

# **Style Manual – Lake Ridge Eagle Media**

## **2025-2026 Basic AP Style Guide for Lake Ridge Student Publications**

### **Names and Mascots**

- In a story or caption, if someone is mentioned more than once, introduce them using their full name and grade, but after that refer to them using their LAST name: For eight years, John Doe, 9, has had a passion for playing the flute. “Quote,” Doe said.
- All mascots are capitalized and plural nouns
- Do not capitalize classifications: freshman John Doe
- Use numbers to signify grade levels(with surrounding commas) in captions and stories:  
Jonathon Miller, 9, said. However, if a photo contains multiple people who are of the same grade level, then use the full spelling: juniors John Adams, Rachel Nguyen, and Jane Doe.
- Instead of writing out juniors, add 11 to the end of the sentence.
- Make sure that the names used in captions and stories are the individual’s legal names (as shown in Skyward and the student locator), not a nickname.
- Do not include suffix to any name such as Jr., Sr., III
- Do not include pronouns such as He, Him, She, Her.
- If an individual quoted/spoken about in a quote has a Ph.D, use “Dr.” on first reference: “Dr. Heather Thompson. Use their last name on any references thereafter
- COVID-19 is acceptable on first reference for the coronavirus disease that first appeared in late 2019. Because COVID-19 is the name of the disease, not the virus, it is not accurate to write a new virus called COVID-19. Instead: a new virus caused a disease called COVID-19. Adapted from @APStylebook 2/26/20

### **Capitalization**

- Names of clubs are capitalized if they are specific: Chess Club, Student Council, Key Club. Do not capitalize groups: marching band, choir, color guard
- Formal names of committees are capitalized: Prom Committee
- All months and days of the week are capitalized.
- “Homecoming” is capitalized when used as a noun, but not when used as an adjective.
- “Pink Out” and “Black Out” are capitalized.
- “JV” and “Varsity” are capitalized.
- Be sure to capitalize all names including first and last (Ex. James Smith).

### **Quotes**

- “This is the first sentence of the quote,” Smith said. “This is the second sentence of the quote.”
- Always use the word “said.” If you feel the need to include a synonym for said, your quote does not say anything.
- “name said” order, NOT “said name”
- Only utilize “said name” if long descriptor follows subject. ( Ex: said yearbook adviser Kristi Canon)
- Opinions and emotions go in quotes. Facts go in transitions.

### **Dates and Times**

- Always spell out days of the week (never abbreviate): Wednesday, not Wed. Friday, not Fri.
- If the name of a month is used alone, do not abbreviate it: October, January, etc. However, if the month is used with a specific date, abbreviate months with more than five letters: April 24, 2024; Oct. 23; Dec. 25, 2025
- Only list the year if the event occurred outside of the years published with the book (i.e. 2025-2026)
- Use a.m. and p.m. when listing a numerical time: 9: 30 a.m.
- Use noon and midnight instead of 12 a.m. and 12 p.m.

### **Punctuation Rules**

- Do not use ellipses unless they are used in a quote to connect two things that someone said in an interview that were not said side by side: “Basketball is my life... I wouldn’t give it up for the world.” ( the second part was said at a later point in the interview).
- Use one space after a period.
- Use the apostrophe after the “s” if the noun is plural (ex. girls’ basketball, boys’ soccer, teachers’ lounge), but an apostrophe before the “s” if the noun naturally ends with an s (ex. Mrs. Hicks’s room, Dallas’s skylights) or is possessive (ex: Sydney’s notebook, Walker’s test scores).
- Use the Oxford comma. (ex. apples, bananas, and oranges NOT apples, bananas and oranges)

### **School Names**

- “Lake Ridge High School” does not trim to LRHS, but Lake Ridge is acceptable. Use Lake Ridge minimally in the book or other publications. Our audience already knows it is Lake Ridge because it is Lake Ridge/ Eagle Media content
- Do not use “Mansfield” in front of other district schools.
- Do not use “SHS or “THS” etc.
- “Timberview” is one word.
- “Lake Ridge” is two words.

- “Summit” has one ‘t’
- Use full name of other Mansfield schools: Danny Jones Middle School
- “DeSoto” is spelled with a capital “S”
- Include names of schools that students compete against or collaborate with.
- Always spell a Schools name correctly when used.

## Numbers

- Use figures for ages( ex: 17-years-old), sums of money, time of day, percentages, house numerals, years, days of the month, degrees of temperature, proportions, votes, scores, speeds, times of races, dimensions, distances, and serial numbers. In any other cases, spell out numbers under 10( ex: three, seven, 11, 16, etc.)
- Spell out numbers, no matter how large, when they begin sentences: Four score and seven years ago; rephrase the sentence if long numbers are awkward;  
**EXCEPTION:** When starting sentences with a year (2016), do not write it out
- Avoid superscripts: 1st, 2nd, 3rd – spell them out: first, second, third
- Hyphenate fractions: one-fifth
- Avoid unnecessary ciphers or numbers. Use \$1, not \$1.00: 1 p.m., not 1:00 pm.
- Spell out percent when used casually, and use the % sign when used with a statistic or other numerical value: about 20 percent of my fans, research shows that 30% of the population is dependent on their devices.

## Titles

- Use “boys” and “girls” not “men” and “women”
- Names of books, newspapers, movies, magazines, and other publications are in italics. Place quotation marks around almost all other composition titles: “The Potter Show,” *Mansfield Times*
- Course grades are capitalized: Martinez earned an A in English last semester.
- Use “international” students, not “foreign” students.
- Names of halls in school are not capitalized but room numbers are: math hall, E-131
- Dr. Jim Vaszauskas Center for the Performing Arts
- Capitalize titles if stated before names; lowercase titles placed after:  
Band President Suzie Smith; Principal Ashley Alloway
- Do not use Mr. Mrs. Ms. etc. Instead titles before name: Journalism Teacher John Soheli or History Teacher Brandon Austin.

## Captions

- In captions or cutline use: front row, second row, third row, back row; do not capitalize and go from left to right without typing “from left to right”

- The first sentence will ALWAYS be in present tense describing what the subject is doing in the photo
- The second sentence is past tense and contains information from the interview that is relevant, but is not included in the quote used in the following sentence
- The last sentence(s) contain your chosen quote for the caption. The full quote may consist of one large quote broken in two or two small quotes that go together.
- “pep rally” is two words
- “winter guard” and “color guard” are two words and should be used in place of “flag girls” or “flag line”
- spell out “percent”
- Don’t repeat words in one caption, or use “dead words”
- Do not use periods in capitalized abbreviations: UTA, UNT, AVID, MISD
- “Who” refers to people, “That” and “Which” refer to inanimate objects or pets without a name
- Use “that” for essential clauses without commas (If you can omit “that,” omit it)
- Check all “photo bys” to make sure it’s not capitalized
- Use two words for class periods/blocks (fourth block)
- Use only 1 text box for the entire caption. Within that 1 textbox, you may select the different fonts for the lead-in, caption text, and byline. Using only 1 textbox will align the spacing and keep it consistent throughout the book.

### **Interviews:**

- The first word of a story should not be written until interviews are finished. (This doesn’t mean you can’t go back for clarification.)
- If a writer uses every quote from an interview, he/she did not do a thorough interview, which results in a weak story.
- Record all interviews. Audio recordings and written transcripts of all interviews must be saved to Google Drive with photos and other documents for each spread.
- All quotes are accurate and real. The use of AI or any other digital technology to formulate a quote without explicit permission will result in severe consequences or expulsion from the program.
- Don’t go for interviews in English or TCC classes unless with teacher permission
- Don’t count on someone else to do your interviews.

### **Writing Tips** (from Lori Oglesbee, publications consultant @LOGLESBEE)

- Speak your writing OUT LOUD so you can revise and edit yourself! You will hear things that you probably didn’t before.

- Read your writing to someone else and get their opinion
- **Cemetery/Dead Words** - DO NOT USE THESE WORDS IN YOUR WRITING. These clutter and make your writing more difficult to read:  
 Fun, get, gets, got, very, many, suddenly, was/were able to, there is/are/was/were, that, enjoys, really, shows, some, pumps, had the opportunity to, just, began to, imagine, in order to, started to, worked hard, come together, a lot, today's society, decided to, you, hard work, most, to take place, hold, meeting, to try and, like  
 - Once you are done writing captions, check all captions for use of dead words
- Edit out "is/are/was/were/able to. Take your sentence to the active voice.  
 Weak: He was able to identify a leaf.  
 Better: He identified the leaf.
- Search & Replace: Be/To/By verbs, -ing verbs, -ion words, -ly words
- "Suddenly" does not add drama or make anything more exciting.
- "Really" and "very" have no meaning. Delete.
- "Today's society" or "This Year" – don't use.
- When a verb is paired with an infinitive, the infinitive should become the verb. Just look for the verb-to-verb pattern.  
 Weak: The school board decided to add two snow days to the calendar.  
 Better: The school board added two snow days to the calendar.
- Using many, most, some, few (indefinite terms) says you don't have any proof. You assumed.  
 Weak: Many seniors drive cars to school.  
 Need specific details...
- Ban the word "opportunity" from your writing. Let your reader decide if it's an opportunity.  
 Weak: They had the opportunity to work with paper and scissors.  
 Better: They worked with paper and scissors.
- Your first sentence should never have a 'be' verb (Be/am/is/are/was/were/been/being).  
 Eliminate all you can. Be verb + an -ing verb = Wrong tense. Move to the simple past, present, or future.  
 Weak: Seniors were collecting canned goods.  
 Better: Seniors collected canned goods.
- At their best, adverbs spice up a verb or adjective. At their worst, they express a meaning already contained in it.  
 Weak: The teacher walked purposely over to Joe's desk.  
 Better: The teacher headed over to Joe's desk.  
 Weak: The fire completely destroyed the building.  
 Better: The fire destroyed the building.

- Nominalization - ion turns a verb into a noun

Weak: The assembly was a celebration for honor graduates.

Better: The assembly celebrated honor graduates.

- **Edit Check:** Cemetery words, Be verbs, -ing verbs, -ion verbs, Adverbs, Quote  
 StylesWeak: Fuller saw that the window blinds for Bolo's house were open and suddenly tried to peek inside to check on him.  
 Better: Fuller peeked through the open blinds to check on Bolo.
- Suggested Writers: 300 Word stories by Brady Dennis - good one "When the Sky Falls" or NSPA stories of the year or ILPC story winners
- Words to omit from all copy:  
 has, have, had, our, we, us, you, also, awesome, cool, rad, awful, but, good, great, guy, kid, like, mad, nice, pretty, scared, so, then

## Artificial Intelligence

- All writing using AI is strictly prohibited. This includes, drafting, and final versions. Copy may only be written by the student.
- Passing AI content

## Sports Writing (from Jenny Dial Creech @jennydialcreech)

- Know the Sport - rules, trends, different styles, offensive/defensive schemes, strategies, what fans of the sport look for and talk about
- Know the Team - roster, starters, start-leaders, record/past records, injuries, schedule/key matchups, rivals, storylines, style of play
- Find topics that relate to the sport
- Give More than the Score - find an angle - sports fans know the scores and highlights, what else can you give them? Stats, records, historical perspective, analysis, talking points
- Accuracy Matters - you are working with numbers, stats, and figures. Make sure they are correct. The best way to be accurate is to be sure you know the team, and are following closely. Be sure to record interviews. In your notes, write down color, reaction to use for more detailed writing.
- Interview postgame - emotions after a win or loss are fresh and compelling.
  - For features, interview subjects multiple times in an area they are comfortable in. Always try to interview in person. Be sure to ask for specifics/details, so you can put your reader there.
- Have questions ready for interviews, but be ready to steer away from them.
- Be clear and concise in writing style. Get to the point quickly
- Make sure your lead grabs your audience. You have to know your audience to do this well.
- Avoid cliches - sports are full of them. Don't overuse sports jargon, it cheapens your

work. **Do not write about team bonding** – this is severely over-used.

- Sports are full of action. Use action verbs( no -ing verbs) and try to avoid passive voice as much as possible.

Write about topics people in sports care about.

- Be creative with your storytelling
- Charts & graphics can enhance your work
- Social media can spread the word and engage your audience
- Videos, podcasts, and audio interviews are also great for audience and story-telling.
- Be objective! If you can't be fair and distance yourself, you shouldn't do the story.
- Know how to research and find facts. These are key to a good story in any section of a publication.
- Make an Impact: Be engaging, Be informative, Keep it fresh, Give your reader something they can't get somewhere else.

**What Judges(Students) Want(** Source: Yearbook Avenue Contest and Award)

#### **Body Copy**

- Uses leads or introduction sentences that avoid names and labels
- The story has a strong focus, descriptively outlining an event or story from the specific year
- Quotes contribute to the telling of the story
- Transitions help the story flow and add new information
- Quotes are attributed using AP Style
- Uses third person, objective voice
- Contains specific details that contribute to the “color of the story”
- Copy shows evidence of careful editing and stylebook use

#### **Captions**

- Gag captions should not be used( typically makes the audience negatively reflective)
- Every photo has a caption placed next to it or in a logical place near it
- Lead-ins link caption to photo verbally and visually
- Answers the 5 W's and H about photo
- Does not begin with a name or label like “football” or “cheerleading
- First sentence in present tense; second sentence written in past tense
- Second sentence reports the outcome of the action shown in the photo
- Captions do not state the obvious
- Group photo captions have a consistent format( only use left to right if necessary)
- Captions have been carefully edited for content and AP Style

#### **Headlines**

- Are clever in summarizing the content on the spread
- Do not include labels ( Student Council, Soccer, Math, etc.)
- Contains primary and secondary headlines
- Written in past tense
- Eliminates unnecessary words like “a,” “an,” and “the”
- Makes reader curious about story
- Usually one main headline per spread. Other headlines are prioritized by importance in size
- All headlines are consistent and relate to the theme.

- Edited and technically correct according to AP Style
- Design is consistent within sections
- Feature story heading and secondary contains both subject and verb

#### **Considered Elements of Design, Photography, Coverage, and Theme**

- Judges = Students; It is important to remember that your peers are the audience and not associate judges
- 3x coverage of everyone who wants to/can be featured( inclusivity)
- Consistent Margins
- White Space used to enhance content elements
- Dominant Elements
- Non-rectangular and tilted photos used sparingly and effectively
- Photo credits 6-8 pt
- Theme throughout book
- Fonts appropriate for the tone of theme
- Font size based on importance of content
- Copy layered over screens is readable
- A combination of action and reaction shots( 75-80% action, 10-15% reaction, 5-10% snapshot/illustration)
- Few posed photographs
- Wide range of light and dark photography
- Group Photos cropped at waist, above heads, and at sides
- Cover design leans more on the professional side( organized and professional appeal)
- Incorporated details are specific to the school/year
- Index lists all people and topics in the book
- Opening and closing sections should typically have the same design( common writing vision, photography, and design)
- Copy contains specific details explaining thematic link to school and/or year
- Theme personality brought to life in copy
- Consistent design for all dividers
- Photos tie to theme visually
- Captions support theme by drawing links between photos and theme, verbally