

Staff Manual – Lake Ridge Eagle Media

2021-2022 Basic AP Style Guide for Lake Ridge Publications

Names and Mascots

- All mascots are capitalized
- Capitalize titles: Band President Suzie Smith; Principal Ashley Alloway
- Do not capitalize classifications: freshman John Doe
- Do not use Mr. Mrs. Ms. etc. Instead Journalism Teacher John Sohel or History Teacher Brandon Austin.
- Use the number for grades (with surrounding commas) in captions and in stories: Jonathon Miller, 9, said.
- However, if there are multiple people in the photo who are all of the same grade level, then use the full spelling: juniors John Adams, Rachel Nguyen, and Jane Doe.
- Make sure that the names used in captions and stories are the individual's legal names (as in what shows up in Skyward and the student locator) not a nickname.
- In a story, 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.
- Do not include suffix to any name such as Jr., Sr., III
- 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
- Formal names of committees are capitalized: Prom Committee
- "Internet" is ALWAYS capitalized
- All months and days of the week are capitalized
- "Homecoming" if it's a noun, but not as the adjective: homecoming game
- "JV" capitalized, "varsity" is never

Quotes

- "This is the first sentence of the quote," Franny Freedman, 9, said. "This is the second sentence of the quote."
- Always use the word "said" If you feel the need for a synonym for said, your quote does not say anything.
- Opinions and emotions go in quotes. Facts go in transitions.
- "name said" order, NOT "said name"
- Quotes should always have 2 sentences.

Dates

- Always spell out names of months and weeks (never abbreviate): January, not Jan. Wednesday, not Wed.

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. Example “Basketball is my life... I wouldn’t give it up for the world,” if that 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).

School Names

- “Lake Ridge High School” does not trim to LRHS, but Lake Ridge is acceptable. Use Lake Ridge minimally in the book. They already know it is Lake Ridge because it is the Lake Ridge yearbook.
- “Lady Eagles” is never to be used
- Do not use “Mansfield” in front of other district schools: Summit High School
- 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

Numbers

- Use figures for ages, 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, and serial numbers
- 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. Use \$1, not \$1.00: 1 p.m., not 1:00 p.m.

Titles

- Use “boys” and “girls” not “men” and “women”
- Names of books, newspapers, movies, magazines, and other publications are in italic
- 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
- MISD Center for Performing Arts

Captions

- In captions or outline use: front row, second row, third row, back row; do not capitalize and go from left to right without typing “from left to right”
- “pep rally” is two words
- “winter guard” and “color guard” are two words and should be used in the place of “flag girls” or “flag line”
- spell out “percent”
- Use periods in lower-case abbreviations: c.o.d, f.o.b, a.m., p.m., m.p.h, r.p.m

- 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)
- Use two words for class periods (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 cannot be written until ALL 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 resulting in a weak story.

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.
- Cemetery 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
- 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.
- “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.
- Search & Replace: Be/To/By verbs, -ing verbs, -ion words, -ly words
- Nominalization - ion turns a verb into a noun
 - Week: 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 Styles
 - Weak: 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

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
- 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 and try to avoid passive voice as much as possible.
- Be creative with your storytelling
- Charts & graphics can enhance your work
- Social media can spread the word and engage your audience
- Videos, podcasts, audio interviews 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.