



DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INC.
Writing Style Guide

Delta Writing Style Guide

A Writing Style Guide and Language Usage Manual



DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INCORPORATED

The first style guide, *Sisterly Yours* (2004), was created by
Doris McEwen, Ph.D.
National Secretary 2002–06

Updated 2019 by the
National Information and Communications Committee

Writing Style Guide

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About Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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National President & CEO

Cheryl A. Hickmon
National First Vice President

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National Second Vice President

Elsie Cooke-Holmes
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SOCIAL MEDIA



@DSTinc1913



@DSTinc1913



@DSTinc1913



linkedin.com/company/dstinc1913



My Dear Sorors,
I am pleased to present to you the 2019 edition of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated's Delta Writing Style Guide. The Guide is an important tool when you are communicating across the globe about our illustrious sisterhood.



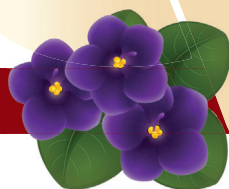
Since our founding in 1913, Delta has led the way when it comes to making an impact on the communities we serve. Our goal is to build on our success by effectively communicating our purpose, our plans and our progress. We can only do that if we are consistent in our communication, sharing the same message in the same way about who we are, why we exist, what our plans are for the future and what we've accomplished around the world. To achieve that goal, we must provide each member with the right communications tools.

Our National Information and Communications Committee has worked to update this document, keeping in mind the ideals of our Sorority and the tenets of journalism. I appreciate the committee's expertise and commitment to keeping our Sorority on the cutting edge.

Let's make sure we are consistent in communicating with each other and in telling the story of the impact we have on the communities we serve. I thank you for your continued support as we find the best ways to utilize the Sorority's resources.

With Joy in our Sisterhood,

Beverly E. Smith
National President & CEO
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.



Greetings from the Chair
- Deidra K. Diaz

Sorors,

With great enthusiasm, the National Information and Communications Committee proudly presents this updated writing style guide and language usage manual to assist your chapter and all members of Delta Sigma Theta. The Delta Writing Style Guide is a valuable tool for anyone responsible for Delta communications and publicity within or outside of the Sorority. To capture the importance of this guide and distinguish it from our Branding Style Guide, we have updated the name of this document to the Writing Style Guide.

There are two main sections in this manual. The first section addresses writing related to Delta words and phrases, while the other section mirrors The Associated Press Stylebook. The AP Stylebook is the newspaper industry standard used by media professionals, including print journalists, broadcasters and public relations firms. You can consult online tip sheets for AP Style points, or to consult the AP Stylebook online, you can subscribe for less than \$25 a year at www.apstylebook.com.

The Writing Style Guide is for all Deltas. As we work to communicate in a consistent and correct manner, we must have tools for guidance and support. The first guide, known as Sisterly Yours, was developed by Doris McEwen, PhD, National Secretary, 2002-06. We thank her for that document and are pleased to continue to update and share this guide with you.

Sisterly and Sincerely,

Deidra K. Diaz
Chair, National Information & Communications Committee

Committee

National Information and Communications Committee 2017-2019

Deidra K. Diaz, Southern Region | Chair

LaTisha Bandele, Eastern Region

Glenise Cloudy, Central Region

Davon Crews, Collegiate Member

Kerline Docteur, Southern Region

Pandora Frazier, South Atlantic Region

Schalene Houston, Midwest Region

Kimberly King, Southern Region

Vivian King, Midwest Region

Monica Lewis, Eastern Region

Dana London, Midwest Region

Keyarria Mack, Southern Region

Stephanie Maxwell, Southwest Region

Alicia Nails, Midwest Region

Yolanda Ortiz, South Atlantic Region

Brittney Thomas, Collegiate Member

Libra White, Farwest Region

Amanda Wise, South Atlantic Region

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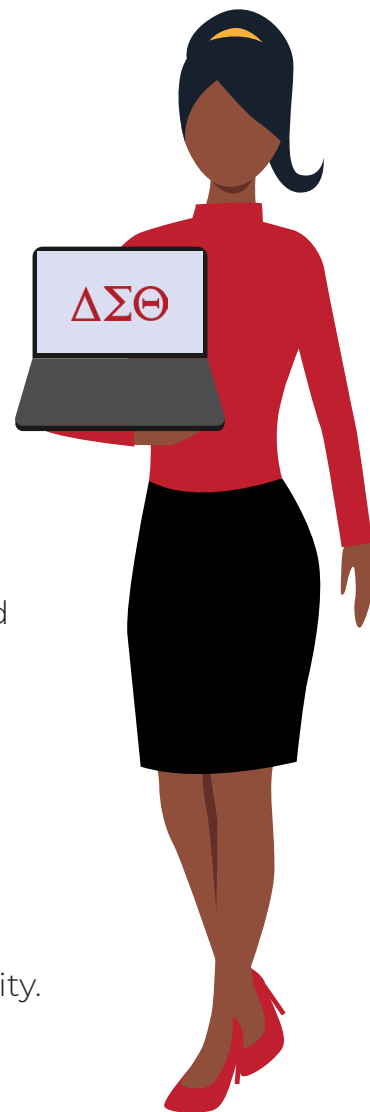
Please direct any questions or suggestions regarding the Delta Writing Style Guide to the National Information and Communications Committee:

infoandcommunications@deltasigmatheta.org

How to Use the Style Guide

WHO SHOULD USE THE DELTA WRITING STYLE GUIDE?

- △ Chapter presidents
- △ Chapter journalists
- △ Committee chairs
- △ Corresponding secretaries
- △ Publicity/Public Relations chairs
- △ Webmasters
- △ Social Media coordinators
- △ Every soror



WHAT IS THE DELTA WRITING STYLE GUIDE?

This is a writing guide with consistent “rules” for language usage and formatting, detailed in three sections: Delta Words and Phrases, Common Words and Phrases, and Social Media.

WHEN IS THE DELTA WRITING STYLE GUIDE USED?

The Guide is used whenever we are communicating our message about Delta either internally or to the public.

WHY USE THE DELTA STYLE GUIDE?

To ensure consistency in communications about and from the Sorority.

WHERE IS THE WRITING STYLE SET FORTH IN THE DELTA WRITING STYLE GUIDE USED?

The Guide is used with publications, minutes, media releases, and all official documents.

HOW DOES THIS STYLE GUIDE SERVE AND ADVANCE THE MISSION OF DELTA?

The Guide is used to provide consistency in how we communicate with one another and others, in telling the story of the impact the Sorority has on the communities we serve.

Here are some examples of how to use this style guide.

STYLE GUIDE SECTIONS

△ DELTA WORDS AND PHRASES

This section explains how to write words and phrases used regularly by members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated.

Example Style Guide Entries

Founders Day

Founders Day is always capitalized without an apostrophe either before or after the "s."

Academic degrees

Use an apostrophe in bachelor's degree, a master's, etc., but there is no possessive apostrophe + s construction in Bachelor of Arts or Master of Science.

△ COMMON WORDS AND PHRASES

This section highlights commonly used words and phrases, presented in a directory format similar to that used by The Associated Press Stylebook.

△ SOCIAL MEDIA

This section explains how to follow Delta Writing Style when posting messages on social media channels.

Delta Words and Phrases



Alumnae

Plural of alumna, which means a female graduate. Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated refers to its graduate chapters as alumnae chapters, not alumni chapters. “Alumnae” is pronounced [uh-luhm-nee] and rhymes with “gum tree.”

Biennial

This means happening every second year. In Delta, there are biennial conventions, not biannual, which means twice a year.

Capitalization

Always capitalize the following:

Delta
 Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated
 Founders
 Founders Day
 Grand Chapter
 Honorary Member(s)
 National Executive Board
 National Executive Committee
 National Headquarters
 National President & CEO
 National First Vice President
 National Second Vice President
 National Secretary
 National Treasurer
 Past National President(s)
 Sorority (when referring to Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.)

Centennial

In 2013, Delta Sigma Theta celebrated its 100th year, also known as its centennial year. Capitalize the word when describing Delta Sigma Theta’s Centennial Celebration. Use lowercase in referencing the Sorority’s centennial year.

Chapter:

Nearly 1,000 collegiate and alumnae chapters have been chartered throughout the world. When writing about a specific chapter, capitalize all words, for example, San Jose Alumnae Chapter. On second reference, you may drop the word “chapter.” When describing a chapter, you do not need to capitalize the word.

Example:

Birmingham Alumnae is one of the many chapters of Delta Sigma Theta.

However, on second reference to a specific chapter, when the word stands alone, chapter is capitalized.

Example:

The Chapter invites you to serve as a sponsor to our fundraising event. Dancing with the Stars.

Chapter President

Each of Delta's chapters has a chapter president. Capitalize the title when it immediately precedes the name of the president. Do not capitalize "chapter president" if it is not preceding the president's name.

Example: Chapter President Jane Doe, or Jane Doe, chapter president.

Charter Members

Delta Sigma Theta charter members are those sorors who organize a chapter. They should not be confused with the 22 Founders of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. The term "charter members" should not be capitalized unless used as a heading.

Chapter Name

The chapter name comes before the Sorority's name.

Example:

Charlotte Alumnae Chapter

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Commissions, Committees and Task Forces

If a specific committee is named by their full and formal title, capitalize that title.

Examples:

The Chapter's Membership Services Committee organized a reclamation activity.

The National Ritual and Ceremonies Commission presented a workshop.

Delta

Capitalize all uses when referring to Delta Sigma Theta or to a Delta soror.

Delta Days in the Nation's Capital

The title of this annual event refers to the capital city of the United States. Not to be confused with the Capitol, the building used by Congress.

Executive Committee

Delta's Executive Committee consists of the following officers:

National President & CEO

National First Vice President (no hyphenation, no abbreviation of First to 1st)

National Second Vice President (no hyphenation, no abbreviation of Second to 2nd)

National Secretary

National Treasurer

Always capitalize Executive Committee.

Five-Point Programmatic Thrust

The major programs of the Sorority are based upon these five principles. There is a hyphen between “Five” and “Point.” There is only one Thrust - consisting of all points. The five points should be listed in alphabetical order.

- Economic Development
- Educational Development
- International Awareness and Involvement
- Physical and Mental Health
- Political Awareness and Involvement

Founders

Delta Sigma Theta has 22 Founders. Always capitalize the word “Founders.” Delta’s Founders should not be confused with charter members who organize a chapter.

Founders Day

Founders Day is always capitalized without an apostrophe either before or after the “s” because it is **not** possessive, not a **day** that “belongs” to the **Founders**.

Grand Chapter

Delta’s Grand Chapter refers to all the members of the Sorority and is always capitalized. Never refer to Grand Chapter as Nationals or Headquarters.

Incorporated

Spell out and capitalize Incorporated in the first reference to the Sorority’s name. It is acceptable to abbreviate as Inc. on the second reference. Use a comma before either Incorporated or Inc.

Member at large/member-at-large

When using as a noun, it is member at large. However, when using as an adjective, it is member-at-large.

Examples:

A member at large has equal rights and privileges.

The DELTA Journal was sent to all member-at-large sorors.

National Convention

Capitalize national convention when referring to a specific event, for example, 54th National Convention. Use lowercase “national convention” or “the convention.” The national convention is never referred to as “Nationals.”

National First Vice President and National Second Vice President

These titles are never hyphenated.

National Headquarters

Delta's National Headquarters is located in Washington, DC. National Headquarters is always capitalized. National Headquarters is never referred to as "Nationals."

National President

Capitalize in all uses - even when it follows the name. On first reference, the National President's preferred full name should always be used.

Examples:

First reference:

National President Beverly E. Smith led the meeting.

Beverly E. Smith, National President, entered the assembly.

Second reference:

Soror Smith is the keynote speaker for the Founders Day luncheon.

Dr. Walker introduced the EMBODI participants.

The National President participated in the initiative.

The National President doesn't receive a number until she leaves office.

Example:

The 23rd National President, Dr. Louise A. Rice, served two terms.

Omega Omega

The term "Omega Omega" should always be capitalized.

Past National President(s)

"Past National President(s)" should always be capitalized. The first reference should include the Past National President's number followed by "National President" and her name. Second reference can refer to the Past National President. However, do not use the number and "Past National President" together.

Example:

22nd National President Gwendolyn E. Boyd

Past National President, Dr. Louise A. Rice, served two terms.

NOT: The 23rd Past National President, Dr. Louise A. Rice, served two terms.

Regional Conference

Capitalize regional conference when referring to a specific event. Do not capitalize when using the words in general. This rule also applies for state clusters or conferences. The regional conference is never referred to as "Regionals."

Examples:

I will be attending the regional conference in July.

The Protocol and Traditions Committee is preparing for state clusters and conferences.

It is time to register for the 45th Midwest Regional Conference.

Delta Sigma Theta has seven regional conferences in one year; the Southern Regional Conference took place in June.

Regional Leadership Team

This should be “regional leadership team” unless it is used in conjunction with the region’s name, as in “Southern Regional Leadership Team.” This is similar to the style for regional directors and regions in general. If team members are being listed, the heading of the full title, “Regional Leadership Team” should be capitalized.

Regions

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. is composed of seven regions:

Central Region

Eastern Region

Farwest Region

Midwest Region

South Atlantic Region

Southern Region

Southwest Region

Capitalize region when it is describing a specific region, as above.

Example:

Delta has seven regions, and one of them is the Eastern Region, where the Sorority was founded.

Rites of Passage

The term “Rites of Passage” should be capitalized.

Example:

There are three Rites of Passage.

Soror

Soror should not be capitalized unless it immediately precedes a name.

Examples:

Soror Jane Doe

Jane Doe is a soror.

The sorors gathered.

Do not use soror on an envelope to address members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Sorority

Capitalize when referring to Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Do not capitalize when referring to sororities in general.

Common Words and Phrases



This guide is based on The Associated Press Stylebook. Like the AP Stylebook, this section is organized using dictionary entires.

A

A before H

Use “a” before a pronounced “h”: a historian, a horse, a hysterical joke

Use “an” before an aspirated “h”: an hour, an honest man

Abbreviations

It is preferable to avoid abbreviations, except in tables, headlines and other situations where space is limited. When an abbreviation is necessary, here are some reminders:

Abbreviations that consist of all capital letters or acronyms do not take periods, except when referring to nations, states, cities or people.

Examples: DST, DDNC, DDUN, Delta GEMS and EMBODI

Names of organizations

Names of organizations should be spelled out on first reference. In general, do not follow an organization’s name with an abbreviation or acronym in parentheses or set off by dashes (legal documents are the exception). If an abbreviation or acronym would not be clear on second reference without this arrangement, do not use it.

Academic degrees

Use an apostrophe in bachelor’s degree, a master’s, etc., but there is no possessive apostrophe +s construction in Bachelor of Arts or Master of Science.

African American

Do not use a hyphen unless using the term as an adjective. The term is acceptable for an American person of African descent, but be careful not to apply it indiscriminately. For instance, Caribbean descendants generally refer to themselves as Caribbean Americans. The term Black is also acceptable. Follow an individual’s preference. Avoid the too general and dated term “minority.”

Ages

Always use numerical figures.

Example:

The student is 18 years old.

Ages used as nouns or adjectives before a noun require hyphens.

Examples:

The Children's Center is hosting a party for 2-year-olds today.

The 23-year-old student ran for office.

References to an age range or a decade require no apostrophe before the "s."

Examples:

The soror was in her 30s, not 30's.

She grew up in the 1950s, not 1950's.

a.m., p.m.

Use "a.m." and "p.m." in lowercase, with periods. Do not use ":00" for even hours.

Avoid redundancies, such as 10 a.m. on Tuesday morning.

Use noon or midnight and do not follow with hours as there is no 12 a.m. or 12 p.m. because

AM = Ante meridiem: Before noon; PM = Post meridiem: After noon

See also **Time of day**.

B

Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science

A bachelor's degree or bachelor's is acceptable in any reference.

Bi-

Generally, no hyphen is used when writing bimonthly, bilateral or bilingual.

Blind

See **Disabled/Handicapped/Impaired**

Book titles

See **Composition titles**

C

Capitalization

City

Capitalize city as part of a proper name or when referencing the official city entity.

Examples:

Kansas City, New York City, Oklahoma City

The Atlanta City Council announces that the City of Atlanta will partner with Delta

Lowercase elsewhere, including all “city of” phrases.

Examples:

A Georgia city

city government

in the city of Atlanta

Directions

Directions are not capitalized if they refer to a compass direction. However, they should be capitalized if they refer to a region, are part of a proper name or denote a widely known section of a city or state. When in doubt, use lowercase.

Seasons

Always lowercase fall, spring, summer, winter and derivatives such as springtime, unless part of a formal name.

Century

Lowercase, spelling out numbers less than 10.

Examples:

The first century

The 20th century

Children

In general, use the first and last name of a child on first reference. Call children 15 or younger by their first name on second reference. For ages 16 and 17, use judgment, but generally go with the last name. Use the last name for those 18 and older.

Colons

Capitalize the first word following the colon if it begins a complete sentence or is a proper noun.

Examples:

The goal was simple: Keep customers first.

Three words best describe the day: wet, dreary, disappointing.

Colons and semicolons are never enclosed within the ending quotation marks unless they are part of the quotation.

Commas

Use commas to separate items in a simple series, but not before the conjunction.

Example:

The items on the chapter’s agenda included workshops, service projects and upcoming meetings.

However, use a comma before the conjunction if there is a possibility of confusion without it.

Example:

Among those attending the conference were the deans of social sciences, applied sciences and the arts, and humanities and the arts.

Use a comma to separate a name and academic degree.

Example:

Paulette C. Walker, Ed.D.

When used with quotation marks, commas and periods are always enclosed within the quotation marks.

Example:

"The parking lot is crowded," she said. "I should have left home earlier to attend the Founders Day luncheon."

A comma is needed before the word "including."

Example:

Six scholarship applicants met the criteria, including three years of community service involvement, enrollment in an accredited school and two years of work experience.

Company, corporate, product names

In general, follow the spelling and capitalization used by the company: eBay, iPod, MasterCard, Macintosh. However, company names should always be capitalized at the beginning of a sentence.

Use ampersands as the official company or product name dictates.

Abbreviate Co. and Corp., and eliminate the comma before Inc. for companies.

When referring to Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, spell out Incorporated in the first reference. It is acceptable to abbreviate as Inc. in the second reference, but DO use the comma before either Incorporated or Inc.

Use lowercase "the" unless is it part of the company's formal name.

Examples:

Procter & Gamble, Gannett Co., Microsoft Corp., the Kroger Co., the Los Angeles Times, The New York Times

Although graphic elements may be part of a company's logo, in text never use typographic symbols or unusual fonts in a name, including exclamation points, quotation marks, plus signs, asterisks, bold type or italic type.

Examples:

Correct: Yahoo, E-Trade

*Incorrect: Yahoo!, E*Trade*

Composition titles

Use these AP Stylebook guidelines in reference to book titles, computer games, movies, operas, plays, poems, albums and songs, radio and television programs, as well as the titles of 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 and books that are primarily catalogs of reference material. Translate a foreign title into English unless a work is known to the American public by its foreign name.

Examples:

"A Song of Faith and Hope: The Life of Frankie Muse Freeman"

"Roses and Revolutions"

Reference works:

Encyclopedia Britannica

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition

Compound modifiers

When two or more words are used to express a single concept in modifying a noun, they become compound modifiers. Compound modifiers are linked with hyphens and act as adjectives.

Examples:

Long-term assignment

Full-scale investigations

Small-business owner

Part-time or full-time worker

African-American women

20th-century art

An exception may occur when two words are so commonly associated together that no confusion would occur or if the word combination appears after a noun.

Examples:

He is a real estate agent.

She works part time.

Computer terms

Do not capitalize the word internet.

Some of the spellings of internet-related words below are aligned with the “AP Stylebook.”

- app
- cyberspace
- download
- dot-com (informal adjective)
- email
- emoji
- firewall
- homepage
- hyperlink
- internet
- internet radio
- intranet
- IP address (Internet Protocol address)
- Java (a trademark)
- listserv
- login
- logoff
- logon

Computer terms

- MP3
- online
- screen saver
- selfie
- URL (Uniform Resource Locator)
- World Wide Web (a proper name)
- the web, website, webcast, webmaster

Always include a period at the end of a sentence even if a web address or email address appears at the end.

D**Datelines**

Datelines are placed at the beginning of media releases and news stories. They should contain a city name, entirely in capital letters, followed in most cases by the name of the state, country or territory where the city is located.

DOMESTIC DATELINES: A list of domestic cities that stand alone in datelines without the state:

ATLANTA	MILWAUKEE
BALTIMORE	MINNEAPOLIS
BOSTON	NEW ORLEANS
CHICAGO	NEW YORK
CINCINNATI	OKLAHOMA CITY
CLEVELAND	PHILADELPHIA
DALLAS	PHOENIX
DENVER	PITTSBURGH
DETROIT	ST. LOUIS
HONOLULU	SALT LAKE CITY
HOUSTON	SAN ANTONIO
INDIANAPOLIS	SAN DIEGO
LAS VEGAS	SAN FRANCISCO
LOS ANGELES	SEATTLE
MIAMI	WASHINGTON

Stories from all other U.S. cities should have both the city and state name in the dateline, for example: KANSAS CITY, Mo., and KANSAS CITY, Kan.

Spell out Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah.

Preferred editorial abbreviations for datelines are:

Ala., Ariz., Ark., Calif., Colo., Conn., Del., D.C., Fla., Ga., Ill., Ind., Kan., Ky., La., Md., Mass., Mich., Minn., Miss., Mo., Mont., Neb., Nev., N.H., N.J., N.M., N.Y., N.C., N.D., Okla., Ore., Pa., R.I., S.C., S.D., Tenn., Vt., Va., Wash., W. Va., Wis., Wyo.

See **States**.

Deaf

See **Disabled/Handicapped/Impaired**

Degrees

See Academic degrees under **Capitalization**

Delta Days in the Nation's Capital

Disabled/Handicapped/Impaired

In general, writers should avoid the terms “handicapped” and “impaired” and use the term “disability” when referring to limitations resulting from a person’s disability. When referring to the person with a disability, “people first” language should always be used, as in:

- a person with a disability
- a person who is blind
- a person who is hard of hearing
- a person with a cognitive disability
- a person who is unable to speak
- a person with a physical disability
- a person with a psychiatric disability
- a person who uses a wheelchair

A person with a disability should never be described as having a disability unless that information is pertinent to what is being written. Avoid all descriptive language that might lead a reader to believe the person is an object of pity or a victim, such as “confined to a wheelchair,” “afflicted with” or “overcome their disability.”

Doctor

Use Dr. in first reference as a formal title before the name of an individual who holds a doctor of dental surgery, doctor of medicine, doctor of optometry, doctor of osteopathy, or doctor of podiatric medicine degree.

Example:

Dr. Regina Benjamin

Incorrect: Dr. Regina Benjamin, M.D.

If appropriate in the context, Dr. also may be used on first reference before the names of individuals who hold other types of doctoral degrees. However, keep in mind that the public primarily associates the word “doctor” with physicians.

E

Ellipsis

The three dots represent omitted words or a pause in speaking. They are preceded and followed by spaces.

Example:

She talked about the morning traffic, her previous vacation, her son’s wedding plans ... and enough other topics to bore everyone.

e.g.

It means for example, it is always followed by a comma.

Email

Use lower case and do not hyphenate.

Example:

For any questions regarding the event, please email the committee chair.

F**Farther, further**

“Farther” refers to physical distance.

“Further” refers to an extension of time or degree.

Examples:

The house was farther down the road than she remembered.

He asked what further side effects he could expect.

Fewer, less

Fewer applies to numbers and modifies a plural noun. Less applies to quantities and modifies a singular noun.

Example:

She now eats fewer meals and less candy.

Fundraising, fundraiser

It is one word in all forms and uses. Do not hyphenate.

H**Headlines**

Only the first word and proper nouns are capitalized.

Follow story style in spelling, but use numerals for all numbers and single quotes for quotation marks. Exception: use US, UK and UN (no periods) in all headlines.

Hispanic

The terms “Hispanic” and “Latino/Latina” can be interchangeably used when referring to individuals from a Spanish-speaking land or culture or from Latin America. Usage varies depending on context and the audience being addressed.

Hyphens

In type, hyphens are different from dashes. Hyphens are sometimes used to avoid ambiguity.

Example:

He recovered from financial collapse.

He re-covered his sofa in gray leather.

Never hyphenated: National First Vice President and National Second Vice President

I**Identity**

Racial, ethnic, sexual and gender identity is personal. Ethnicity is not synonymous with race; gender is not synonymous with sex; and gender identity is not synonymous with sexual orientation.

Although labels should be avoided whenever possible, it is sometimes relevant to the article, press release or report. In general, utilize the term people prefer to be called, especially when dealing with race and ethnicity.

Sometimes the common conventions of language inadvertently contain biases toward certain populations, e.g., using “normal” in contrast to someone identified as “disabled.” It is important to be aware of how the choice of terminology may come across to the reader, particularly if the reader identifies with the population in question.

i.e.

Abbreviation for the Latin id est or that is and is always followed by a comma.

Internet

See **Computer terms**

Its, it's

Its is a possessive pronoun, while it's contracts “it is” or “it has.”

A simple way to determine which term is needed is to read the sentence using “it is.” If the sentence doesn't make sense, its is needed, not it's.

J**Jargon**

Avoid the use of jargon, clichés and colloquialisms in communications. Copy filled with technical “insider's” language confuses and discourages readers.

K**Kids**

Use “children” unless referring to goats.

L**Latino/Latina**

“Latino” is the masculine word while “Latina” is the feminine. Latino can refer to a mixed group of both genders. The terms “Latino/Latina” and “Hispanic” can be interchangeably used when referring to individuals from a Spanish-speaking land or culture or from Latin America. Usage varies depending on context and the audience being addressed.

Use specific nationalities when available.

Examples:

Bolivian, Colombian, Cuban, Mexican, Peruvian, Puerto Rican

M**Magazine names**

See **Newspaper/Magazine/Journal names**

Months

Abbreviate Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. when used with a specific date.

Example:

My birthday is Jan. 15.

Spell out when used alone or only with a year.

Example:

January 1989 was the coldest month on record.

When using a month, date and year, set off the year with commas.

Example:

June 6, 1944, was D-Day.

Also see **Dates**

Movie titles

See **Composition titles**

N**Newspaper/Magazine/Journal names**

As stated in the AP Stylebook, capitalize “the” in a newspaper’s name if that is the way the publication prefers to be known. Do not place name in quotes.

Example:

Detroit Free Press

The New York Times

Where the location is needed, but is not part of the official name, use parentheses.

Example:

The Huntsville (Ala.) Times

Capitalize the magazine or journal name, but do not place it in quotes. Lowercase “magazine” or “journal” unless it is part of the publication’s formal title. Check the masthead to confirm the formal name.

Examples:

DELTA Journal

Ebony magazine

Although clever typographic elements may be part of a publication’s nameplate, editorial content never uses graphic symbols or stylized fonts, including exclamation points, quotation marks, plus signs, asterisks, bold type or italic type.

Examples:

the Cincinnati Enquirer, ESPN the Magazine, Lifetimes

Incorrect: The Cincinnati Enquirer, ESPN The Magazine, LIFETIMES

Numbers and numerical references

As a general rule, numbers from one to nine should be spelled out; numbers 10 and above should be left in numerical form. Use numerical figures, however, when referring to sections of a book, grade point average and scores.

Examples:

A GPA of 3.0

An ACT score of 8

Spell out “percent,” when it stands alone. Use the % sign when paired with a numeral, with no space, in most cases. This is a 2019 AP Style change.

Example:

More than 20% passed the test with a score of 85 or better.

Spell out ordinal numbers first through ninth. For the 10th ordinal and above, use figures.

Example:

First, second, 10th, 23rd, 31st

When describing money in text, do not include the decimal places for whole dollars.

Example:

Tickets cost \$5 for general admission, \$3 for students and \$2.50 for children under 12.

When describing time, do not use :00 as minute placeholders for whole hours. To avoid confusion, always use noon, not 12 p.m., to refer to middle of the day and midnight to refer to the end of the day.

Example:

The program will run from 8 a.m. to noon, with a coffee break at 10:15 a.m.

Telephone Numbers

When writing telephone numbers, use parentheses around the area code, a format that telephone companies have agreed upon for domestic and international calls.

Examples:

Call (313) 555-1200 for information.

Call toll-free (800) 555-1468.

Always include the area code since there can be multiple area codes in a region, city or town and people relocate with mobile phone numbers, making area codes less geographically restricted.

If extension numbers are needed, use a comma to separate the main number from the extension: (202) 555-1200, ext. 2.

P

Percentages

Spell out “percent,” when it stands alone. Use the % sign when paired with a numeral, with no space, in most cases. This is a 2019 AP Style change.

For amounts less than 1 percent, precede the decimal with a zero.

Examples:

Housing sales rose by 0.2%

Repeat percent with each individual figure.

Plurals

Compound words

For those terms that include two or more separate words or a hyphenated word, add the s to the most significant word.

Examples:

Attorneys general

Daughters-in-law

Multiple letters

Add an “s” with no apostrophe.

Examples:

ABCs

VIPs

Numerals

Add an “s” with no apostrophe.

Example:

1990s

Single letters

Add “ ’s” to avoid confusion.

Example:

His report card was full of A’s and B’s.

Poem titles

(see Composition titles)

Presentation titles

See **Composition titles**

Principal, principle

Principal refers to someone or something first in authority or importance.

Examples:

School principal, principal player, principal problem

Principle refers to a fundamental truth.

Example:

Principle of self-determination

Q

Quotation marks

In text, place quotation marks around names of songs, poems, lecture titles and other items listed under “Composition titles.” Periods and commas, when used with quotation marks, always go within the quotation marks.

Example:

The project is “long overdue,” said Matilda.

Dashes, semicolons, question marks and exclamation points go within quotation marks only when they relate to the quoted matter.

Example:

Ask him, “How do you plan to implement the proposal?”

S

Seasons

See **Capitalization**

Semicolon

Use the semicolon to indicate a greater separation of thought and information than a comma can convey, but less than what a period implies.

Example:

He leaves a daughter, Susan Jones of Los Angeles; three sons, Jim Smith of Los Angeles, John Smith of Chicago and Jay Smith of Denver; and a sister, Tammy Hill of New York.

Spaces

One space should be placed after all punctuation, including periods and question marks, at the end of sentences.

States

The names of the 50 U.S. states should be spelled out when used in the body of a story, whether standing alone or in conjunction with a city, town, village or military base. No state name is necessary if it is the same state as the dateline. See **Dateline**.

ABBREVIATIONS REQUIRED:

Use the state abbreviations found in the Dateline section, listed below:

State abbreviations with the postal code abbreviations in parentheses.

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

In conjunction with the name of a city, town, village or military base in most datelines.
In short-form listings of party affiliation: D-Ala., R-Mont.
In photo captions

When using a state name with a city name in editorial copy, surround the state name with commas.

Example:

Her business in Evansville, Indiana, has shown great profits.

Eight state names are never abbreviated:

Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah

T

Television show titles

See **Composition titles**

Time of day

See also **a.m., p.m.**

Use “noon” or “midnight,” rather than 12 p.m. or 12 a.m., which might be confusing. Avoid redundancy, such as: 10 a.m. this morning.

Use en-dashes or the word “to” to denote ranges in time. Use a.m. or p.m. only once for time ranges that begin and end either in the morning or in the afternoon.

Examples:

The Honors Convocation is scheduled for 4–6 p.m. on Friday, July 11.

The sorority meeting from 10 to 11 a.m. has been moved to 1 to 2 p.m.

The workshop is scheduled for 10 a.m.–2 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 13.

Titles

Do not combine titles such as Mr., Mrs., Ms., Dr., or Esq. with another title or with the abbreviation for an academic degree. The same is true with soror.

Example:

Dr. Paulette C. Walker or Paulette C. Walker, Ed.D. or Soror Paulette C. Walker

Incorrect: Dr. Paulette C. Walker, Ed.D. or Soror Dr. Paulette C. Walker

Use regular font in quotation marks for songs and television shows.

Examples:

“Respect” by Aretha Franklin

“Rise Up” by Andra Day

“A Different World”

“Scandal”

Use regular font with no quotation marks and not italics for titles of magazines and newspapers.

Examples:

The New York Times

Los Angeles Times

Time magazine

Toward

Not “towards”

U

URLs

See **Computer terms**

W

Who, Whom

“Who” and “whoever” are the nominative forms, used as subjects {Whoever said that?} or predicate nominatives. “Whom” and “whomever” are the objective forms, used as the object of a verb {You called whom?} or a preposition {To whom are you referring?}.

Incorrect: Whom should I say is calling?

Correct: Who should I say is calling?

Incorrect: I’ll talk to whomever will listen.

Correct: I’ll talk to whoever will listen.

Incorrect: Whoever you choose will suit me.

Correct: Whomever you choose will suit me.

Y

Years

For decades, use an “s” without an apostrophe.

Examples:

1960s and '60s

Incorrect: the 1960’s and 60’s

On first reference, use 1960s, not '60s.

For centuries, the preferred format is the 20th century, not the 1900s.

For periods covering multiple years, use 2006-07, not 2006-2007.

Exception: In writing about the end of a century, use 1999-2000.

Social Media



Social media is a communications channel that can reach thousands with one click. With such a powerful resource at every sorority member's fingertips, it is important to use social media wisely. When communicating about the Sorority on behalf of a chapter, the guidelines outlined in the Delta Style Guide should be followed. Using the same written language to discuss the organization, whether in print or online, will help to reinforce the Sorority's brand across the globe.

It is important to keep the audience in mind when writing for social media. Since messages are usually directed at Deltas and non-Deltas, try to minimize use of the term "soror." Also, attempt to avoid using terms that may not be easily understood by an external audience. Due to character limits and the expectation of brevity on social media, abbreviations may be necessary. Try to ensure abbreviations are understandable due to context clues or recent posts. Your goal is to engage those who see your posts so that they will interact in return.

Always participate in a manner that positively reflects the brand of the Sorority. It is imperative that posts do not violate the privacy of Deltas or divulge the Sorority's proprietary information.

The following pages offer examples of the Sorority's writing style applied on social media.

Social Media Examples



Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
15,971 followers
2mo

The Delta Red Pages has made its debut just in time for [#DSTConvention2019](#). All soror business owners and non-profit directors are encouraged to register their organizations to be part of the Sorority's first ever online busine ...see more

1,042 • 37 Comments • 14,270 Views

Like Comment Share



LET'S GET Social

Please use the Sorority hashtag **#DST1913** and the 54th National Convention hashtag **#DSTconvention2019** for your social media posts.
—National Information and Communications Committee

f /dstinc1913
ig @dstinc1913
tw @dstinc1913

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc
July 5

Be sure to follow @DSTinc1913 on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for the latest updates during our 54th National Convention!
[#DSTconvention2019](#) [#DST1913](#)

711 17 Comments 229 Shares

Like Comment Share

Most Relevant

- Vivian King Can't WAIT!
Like · Reply · 4w
- Catherine Eady-Rouse Praying for a fantastic 54th Convention. Sending Love To All
Like · Reply · 3w
- Sharon Walker Wooo Whoooo!! Love My DST!!!
Like · Reply · 4w
- Felicia Garry Fisher Delta Ready!
Like · Reply · 3w
- Stephanie Morton Getting ready!!
Like · Reply · 3w

Write a comment...



Twitter Example



Instagram Example



Revised 2019 by the National Information and Communications and
National Documents Review and Management Committees.

For detailed information about proper use of the internet and social media, consult
the Delta Internet Guidelines: <http://www.deltasigmatheta.org>.

Please direct any questions or suggestions regarding the Delta Writing Style Guide
to Deidra K. Diaz, chair of the National Information and Communications Committee
at infoandcommunications@deltasigmatheta.org.

