

*Style Book*



THE  
SACRAMENTO  
UNION



# Style Sheet

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**T**HIS style book is for the instruction and guidance of reporters, correspondents and all other employees who write, edit or handle copy.

To secure uniform style, brevity and accuracy it is essential that you familiarize yourself thoroughly with the entire contents of this style book.

If additional instructions become necessary they will be given you for inclusion in this book.

Please preserve this book.

The general style of The Sacramento Union is simplicity. Short words, short sentences, short paragraphs will tell the story so that everyone can understand.

Remember that the reader does not know as much of the story as you. If you write of something unusual explain it in simple, direct terms.

Give the source of all stories. If possible quote directly from your informant. This is particularly essential in all stories relating to crime, civil or criminal charges or to any disputed claims. If there are two sides to the story, get both.

Names always are news, but only when the names are correct. Give full names. Never write Mrs. J. Jones. Find out what the initial J means.

Keep all stories up to date. If you are reporting a meeting that was held several days before, get a new angle into the lead. Base your lead upon some result of the meeting, or, if there is no development, feature the next meeting or future plans of the organization.

It is essential that you check the authenticity of all stories. If possible check the persons named in your story. If they cannot be reached check someone who can speak for them.

Remember that editorials are written by editorial writers. A news story must be all news. Opinions, claims and charges must always be directly attributed to someone. As a reporter you have no opinions.

News is the world's most perishable product. Write it while it's still news.

Do not hesitate to ask for help. If you are working on a story that you cannot handle by yourself call the office and explain your difficulty.

## COMPOUND WORDS

Two or more words are compounded either to express a unit idea or to prevent ambiguity.

In general, two nouns used together in their literal sense are compounded only if one of them commonly functions as a prefix or suffix, and when the compound has only one accent.

The following are examples of solid compounds with the words used as prefixes and suffixes in italics: *snowline*, *postmaster*,



*policyholder, bedroom, businessmen, birthplace, landowner, newspaperman, brickmaker.*

When neither of the words is commonly used as a prefix or suffix and the meaning is clear without compounding they are written as two words—

abiding place	dining room	post office
fellow citizen	day labor	wave length

In general omit the hyphen, when its omission causes no ambiguity in sound or sense.

A hyphen is used to avoid doubling a vowel or tripling a consonant: co-operate, re-elect, ball-like. To insure intelligibility—head-on, near-by. To join a single letter: X-ray, T-shaped. To join the elements of an improvised compound: make-believe, know-it-all. A hyphen is used in a compound noun having an adverb as its second element: go-between, hold-up, looker-on.

A hyphen is used in compound adjectives in which the second element is a participle, as good-looking, cold-blooded, high-minded. Compound color terms: blue-green; unit modifiers, well-known author, one-half interest, two-party system, 10-round fight.

A hyphen is not used if the first word is an adverb ending in *ly*, *i. e.*, recently completed project, or when the first word in a three-word modifier is an adverb modifying the second, long drawn out, very well defined, etc.

Do not hyphenate single titles: vice president, undersecretary, commander in chief, major general; but, secretary-treasurer.

Prefixes and suffixes form derivatives—not compounds—and do not require a hyphen except the prefixes *ex*, *quasi* and *self* and the suffix *elect*. Otherwise, a hyphen is used before a proper name or to prevent mispronunciation or misinterpretation: semifinal, ultraviolet, antislavery, ex-governor, self-defense, president-elect, un-American re-treat (to treat again). Combining forms are treated as prefixes: arteriosclerosis, hydroelectric.

Two exceptions to the above rules are transatlantic and transpacific. Otherwise trans-Mississippi, etc. Idiomatic phrases are not hyphenated: inasmuch, insofar.

#### ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviate such terms as—

Scriptural citations: Gen. iv, 2-9.

Names of states when immediately following the city or place designated; for instance, Elko, Nev. (When a city is of such general importance and reputation as to be commonly known, the state need not be specified; for instance, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, New Orleans, St. Louis). Omit the name of the state in the dateline of all California cities.

Streets, avenues and boulevards are spelled out. For instance—K street, Folsom boulevard, 12th avenue.

Company is not abbreviated.

Abbreviate title when initials are given—Gov. Frank F. Merriam. Spell out title when initials omitted: Governor Merriam.

#### SPELLING

Do not use simplified spelling in such words as: through, throughout, though, although.

Omit the ending “te” from such words as cigaret, omelet, brunet, etc.

Double the final consonant before a suffix in accented last syllables: abhorred, admitted, allotted, controlled, occurred.

Do not double on unaccented last syllables: benefited, kidnaped, combated, traveled, leveled, modeled, labeled, enameled, worshiped, marshaled.

Theater, center, etc. Not theatre, centre.

Use “e” in place of diphthongs “ae” and “oe” in such words as anesthetic, diarrhea, subpena, etc.

Use “dg-ment” rather than “dge-ment” in such words as judgment, abridgment, etc.

Use “s” in defense, pretense, offense.

Do not put “s” on forward, backward, toward, etc.

Fair Oaks, not Fair Oaks; Cosumnes, not Consumnes; Slough-house, Orangevale.

Trinity procathedral.

#### STYLE

Omit “on” before dates. For instance: The meeting will be held June 1.

Always use the shortest possible expression. For instance: “arrested.” Not “taken into custody.”

Use 4 a. m. Not 4 o'clock.

Time is written before dates. For instance: The meeting will be held at 4 p. m. June 9.

Use numerals, not words, when points are to be emphasized. For instance: 1, not first. In listing points, developments, etc., write it this way:

1—Four men were killed, seven injured.

2—Property damage exceeded \$100,000.

Do not quote names of horses, ships, paintings, characters in a play, or matter following an em dash. Do not quote matter marked indent, solid.

However, quote names of plays, movies and titles of books.



When Saturday of next week is designated use the date, not the day. For instance: May 28. Not Saturday, May 28.

When Saturday of this week is designated use the day and not the date. For instance: Saturday. Not Saturday, May 28.

Use "in" not "at" as in the following: The meeting will be held in the Hotel Senator. Not "at" the Hotel Senator.

When listing officers, give the name and then title: John Jones, president; Henry Smith, vice president; *but* Directors Bill Brown, Fred Crawford and Joe Sullivan.

Do not say "the late" when referring to a dead person. Say: Robert Jackson and Henry Jones, deceased, started the company.

#### CAPITALIZATION

Capitalize proper names, months, days of the week, geographical names, holidays, lodges, schools, theaters, unions, amusement resorts, parks, etc.

Capitalize sections of the city, such as Oak Park, Curtis Oaks, etc.

When using a title before a man's name, capitalize it. When using after his name, do not capitalize it. For instance: Governor Merriam; C. H. S. Bidwell, mayor of Sacramento. In general, if the title is short, use it before the name; if long, use it afterward.

In foreign names do not capitalize von, van, d', da when preceded by forename or title. In American and English names they are usually capitalized.

Capitalize names of political parties: Democrats, Republicans, Socialists, Communists, Nazis, Fascists—but put down divisions, such as standpatters, progressives; and, when referring to principles rather than parties, such as fascism, communistic, democratic, etc.

Capitalize names of books, plays, movies, Bible, Old Testament, Ten Commandments, Sermon on the Mount, etc.

Keep up appellations of the Deity: Lord, Savior, etc., and pronouns which refer directly to the Deity.

In nouns named after some person, keep up the proper part, such as Maxim gun, Winchester rifle, etc.

Keep up distinctive patriotic and historical names, such as Old Glory, Magna Charta, Declaration of Independence, Holy Land, Dark Ages, etc.

The in The Sacramento Union—use the official and complete name of the paper. When the name is used again in the same story use "The Union" only.

Capitalize Negro (special request).

Capitalize title permanently used as a substitute for a proper name: Prince of Wales, Duke of Windsor.

Capitalize nicknames, such as Il Duce, Der Fuehrer, Kingfish, etc.

Capitalize the first word of a complete quotation and the first of a series of words or phrases following a colon.

Fragmentary quotations are not capitalized.

#### DO NOT CAPITALIZE

Governmental institutions, such as senate, house, supreme court, toll bridge authority, interstate commerce commission, citizens' conservation corps, national recovery administration, 10th congressional district or titles of bills or laws, as Wagner labor disputes act, national industrial recovery act, reconstruction finance corporation.

Do not capitalize the common ending of a proper noun when used in its common meaning: Senator hotel, Sacramento river, Vienna bakery, Rotary club, Sacramento chamber of commerce, Grant Union high school, Sacramento junior college, George Manhart post No. 61, Parent-Teacher association; *but*, Madison Square Garden, Wall Street (as a money center), White House.

Do not capitalize indefinite geographical terms, such as the east, orient or oriental, arctic, northern California, southern California, vatican; new deal, holy see, pope, soviet.

In addition to the general rules, do not capitalize: Points of the compass: north, south, east, west. Seasons: autumn, spring, etc.

Abbreviations of the time of day, a. m., p. m., noon.

Such words as bologna sausage, brussels sprouts, morocco leather, georgette crepe, herculean, great white way, arctic expedition, etc.

#### FIGURES

Spell out numbers below 10 and use numerals above. For instance: Nine, 13. When a confusion of numbers appear in a paragraph print them in figures.

However, in money, ages and per cent use figures.

In his pocket were 5, 25 and 50-cent pieces.

All boys from 5 to 16 years of age.

The commissions ranged from 5 to 20 per cent.

Fourth street, 14th street.

(Certain exceptions to the above are listed below.)

Never start a sentence with figures or use figures immediately after a colon.

Spell out numbers used casually or in proper names, for instance: Twelve Apostles, in nine cases out of ten, one out of a thousand, forty-niners, eleventh hour, football eleven, sacred thirty-six, etc.



Use a comma in numbers of more than four digits, 1000, 10,000, counting dollar mark as one digit, viz., \$1,000, not \$1000.

Use a period in decimals and to separate dollars and cents. In case of even dollars, write it \$10, not \$10.00.

Where paragraphs are numbered, use figures, colon and quad; instance—

1: The man, etc.

Article 1:

Section 1:

Use plain numerals in all dates; for instance: July 21, instead of July 21st.

When a man's age is immediately followed by his address, it makes for clarity to separate the two numbers by "of," but otherwise omit the "of." For instance: A truck hit John Jones, 45. A truck hit John Jones, 45, of 2549 K street.

Always use figures in scores, time records, betting odds, market reports, money values, statistics, temperatures, latitudes, prices, votes, etc.