confusion: *The man is quick-witted. The children are soft-spoken. The play is second-rate.*

## Two-Thought Compounds

- *Socio-economic*

## Compound Proper Nouns and Adjectives

- Use a hyphen to designate dual heritage: *Italian-American, Mexican-American.* **No hyphen** for French Canadian or Latin American.

## Avoid Duplicated Vowels, Tripled Consonants

- *anti-intellectual, pre-empt, shell-like*

## Numerals

When large numbers must be spelled out, use a hyphen to connect a word ending in “y” to another word: *twenty-one, fifty-five, etc.*

## Suspensions Hyphen

*He received a 10- to 20-year sentence in prison.*

## Parentheses ( )

- The temptation to use parentheses is a clue that a sentence is becoming contorted. Try

to write it another way. If a sentence must contain incidental material, then commas or two dashes are frequently more effective. Use these alternatives whenever possible.

- Place a period outside a closing parenthesis if the material inside is not a sentence (such as this fragment).
- When a phrase placed in parentheses (this one is an example) might normally qualify as a complete sentence but is dependent on the surrounding material, do not capitalize the first word or end with a period.
- Never use parentheses to denote a political figure's party affiliation and jurisdiction. Instead, set them off with commas.

## Period (.)

END A DECLARATIVE SENTENCE — *The stylebook is finished.*

END OF A MILDLY IMPERATIVE SENTENCE — *Shut the door.*

- Use an exclamation point if greater emphasis is desired. Be careful! END OF SOME RHETORICAL QUESTIONS
- A period is preferable if a statement is more a suggestion than a question: *Why don't we go.*

END OF AN INDIRECT QUESTION: He asked what the score was.

## Abbreviations

*T.S. Eliot* (No space between T. and S., to prevent them from being placed on two lines in typesetting.)

- Abbreviations using only the initials of name do not take periods: *JFK, LBJ*

## Placement with Quotation Marks

- Periods always go inside quotation marks.

## Question Mark (?)

### Multiple Question

- Use a single question mark at the end of the full sentence. Did you hear him say, "*What right have you to ask about the riot?*"

- Do not use quotation marks to indicate the end of an indirect question. *He asked who started the riot.*

## Placement with Quotation Marks

- Inside or outside, depending on the meaning. *Who wrote "Gone With the Wind"?*  
*He asked, "How long will it take?"*
- The question mark supersedes the comma that normally is used when supplying attribution for a quotation: "*Who is there?*" *she asked.*

## Quotation Marks (" ")

### Running Quotations

- If a full paragraph of quoted material is followed by a paragraph that continues the quotation, do not put close-quote marks at the end of the first paragraph. Do, however, put open-quote marks at the start of the second paragraph.

### Partial Quotes

- When a partial quote is used, do not put quotation marks around words that the speaker could not have used.
- Suppose the speaker said, "*I am horrified at your slovenly manners.*"  
*Wrong: She said she "was horrified at their slovenly manners."*  
*Right: She said she was horrified at their "slovenly manners."*
- When quoting within quoted material, use single quotation marks for the inside quote.

### Punctuation

- The period and the comma always go within the quotation marks.
- The dash, the semicolon, the question mark and exclamation point go within the quotation marks when they apply to the quoted matter only. They go outside when they apply to the whole sentence.

## Semicolon (;)

- In general, use the semicolon to indicate a greater separation of thought and

information than a comma can convey but less than the separation that a period implies.

### To Clarify a Series

- Use semicolons to separate elements of a series when individual segments contain material that also must be set off by commas.

*He leaves a son, John Smith of Chicago; three daughters, Jane Smith of Wichita, Kan., Mary Smith of Denver, and Susan, wife of William Kingsbury of Boston; and a sister, Martha, wife of Robert Warren of Omaha, Neb.*

### To Link Independent Clauses

- Use a semicolon when a coordinating conjunction such as *and*, *but* or *for* is not present: The package was due last week; *it arrived today.*
- If a coordinating conjunction is present, use a semicolon before it only if extensive punctuation also is required in one or more of the individual clauses: *They pulled their boats from the water, sandbagged the retaining walls, and boarded up the window; but even with these precautions, the island was hard-hit by the hurricane.*

### Placement with Quotes

- Place semicolons outside quotation marks.

## The Associated Press Style Rules

### Abbreviations and Acronyms

- Do not use a particular abbreviation or acronyms which the reader would not quickly recognize.
- Use *Texas PTA* on all references to the Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers.
- Do not *put Texas PTA* or *TPTA* in parentheses after writing the full name.

- Titles: Abbreviate the following titles when used before a full name outside direct quotations: Dr., Gov., Lt. Gov., Mr., Mrs., Rep., the Rev., Sen.
- Spell out all titles except Dr., Mr., Mrs. and Ms. when they are used before a name in direct quotations.
- Abbreviate *junior* (Jr.) and *senior* (Sr.) after an individual's name. Do not separate with a comma.
- Abbreviate *company*, *corporation*, *incorporated* and *limited* when used after the name of a corporate entity.
- Use the following abbreviations: A.D., B.C., a.m., p.m., No. 9. (Number is abbreviated No. when used with a numeral.)
- Abbreviate avenue (Ave.), boulevard (Blvd.), and street (St.) in numbered addresses.
- **Example:** 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., She lived on Pennsylvania Avenue.

### Academic Degrees

- Try to avoid abbreviations and use a phrase instead: *He received a bachelor of arts degree, a master's of psychology and a doctorate in counseling.*  
*He received his bachelor's degree from The University of Texas.*
- Use abbreviations only when there is a need to identify an individual by such and a phrase would be cumbersome. Use abbreviations only after a full name.  
**Example:** *Sam Jones, Ph.D., won the Nobel Prize. Do not repeat identification such as Dr. Sam Jones, Ph.D., won the Nobel Prize.*

### Academic Department / Titles

- Lowercase words except for proper nouns: *the department of history, the department of English, the English department, the membership department, the public relations department*
- Lowercase titles except when they directly precede a name. **Example:** *Executive*

*Director Bill Smith is a PTA life member. Tom Thompson, director of office operations, is a member of National Association of Exposition Managers.*

## Accept / Except

- Accept means to receive. Except means to exclude.

## Addresses

- Use the abbreviations *Ave.*, *Blvd.*, *St.*, only with a numbered address: **408 W. 11th St.**
- *Alley*, *drive*, *road*, *terrace*, etc. always are spelled out.
- Always use figures for an address number: 9 Morning Circle
- Spell out and capitalize First through Ninth when used as street names; Use figures with two letters for 10th and above: *7 Fifth Ave.*, *Fifth Avenue*, *100 21st St.*, *Second Street*
- Abbreviate compass points when used with a numbered address: *222 E. 42nd St.*, *East 42nd Street*, *East Sixth Street*, *1401 W. 21st St.*

## Adopt, Approve, Enact, Pass

- Amendments, ordinances, resolutions and rules are adopted or approved. Bills are passed. Laws are enacted.

## Affect, Effect

- Affect, as a verb, means to influence: *The game will affect the standings.*
- Affect, as a noun, is best avoided. It occasionally is used in psychology to describe an emotion, but there is no need for it in everyday language.
- Effect, as a verb, means to cause: *He will effect many changes in the company.*
- Effect, as a noun, means result: *The effect was overwhelming. He miscalculated the effect of his actions. It was a law of little effect.*

## AFL-CIO

- Abbreviation acceptable on all references. It stands for American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations.

## Afterward, not Afterwards

## Ages

- Always use figures. Ages expressed as adjectives before a noun or as substitutes for a noun use hyphens. **Examples:** *A 5-year-old boy*, *but the boy is 5 years old.* *The boy, 7, and his sister, 10, ran in the race.* *The race was for 3-year-olds.* *The woman is in her 30s.* (no apostrophe)

## Aid, Aide

- Aid is assistance; Aide is a person who serves as an assistant.

## Alcoholic

- Use recovering, not reformed, in referring to those afflicted with the disease of alcoholism.

## All Right

- (adv) Never alright

## Allude, Refer

- To allude to something is to speak of it without specifically mentioning it. To refer is to mention it directly.

## A.M., P.M.

- Lowercase with periods. (a.m.) (p.m.) Avoid the redundant 10 a.m. this morning

## American

- Do not limit the description to citizens or residents of the United States. It also may be applied to any resident or citizen of nations in North or South America.

## Among / Between

- The maxim that between introduces two items and among introduces more than two covers most questions about how to use these words: *The funds were divided among Ford, Carter and McCarthy.*
- Between is the correct word when expressing the relationships of three or more items considered one pair at a time: *Negotiations on a debate format are under way between the network and the Ford, Carter and McCarthy committees.*
- As with all prepositions, any pronoun that follows these words must be in the objective case: *among us, between him and her, between you and me.*

## Annual

- An event cannot be described as annual until it has been held in at least two successive years. Do not use the term *first annual*. Instead, note that sponsors plan to hold an *event annually*.

## Assault, Battery

- Popularly, assault almost always implies physical contact and sudden, intense violence.
- Legally, however, assault means simply to threaten violence, as in pointing a pistol at an individual without firing it. Assault and battery is the legal term when the victim was touched by the assaulter or something the assaulter put in motion.

## Association

- Do not abbreviate. Capitalize when part of a proper name.
- Capitalize *Association* when it stands alone and refers to the Texas PTA.

## Average, Mean, Median, Norm

- Average refers to the result obtained by dividing a sum by the number of quantities

added together: *The average of 7, 9, and 17 is 33 divided by 3, or 11.*

- Mean commonly designates a figure intermediate between two extremes: *The mean temperature of the day with a high of 56 and a low of 34 is 45.*
- Median is the middle number of points in a series arranged in order of size: *The median grade in the group of 50, 55, 85, 88, and 92 is 85. The average is 74.*
- Norm implies a standard of average performance for a given group: *The child was below the norm for his age in reading comprehension.*

## Awhile, A While

- *He plans to stay awhile. He plans to stay for a while.*

## Bad, Badly

- Bad should not be used as an adverb. It does not lose its status as an adjective, however, in a sentence such as I feel bad. Such a statement is the idiomatic equivalent of I am in bad health. An alternative, I feel badly, could be interpreted as meaning that your sense of touch was bad.

## Because, Since

- Use because to denote a specific cause-effect relationship: *He went because he was told.*
- Since is acceptable in a causal sense when the first event in a sequence led logically to the second but was not its direct cause: *He went to the game, since he had been given the tickets.*

## Benefit, Benefited, Benefiting

## Biannual, Biennial

- Biannual means twice a year and is a synonym for the word semiannual.
- Biennial means every two years.

## Bible

- Capitalize, without quotation marks, when referring to the Scriptures in the Old Testament or the New Testament. Capitalize also related terms such as the *Gospels, Gospel of St. Mark, the Scriptures, and the Holy Scriptures*.
- Lowercase biblical in all cases.
- Lowercase bible as a non-religious term: My dictionary is my bible.
- Do not abbreviate individual books of the Bible.

## Biweekly

- Means every other week. Semiweekly means twice a week.

## Boy Scouts

- The full name of the national organization is Boy Scouts of America. Boy Scouting is for boys 11 through 17. Members are Boy Scouts or Scouts.
- Cub Scouting is for boys 8 through 10. Members are Cub Scouts or Cubs.
- Exploring is a separate program open to boys and girls from high school age through 20. Members are Explorers, not Explorer Scouts. Members of units that stress nautical programs are Sea Explorers.

## Call Letters

- Use all caps. Use hyphens to separate the type of station from the basic call letters: *WBZ-AM, WBZ-FM, and WBZ-TV*

## Camp Fire

- The full name of the national organization is Camp Fire Inc. It was founded in 1910 as Camp Fire Girls. The name was changed in 1979 to reflect the inclusion of boys. Headquarters is in Kansas City, Mo.
- Both girls and boys are included in all levels of the organization. Boys and girls 6 to 8 are Camp Fire Blue Birds. Children 9 through 11 are Camp Fire Adventure Members or Adventurers. Children 12 and

13 are Camp Fire Discovery members. Youths 14 through 17 are Camp Fire Horizon members.

## Campaign Manager

- Do not treat as a formal title. Always lowercase.

## Capitalization

- In general, avoid unnecessary capitals. Lowercase the common noun elements of names in all plural uses: *the Democratic and Republican parties, Main and State streets, lakes Erie and Ontario*.
- Capitalize words that are derived from a proper noun and still depend on it for their meaning: *American, Christian, Christianity, English, French, and Marxism, Shakespearean*.
- Lowercase words that are derived from a proper noun but no longer depend on it for their meaning: *french fries, herculean, manhattan cocktail, malapropism, quixotic, venetian blind*.

## Cash on Delivery

- *c.o.d.* is preferred on all references.

## Catholic, Catholicism

- Use Roman Catholic Church, Roman Catholic or Roman Catholicism in the first reference to those who believe that the pope, as bishop of Rome, has the ultimate authority in administering an earthly organization founded by Jesus Christ.
- Most subsequent references may be condensed to Catholic Church, Catholic or Catholicism.

## Cents

- Spell out the word *cents* in lowercase, using numerals for amounts less than a dollar: 5 cents, 12 cents. Use the \$ sign and decimal system for larger amounts: *\$1.01, \$2.50*.

## Century

- Lowercase, spelling out numbers less than 10: *the first century, the 20th century*
- For proper names, follow the organization's practice: *20th Century Fox, Twentieth Century Fund, Twentieth Century Limited*

## Company, Companies

- Use Co. or Cos. when a business uses either word at the end of its proper name: *Ford Motor Co., American Broadcasting Cos.* But: *Aluminum Company of America.*
- If company or companies appears alone in second reference, spell the word out and use lowercase.
- The forms for possessives: *Ford Motor Co.'s profits, American Broadcasting Cos.' profits.*

## Composition Titles

- Apply the guidelines listed here to book titles, movie titles, opera titles, play titles, poem titles, song titles, television program titles, and the titles of lectures, speeches and works of art.
- Capitalize the principal words, including prepositions and conjunctions of four or more letters.
- Capitalize an article — the, a, an — or words of fewer than four letters if it is the first or last work in a title.
- Use quotation marks around the names of all such works mentioned above except the Bible and books that are primarily catalogs of reference material. In addition to catalogs, this category includes almanacs, directories, dictionaries, encyclopedias, gazetteers, handbooks, magazines and similar publications.
- **Examples:** *“The Star-Spangled Banner,” “The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich,” “Gone With the Wind,” “Of Mice and Men,” “For Whom the Bell Tolls,” “Time After Time,” the NBC-TV “Today” program*

## Congress

- Capitalize U.S. Congress and Congress when referring to the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. Although Congress sometimes is used as a substitute for the House, it properly is reserved for reference to both the Senate and House.

## Congressman, Congresswoman

- Use only in reference to members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

## Courtesy Titles

- In general, do not use the courtesy titles Miss, Mr., Mrs. or Ms. with first and last names of the person: *Barbara Bush, Ronald Reagan.*
- Do not use Mr. in any reference unless it is combined with Mrs.: *Mr. and Mrs. John Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Smith*

## Dangling Modifiers

- Avoid modifiers that do not refer clearly and logically to some word in the sentence. Dangling: *Taking our seats, the game started.* (Taking does not refer to the subject, game, nor to any other work in the sentence.) Correct: *Taking our seats, we watched the opening of the game.* (Taking refers to we, the subject of the sentence.)

## Descriptive Words

- Do not confuse punctuation rules for non-essential clauses with the correct punctuation when a non-essential word is used as a descriptive adjective. The distinguishing clue often is the lack of an article or pronoun: *Right: Julie and her husband David went shopping. Julie and her husband, David, went shopping.* *Right: Company Chairman Henry Ford II made the announcement. The company*

*chairman, Henry Ford II, made the announcement.*

## Directions and Regions

- In general, lowercase north, south, northeast, northern, etc. when they indicate compass direction; capitalize these words when they designate regions.  
**Examples:** *He drove west. The cold front is moving east. A storm system that developed in the Midwest is spreading eastward. It will bring showers to the East Coast by morning and to the entire Northeast by late in the day. The North was victorious. The South will rise again. She has a Southern accent.*
- Lowercase compass points only when they describe a section of a state or city: *western Texas, southern Atlanta.*
- Capitalize compass points when part of a proper name: *North Carolina.*
- Capitalize compass points when denoting widely known sections: *West Texas, East Texas, Southern California, East Austin, and South Side of Chicago.*
- When in doubt, lowercase.

## Area

- Always spell it out. Use a figure and capitalize area when forming a proper name: *Area 18*

## Dollars

- Always lowercase. Use figures and \$ sign in all except casual references or amounts without a figure: *The book cost \$4. I had \$2 in my pocket. Dad, please give me a dollar.*
- For specified amounts, the word takes a singular verb: *He said \$500,000 is what they want.*
- For amounts of more than \$1 million, use the \$ and numerals up to two decimal places. Do not link the numerals and the word by a hyphen: *He is worth \$4.35 million. He is worth exactly \$4,351,242. He proposed a \$300 billion budget.*

- The form for amounts less than \$1 million: *\$4, \$25, \$500, \$1,000, \$650,000.*
- See CENTS for more information

## Earth

- Generally lowercase; capitalize when used as the proper name of the planet. *She is down to earth. How does the pattern apply to Mars, Jupiter, Earth, the sun and the moon?*

## Either...or, Neither... nor,

- The nouns that follow these words do not constitute a compound subject; they are alternate subjects and require a verb that agrees with the nearer subject: *Neither they nor he is going. Neither he nor they are going.*

## Elderly

- -Use this word carefully and sparingly. It is appropriate in generic phrases that do not refer to specific individuals: *concern for the elderly, a home for the elderly, etc.*
- -If the intent is to show that an individual's physical or mental capabilities have deteriorated as a direct result of age, cite a graphic **Example** and give attribution for it.
- -Apply the same principle to terms such as senior citizen.

## Election Returns

- Use figures with commas every three digits starting at the right and counting left. Use the word to (not a hyphen) in separating different totals listed together: *Jimmy Carter defeated Gerald Ford 40,827,292 to 39,146,157 in 1976.*
- Use the word votes if there is any possibility that the figures could be confused with a ratio: *Nixon defeated McGovern 16 votes to 3 votes.*
- Do not attempt to create adjectival forms such as the 40,827,292-39,146,157 vote...

## Emcee, Emceed, Emceeing

- A colloquial verb and noun best avoided. A phrase such as *He was the master of ceremonies* if preferred.

## Emeritus

- This word is added to formal titles to denote that individuals who have retired retain their rank or title.
- When used, place *emeritus* after the formal title, in keeping with the general practice of academic institutions: *Professor Emeritus Samuel Eliot Morison, Dean Emeritus Cortney C. Brown, and Publisher Emeritus Barnard L. Colby.*

## En Route

- Always two words.

## Ensure, Insure

- Use ensure to mean guarantee: *Steps were taken to ensure accuracy.*
- Use insure for references to insurance: *The policy insures his life.*

## Entitled

- -Use it to mean a right to do or have something. Do not use it to mean titled.  
*Right: She was entitled to the promotion.*  
*Right: The book was titled "Gone With the Wind."*

## Essential Clauses, Non-Essential Clauses

- Also referred to as restrictive clause and non-restrictive clause.
- Both types of clauses provide additional information about a word or phrase in the sentence.
- The difference between them is that the essential clause cannot be eliminated without changing the meaning of the sentence. It so restricts the meaning of the word or phrase that its absence would lead

to a substantially different interpretation of what the author meant.

- The non-essential clause, however, can be eliminated without altering the basic meaning of the sentence. It does not restrict the meaning so significantly that its absence would radically alter the author's thought.
- Punctuation: An essential clause must not be set off from the rest of a sentence by commas. A non-essential clause must be set off by commas.
- The presence of absence of commas provides the reader with critical information about the writer's intended meaning.

## Use of Who, That, Which

- When an essential or non-essential clause refers to a human being or animal with a name, it should be introduced by who or whom.
- *That* is the preferred pronoun to introduce clauses that refer to an inanimate object or an animal without a name.
- *Which* is the only acceptable pronoun to introduce a non-essential clause that refers to an inanimate object of an animal without a name.
- The pronoun *which* occasionally may be substituted for *that* in the introduction of an essential clause that refers to an inanimate object or an animal without a name. In general, this use of *which* should appear only when that is used as a conjunction to introduce another clause in the same sentence.

*He said Monday that the part of the army which suffered severe casualties needs reinforcement.*

## Essential Phrases, Non-Essential Phrases

- An essential phrase is a word or group of words critical to the reader's understanding of what the author had in mind.
- A non-essential phrase provides more information about something. Although the information may be helpful to the reader's

comprehension, the reader would not be misled if the information were not there.

### **Punctuation**

- Do not set an essential phrase off from the rest of a sentence by commas.
- We saw the award-winning movie “*One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest.*” (No comma, because many movies have won awards, and without the name of the movie the reader would not know which movie was meant.) *They ate dinner with their daughter Julie.* (Because they have more than one daughter, the inclusion of Julie’s name is critical if the reader is to know which daughter is meant.) *We saw the 1976 winner in the Academy Awards competition for best movie, “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest.”* (Only one movie won the award. The name is informative, but even without the name no other movie could be meant.) *They are at dinner with their daughter Julie and her husband, David.* (Julie has only one husband. If the phrase read her husband David, it would suggest that she had more than one husband.) *The company chairman, Henry Ford II, spoke.* (In the context, only one person could be meant.) *Indian corn, or maize, was harvested.* (Maize provides the reader with the name of the corn, but its absence would not change the meaning of the sentence.)

### **Every Day (Adv.)**

### **Everyday (Adj.)**

- *He goes to work every day. She wears everyday shoes.*

### **Every One, Everyone**

- Two words when it means each individual item: *Every one of the clues was worthless.*
- One word when used as a pronoun meaning all persons: *Everyone wants his life to be happy.*
- (Note that everyone takes singular verbs and pronouns.)

### **Ex-**

- Use no hyphen for words that use ex- in the sense of out of: *excommunicate, expropriate*
- Hyphenate when using ex- in the sense of former: *ex-convict, ex-president*
- Do not capitalize ex- when attached to a formal title before a name: *ex-President Reagan*. The prefix modifies the entire term: *ex-New York Gov. Nelson Rockefeller; not New York ex-Gov.*
- Usually former is better.

### **Farther, Further**

- Farther refers to physical distance. He walked farther into the woods.
- Further refers to an extension of time or degree: She will look further into the mystery.

### **Federal**

- Capitalize *federal* when corporate or governmental bodies use the word as part of their formal names: *Federal Express, the Federal Trade Commission*.
- Lowercase when used as an adjective to distinguish something from state, county, city, town or private entities: *federal assistance, federal court, the federal government, a federal judge*
- Also: *federal District Court (but U.S. District Court is preferred) and federal Judge John Sirica (but U.S. District Judge John Sirica is preferred.)*

### **Federal Court**

- Always lowercase

### **Felony, Misdemeanor**

- A felony is a serious crime. A misdemeanor is a minor offense against the law.

### **Fewer, Less**

- In general, use fewer for individual items, less for bulk or quantity.

## Filibuster

- To filibuster is to make long speeches to obstruct the passage of legislation.
- A legislator who used such methods also is a filibuster, not a filibusterer.

## Firefighter, Fireman

- The preferred term to describe a person who fights fire is firefighter.

## First Degree, First-Degree

- Hyphenate when used as a compound modifier: *It was murder in the first degree. He was convicted of first-degree murder.*

## Former

- Always lowercase. But retain capitalization for a formal title used immediately before a name: *former President Nixon.*

## Four-H Club

- 4-H Club is preferred. Members are 4-H'ers.

## Fractions

- Spell out amounts less than one in stories, using hyphens between the words: *two-thirds, four-fifths, seven-sixteenths, etc.*
- Use figures for precise amounts larger than one, converting to decimals whenever practical.

## Full Time, Full-Time

- Hyphenate when used as a compound modifier: *He works full time. She has a full-time job.*

## Fund Raising, Fund-Raising, Fund-Raiser

- *Fund raising is difficult. They planned a fund-raising campaign. A fund-raiser was hired.*

## Gay

- Do not use as a noun meaning a homosexual unless it appears in the formal name of an organization or in quoted matter. In a story about homosexuals, gay may be used as an adjective meaning homosexual.

## Girl

- Applicable until 18th birthday is reached. Use woman or young woman afterward.

## Good, Well

- Good is an adjective that means something is as it should be or is better than average.
- When used as an adjective, well means suitable, proper, healthy.
- When used as an adverb, well means in a satisfactory manner or skillfully.
- Good should not be used as an adverb. It does not lose its status as an adjective in a sentence such as I feel good. Such a statement is the idiomatic equivalent of I am in good health. An alternative, *I feel well*, could be interpreted as meaning that your sense of touch was good.

## Governor

- Capitalize and abbreviate as Gov. or Govs. When used as a formal title before one or more names in regular text.
- Capitalize and spell out when used as a formal title before one or more names in direct quotations.
- Lowercase and spell out in all other uses.

## Grade, Grader

- -Hyphenate both the noun forms (*first-grader, second-grader, 10th-grader, etc*) and the adjectival forms (*a fourth-grade pupil, a 12th-grade pupil*).

## Grand Jury

- Always lowercase: *A Los Angeles County grand jury, the grand jury...*

- This style has been adopted because, unlike the case with city council and similar governmental units, a jurisdiction frequently has more than one grand jury session.

## Gray

- -not grey

## Half

- Follow Webster's New World Dictionary. Hyphenate if not listed there. Some frequently used words without a hyphen: *halfback, halftone, halfhearted, halftrack*
- Halftime is an exception to the dictionary in keeping with widespread practice in sports copy.
- Some frequently used combinations that are two words without a hyphen include: *half brother, half dollar, half note, half size, half sole, half tide.*
- Some frequently used combinations that include a hyphen: *half-baked, half-life, half-blood, half-cocked, half-hour, half-moon, half-sole, half-truth.*

## Half-Mast, Half-Staff

- On ships and at naval stations ashore, flags are flown a half-mast. Elsewhere ashore, flags are flown at half-staff.

## Handicapped, Disabled, Impaired

- In general, do not describe an individual as disabled or handicapped unless it is clearly pertinent to a story. If such a description must be used, make it clear what the handicap is and how much the person's physical or mental performance is affected.
- Some terms include:  
*Disabled:* A general term used for a condition that interferes with an individual's ability to do something independently.  
*Handicap:* It should be avoided in describing a disability.

*Blind:* Describes a person with complete loss of sight. For others use terms such as partially blind.

*Deaf:* Describes a person with total hearing loss. For others use partial hearing loss or partially deaf.

*Mute:* Describes a person who physically cannot speak. Others with speaking difficulties are speech impaired.

*Wheelchair-bound:* Do not use this or variations. A person may use a wheelchair occasionally or may have to use it for mobility. If it is needed, say why.

## Hang, Hanged, Hung

- One hangs a picture, a criminal or oneself.
- For past tense or the passive, use hanged when referring to executions or suicides, hung for other actions.

## Hawaii

- Do not abbreviate. Residents are Hawaiians, technically natives of Polynesian descent.
- State comprises of 132 islands about 2,400 miles southwest of San Francisco. Eight islands — Hawaii, Kahoolawe, Kauai, Lanai, Maui, Molokai, Nihau and Oahu — account for all but three square miles of the 6,450 in the state.

## Headquarters

- May take a singular or a plural verb. Do not use *headquarter* as a verb.

## Holidays

- Capitalize them: *New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Groundhog Day, Easter, Hanukkah, etc.*

## Homicide, Murder, Manslaughter

- Homicide is a legal term for slaying or killing.
- Murder is malicious, premeditated homicide. Some states arbitrarily define certain

homicides as murder if the killing occurs in the course of armed robbery, rape, etc.

- Manslaughter is homicide without malice or premeditation.
- A person should not be described as a murderer until convicted of the charge.
- Unless authorities say premeditation was obvious, do not say that a victim was murdered until someone has been convicted in court. Instead, say that a victim was killed or slain.

## Hopefully

- It means in a hopeful manner. Do not use it to mean it is hoped, let us or we hope.  
*Right: It is hoped that we will complete our work in June.*  
*Right: We hope that we will complete our work in June.*  
*Wrong: Hopefully, we will complete our work in June.*

## In, Into

- *In* indicates location: He was in the room.
- *Into* indicates motion: She walked into the room.

## In-

- No hyphen when it means not: *inaccurate, insufferable*
- Often solid in other cases: *inbound, indoor, infield, infighting, inpatient*
- A few combinations take a hyphen, however: *in-depth, in-group, in-house, in-law*
- Follow Webster's New World when in doubt.

## -In

- Precede with a hyphen: *break-in, cave-in, walk-in, and write-in*

## Incorporated

- Abbreviate and capitalize as Inc. when used as part of a corporate name. It usually is not needed, but when it is used, do not set off

with commas: *J.C. Penney Co. Inc. announced...*

## In Spite of

- Despite means the same thing and is shorter.

## Intra-

- The rules in prefixes apply, but in general, no hyphen. Some **Examples**: *intramural, intrastate*

## Irregardless

- Irregardless is a double negative. Regardless is correct.

## Junior, Senior

- Abbreviate as *Jr.* and *Sr.* only with full names or persons or animals. Do not precede by a comma: *Joseph P. Kennedy Jr.*

## Juvenile Delinquent

- Juveniles may be declared delinquents in many states for anti-social behavior or for breaking the law.
- In some states, laws prohibit publishing or broadcasting the names of juvenile delinquents.

## Kids

- Use children unless you are talking about goats, or the use of kids as an informal synonym for children is appropriate in the context.

## Kindergarten

## Kudos

- It means credit or praise for an achievement. The word takes plural verbs: *Kudos go to John Jones.*

## Lay, Lie

- The action word is lay. It takes a direct object. Laid is the form for its past tense and its past participle. Its present participle is laying.
- Lie indicates a state of reclining along a horizontal plane. It does not take a direct object. Its past tense is lay. Its past participle is lain. Its present participle is lying.
- When lie means to make an untrue statement, the verb forms are lie, lied, lying.

*Right: I will lay the book on the table.*

*I am laying the book on the table.*

*I laid the book on the table.*

*The prosecutor has laid the blame on him.*

*The prosecutor is laying the blame on him.*

*The prosecutor tried to lay the blame on him.*

*Right: He lies on the beach all day.*

*I will lie down.*

*He is lying on the beach.*

*I am lying down.*

*He lay on the beach all day*

*He has lain on the beach all day.*

*I lay down.*

*I have lain down.*

*Wrong: He lays on the beach all day.*

*I will lay down.*

## Legislative Titles

- Use Rep., Reps., Sen. and Sens. as formal titles before one or more names in regular text on the first reference. Spell out and capitalize these titles before one or more names in a direct quotation. Spell out and lowercase representative and senator in other uses.
- Spell out other legislative titles in all uses.
- Capitalize formal titles such as assemblyman, assemblywoman, city councilor, delegate, etc., when they are used before a name. Lowercase in other uses.
- Add U.S. or state before a title only if necessary to avoid confusion: *U.S. Sen. Herman Talmadge spoke with state Sen. Hugh Carter.*

- The use of Rep. or Sen. in first reference is normal, but not mandatory provided the individual's title is given later in the story.
- Deletion of the title on first reference is frequently appropriate, for **Example**, when an individual has become well known: *Barry Goldwater endorsed President Ford today. The Arizona senator said he believes the president deserves another term.*
- Do not use legislative titles before a name on second reference unless they are part of a direct quotation.

## Congressman, Congresswoman

- *Rep. and U.S. Rep.* are the preferred first-reference forms when a formal title is used before the name of a U.S. House member. *Congressman and congresswoman* should appear as capitalized formal titles before a name only in direct quotation.

## Legislature

- Capitalize when preceded by the name of a state: the *Texas Legislature*. Retain capitalization when the state name is dropped but the reference is specifically to that state's legislature.
- Lowercase legislature when used generically. No legislature has approved the amendment.
- Use legislature in lowercase for all plural references: *The Arkansas and Colorado legislatures are considering the amendment.*

## Like, As

- Use like as a preposition to compare nouns and pronouns. It requires an object: *Jim blocks like a pro.*
- The conjunction *as* is the correct word to introduce clauses: *Jim blocks the linebacker as he should.*

## Magazine Names

- Do not place it in quotes. Lowercase magazine unless it is part of the publication's formal title: *Harper's*

*Magazine, Newsweek magazine, Time magazine*

- Check the magazine’s masthead if in doubt.

## Mass

- It is celebrated, said or sung.
- Always capitalize when referring to the ceremony, but lowercase any preceding adjectives: *high Mass, low Mass, requiem Mass*.

## Medicaid

- A federal-state program that helps pay for health care for the needy, aged, blind and disabled, and for low-income families with children.
- A state determines eligibility and which health services are covered. The federal government reimburses a percentage of the state’s expenditures.

## Medicare

- The federal health care insurance program for people aged 65 and over, and for the disabled.
- Eligibility is based mainly on eligibility for Social Security.
- Medicare helps pay charges for hospitalization, for stays in skilled nursing facilities, for physician’s charges and for some associated health costs. There are limitations on the length of stay and type of care.

## Months

- Capitalize the names of months in all uses. When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate only Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., and Dec. Spell out when using alone or with a year alone.
- When a phrase lists only a month and year, do not separate the year with commas. When a phrase refers to a month, day and year, set off the year with commas. Do not use *st, nd, rd* or *th*. **Examples:** *January 1972 was a cold month. Jan. 2 was the*

*coldest day of the month. His birthday is May 8. Feb. 14, 1987, was the target date.*

## Nationalities and Races

- Capitalize the proper names of nationalities, peoples, races, tribes, etc.: *Arab, Arabic, African, Afro-American, American, Caucasian, Cherokee, Chinese, Eskimo, French Canadian, Gypsy, Japanese, Jew, Jewish, Latin, Negro, Nordic, Oriental, Sioux, Swede*.
- Lowercase black, white, red, mulatto, etc.

## Nationwide, Statewide, Citywide, etc.

- Do not hyphenate.

## Numerals

- When large numbers must be spelled out, use a hyphen to connect a word ending in “y” to another word; do not use commas between other separate words that are part of one number. **Examples:** *twenty; thirty; twenty-one; thirty-one; one hundred forty-three; one thousand one hundred fifty-five; one million two hundred seventy-six thousand five hundred eighty-seven*.
- Spell out a numeral at the beginning of a sentence. If necessary, recast the sentence. There is one exception: calendar year  
**Examples:**  
*Wrong: 993 freshmen entered college last year.*  
*Right: Last year 993 freshmen entered the college.*
- 1976 was a very good year.
- Always use figures when referring to ages.
- Spell out first through ninth when they indicate sequence in time or location: first base, the First Amendment: He was first in line. Starting with the 10th use figures.
- Use 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc. when the sequence has been assigned in forming names, such as 1st Ward, 7th Fleet, 1st Sgt.  
**Examples:**
  - Act 1, Scene 2

- a 5-year-old girl
- a 5-4 court decision
- 2nd District Court
- the 1980s, the '80s
- The House voted 230-205. (Fewer than 1,000 votes)
- Jimmy Carter defeated Gerald Ford 40,827,292 to 39,146,157. (More than 1,000 votes)
- 5 cents, \$1.05, \$650,000, \$2.45 million
- No. 3 choice, but Public School 3
- 0.6 percent, 1 percent, 6.5 percent
- In a series, apply the same guidelines: They had 10 dogs, six cats and 97 hamsters. They had four four-room houses, 10 three-room houses and 12 10-room houses.

- Capitalize internal elements of an organization when they have names that are not widely-used generic terms: *the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches, the House of Delegates of the American Medical Association, the House of Bishops and House of Deputies of the Episcopal Church.*

### Flip-Flopped Names

- Retain capital letters when commonly accepted practice flops a name to delete the word of: *College of the Holy Cross, Holy Cross College, Harvard School of Dental Medicine, Harvard Dental School*
- Do not, however, flop formal names that are known to the public with the word of: *Massachusetts Institute of Technology, for Example, not Massachusetts Technology Institute.*

## OK, OK'd, OK'ing, OKs

- Do not use okay.

## Organizations and Institutions

- Capitalize the full names of organizations and institutions: *the American Medical Association; First Presbyterian Church; General Motors Corp.; Harvard University, the Society of Professional Journalists.*
- Retain capitalization if Co., Corp., etc. is deleted from the full proper name: General Motors.
- **Subsidiaries:** Capitalize names of major subdivisions: *Pontiac Motor Division of General Motors.*
- **Internal Elements:**
- Use lowercase for internal elements of an organization when they have names that are widely used generic terms: *the board of directors of General Motors, the board of trustees of Columbia University, the history department of Harvard University, the sports department of the Daily Citizen-Leader.*

## Percentages

- Use figures: 1 percent, 2.5 percent (use decimals, not fractions), 10 percent
- For amount less than 1 percent, precede the decimal with a zero: *The cost of living rose 0.6 percent.*
- Repeat percent with each individual figure: *He said 10 percent to 30 percent of the electorate may not vote.*

## Police Department

- -In communities where this is the formal name, capitalize police department with or without the name of the community: *the Los Angeles Police Department, the Police Department.*

## Press Secretary

- -Seldom a formal title. For consistency, always use lowercase, even when used before an individual's name. (The formal title for the person who serves a U.S. president in this capacity is assistant to the president for press relations.)

## Principal, Principle

- Principal is a noun and adjective meaning someone or something first in rank, authority, importance or degree.
- Principle is a noun that means a fundamental truth, law, doctrine or motivating force.

## Raised, Reared

- Only humans may be reared. Any living thing, including humans, may be raised.

## Rev.

- When this description is used before an individual's name, precede it with the word the because, unlike the case with Mr. and Mrs., the abbreviation Rev. does not stand for a noun.
- If an individual has a secular title such as Rep., use whichever is appropriate to the context.

## Roman Numerals

- In Roman numerals, the capital letter I equals 1, V equals 5, X equals 10, L equals 50, C equals 100, D equals 500 and M equals 1,000.
- Do not use M to mean million, as some newspapers occasionally do in headlines.
- Other numbers are formed from these by adding or subtracting as follows:
- The value of a letter following another of the same or greater value is added: *III equals 3*
- The value of a letter preceding one of greater value is subtracted: *IV equals 4*.

## R.S.V.P.

- The abbreviation for the French *repondez s'il vous plait*. It means please reply.

## School

- Capitalize when part of a proper name: *Public School 3, Madison Elementary School, Doherty Junior High School, and Stephen F. Austin High School*

## Seasons

- Lowercase spring, summer, fall, winter and derivatives such as springtime unless part of a formal name: *Dartmouth Winter Carnival, Winter Olympics, and Summer Olympics*.

## Semiannual

- Twice a year, a synonym for biannual.
- Do not confuse it with biennial, which means every two years.

## Shall, Will

- Use shall to express determination: *We shall overcome. You and he shall stay.*
- Either shall or will may be used in first-person constructions that do not emphasize determination: *We shall hold a meeting. We will hold a meeting.*
- For second- and third-person constructions, use will unless determination is stressed: *You will like it. She will not be pleased.*

## Should, Would

- Use should to express an obligation. We should help the needy.
- Use would to express a customary action. In the summer we would spend hours by the seashore.
- Use would also in constructing a conditional past tense, but be careful:  
*Wrong: If Sam would not have had an injured foot, Tom would not have been in the lineup.*  
*Right: If Sam had not had an injured foot, Tom would not have been in the lineup.*

## State Names

- Spell out the names of the 50 U.S. states when they stand alone in textual material. Any state name may be condensed, however, to fit typographical requirements for tabular material.
- Eight States are not abbreviated: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah.

- Memory Aid: Spell out the names of the two states that are not part of the continental United States and the continental states that are five letters or fewer.

### Abbreviations:

Ala.	Ariz.	Ark.	Calif.	Colo.
Conn.	Del.	Md.	Mass.	Mich.
Minn.	Miss.	Mo.	Mont.	N.D.
Okla.	Ore.	Pa.	R.I.	S.C.
S.D.	Fla.	Ga.	Ill.	Ind.
Kan.	Ky.	La.	Neb.	Nev.
N.H.	N.J.	N.M.	N.Y.	N.C.
Tenn.	Vt.	Va.	Wash.	W.Va.
Wis.	Wyo.			

### Punctuation:

- Place one comma between the city and state names, and another comma after the state name, unless ending a sentence or indicating a dateline: *He was traveling from Nashville, Tenn., to Austin, Texas, en route to his home in Albuquerque, N.M.*  
*She said Cook County, Ill., was Mayor Daley's stronghold.*
- Use *New York State* when necessary to distinguish the state from New York City.

### Television Station

- The call letters alone are frequently adequate, but when this phrase is needed, use lower-case: *television station WTEV.*

### Temperatures

- Use figures for all except zero. Use the word minus, not a *minus* sign, to indicate temperatures below zero.

### Texas

- Do not abbreviate.
- Second in total land area: 262,134 square miles.

### That (Conjunction)

- Use the conjunction *that* to introduce a dependent clause if the sentence sounds or

looks awkward without it. There are no hard-and-fast rules, but in general:

- *That* usually may be omitted when a dependent clause immediately follows a form of the verb to say: *The president said he had signed the bill.*
- *That* should be used when a time element intervenes between the verb and the dependent clause: *The president said Monday that he had signed the bill.*
- *That* usually is necessary after some verbs. They include: *advocate, assert, contend, declare, estimate, make clear, point out, propose and state.*
- *That* is required before subordinate clauses beginning with conjunctions such as *after, although, because, before, in addition to, until and while*: *Haldeman said that after he learned of Nixon's intention to resign, he sought pardons for all connected with Watergate.*
- When in doubt, include *that*. Omission can hurt. Inclusion never does.

### That, Which, Who, Whom (Pronouns)

- Use *who* and *whom* in referring to people and to animals with a name: *John Jones is the man who helped me.*
- Use *that* and *which* in referring to inanimate objects and to animals without a name.

### Their, There, They're

- *Their* is a possessive pronoun: *They went to their house.*
- *There* is an adverb indicating direction: *We went there for dinner.*
- *There* also is used with the force of a pronoun for impersonal constructions in which the real subject follows the verb: *There is no food on the table.*
- *They're* a contraction for *they are*.

## Times

- Use figures except for noon and midnight. Use a colon to separate hours from minutes: *3 a.m., 3:30 p.m.*
- Avoid such redundancies as 10 a.m. this morning, 10 p.m. tonight or 10 p.m. Monday night. Use *10 a.m. today, 10 p.m. today or 10 p.m. Monday, etc.*

## Titles

- In general, confine capitalization to formal titles used directly before an individual's name.
- Lowercase and spell out titles when they are not used with an individual's name: *The council president issued a statement.*
- Lowercase and spell out titles in constructions that set them off from a name by commas: The vice president, Nelson Rockefeller, declined to run again. Paul VI, the current pope, does not plan to retire.

### Formal Titles

- Capitalize formal titles when they are used immediately before one or more names: *Pope Paul, President Washington, Vice Presidents John Jones and William Smith.*
- A formal title generally is one that denotes a scope of authority, professional activity or academic accomplishment so specific that the designation becomes almost as much an integral part of an individual's identity as a proper name itself: *President Carter, Gov. Ella Grasso, Dr. Marcus Welby,*
- Other titles serve primarily as occupational descriptions: astronaut John Glenn, movie star John Wayne,

### Long Titles

- Separate a long title from a name by a construction that requires a comma: *James Roberts, director of officer operations, spoke.*
- As a general rule, titles of four or more words should follow the name of the individual instead of preceding the name.

## Toward, Not Towards

### Up

- The rules in prefixes apply, but in general, no hyphen. Some **Examples**: *upend, upgrade, upstate, uptown*

### -Up

- Follow Webster's New World Dictionary. Hyphenate if not listed there.
- Some frequently used words (all are nouns; some also are used as adjectives): *breakup, call-up, change-up, checkup, cleanup, close-up, cover-up, crackup, follow-up, frame-up, grown-up, holdup, letup, lineup, makeup, mix-up, mock-up, pileup, push-up, roundup, runners-up, setup, shake-up, shape-up, smashup, speedup, tie-up, walk-up, windup*

## U.S. Postal Service

- Use U.S. Postal Service or the Postal Service on first reference. Retain capitalization of Postal Service in subsequent references to the agency.
- Lowercase the service when it stands alone. Lowercase post office in generic references to the agency and to an individual office: *I went to the post office.*

## Who, Whom

- Use *who* and *whom* for references to human beings and to animals with a name. Use *that* and *which* for inanimate objects and animals without a name.
- *Who* is the work when someone is the subject of a sentence, clause or phrase: The woman who rented the room left the window open. *Who is there?*
- *Whom* is the word when someone is the object of a verb or preposition: *The woman to whom the room was rented left the window open. Whom do you wish to see?*

## Wide

- No hyphen. **Examples:** *citywide, continentwide, countrywide, industrywide, nationwide, statewide, worldwide.*

## Years

- Use figures without commas: 1986. Use an “s” without an apostrophe to indicate spans of decades or centuries: the 1890s, the 1800s.
- Years are the lone exception to the general rule in numerals that a figure is not used to start a sentence: *1976 was a very good year.*

## Youth

- Applicable to boys and girls from age 13 until 18th birthday. Use man or woman for individuals 18 and older.
- *Youth* is acceptable as a plural form.

## Zip Codes

- Use all-caps ZIP for Zone Improvement Program, but always lowercase the word *code*.
- Run the five digits together without a comma, and do not put a comma between the state name and the Zip code: *New York, NY 10020*