grapeshot

Macquarie University Student Publication

STYLE GUIDE 2013

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grapeshot

Introduction

English has often been described as a fickle language. The ever-changing rules and regulations mean that you can never quite be sure if you're doing the right thing. Deciding whether to use numerals instead of words when writing numbers or which punctuation mark goes in what place can be quite pedantic to the average person. In some cases, editing can be more of a matter of style than correct usage. So, this guide has been prepared to make your job easier!

Before you start writing, here are a few words of wisdom:

CONSISTENCY IS KEY. You can't use '%' in one sentence and then 'per cent' in the next. Be consistent. If you choose to fuck it up, at least make sure you're confident about it.

MAKE SENSE. This sounds easy, but often what you're trying to say and what you actually write ends up parting ways. Get someone who doesn't know your topic to read over it.

LESS IS MORE. Sentences don't need to be longer than 25 words. Paragraphs don't need to be longer than 3-4 sentences. This is a magazine, not an academic essay. Be succinct.

READ IT ALOUD. It's even better if you can get someone to read out your own work to you. If they're stumbling, or changing your words around, there is probably an issue with the flow of your piece.

RESEARCH. I cannot express to you how much better this makes your piece. I personally recommend getting interviews with students and staff. Firstly, an interview localises the piece to suit the university context and secondly it gives it *much* more depth and personality.

Other questions to ask yourself:

• What's the general point of your piece? Why did you write it? What are you trying to say, in one sentence?

• Have you made a decision as to whether your piece is a research piece or an opinion piece? There's nothing more frustrating than reading an opinion piece in disguise.

• Does your piece flow? Is it easy to see how you got from one point to the next?

• Is any statement you can't back up clearly marked as opinion?

- Courtesy of Farrago Style Guide 2013

Common Mistakes:

- You're and Your

- Its and It's

- Affect and Effect

- Practise/practice, license/license advise/advice – the first is a verb and second is a noun

- Be careful with punctuation. Quite often writers mix up the usage of .,:; Our style guide explains how to use each of these.

- Long sentences: 25 words per sentence max. Count them.

- Dates: 7 January 2013. We prefer this format.

- American spelling: realise/realize (watch out for MSWord's autocorrect). Always use Australian English.

- Capitalisation – especially of the word university (It's only a capital when you're referring to the name of a specific university) i.e. "Macquarie University" or "the university".

- Avoid passive voice.

- Sentences starting with "But" = we will kick your butt.

- Repetition – make use of the wonderful range of words in the English language. In general, avoid using the same word more than once in one paragraph.

Apostrophes
Apostrophes are used when shortening two words, for example: didn't or can't. As a general rule, apostrophised words should not be used in news articles, but due to the nature of *Grapeshot* they are acceptable elsewhere in the magazine.

Additionally, apostrophes are also used with nouns to show possession.

Example: The boy knew that it was Nathan's computer.

In the case of words already ending with the letter's', the 's' should be omitted after the apostrophe.

Example: The girl did not know whether her parents' car was stolen.

Capitalisation
Words should always begin with a capital letter in the outset of a sentence.

Likewise, the first letter of names and titles should also be capitalised, for example: Vice Chancellor Professor Bruce Dowton.

The first letters of an organisation's name should also appear in capital form, for example: Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

The first letter of months and days should also begin with a capital, for example: Tuesday, 2 January 2013.

Date and Time
Dates should be arranged in the following order: day/month/year.

> Example: Monday 19 October 2012.

> NOT

> Monday, October 19th 2012 or the 19th of October.

Time should be written numerically, in a 12-hour format, followed by am or pm, using a colon.

> Example: At exactly 5:35pm, the man was struck by lightning while cleaning his backyard.

Decades should appear in their written form.

> Example: During the eighties, everybody had bad hair.

> NOT

> During the '80s, everybody had bad hair.

> But, '1980's' is acceptable.

Again, for some of the more informal sections, writing 'the '80s' would be acceptable.

Hyperlinks and contact links
Often, articles will contain links to different websites or a contact point such as an email address. These links should appear at the end of the article in a separate paragraph directing readers to these sources of information. The website address should be generalised where addresses are long. You do not need to put http:// at the start of a link.

> Example: For more information visit:
> www.grapeshotmq.com.au

> OR

> Contact:
> mrx@gmail.com

Grapeshot does publish online, so let us know if you would like a hyperlink to be included in your article.

When to italicise or bold text
Italics should be used when referring to the title of a piece of work such as a book, film or magazine. Words used in a language other than English should also be italicised.

> Example: "*Mean Girls* is a great film," she said.

You do NOT need to italicise band names or song titles, however you do italicise their album.

> Example: Birds of Tokyo's new track "Lanterns" is a brand new single from their album *March Fires.*

Bold is used for headings and sub-headings, but it can also be used for short passages that require emphasis.

Numbers
Numbers one (1) to nine (9) should not appear numerically, unless it is used to indicate dates, times, currencies, business titles, and contact information.

> Example: It has been reported that ten people died on the scene.

> NOT

> It has been reported that 10 people died on the scene.

After 10, numbers can appear in their numeric form.

Objectivity
Editors must ensure that all articles are written from an objective standpoint. In its simplest form, this means all articles must use neutral language and present both perspectives on an issue in one article or a collection of contrasting articles. There are rare exceptions.

All quotes, statistics, and research should be attributed to a source. While we don't publish these sources, you do need to list them on your article. This way editors can do background checks and fact checks on your research. (That's right. We do that.)

Punctuation Marks
Punctuation marks are necessary elements of any piece of writing that helps to arrange text.
- Full stops – should be placed at the end of a sentence, indicating to the reader when a sentence stops and a new one begins.
- Commas – indicate pauses throughout a sentence and are also used to schedule lists.
- Question marks (?) – used at the end of sentences where a question is being asked.
- Exclamation marks (!) – are placed at the end of sentences to show emphasis. Use these sparingly.
- Quotation Marks ("…") – are used to indicate speech and are commonly found in the beginning and end of a sentence. Double inverted commas should be used.

> Example: "I am appalled!" she said.

> NOT

> 'I am appalled!' she said.

In a standalone quotation, the full stop is placed inside the quotation marks. When the quote is incorporated into your sentence the full stop is *outside* the quotation marks. However, we recommend that you **don't** use quotes as part of your sentence. These are more appropriate in academic writing than journalism.

When using inverted commas for sarcasm or jargon, we use single, not double inverted commas.

- Semi-colons (;) – are more commonly used as a break linking connected clauses. Often, sentences which contain a semi-colon can be broken up into two sentences. Opt for this option, where possible.

> Example: The man sat down on the chair; he took up all the space.
>
> OR
>
> The man sat down on the chair and took up all the space.

- Colons (:) – are often used to begin lists.
- Dashes – often used to add extra information to a text.

Spelling
Australian spelling NOT American spelling should be used.

> Example: centre, organise, colour.
>
> NOT
>
> Center, organize, color.

However, 'jail' as opposed to 'gaol' is acceptable.

SMS language such as LOL, LMAO, ROFL should not be used in articles. However, for some articles using SMS language may be appropriate for its content.

Symbols
Although very common, symbols should **not** be used as a substitute for a word in an article.

> Example: The Report stated that the cost of living in Sydney has jumped 200 per cent since last year.
>
> NOT
>
> The Report stated that the cost of living in Sydney has jumped 200% since last year.

However, there are some exceptions:
- Currency symbols should always be used before the number.
- When referring to hastags (#) or usernames or emails (which use '@') in an article.

Titles and Position
A person's position should first appear before their full name and their title before their last name subsequently. When shortened, full stops should not be used at the end.

> Example: "I think Macquarie University is the best University in Sydney," said Macquarie University's Vice Chancellor Professor Bruce Dowton.
> ….
> However, Prof Downton did admit there was still room for improvement.

Contribution Overview & Word Counts
You may choose to contribute one or more of the following sections in the magazine. Please stick to the word counts.

Content	Page	Structure	Word counts	
			Minimum	**Maximum**
News	6-9	Articles	300	500
		Quick news	50	100
Columns	10	International	300	350
	10	Sustainability	300	350
	11	2ser	300	350
	11	Health & fitness	300	350
	12	Student Advocacy Discussion x 2	300	350
	x	Science	400	500
	x	Business	400	500
Feature	x	Articles x n	500	1000
Creative	28-29	Short stories x 2	500	1000
Reviews (Music, Film, Book, Exhibition, App etc.)	32-33	Main review x 1	150	200
		Supplementary reviews x 2	50	80
The Stew #DiscoverSydney	36	Intro	20	40
		Place entry x 5	80	100
What's On Calendar	38	Event entry per day	/	30
Blog posts	On the website	/	200	500

Submitting your article

Please label according to our preferred system. It is very easy for pieces to go astray.

titleofpiece_wordcount_yourname.docx

You must fill out the Submission Form on our website.

You must stick to the word count. There is no leeway. We will just cut out paragraphs from the bottom.

You must list your sources and a contact number for the person you interviewed (there are some exceptions to this. If you have a problem giving out the number you can send us and email and we will work around it.

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┌──────────────┐   Send via email with Submission   ┌─────────────────────────┐
│   Writer     │──────────────────────────────────▶│  grapeshot@mq.edu.au    │
│              │   Form and images that are free to │                         │
└──────────────┘   share.                           └─────────────────────────┘
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| News Editor | Features Editor | Regulars Editor | Submissions Editor |

Fact checking, editing and assisting writers who ask for some more direction.

 This could include sending back to the writer for further research or a higher word count.

Review Board and the Final Edit team

Published