



Grant Wood Area Education Agency Style Guide

Communications Office

Updated: July 2021

Equity Statement: Grant Wood Area Education Agency extends equal opportunities in its employment practices, educational programs and services, and does not discriminate on the basis of color, gender, race, national origin, religion, creed, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, disability, veteran status or as otherwise prohibited by law. If you believe you or your child has been discriminated against or treated unjustly, please contact the Agency's Equity Coordinator, Maria Cashman, at 319-399-6847 or 800-332-8488. Grant Wood AEA, 4401 Sixth St SW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52404.

Introduction

The marketing of Grant Wood Area Education Agency services and employee expertise depends on a conscious and systematic effort by all of us to create a clear, consistent and favorable impression through relationships and written and verbal communications. This is particularly important since we are an intermediate agency and our services often are not visible to the general public.

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure consistency in agency communications – both in looks and in language used. By following these guidelines, we can maintain a high degree of recognition for and awareness of the agency's programs and services.

These guidelines cannot cover every design situation specifically. If there are questions regarding use or if you need assistance in solving design problems related to these guidelines, contact the Grant Wood AEA Director of Communications and Creative Services at ext. 6714.

■ Grant Wood AEA Usage

- GWAEA / Grant Wood AEA / Grant Wood Area Education Agency - Grant Wood Area Education Agency (GWAEA) is the organization for which we work. We do not identify the agency as "Grant Wood," but rather as **Grant Wood Area Education Agency** or **Grant Wood AEA**. When you want to refer to the geographic area served by Grant Wood AEA, the more common term is the Grant Wood AEA service area.

The Grant Wood AEA service area consists of seven counties we work in, and where the students we serve live and attend school. To say, "The schools in Grant Wood Area Education Agency are . . ." is an inaccurate statement. We have no schools in our agency. We have schools in the Grant Wood AEA service area.

- The Association - The Grant Wood Education Association (GWEA) is the professional organization and bargaining unit for contracted and classified staff, affiliated with the Iowa State Education Association (ISEA) and the National Education Association (NEA).
- In body texts and captions - use Grant Wood AEA rather than Grant Wood Area Education Agency on second reference. Instead of GWAEA teachers use "Teachers in the Grant Wood AEA service area."

■ Equity Statement

All brochures, fliers, and newsletters providing information about Grant Wood AEA programs and services and published by a program or region of the agency shall include the following equity compliance statement:

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color, gender, race, national origin, religion, creed, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, disability, veteran status or as otherwise prohibited by law. If you believe you or your child has been discriminated against or treated unjustly, please contact the Agency's Equity Coordinator, Maria Cashman, at 319-399-6847 or 800-332-8488. Grant Wood AEA, 4401 Sixth St SW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52404.

■ Agency Logo

The Grant Wood Area Education Agency logo represents us at the very highest level and is vitally important to our brand. It acts as a signature, an identifier and is a reflection of our organization. It is, and should always be, the most consistent component in our communications. Please reference [Brand Central](#) for specific information on use of the agency's logo.

■ Creating Communication Materials

If you're developing a new brochure, flyer or other information for the agency, please use the [ABC Toolkit](#) to guide the development of your work.

■ **Blogs** - For blog names, use the name as spelled by the writer, capitalizing the first letter and other main words. Don't enclose the name in quotation marks unless it's an unusual spelling that might otherwise be unclear.

■ **Books, Periodicals, Reference Works and Other Types of Compositions** - Use quotation marks around the titles of books, songs, television shows, computer games, poems, lectures, speeches and works of art. Examples: Author Porter Shreve read from his new book, "When the White House Was Ours." They sang "The Star-Spangled Banner" before the game.

Do not use quotations around the names of magazines, newspapers, the Bible or books that are catalogues of reference materials. Examples: The Washington Post first reported the story. He reads the Bible every morning.

Do not underline or italicize any of the above.

Apply the guidelines listed here for these titles: book, computer and video game, movie, opera, play, poem, album and song, radio and television program, 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, the Quran, and other holy books and books that are primarily catalogs of reference materials. In addition to catalogs, this category includes almanacs, directories, dictionaries, encyclopedias, gazetteers, handbooks and similar publications. Do not use quotation marks around such software titles as WordPerfect or Windows.
- Translate a foreign title into English unless a work is generally known by its foreign name.

- Books, films, TV shows, works of art, etc., use quotation marks around them.
- Magazines and newspapers are capitalized, not italicized.
- Example: She read *The New York Times* before she turned on the television to watch "Survivor."

■ **Datelines** - Newspapers use datelines when the information for a story is obtained outside the paper's hometown or general area of service. Datelines appear at the beginning of stories and include the name of the city in all capital letters, usually followed by the state or territory in which the city is located. The Associated Press Stylebook lists 30 U.S. cities that do not need to be followed by the name of a state. See **states and cities** below. Examples:

- DENVER – The Democratic National Convention began...
- ST. PAUL, Minn. – The Republican National Convention began...
- YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio – President Bush spoke to a group...

■ **Dimensions** - When writing about height, weight or other dimensions, use figures and spell out words such as feet, miles, etc. Examples: *She is 5-foot-3. He wrote with a 2-inch pencil.*

■ **Miles** - Use figures for any distances over 10. For any distances below 10, spell out the distance. Examples: *My flight covered 1,113 miles. The airport runway is three miles long.*

■ **Names and Titles** - Always use a person's first and last name the first time they are mentioned in a story. Only use last names on second reference. Do not use courtesy titles such as *Mr., Mrs., Miss* or *Ms.* unless they are part of a direct quotation or are needed to differentiate between people who have the same last name.

Generally, capitalize formal titles when they appear before a person's name, but lowercase titles if they are informal, appear without a person's name, follow a person's name or are set off before a name by commas. Also, lowercase adjectives that designate the status of a title. If a title is long, place it after the person's name, or set it off with commas before the person's name. Examples: *President Bush; President-elect Obama; Sen. Harry Reid; Evan Bayh, a senator from Indiana; the senior senator from Indiana, Dick Lugar; former President George H.W. Bush; Paul Schneider, deputy secretary of homeland security.*

■ **Dates, Months, Years, Days of the Week** - For dates and years, use figures. Do not use *st, nd, rd,* or *th* with dates, and use Arabic figures. Always capitalize months. Spell out the month unless it is used with a date. When used with a date, abbreviate only the following months: *Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov.* and *Dec.* Spell out when using alone or with a year alone. Example: On Dec. 24, a holiday party...

Commas are not necessary if only a year and month are given, but commas should be used to set off a year if the date, month and year are given. Use the letter *s* but not an apostrophe after the figures when expressing decades or centuries. Do, however, use an apostrophe before figures

expressing a decade if numerals are left out. Examples: *Classes begin Aug. 25. Purdue University was founded May 6, 1869. The semester begins in January. The 1800s. The '90s.*

If you refer to an event that occurred the day prior to when the article will appear, do not use the word yesterday. Instead, use the day of the week. Capitalize days of the week, but do not abbreviate. If an event occurs more than seven days before or after the current date, use the month and a figure.

■ **Times** - When referring to time, use figures but spell out noon and midnight. Use a colon to separate hours from minutes, but when the time is on the hour, delete the :00. Example: 9 a.m. - 2:10 p.m. and 9:30 a.m. - 2:10 p.m. When times occur in the same frame (ie: a.m. or p.m.) use the following format: Example: 9-11 a.m. Also, a.m. and p.m. should be lowercase and have a period after each letter.

■ **Percentages** - AP style change (April 2019):

Use the % sign when paired with a numeral, with no space, in most cases: Average hourly pay rose 3.1% from a year ago; her mortgage rate is 4.75%; about 60% of Americans agreed; he won 56.2% of the vote. Use figures: 1%, 4 percentage points.

■ **Numerals** - Spell out numbers below 10 and use figures for numbers 10 and above. Never begin a sentence with a figure, except for sentences that begin with a year. Examples: Two hundred freshmen attended. Five actors took the stage. 1776 was an important year.

Use roman numerals to describe wars and to show sequences for people. Examples: World War II, Pope John Paul II, Elizabeth II.

For ordinal numbers, spell out first through ninth and use figures for 10th and above when describing order in time or location. Examples: second base, 10th in a row. Some ordinal numbers, such as those indicating political or geographic order, should use figures in all cases. Examples: 3rd District Court, 9th ward. Example: The man had five children and 11 grandchildren.

When referring to money, use numerals. For cents or amounts of \$1 million or more, spell the words cents, million, billion, trillion etc. Examples: \$26.52, \$100,200, \$8 million, 6 cents.

■ **Ages** - For ages, always use figures. If the age is used as an adjective or as a substitute for a noun, then it should be hyphenated. Don't use apostrophes when describing an age range. Examples: A 21-year-old student. The student is 21 years old. The girl, 8, has a brother, 11. The contest is for 18-year-olds. He is in his 20s.

■ **Abbreviations and Acronyms** - Some widely known abbreviations are required in certain situations, while others are acceptable but not required in some contexts. For example, Dr., Gov., Lt. Gov., Rep., the Rev. and Sen. are required before a person's full name when they occur outside a direct quotation. Please note, that medical and political titles only need to be used on first reference when they appear outside of a direct quote. For courtesy titles, use these on second

reference or when specifically requested. Other acronyms and abbreviations are acceptable but not required (i.e. FBI, CIA, GOP). The context should govern such decisions.

■ **Phone numbers** - When referring to phone numbers, use the following style. Use hyphens, not periods. Example: 319-399-6712 or 800-332-8488, ext. 6712

■ **Addresses** - For numbered addresses, always use figures. Abbreviate Ave., Blvd., and St. and directional cues when used with a numbered address. Always spell out other words such as alley, drive and road. If the street name or directional cue is used without a numbered address, it should be capitalized and spelled out.

If a street name is a number, spell out First through Ninth and use figures for 10th and higher.

Examples of correctly formatted addresses: 101 N. Grant St., Northwestern Avenue, South Ninth Street, 102 S. 10th St., 605 Woodside Drive.

States and Cities - When the name of a state name appears in the body of a text, spell it out. When the name of a city and state are used together, the name of the state should be abbreviated (except for *Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas* and *Utah*). States should also be abbreviated when used as part of a short-form political affiliation. Examples: *He was travelling to Nashville, Tenn. The peace accord was signed in Dayton, Ohio. The storm began in Indiana and moved west toward Peoria, Ill.*

Here is how each state is abbreviated in AP style (with the postal code abbreviations in parentheses):

Ala. (AL)	Ariz. (AZ)	Ark. (AR)	Calif. (CA)	Colo. (CO)
Conn. (CT)	Del. (DE)	Fla. (FL)	Ga. (GA)	Ill. (IL)
Ind. (IN)	Kan. (KS)	Ky. (KY)	La. (LA)	Md. (MD)
Mass. (MA)	Mich. (MI)	Minn. (MN)	Miss. (MS)	Mo. (MO)
Mont. (MT)	Neb. (NE)	Nev. (NV)	N.H. (NH)	N.J. (NJ)
N.M. (NM)	N.Y. (NY)	N.C. (NC)	N.D. (ND)	Okla (OK)
Ore. (OR)	Pa. (PA)	R.I. (RI)	S.C. (SC)	S.D. (SD)
Tenn. (TN)	Vt. (VT)	Va. (VA)	Wash. (WA)	W.Va. (WV)
Wis. (WI)	Wyo. (WY)			

Never abbreviate *Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas* and *Utah*.

AP style does not require the name of a state to accompany the names of the following 30 cities:

Atlanta	Baltimore	Boston	Chicago	Cincinnati
Cleveland	Dallas	Denver	Detroit	Honolulu
Houston	Indianapolis	Las Vegas	Los Angeles	Miami
Milwaukee	Minneapolis	New Orleans	New York	Oklahoma City
Philadelphia	Phoenix	Pittsburgh	St. Louis	Salt Lake City
San Antonio	San Diego	San Francisco	Seattle	Washington

■ **Punctuation** - Use a single space after a period. Do not use commas before a conjunction in a simple series. Example: *In art class, they learned that red, yellow and blue are primary colors. His brothers are Tom, Joe, Frank and Pete.* However, a comma should be used before the terminal conjunction in a complex series, if part of that series also contains a conjunction. Example: *Purdue University's English Department offers doctoral majors in Literature, Second Language Studies, English Language and Linguistics, and Rhetoric and Composition.*

Commas and periods go within quotation marks. Example: *"I did nothing wrong," he said. She said, "Let's go to the Purdue game."*

■ **Technology Terms** - Here are the correct spelling and capitalization rules for some common technological terms:

- *BlackBerry, BlackBerrys*
- *download*
- *eBay Inc.* (use *EBay Inc.* when the word begins a sentence)
- *e-book*
- *e-book reader*
- *e-reader*
- *email*
- *cellphone*
- *Facebook*
- *Google, Googling, Googled*
- *hashtag*
- *IM* (*IMed, IMing*; for first reference, use *instant messenger*)
- *internet*
- *iPad, iPhone, iPod* (use *IPad, IPhone, or IPod* when the word begins a sentence)
- *LinkedIn*
- *social media*
- *smartphone*
- *Twitter, tweet, tweeted, retweet*
- *World Wide Web, website, Web page*
- *webmaster*

- *YouTube*

■ **Who vs Whom** - Who is the pronoun used for reference to human beings and to animals with a name. Whom is used when someone is the object of a verb or a preposition.

■ **That and which** - (pronouns) are used when referring to inanimate objects and to animals without names.

■ **Grade and Grader** - Hyphenate in combining forms: a fourth-grade student, a 12th-grade student, first-grader, 10th-grader; But: She is in the fifth grade.

■ **Compound Words** - Reference the dictionary for usage of compound words.

Inclusive Language Guidelines

Our perceptions and misperceptions about each other are enhanced by the language we use. How we communicate about persons with disabilities can enhance dignity, promote positive attitudes and help to break down stereotypes and barriers. With care one can be descriptive, while not being offensive.

Here are tips to improve language related to disabilities:

■ **People first.** Speak of the person as an individual first and then the disability. Use “a person with a disability” rather than “a disabled person.”

■ **Words matter.** Emphasize abilities not limitations. In many instances, the disability need not be mentioned at all. “The architect gave a presentation...” provides appropriate description. “The architect, who is confined to a wheelchair...” adds unnecessary description.

■ **Inclusive terms.** Avoid labeling people as part of a disability group. “People with disabilities” rather than “the disabled.”

■ **Descriptive adjectives.** Adjectives should be used as descriptions not categories. Use “the student in a wheelchair,” rather than “the wheelchair student.”

■ **Self-reflection.** Don’t patronize or give excessive praise or attention to a person with a disability. Choice and independence are important; let people do or speak for themselves as much as possible.

■ **Avoid emotional words.** Use empowering words such as successful or productive to enhance abilities, and avoid words that serve to dehumanize.

■ **Disability vs. Handicap.** A *disability* is a functional limitation that interferes with a person's ability to walk, hear, talk, or learn. The word *handicap* describes a situation or barrier imposed by society, the environment, or oneself.

■ **Positive images.** Use positive images in graphics and watch out for stereotypes. A picture of a student seated in a wheelchair at a computer emphasizes ability; a picture of a student in a wheelchair being pushed down a hallway sends a different message.

References

Words Matter: Guidelines on Using Inclusive Language in the Workplace, British Columbia BC Public Services. [Online]. Available: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/careers/all-employees/working-with-others/words-matter.pdf>

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<https://twitter.com/APStylebook>