

Wet Apple Media Style Guide for Free-Lance Writers

The following is a Style Guide for submission of written materials for ALL Wet Apple Media publications.

We use QuarkXPress for OSX on the Mac to build the pages in all our publications. All text is imported directly from pre-formatted Microsoft Word (MS Word) documents. Quark automatically converts those documents to the style sheet used for each particular publication. Strict adherence to these guidelines will help us streamline the editing process considerably, as well as enhance the efficiency of the final production processes, and will be greatly appreciated.

Formatting Text

- All text must be typed, single-spaced, in Microsoft Word.
- All text must be submitted in 12 pt. Arial.
- All text must be justified.
- All stories must be spell and grammar-checked before submission.

Indents, Sentence Spacing, Paragraphs and Punctuation

- Indents are one-quarter inch at the beginning of each paragraph. Use the indent guide (the top of the two triangular slides) on the ruler for this, NOT the tab setting.
- There are NO carriage returns or spaces between paragraphs.
- There is only ONE space between the end of a sentence and beginning of the next one, not two as some publications require.
- ALL punctuation goes on the INSIDE of quotation marks. NO exceptions!
- A comma is required after the last word before a quote. Such as... Jones said, "This is a great day."
- The first word of a quotation is always capitalized just as the beginning of a new sentence is.
- When parentheses are used, punctuation always comes after. John went home (because he lived there).

Headlines, Subheads and Bylines

- Headlines have ONLY the first word capitalized, just as you would in any regular sentence. The first letter of every word of a headline is NOT capitalized.
- Entire headlines are NOT capitalized either.
- The entire headline as well as the byline should appear in bold type using the bolding tool in the formatting toolbar in MS Word.
- Bylines should appear as the first line in the story, with an immediate carriage return.
- The word "By" is always capitalized. There is also a carriage return between the headline and the byline, but not one between the byline and the first sentence of the story, so it should appear like this:

This is the headline

By Your Name

The first line of the story goes here, in regular type, without a carriage return.

- Subheads are always in bold type, using the bolding tool in the formatting toolbar in MS Word.
- Each word in a subhead is capitalized.
- Subheads are NOT to be underlined.

Working With Numbers In a Story

- Dates are always written as just the number (Jan. 12, Oct. 15, etc.). There is no “th” or “st” suffix after the number. Do not use the year, if it is THIS year.
- Time of day is “a.m.” or “p.m.” NOT, am, AM, A.M. pm, PM. or P.M. (6 a.m. or 10 p.m. is correct).
- Just use the numeral if it is the top of the hour. 10 a.m. is correct. 10:00 a.m. is NOT. Only use the minutes when they are indicated, such as 6:30 a.m.
- Numbers from one to nine are spelled out. Numbers from 10 and above use the numerals.
- Telephone numbers always have the area code in parentheses such as (360) 555-1212. This includes toll-free numbers as well (800, 888, 877, 866 etc.) Do NOT use the numeral 1 in front of a toll free number — just use the toll-free prefix as if it were an area code. (800) 555-1212.
- Dollar amounts do not use the cents unless it is a specific amount. (\$5,600, NOT \$5,600.00, but \$5,656.56 would be correct. In the case of millions of dollars, use a decimal and round it off (\$1.5 million, NOT \$1,523,462). If it is more than half of the next step up, round upwards. (\$1,596,000 would round UP to \$1.6 million, while \$1,523,462 would round DOWN to \$1.5 million).
- All percentages are written using the word, NOT the symbol. (10 percent is correct, 10% is NOT).

Working With Bullets and Number Formatting in a Story

- When using bullets, DO NOT use the bullet-formatting tool on the toolbar in MS Word. This changes the spacing and tabbing format for the ENTIRE story, causing it to have to be completely reformatted during the editing process. Bullet each bullet point individually, using the original story formatting outlined above. Bullet points are indented one-quarter inch just like the beginning of each paragraph. Use the indent guide (the top triangular slide) on the ruler for this, NOT the tab setting. Bullets can be set individually using Option 8 in MS Word for the Mac.
- The very same rules apply for using numbered points in a story as they do for bullets. Numbers are ALWAYS followed by a close parentheses indicator, NOT by a period. For example: 2) is correct, 2. Is NOT.

Working With Web Addresses In a Story

- When an Internet URL (Web address) is used, eliminate the http:// when followed by www. If it isn't followed by www., then leave it in. www.wetapple.com is correct. <http://www.wetapple.com> is not. <http://wetapple.com> is acceptable because www. Is not part of the URL.
- Web addresses always have an underline when typed in MS Word. The program does this automatically, and prints them in blue. Select the address, and eliminate the underline. It will take two mouse clicks on the underline tool in the MS Word formatting toolbar to do this.
- The proper references to technology terms are: Web site (two words, Web capitalized); e-mail (a dash between “e” and “mail”); online (one word); and Internet (the “I” is always capitalized).

Working With Photos in a Story

- Under NO conditions should photos EVER be embedded in an MS Word document. These are simply unusable for us under most conditions, have to be extracted from the document, and the entire document reformatted.

- Photos should be e-mailed separately and each one sent as an individual attachment. This way, if something is corrupted in the e-mailing process, we only lose and/or have to deal with one photo, not all of them.
- If photos can't be e-mailed for some reason, it is permissible to deliver them to us on a CD. Please label the CD so we know who it is from and what it is.
- Although we have to convert photos to CMYK, .tiff files for printing, please send the original JPG photos, not photo-retouched or resized in any way. The original photos directly as downloaded from the camera is the preferred submission method.
- Although the printing process requires high resolution (Dot Per Inch or "dpi") photos, digital cameras don't usually have dpi settings, and most can only set a pixel-by-pixel size designation (Example: 1024x1280 pixels). Therefore, please use the "fine quality" or "highest quality" setting on your camera. Designating a pixel size if possible makes sure we can convert them to get the right size photos we need.
- Photos, when saved in Adobe PhotoShop, should be saved in the Macintosh format whenever possible, even if you are working on a PC.
- It is permissible to Zip individual photo attachments (or use Stuffit on the Mac) if the file size is exceptionally large.

Other General Editorial Information

- We generally use AP Style. This means months are abbreviated, as are state names. State names use the old-style abbreviations (Calif., Fla., Wash., etc), NOT the current Post Office-style (CA, FL, WA, etc.).
- Stories are NOT to be written in the first person. NO references such as, "she told me that..." Use, " she said," or "she stated," or "she noted," or "she indicated," etc. Nothing like, "I saw this," Use something like, "It was apparent that... or, "it was obvious that..."
- Personal observations, comments and opinions are NOT to be used in stories. Opinions go on the editorial page only, NOT in news stories. These WILL be edited out.
- When referring to someone in a story, use their first and last names, as well as any title in ONLY the FIRST reference to them. "John Jones, vice president for the firm, said, "This is a great day."
- Use only the LAST name in additional references, not their first names. "Jones went on to say that..." The ONLY exception to this is when there is more than one person in the story with the same last name. Then, use both first and last names, not just the first name. John Smith said... Meanwhile Jane Smith disagreed, saying...
- Capitalize their job title or position ONLY when it comes BEFORE their name in the story. Such as: General Manager John Jones noted that it is a great day. If the title is used AFTER the name, it is NOT capitalized, but is usually used as a preposition and bordered by commas. Such as: John Jones, general manager of the firm, noted that it is a great day.
- Positions or departments within a company are NOT capitalized. Such as, "He will head the credit department at the bank." In this instance, "credit department" is NOT capitalized. However, if the story reads, "Credit Department Manager, John Jones, noted it's a great day," then it would be capitalized only because it is his job title.
- Ampersands are NOT to be used in the text of a story unless they are part of a company or proper name. For example, Date and Time is correct, Date & Time is NOT. Jones & Sons, as part of a proper name, is allowable.