



DELTA STYLE GUIDE



A WRITING STYLE GUIDE AND
LANGUAGE USAGE MANUAL

DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INCORPORATED

Delta Style Guide

A Writing Style Guide and Language Usage Manual

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated

First edition: Sisterly Yours (2004) created by Doris McEwen, Ph.D.
National Secretary 2002–06

Revised 2014 by the National Information and Communications
Committee and National Documents Review and Revision Task Force

Contents

About Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated	1
Message from the National President	2
Message from the National Information and Communications Committee	3
How to Use the Style Guide.....	5
Delta Words and Phrases	7
Common Words and Phrases	14
Social Media	38

About Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated

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National First Vice President

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/DSTinc1913



@DSTinc1913



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Message from the National President

Dear Sorors,

I am pleased to present to you Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated's updated Delta Style Guide. This guide should be an important tool when you are communicating across the globe about our illustrious sisterhood.

Since our founding in 1913, Deltas have contributed greatly to the communities we serve. Our goal is to build on our success by effectively communicating our purpose, our plans and our progress. We can only do that if we are consistent in our communication, sharing the same message — in the same way — about who we are, why we exist, what our plans are for the future and what we've accomplished around the world. To achieve that goal, we must arm each and every soror with the right communications tools, beginning with this guide.

Our National Information and Communications Committee has worked to develop this document, keeping in mind the ideals of our Sorority and the tenets of journalism. I appreciate the committee's expertise and the foundation provided by the creator of the first Delta Style Guide, Doris McEwen, Ph.D. I would like to thank the National Documents Review and Revision Task Force and National Headquarters Programs, Public Relations and Publications staff for their valuable input as well.

Sorors, we are embarking on our next 100 years. Let's make sure we are consistent in telling the story of the impact we have on the communities we serve.

In service, leadership and empowerment,

Paulette C. Walker

Dr. Paulette C. Walker
National President and CEO

Message from the National Information and Communications Committee

Dear Sorors,

Thank you for reading Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated's revised style guide and language usage manual.

The style guide is for all Deltas, whether you are an individual contributor to your chapter, the member of a committee or a soror charged with generating publicity for the Sorority.

You will find two main sections in this manual. One section is devoted to writing related to Delta words and phrases. The other section is similar to The Associated Press (AP) Stylebook, the newspaper industry standard used by print journalists, broadcasters and public relations firms. For additional writing references, please consult the AP Stylebook, which can be found in print, electronically or by subscription at www.apstylebook.com.

Special thanks to Doris McEwen, Ph.D. National Secretary (2002-06), for developing the original Delta Style Guide known as Sisterly Yours. Also, the committee would like to thank our National President, Dr. Paulette C. Walker, for understanding the importance of having an updated style guide to effectively communicate our brand in the second century of our sisterhood.

We appreciate the guidance provided by the National Headquarters staff, especially Sorors Ella McNair, Bernadine Stallings and E. Missy Daniels. And, we would be remiss if we didn't thank the National Documents Review and Revision Task Force, led by Sorors Sandra K. Parker and Carol E. Ware, and our DRRTF liaison, Gwendolyn Mosley.

Sorors, we're grateful you picked up this manual. With your help, we can ensure people throughout the world have a clear understanding of our Sorority's contributions well into the future.

Yours in Delta,

Erica D. Donerson, Chair

National Information and Communications Committee

National Information and Communications Committee 2013-15

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Please direct any questions or suggestions regarding the Delta Style Guide to the National Information and Communications Committee: communicationcommittee@deltasigmatheta.org.

How to Use the Style Guide

Who should use the Delta Style Guide?

Chapter Journalists
Chapter Presidents
Committee Chairs
Corresponding Secretaries
Publicity/Public Relations Chairs
Webmasters
Every soror

What is the Delta Style Guide?

This is a writing guide with three sections: *Delta Words and Phrases*, *Common Words and Phrases*, and *Social Media*.

Delta Words and Phrases

Provides an explanation of how to write words and phrases used primarily by members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated

Common Words and Phrases

Highlights commonly used words and phrases in a format similar to The Associated Press (AP) Stylebook

Social Media

Explains how to follow Delta Style when posting messages on social media channels

Why use the Delta Style Guide?

To ensure consistency in the Sorority's communications

How?

Here are some examples of how to use this style guide.

Style Guide Entries

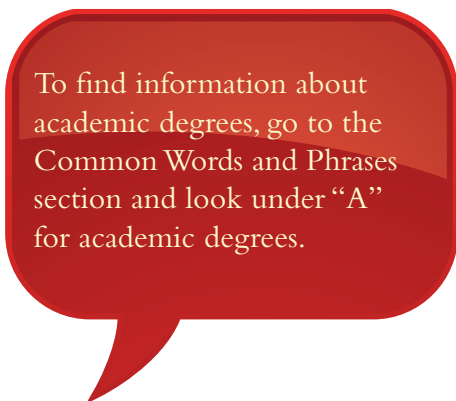
Founders Day: Founders Day is always capitalized without an apostrophe after the “s.”



If you're looking for information on Founders Day, go to the Delta Words and Phrases section and look under “F” for Founders Day.

Academic degrees

Use an apostrophe in bachelor's degree, a master's, etc., but there is no possessive in Bachelor of Arts or Master of Science.



To find information about academic degrees, go to the Common Words and Phrases section and look under “A” for academic degrees.

Delta Words and Phrases

Delta Words and Phrases

Below are some helpful Delta writing style and grammar tips.

Alumnae: Plural of alumna, which means a female graduate. Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated refers to its graduate chapters as alumnae chapters, not alumni chapters. “Alumnae” is pronounced [uh-luhm-nee] and rhymes with “a gum tree.”

Biennial: This means happening every second year. In Delta, there are biennial conventions, not biannual, which means twice a year.

Capitalization:

Always capitalize the following:

Delta

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated

Founders

Founders Day

Grand Chapter

Honorary Member(s)

National Executive Board

National Executive Committee

National Headquarters

National President

National First Vice President

National Second Vice President

National Secretary

National Treasurer

Past National President(s)

Sorority (when referring to Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.)

Centennial: In 2013, Delta Sigma Theta celebrated its 100th year, also known as its centennial year. Capitalize the word when describing Delta Sigma Theta’s Centennial Celebration. Use lowercase in referencing the Sorority’s centennial year.

Chapter: Nearly 1,000 collegiate and alumnae chapters have been chartered throughout the world. When writing about a specific chapter, capitalize all words, for example, San Jose Alumnae Chapter. On second reference, you may drop the word “chapter.” When describing a chapter, you do not need to capitalize the word.

Example:

Milwaukee Alumnae is one of the many chapters of Delta Sigma Theta.

Chapter President: Each of Delta’s chapters has a chapter president. Capitalize the title when it is introducing the president. For example, use Chapter President Jane Doe, but Jane Doe, chapter president. Do not capitalize “chapter president” if it is not preceding the president’s name.

Charter Members: Delta Sigma Theta charter members are those sorors who organize a chapter. They should not be confused with the 22 Founders of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. The term “charter members” should not be capitalized unless used as a heading.

Chapter Name: The chapter name comes before the Sorority’s name.

Example:

The Chattanooga Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Commissions, Committees and Task Forces: If a specific team is mentioned, use initial caps.

Examples:

The chapter’s Membership Services Committee organized a reclamation activity.

The National Ritual and Ceremonies Commission presented a workshop.

Delta: Capitalize all uses when referring to Delta Sigma Theta or a soror.

Delta Days in the Nation’s Capital: The title of this annual event refers to the capital city of the United States, not the building used by Congress.

Executive Committee: Delta's Executive Committee consists of the following officers:

- National President
- National FirstVice President (no hyphenation, no abbreviation of First to 1st)
- National Second Vice President (no hyphenation, no abbreviation of Second to 2nd)
- National Secretary
- National Treasurer

Always capitalize Executive Committee.

Five-Point Programmatic Thrust: The major programs of the Sorority are based upon these five principles. There is a hyphen between "Five" and "Point." There is only one Thrust. The five points should be listed in alphabetical order.

- Economic Development
- Educational Development
- International Awareness and Involvement
- Physical and Mental Health
- Political Awareness and Involvement

Founders: Delta Sigma Theta has 22 Founders. Always capitalize the word "Founders." Delta's Founders should not be confused with charter members who organize a chapter.

Founders Day: Founders Day is always capitalized without an apostrophe after the "s."

Grand Chapter: Delta's Grand Chapter refers to the entire Sorority and is always capitalized.

Incorporated: Spell out incorporated in the first reference to the Sorority's name. It is acceptable to abbreviate as Inc. in the second reference, but use the comma before Inc.

Member at large/member-at-large: When using as a noun, it is member at large. However, when using as an adjective, it is member-at-large.

Examples:

A member at large has equal rights and privileges.

The DELTA Journal was sent to all member-at-large sorors.

National Convention: Capitalize national convention when referring to a specific event, for example, 51st National Convention. Otherwise, use lowercase “national convention” or “the convention.” The national convention is never referred to as “Nationals.”

National First Vice President and National Second Vice President: These titles are never hyphenated.

National Headquarters: Delta’s National Headquarters is located in Washington, DC. National Headquarters is always capitalized. National Headquarters is never referred to as “Nationals.”

National President: Capitalize in all uses. On first reference, the National President’s preferred full name should always be used.

Examples:

First reference:

- o National President Paulette C. Walker led the meeting.
- o Dr. Paulette C. Walker, National President, entered the assembly.

Second reference:

- o Dr. Walker is the keynote speaker for the Founders Day luncheon.
- o Soror Butler-McIntyre introduced the EMBODI participants.
- o The National President participated in the Project 13 initiative.

The National President doesn’t receive a number until she leaves office.

Example:

The 23rd National President, Dr. Louise A. Rice, served two terms.

Omega Omega: The term “Omega Omega” should always be capitalized.

Past National President(s): Any reference should include the Past National President’s number followed by “National President” and her name.

Example:

24th National President Cynthia M.A. Butler-McIntyre

“Past National President(s)” should always be capitalized.

Do not use the number and “Past National President” together.

Incorrect: 24th Past National President

Regional Conference: Capitalize regional conference when referring to a specific event. Do not capitalize when using the words in general. This rule also applies for state clusters or conferences. The regional conference is never referred to as “Regionals.”

Examples:

I will be attending the regional conference in July.

The Protocol and Traditions Committee is preparing for state clusters and conferences.

It is time to register for the 45th Midwest Regional Conference.

Delta Sigma Theta has seven regional conferences in one year; the Southern Regional Conference took place in June.

Regional Leadership Team: This should be “regional leadership team” unless it is used in conjunction with the region’s name, as in “Southern Regional Leadership Team.” This is similar to the style for regional directors and regions in general. If team members are being listed, the heading of “Regional Leadership Team” should be capitalized.

Regions: Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. is comprised of seven regions:

- Central Region
- Eastern Region
- Farwest Region
- Midwest Region
- South Atlantic Region
- Southern Region
- Southwest Region

Capitalize region when it is describing a specific region, as above.

Example:

Delta has seven regions, and one of them is the Eastern Region, where the Sorority was founded.

Rites of Passage: The term “Rites of Passage” should be capitalized.

Example:

There are three Rites of Passage.

Soror: Soror should not be capitalized unless it is before a name.

Examples:

Soror Jane Doe

Jane Doe is a soror.

The sorors gathered.

Do not use soror on a mailing to address members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Sorority: Capitalize when referring to Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Do not capitalize when referring to sororities in general.

Common Words and Phrases

Common Words and Phrases

This guide is based on The Associated Press Stylebook. Like the AP Stylebook, this section is organized like a dictionary.

A

A before H

Use “a” before a pronounced “h”: a historian, a horse, a hysterical joke

Use “an” before an aspirated “h”: an hour, an honest man

Abbreviations

It is preferable to avoid abbreviations, except in tables, headlines and other situations where space is limited. When an abbreviation is necessary, here are some reminders:

All capital letter abbreviations or acronyms do not take periods except when referring to nations, states, cities or people.

Examples: DST, DDNC, DDUN, Delta GEMS and EMBODI

Names of organizations

Names of organizations should be spelled out on first reference. In general, do not follow an organization’s name with an abbreviation or acronym in parentheses or set off by dashes (legal documents are the exception). If an abbreviation or acronym would not be clear on second reference without this arrangement, do not use it.

Academic degrees

Use an apostrophe in bachelor’s degree, a master’s, etc., but there is no possessive in Bachelor of Arts or Master of Science.

African American

Do not use a hyphen unless using the term as an adjective. The term is acceptable for an American person of African descent, but be careful not to apply it indiscriminately. For instance, Caribbean descendants generally refer to themselves as Caribbean Americans. The term black is also acceptable. Follow an individual’s preference.

Ages

Always use figures.

Example:

The student is 19 years old.

Ages used as nouns or adjectives before a noun require hyphens.

Examples:

The Children's Center is hosting a party for 3-year-olds today.

The 24-year-old student ran for office.

References to an age range or a decade require no apostrophes.

Examples:

The soror was in her 30s, not 30's.

She grew up in the 1950s, not 1950's.

a.m., p.m.

Use "a.m." and "p.m." in lowercase, with periods. Do not use ":00" for hours.

Avoid redundancies, such as 10 a.m. on Tuesday morning.

See also **Time of day**

B

Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science

A bachelor's degree or bachelor's is acceptable in any reference.

Bi-

Generally, no hyphen is used when writing bimonthly, bilateral or bilingual.

Blind

See **Disabled/Handicapped/Impaired**

Book titles

See **Composition titles**

CapitalizationCity

Capitalize city as part of a proper name.

Examples:

Kansas City, New York City, Oklahoma City

Lowercase elsewhere, including all “city of” phrases.

Examples:

A California city

city government

city of Los Angeles

Directions

Directions are not capitalized if they refer to a compass direction. They should be capitalized; however, if they refer to a region, are part of a proper name or denote a widely known section of a city or state. When in doubt, use lowercase.

Seasons

Always lowercase fall, spring, summer, winter and derivatives such as springtime, unless part of a formal name.

Century

Lowercase, spelling out numbers less than 10.

Examples:

The first century

The 20th century

Children

In general, use the first and last name of a child on first reference. Call children 15 or younger by their first name on second reference. For ages 16 and 17, use judgment, but generally go with the last name. Use the last name for those 18 and older.

Colons

Capitalize the first word following the colon if it begins a complete sentence or is a proper noun.

Examples:

The goal was simple: Keep customers first.

Three words best describe the day: wet, dreary, disappointing.

Colons and semicolons are never enclosed within the ending quotation marks unless they are part of the quotation.

Commas

Use commas to separate items in a simple series, but not before the conjunction.

Example:

The items on the chapter's agenda included workshops, service projects and upcoming meetings.

However, use a comma before the conjunction if there is a possibility of confusion without it.

Example:

Among those attending the conference were the deans of social sciences, applied sciences and the arts, and humanities and the arts.

Use a comma to separate a name and academic degree.

Example:

Paulette C. Walker, Ed.D.

When used with quotation marks, commas and periods are always enclosed within the quotation marks.

Example:

"The parking lot is crowded," she said. "I should have left home earlier to attend the Founders Day luncheon."

A comma is needed before the word “including.”

Example:

Six scholarship applicants met the criteria, including three years of community service involvement, enrollment in an accredited school and two years of work experience.

Company, corporate, product names

In general, follow the spelling and capitalization used by the company: eBay, iPod, MasterCard, Macintosh, Kmart.

Use ampersands as the official company or product name dictates.

Abbreviate Co. and Corp., and eliminate the comma before Inc. When referring to Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, spell out Incorporated in the first reference. It is acceptable to abbreviate as Inc. in the second reference, but use the comma before Inc.

Use “the” lowercase unless it is part of the company’s formal name.

Examples:

Procter & Gamble, Gannett Co., Microsoft Corp., the Kroger Co., the Los Angeles Times, The New York Times

Although graphic elements may be part of a company’s logo, in text never use typographic symbols or unusual fonts in a name, including exclamation points, quotation marks, plus signs, asterisks, bold type or italic type.

Examples:

Yahoo, Toys R Us, E-Trade

Incorrect: Yahoo!, Toys “R ”Us, E★Trade

Composition titles

Use these AP Stylebook guidelines in reference to book titles, computer games, movies, operas, plays, poems, albums and songs, radio and television programs, as well as 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 word in a title. Put quotation marks around the names of all such works except the Bible and books that are primarily catalogs of reference material. Translate a foreign title into English unless a work is known to the American public by its foreign name.

Examples:

“A Song of Faith and Hope: The Life of Frankie Muse Freeman”

“Roses and Revolutions”

Reference works:

Encyclopedia Britannica

Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition

Compound modifiers

When two or more words are used to express a single concept in modifying a noun, they become compound modifiers. Compound modifiers are linked with hyphens.

Examples:

Long-term assignment

Full-scale investigations

Small-business owner

Part-time or full-time worker

African-American women

20th-century art

An exception may occur when two words are so commonly associated together that no confusion would occur or if the word combination appears after a noun.

Examples:

He is a real estate agent.

She works part time.

Computer terms

Capitalize the word Internet as a proper name to distinguish it from other kinds of nets. It may also be referred to as the Net, also capitalized.

Some of the spellings of Internet-related words below are aligned with the “AP Stylebook.”

- cyberspace
- download
- dot-com (informal adjective)
- email
- emoji
- firewall
- home page
- hyperlink
- Internet
- Internet radio
- intranet
- IP address (Internet protocol address)
- Java (a trademark)
- listserv
- login
- logoff
- logon
- MP3
- online
- screen saver
- selfie
- URL (Uniform Resource Locator)
- World Wide Web (a proper name)
- the Web, website, webcast, webmaster

Always include a period at the end of a sentence even if a web address or email address appears at the end.

D

Deaf

When referring to the community, capitalize.

See **Disabled/Handicapped/Impaired**

Degrees

See Academic degrees under **Capitalization**

Delta Days in the Nation's Capital

Disabled/Handicapped/Impaired

In general, writers should avoid the terms “handicapped” and “impaired” and use the term “disability” when referring to limitations resulting from a person’s disability. When referring to the person with a disability, “people first” language should always be used, as in:

- a person with a disability
- a person who is blind
- a person who is deaf or hard of hearing
- a person with a cognitive disability
- a person who is unable to speak
- a person with a physical disability
- a person with a psychiatric disability
- a person who uses a wheelchair

A person with a disability should never be described as having a disability unless that information is pertinent to what is being written. Avoid all descriptive language that might lead a reader to believe the person is an object of pity or a victim, such as “confined to a wheelchair,” “afflicted with” or “overcome their disability.”

Doctor

Use Dr. in first reference as a formal title before the name of an individual who holds a doctor of dental surgery, doctor of medicine, doctor of optometry, doctor of osteopathy, or doctor of podiatric medicine degree.

Example:

Dr. Regina Benjamin

Incorrect: Dr. Regina Benjamin, M.D.

If appropriate in the context, Dr. also may be used on first reference before the names of individuals who hold other types of doctoral degrees. In the case of the Sorority's National Presidents and Past National Presidents, Dr. is appropriate on first reference in writing. However, keep in mind that the public primarily associates the word "doctor" with physicians.

E

Ellipses

The three dots represent omitted words or a pause in speaking. They are preceded and followed by spaces.

Example:

She talked about the morning traffic, her previous vacation, her son's wedding plans ... and enough other topics to bore everyone.

e.g.

Meaning for example, it is always followed by a comma.

Email

Use lower case and do not hyphenate.

Example:

For any questions regarding the event, please email the committee chair.

F

Farther, further

"Farther" refers to physical distance.

"Further" refers to an extension of time or degree.

Examples:

The house was farther down the road than she remembered.

He asked what further side effects he could expect.

Fewer, less

Fewer applies to numbers and modifies a plural noun. Less applies to quantities and modifies a singular noun.

Example:

She now eats fewer meals and less candy.

Fundraising, fundraiser

It is one word in all forms and uses. Do not hyphenate.

H

Headlines

Only the first word and proper nouns are capitalized.

Follow story style in spelling, but use numerals for all numbers and single quotes for quotation marks. Exception: use US, UK and UN (no periods) in all headlines.

Hispanic

The terms “Hispanic” and “Latino/Latina” can be interchangeably used when referring to individuals from a Spanish-speaking land or culture or from Latin America. Usage varies depending on context and the audience being addressed.

Hyphens

In type, hyphens are different from dashes. Hyphens are sometimes used to avoid ambiguity.

Example:

He recovered from financial collapse.

He re-covered his sofa in gray leather.

Never hyphenated: National First Vice President and National Second Vice President

See **Dashes**

I

Identity

Racial, ethnic, sexual and gender identity is personal. Ethnicity is not synonymous with race; gender is not synonymous with sex; and gender identity is not synonymous with sexual orientation.

Although labels should be avoided whenever possible, it is sometimes relevant to the article, press release or report. In general, utilize the term people prefer to be called, especially when dealing with race and ethnicity.

Sometimes the common conventions of language inadvertently contain biases toward certain populations, e.g., using “normal” in contrast to someone identified as “disabled.” It is important to be aware of how the choice of terminology may come across to the reader, particularly if the reader identifies with the population in question.

i.e.

Abbreviation for the Latin *id est* or *that is* and is always followed by a comma.

Internet

See **Computer terms**

Its, it’s

Its is a possessive pronoun, while it’s contracts “it is” or “it has.”

Examples:

Nothing can take its place.

It’s a small world.

It’s been good to know you.

A simple way to determine which term is needed is to read the sentence using “it is.” If the sentence doesn’t make sense, its is needed, not it’s.

J

Jargon

Avoid the use of jargon, clichés and colloquialisms in communications. Copy filled with technical “insider’s” language confuses and discourages readers.

K

Kids

Use “children” unless referring to goats.

L

Latino/Latina

“Latino” is the masculine word while “Latina” is the feminine. Latino can refer to a mixed group of both genders. The terms “Latino/Latina” and “Hispanic” can be interchangeably used when referring to individuals from a Spanish-speaking land or culture or from Latin America. Usage varies depending on context and the audience being addressed.

Use specific nationalities when available.

Examples:

Bolivian, Colombian, Cuban, Mexican, Peruvian, Puerto Rican

M

Magazine names

See **Newspaper/Magazine/Journal names**

Months

Abbreviate Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. when used with a specific date.

Example:

My birthday is Jan. 15.

Spell out when used alone or only with a year.

Example:

January 1989 was the coldest month on record.

When using a month, date and year, set off the year with commas.

Example:

June 6, 1944, was D-Day.

Also see **Dates**

Movie titles

See **Composition titles**

Newspaper/Magazine/Journal names

As stated in the AP Stylebook, capitalize “the” in a newspaper’s name if that is the way the publication prefers to be known. Do not place name in quotes.

Example:

Detroit Free Press

The New York Times

Where the location is needed, but is not part of the official name, use parentheses.

Example:

The Huntsville (Ala.) Times

Capitalize the magazine or journal name, but do not place it in quotes. Lowercase “magazine” or “journal” unless it is part of the publication’s formal title. Check the masthead to confirm the formal name.

Examples:

DELTA Journal

Ebony magazine

Although clever typographic elements may be part of a publication’s nameplate, editorial content never uses graphic symbols or stylized fonts, including exclamation points, quotation marks, plus signs, asterisks, bold type or italic type.

Examples:

the Cincinnati Enquirer, ESPN the Magazine, Lifetimes

Incorrect: The Cincinnati Enquirer, ESPN The Magazine, LIFETIMES

Numbers and numerical references

As a general rule, numbers from one to nine should be spelled out; numbers 10 and above should be left in numerical form. Use numerical figures; however, when referring to sections of a book, grade point average and scores.

Examples:

A GPA of 3.0

An ACT score of 8

Spell out the word percent in text. Do not use the symbol “%” except in tables and technical text.

Example:

More than 20 percent passed the test with a score of 85 or better.

Spell out ordinal numbers (first, second, third) first through ninth. For the 10th ordinal and above, use figures.

Example:

First, second, 10th, 23rd, 31st

When describing money in text, do not include the decimal places for whole dollars.

Example:

Tickets cost \$5 for general admission, \$3 for students and \$2.50 for children under 12.

When describing time, do not use minute placeholders for whole hours. To avoid confusion, always use noon, not 12 p.m., to refer to middle of the day.

Example:

The program will run from 8 a.m. to noon, with a coffee break at 10:15 a.m.

Telephone Numbers

When writing telephone numbers, use parentheses around the area code, a format that telephone companies have agreed upon for domestic and international calls.

Examples:

Call (313) 555-1200 for information.

Call toll-free (800) 555-1468.

Always include the area code since there can be multiple area codes in a region.

If extension numbers are needed, use a comma to separate the main number from the extension: (202) 555-1200, ext. 2.

P

Percentages

Use figures and always spell out “percent.”

Examples:

1 percent

6.5 percent

For amounts less than 1 percent, precede the decimal with a zero.

Examples:

Housing sales rose by 0.2 percent.

Repeat percent with each individual figure.

Plurals

Compound words

For those terms that include two or more separate words or a hyphenated word, add the s to the most significant word.

Examples:

Attorneys general

Daughters-in-law

Multiple letters

Add an “s” with no apostrophe.

Examples:

ABCs

VIPs

Numerals

Add an “s” with no apostrophe.

Example:

1990s

Single letters

Add “ ’s” to avoid confusion.

Example:

His report card was full of A’s and B’s.

Poem titles

(see **Composition titles**)

Presentation titles

See **Composition titles**

Principal, principle

Principal refers to someone or something first in authority or importance.

Examples:

School principal, principal player, principal problem

Principle refers to a fundamental truth.

Example:

Principle of self-determination

Q

Quotation marks

In text, place quotation marks around names of songs, poems, lecture titles and other items listed under “Composition titles.” Periods and commas, when used with quotation marks, always go within the quotation marks.

Example:

The project is “long overdue,” said Angela.

Dashes, semicolons, question marks and exclamation points go within quotation marks only when they relate to the quoted matter.

Example:

Ask him, “How do you plan to implement the proposal?”

S

Seasons

See **Capitalization**

Semicolon

Use the semicolon to indicate a greater separation of thought and information than a comma can convey, but less than what a period implies.

Example:

He leaves a daughter, Susan Jones of Los Angeles; three sons, Jim Smith of Los Angeles, John Smith of Chicago and Jay Smith of Denver; and a sister, Tammy Hill of New York.

Spaces

One space should be placed after all punctuation, including periods and question marks, at the end of sentences.

States (New AP style effective May 1, 2014)

The names of the 50 U.S. states should be spelled out when used in the body of a story, whether standing alone or in conjunction with a city, town, village or military base. No state name is necessary if it is the same as the dateline.

A dateline is included in an article or news release to indicate where and when it was written/filed or where and when an event occurred.

ABBREVIATIONS REQUIRED:

Use the state abbreviations listed at the end of this section.

- In conjunction with the name of a city, town, village or military base in most datelines.
- In short-form listings of party affiliation: D-Ala., R-Mont.
- In photo captions

When using a state name with a city name in editorial copy, surround the state name with commas.

Example:

Her business in Evansville, Ind., has shown great profits.

Preferred abbreviations are:

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

Eight state names are never abbreviated:

Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah

T

Television show titles

See **Composition titles**

Time of day

See also **a.m.**, **p.m.**

Use “noon” or “midnight,” rather than 12 p.m. or 12 a.m., which might be confusing. Avoid redundancy, such as: 10 a.m. this morning.

Use en-dashes or the word “to” to denote ranges in time. Use a.m. or p.m. only once for time ranges that begin and end either in the morning or in the afternoon.

Examples:

The Honors Convocation is scheduled for 4–6 p.m. on Friday, July 11.

The Sorority meeting from 10 to 11 a.m. has been moved to 1 to 2 p.m.

The workshop is scheduled for 10 a.m.–2 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 13.

Titles

Do not combine titles such as Mr., Mrs., Ms., Dr., or Esq. with another title or with the abbreviation for an academic degree. The same is true with soror.

Example:

Dr. Paulette C. Walker or Paulette C. Walker, Ed.D. or Soror Paulette C. Walker

Incorrect: Dr. Paulette C. Walker, Ed.D. or Soror Dr. Paulette C. Walker

Use regular font in quotation marks for songs and television shows.

Examples:

“Rolling in the Deep” by Adele

“Chances Are” by Johnny Mathis

“A Different World”

“Happy Days”

Use regular font with no quotations marks and not italics for titles of magazines and newspapers.

Examples:

The New York Times

Los Angeles Times

Time magazine

Toward

Not “towards”

U

URLs

See **Computer terms**

W

Who, Whom

“Who” and “whoever” are the nominative forms, used as subjects (Whoever said that?) or predicate nominatives. “Whom” and “whomever” are the objective forms, used as the object of a verb (You called whom?) or a preposition (To whom are you referring?).

Incorrect: Whom should I say is calling?

Correct: Who should I say is calling?

Incorrect: I’ll talk to whomever will listen.

Correct: I’ll talk to whoever will listen.

Incorrect: Whoever you choose will suit me.

Correct: Whomever you choose will suit me.

Y

Years

For decades, use an “s” without an apostrophe.

Examples:

1960s and ’60s

Incorrect: the 1960’s and 60’s

On first reference, use 1960s, not ’60s.

For centuries, the preferred format is the 20th century, not the 1900s.

For periods covering multiple years, use 2006-07, not 2006-2007.

Exception: In writing about the end of a century, use 1999-2000.

Social Media

Social Media

Social media is a communications channel that can reach thousands with one click. With such a powerful resource at every Sorority member's fingertips, it is important to use social media wisely. When communicating about the Sorority on behalf of a chapter, the guidelines outlined in the Delta Style Guide should be followed. Using the same written language to discuss the organization, whether in print or online, will help to reinforce the Sorority's brand across the globe.

It is important to keep the audience in mind when writing for social media. Since messages are usually directed at Deltas and non-Deltas, try to minimize use of the term "soror." Also, attempt to avoid using terms that may not be easily understood by an external audience. Due to character limits and the expectation of brevity on social media, abbreviations may be necessary. Try to ensure abbreviations are understandable due to context clues or recent posts.

It is imperative that posts do not violate the privacy of Deltas or divulge the Sorority's proprietary information.

This section contains examples of the Sorority's writing style applied on social media.

For detailed information about proper use of the Internet and social media, consult the Delta Internet Guidelines online: <http://www.deltasigmatheta.org>.

Facebook



Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc

February 4

DST's National President, Dr. Paulette C. Walker, talks about mental health during DDNC. Let's go on a 'Journey to Wellness' and address mental health issues in our communities. #25DDNC2014 #DST101



photo by Stephanie Stovall

20,088 people reached

Boost Post

Like · Comment · Share

869 8 102 Shares

Twitter



Delta Sigma Theta @dstinc1913 · 23h

Thanks to the Delta Sigma Theta members who helped to make the @StJude #GiveThanksWalk a success.
#DSTSupportsStJude



Instagram

Instagram

A woman with dark hair in a bun, wearing a striped dress and a pearl necklace, is smiling and holding a pink sign. The sign has the text: "Did You Know? Early Voting is available in 33 states and the District of Columbia. NOVEMBER 4, 2014 - MIDTERM ELECTIONS #dstVOTERedu @dstinc1913". In the background, there is a stone archway with the text "DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INC." and Greek letters "ΔΣΘ".

heybo0bo0, theeliteblack, cassandra_hardwick and 267 othe...

dstinc1913

You don't have to wait until November 4th to vote. Vote early...Vote always! #dstVOTERedu

