

# Style Guide

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# Style Guide

## INTRO

When expert opinions don't agree about how to use certain elements of communication, it's called a **style issue**. In those cases, it's up to an organization to determine what to do and stick to it.

Please review and reference the rules below when communicating for One Hope Church.

## STYLES

### Times

- **Correct: 6:00pm, 7:00 - 8:30am, 8:00am - 5:00pm**
- Always include the numbers after the colon. (DO: 8:00 - 9:30pm)
- am/pm has no periods, and no spaces between the numbers and letters. (DO: 9:00-10:30pm)
- Use a hyphen (-) with one space on either side. (DO: 8:00 - 9:30pm)
- Use noon or midnight when possible, not 12:00am or 12:00pm.
- Avoid redundancies like morning or evening. (DON'T: 8:00am in the morning or 7:00pm Tuesday evening)
- When listing event times, use singular for the day. (DO: Sunday at 11:00am; DON'T: Sundays at 11:00am)

### Dates

- **Correct: Tuesday, April 28**
- Use the day number only. (DO: 28; DON'T: 28th)
- Include the day of the week where possible so people don't have to look it up.
- Replace "from" with a comma and "to" with a hyphen. (DO: Thursday, 8:00 - 9:30pm; DO: May 31 - June 1; DON'T: Thursday from 8:00 to 9:30pm)
- Do not abbreviate days or months. (DO: Wednesday; DON'T: Wed.)
- Drop the year unless needed.

### Numbers

- Spell out numbers one through nine and use numerals for 10 and above, except when referring to ages. (*Generous Church* is a four-week series. Each weekend, more than 200 people attend One Hope Church.)
- Write out numbers at the beginning of sentences. (Two hundred people have partnered with One Hope Church. Thirty-five people were baptized last year.)

### Ages

- Always use numerals. (The girl is 5 years old.)
- Use hyphens for ages expressed as adjectives *before* a noun or as *substitutes* for a noun. (A 5-year-old boy. The boy is 5 years old. The ministry is for 3-year-olds. The woman is in her 30s.)

### Grades

- Use numerals (5th grade, 6-12th grade students).

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- Hyphenate if you're substituting for a noun (5th-graders).

## Titles

- Use italics on series titles, message titles, movie titles, and publications like books, magazines, and newspapers. When two titles appear together, use *publication*, "article." (*Outreach Magazine*, "Top 10 Churches.")

## Formatting

- Use bold or italics to emphasize words. Underlining is only appropriate for hyperlinks.
- Bullets: Use consistent bullets and indent spacing throughout your document. Be consistent within each list about whether or not there is punctuation at the end of bullet items.

## Capitalization

- Avoid using all caps. It's the written equivalent of yelling. Would you yell that word you're capitalizing?
- Do not capitalize random words, only proper nouns.
- Lowercase seasons (spring, summer, winter, fall) unless it's part of a proper noun (Fall Picnic).
- When to capitalize:
  - Bible: always (because it's a proper noun).
  - biblical: never (because it's an adjective).
  - Scripture / Scriptures: always (because it's a proper noun).
  - scriptural: never (because it's an adjective).
  - He, Him, His, You, Your when referring to God (unless you're quoting Scripture and the translation you're using doesn't capitalize it).

## Scripture

- Do not abbreviate books of the Bible. (DO: Galatians; DON'T: Gal.)
- Bible verses are always italicized.
- Always include the version references. (ESV is the preferred translation of One Hope Church; see [YouVersion.com](http://YouVersion.com) for additional version abbreviations.)
- Use an ellipsis (...) if it is not a complete sentence. In the following example, note the space between the last letter and the ellipsis:
  - *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, ...* John 3:16 NIV

## Email

- Email or email, not e-mail.
- Email addresses: always lowercase, never hyphenate, never underline. (DO: [firstname@wehaveonehope.com](mailto:firstname@wehaveonehope.com); DON'T: [Firstname.Lastname@WEHAVEONEHOPE.com](mailto:Firstname.Lastname@WEHAVEONEHOPE.com))
- Italicize email addresses when used in text. (DO: Send questions to *mike@wehaveonehope.com*)
- Type out email address rather than hyperlink. (DO: Email us at *info@wehaveonehope.com*; DON'T: Email us.)
  - This allows people with web-based email like Yahoo, Gmail, etc. to see the full email address so they can type or copy/paste it into their emails.

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## Phone Numbers

- Use 10-digit numbers with hyphens instead of parenthesis or periods. (DO: 405-580-5433; DON'T: (405) 580-5433 or 405.580.5433.)

## Addresses

- Abbreviate state names using two letters when using a full address (DO: Orlando, FL; DON'T: Orlando, FLA or Orlando, Florida)
- Write the full state name when using it by itself or with only the state (DO: Florida or Orlando, Florida)
- Separate addresses within other blocks of text or when marking envelopes. Use a three line format when possible:
  - One Hope Church
  - 11317 Lake Underhill Road Suite 500
  - Orlando, FL 32825

## Websites and Links

- Links: Avoid using "click on" or "click here." Make the subject the link. (DO: Register for the next Partnership Class; DON'T: Click here to register for the next Partnership Class.)
- Internet: always capitalize.
- Website = one word (DON'T: web site).
- Web is capitalized when using as shortened form of World Wide Web.
- Online = one word (DON'T: on-line).

## URLs

- Never hyphenate for line breaks.
- Do not capitalize. (DO: www.wehaveonehope.com ; DON'T: www.WEHAVEONEHOPE.com)
- Use "www" at the beginning when it's a destination. (Visit [www.biblex.com](http://www.biblex.com) for a free Bible study tool.)
- Some websites do not use www, so be clear that you're referring to an online destination in the copy. (Register online at [go2.ic/opendoor](http://go2.ic/opendoor). Be part of Church Online at [live.lifechurch.tv](http://live.lifechurch.tv).)
- Drop the www and the extension (.com) unless it's part of the name. (YouVersion is a free online and mobile Bible.)
- When using electronic communication channels, always hyperlink the website so it is a clickable link.
- See examples below.

## Ministry / Event Names

- Avoid using acronyms (DO: One Hope Kids; DON'T: OHK; DO: Financial Peace University; DON'T: FPU)
  - Using an acronym assumes the audience knows what they represent and is a form of "insider" language."
  - Exceptions: YMCA, UCF
- One Hope = two words (always capitalize the O and the H)
- Common Names
  - One Hope Church
  - One Hope Kids

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- One Hope Youth
- One Hope Women
- One Hope Men
- One Hope Worship
- Hospitality Team
- Kids Team
- Setup Team
- Production Team (DON'T: Tech Team)
- Community Group (DON'T: CG or CGs)
- Discipleship Group (DON'T: D-Group, DG)
- Partnership Class
- Financial Peace University

## PUNCTUATION

- No double, triple, or more punctuation (!! or ?!). Avoid using exclamation points in two sentences in a row or several sentences in the same paragraph.
- Spaces: Use one space between sentences, not two.
- Commas: In lists of three items or more, use a comma before and/or. (The event will feature games, food, and prizes.)
- Quotation marks: Use for words spoken by someone else, in reference to the word itself, or for words used in an ironic sense. Do not use quotation marks to soften the meaning of words or to indicate an unconventional usage. (DO: The “short” meeting lasted from 1:00-6:00pm; DON'T: We want people to “own” their development.)
- Punctuation in Quotes: The period and the comma always go within the quotation marks. The dash, the semicolon, the question mark, and the 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.
- Hyphens (-): should be used for hyphenated words, times, date ranges, and phone numbers. Do not allow websites or email addresses to become hyphenated; keep the entire address on one line.
- Dashes (–): When used within a sentence for emphasis, do not use spaces. (DO: When Jesus taught us to pray, He wanted us to remember and acknowledge the fact that we are fully dependent on God—even for our next meal.)
- Colons: Use to clarify or expand what came before the colon. Only use them after statements that are complete sentences. (Paul wrote several books of the New Testament: Galatians, Ephesians, and Philippians to name a few.)
- Colons: Use only a single colon followed by a space. (DO: Seven: Jesus’ Words to His Church; DON'T: Seven :: Jesus’ Words to His Church)
- Semicolons: Use to separate two main clauses that are closely related to each other but that could stand on their own as sentences.
- Ellipsis: When using an ellipsis to omit or allude to other content, ALWAYS use three dots. Any number other than three is not proper usage (DO: “Fod God so loved the world...”; DON'T: “.....that He gave His only Son.”)

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## APOSTROPHES

The apostrophe is used to show possession. Below are some basic rules used to help us maintain consistency and correctness when using apostrophes in writing.

**RULE 1: Never use an apostrophe to make a noun (common or proper) plural.**

- Examples
  - **Incorrect:** *The Wilson's are here.*
  - **Correct:** *The Wilsons are here.*
  - **Incorrect:** *The duck's arrived at the pond.*
  - **Correct:** *The ducks arrived at the pond.*

**RULE 2: To show possession with a singular noun or plural noun that does not end in "s," add an apostrophe plus the letter s.**

- Examples
  - Singular
    - ant = ant's
    - table = table's
    - person = person's
  - Plural
    - children = children's
    - teeth = teeth's

**RULE 3: To show possession with a plural noun that does end in "s" or an "s" sound, form the plural first, then immediately use the apostrophe.**

- Examples
  - *classes'*
  - *guys'*
  - *Actresses'*

**\*RULE 4: To show possession with a common noun that does end in "s", add an apostrophe plus s.**

- Examples
  - lens = ant's
  - cactus = table's
  - bus = person's

**\*RULE 5: To show possession with a proper noun that does end in "s", add a stand-alone apostrophe.**

- Examples
  - Mr. Jones = Mr. Jones'
  - Christmas = Christmas'
  - Jesus = Jesus'

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\*There are conflicting theories regarding these rules. For consistency, we have chosen the policies shared by most newspapers and magazines.

## GRAMMAR TIPS

- Fix fragments. (Fragment: Lessons like persevering when times are rough, standing up for what is right, and honoring God alone. Correct: Kids will learn lessons like persevering when times are rough, standing up for what is right, and honoring God alone.)
- Make sure your subjects and verbs agree. When prepositions are involved, look at the word at the beginning of the prepositional phrase. (Do: Several *formats* of the file *are* available.)
- Ending sentences with a preposition is okay, unless it is an unnecessary preposition. (Do: We have a lot to think about. Don't: Where are they at? Do: Where are they?)
- Use the right preposition. (Do: Information about. Don't: Information on. Do: Questions about. Don't: Questions around.)
- It's fine to use contractions since we favor a casual writing style.
- When two words are used together to modify another, hyphenate the words unless the first word ends with the letter *y* (age-appropriate, culturally relevant teaching).
- Write in an active voice, not passive. Get rid of "there are" phrases as often as possible by rewriting your sentence. (Do: You won't want to miss out on our three new series. Don't: We have three new series that are available that you won't want to miss out on.)

## COMMON MISTAKES

CORRECT: a lot	INCORRECT: alot
CORRECT: all of <i>a</i> sudden or suddenly	INCORRECT: All of <i>the</i> sudden
CORRECT: all right	INCORRECT: alright
CORRECT: cannot	INCORRECT: can not
CORRECT: regardless	INCORRECT: irregardless
CORRECT: would've or would have	INCORRECT: would of
BOARD: wood plank or committee	BORED: the result of something uninteresting or dull
COMPLIMENT: a polite expression of praise or admiration. Remember: I give compliments ("i" in compliment)	COMPLEMENT: to work together well. Remember: We work together ("e" in complement)



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EFFECT: a result (noun)	AFFECT: to influence (usually a verb)
EVERYDAY: common (adjective/adverb)	EVERY DAY: daily
IT'S: it is	ITS: belonging to it (possessive)
LED: past tense of "to lead"	LEAD: present tense of "to lead"
LOGIN: noun	LOG IN: verb
SETUP: noun	SET UP: verb
PEEK: to look quickly (verb)	PEAK: summit or top (noun)
SIGNUP: noun	SIGN UP: verb
TEARDOWN: noun	TEAR DOWN: verb
THAN: used to compare	THEN: reference to time
THEIR: belonging to them (possessive)	THEY'RE: they are
THERE: a place	
YOUR: belonging to you	YOU'RE: you are

## WRITING FOR THE WEB

People read online content differently than they do print materials. The physical limitations of computer monitors, as well as the nature of a hypertext environment, prevent people from reading for long periods of time or in a linear fashion. While good writing is good writing, understanding these differences is crucial to communicating effectively on the Web.

Interestingly enough, in today's information age, people are becoming more accustomed to the reading style of web copy and less accustomed to print copy. In fact, more documents are being published in scannable or bulleted formats.

Here are some quick tips to use when writing copy for web or print:

- "Chunk" text (break into smaller pieces) for quick and easy consumption
- Use short phrases to make a point
- Be direct and use active voice

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- Make one point per paragraph
  - Use a sans-serif font like Arial for easier readability on digital screens
  - Avoid empty phrases, market speak, or flowery language. A reader is more likely to trust content that isn't overhyped
  - Eliminate vague modifiers (really, very, actually, sort of)
  - Use an "inverted pyramid" writing style
    - make the main point as soon as possible and provide additional information
  - Break paragraph points into bulleted lists
  - Never use "click on" or "click here;" make the subject a hyperlink
- 

## REFERENCES

You can also refer to the following recommended references.

Merriam-Webster Home and Office Edition, Merriam-Webster, Inc., Springfield, MA, 1998 ISBN 0-8777-96068.  
[merriam-webster.com](http://merriam-webster.com)

The Associated Press Stylebook 2006, Norm Goldstein, Editor, Perseus Publishing, Cambridge, MA, 2006.

The Wired Style Guide: Principles of English Usage in a Digital Age, Constance Hale, Editor, Jessie Scanlon, Broadway Books, 1999 ISBN 0-7679-0372-2.

<http://www.grammarbook.com/punctuation/apostro.asp>