

San Diego Family Magazine Freelance Writers' Style Guide

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Please send to [HYPERLINK "mailto:Kirsten@sandiegofamily.com"](mailto:Kirsten@sandiegofamily.com) Kirsten@sandiegofamily.com and include one of the following in the subject line of your email: Story idea, Article, Query. If you have photos to include, please give us details on the photographer. For example, Anne Johnson, photo by Mark Johnson. Or, Photo used with permission from the author (if it's a personal photo), etc.

Most stories should be 800-1000 words, and up to 1200 for a feature. Please contact me if you anticipate your story running long.

Proof your work before you submit your article. Use spelling and grammar check features in your word processing program, have another person read the article, if possible.

STYLE (Follow AP style guidelines)

Always give your article a headline (see formatting on sample page). Even though it may be changed in editing, your story is incomplete if you submit it without a working title.

Open with a 'hook' to get the reader interested, use the remainder of the story for supporting information.

Localize the story within the first couple paragraphs.

Keep paragraphs short.

Single space between sentences.

Give your subject a gender (male or female), and keep it consistent throughout the piece.

Do not use he/she, him/her.

When mentioning parents or professionals, always give the city and state where they live or work. Strive for interviews/resources with a San Diego county focus.

Submit all files in 12 point Garamond font.

Be consistent in lists, don't use using state and ZIP in some addresses but not in others.

Avoid beginning sentences with And, So or But.

Condense your sentences when possible. Example: Jill is entering the room. Change to:

Jill enters the room.

Avoid using unnecessary or 'filler' words like however, anyway etc.

Omit trademark symbols.

Resources

AP Stylebook (current edition)

Basic AP info: [HYPERLINK "http://www.usu.edu/journalism/faculty/sweeney/resources/ap.htm"](http://www.usu.edu/journalism/faculty/sweeney/resources/ap.htm) www.usu.edu/journalism/faculty/sweeney/resources/ap.htm

America Copy Editors Society

HYPERLINK "<http://www.copydesk.org/reference.htm>" www.copydesk.org/reference.htm (resource links)

HYPERLINK "<http://www.copydesk.org/words/>" www.copydesk.org/words/ (more resources about writing & style)

SAMPLE

Wendy Writer (name for payment)
755 Writer Street
Chula Vista, CA 91910
619-425-0000
emailme@cts.com

2007 © Wendy Writer
850 words
First Time Rights
Electronic Rights Given

Learn to Research Your Roots (capitalize title)
Using the web to find your ancestors (optional subtitle—lower case)
Wendy Penn (nom de plume, if used)

Body of Article (Left justify first line of first paragraph. Return/enter at end of paragraph.)
(Indent first line of following paragraphs. Do not tab, slide the upper guide on the ruler to indent lines 1/2 inch)

Quote begins a new paragraph.

(Include a brief blurb about you at the end of every story. It should tell the reader something about your background for writing that particular article.)

Wendy Penn is a freelance writer and mom of two boys. Wendy and her family live in Chula Vista, CA. She is currently tracing her family's roots at the local library; visit her on the web at HYPERLINK "<http://www.wendywriter.com>" www.wendywriter.com.

SIDEBAR

Add additional information here. It will appear in a text box. Keep sidebar items short and sweet. Just the facts, ma'am. Do not summarize article. Alphabetize lists (websites, shops, etc.) List most recent resources first (books and articles by publication date).

Cathy's Coffee

HYPERLINK "<http://www.cathyscoffee.com>" www.cathyscoffee.com
858-555-4521

Joe's Java

HYPERLINK "<http://www.joesjava.com>" www.joesjava.com
619-555-joes

SIDEBAR 2 (For additional info/resources)

Best Beans

John Smith (2007, Hyperion)

All About Caffeine

Nancy Jones (2006, Harcourt)

Sources: Include your source list at the end of your article including all books and articles (author, date and publisher), websites (web addresses), and interview subjects (name and contact information). This is helpful if we need to clarify any information in your story.

Specifics Follow these guidelines, when in doubt, refer to the most current AP stylebook.

Ages Always use figures. When the context does not require years or years old, the figure is presumed to be years. Examples: A 5-year-old boy, but the boy is 5 years old. The boy, 7, has a sister, 10. The woman, 26, has a daughter 2 months old. The law is 8 years old. The race is for 3-year-olds. The woman is in her 30s (no apostrophe).

Amounts Fewer: number (fewer marbles)
Less: volume (less milk)
More than: number of (more than 50 exhibits)
Over: refers to height/spatial relationships

Citations When citing from books, include author, year, publisher.
Example: *The Truth About Forever* by Sarah Dessen (2006, Viking).
For book reviews, always include author, publisher, year, price.
Italicize book titles. Article titles appear in quotation marks.

Numerals Spell one through nine, use numerals for 10 and up. Spell out a whole numbers that begin a sentence. (Twenty-five years ago...)
Write out dollars and cents. I have five dollars. The tickets are 50 dollars each.
Exception: numerals that identify a calendar year. If necessary, rewrite the sentence to place the number inside.
Use figures with millions or billions. 100 million people, 3 billion dollars.

Percent Use figures: 1 percent, 2.5 percent (use decimals, not fractions) Do not use %. Only use two decimal places. 15.25, not 15.253.

Recent/Recently:

Refers to events within the preceding three months. Give older information a more concrete time frame (four months ago, early in 2006). If you're using information that's more than a year or two old, you may want to reconsider your resources (unless it's something like the US Census or the Olympics).

Sequence Do not superscript sequence numbers. 21st; 18th.
Spell out first through ninth when they indicate sequence in time or location: first base; she was fourth in the race. Starting with 10th, use figures: 14th annual; 23rd phone call.
Use 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc. when the sequence is part of a proper name or title;
Examples: 7th Fleet; 1st Sgt.; 2nd District Court

States Use city and state abbreviations if the town is small or not well-known.

Thorne is a long-time resident of Durango, CO.
Use city for capitals and large cities.
I recently visited New York and Boston.

Titles Director of Analytic Funding, Liz Smith
Liz Smith, director of analytic funding for Smith-Thompson
Jim Barnes, professor of psychology
Professor Jim Barnes

Years For years, write '80s or 1980s, NOT 80's or 1980's.

PUNCTUATION

Only use exclamation marks and italics when necessary.
Put a hyphen after some prefixes like ex-, self- and all-, especially if the last letter of the prefix is the same as the first letter of the word it's connected to.
Examples: re-enact; co-operate; ex-mayor; self-esteem.
Fifth- and sixth-graders.
Use "curly" quotes. You can change this in MS Word at Tools>Auto Correct> Auto Format as You Type.
When a compound adjective comes before the noun, use a hyphen.
Example: *Please don't wear that moth-eaten sweater again.*

Commas Use to separate elements in a series, but do not put a comma before the conjunction in a simple series. The flag is red, white and blue.
Put a comma before the concluding conjunction in a series, however, if an integral element of the series requires a conjunction: I had orange juice, toast, ham, and eggs for breakfast.

Ellipsis Three periods used to indicate the deletion of one or more words in condensing quotes, texts and documents. The form should look like ... this (space, ellipsis, space). Can also indicate an unfinished thought, with the assumption that the reader knows what you are going to say. A bird in the hand ... (but please try to avoid using this construction).

Never begin a sentence with an ellipsis. Continuing dialog can be represented with commas or periods.

Example: "I can't find my book anywhere ... so I guess it's gone for good."
"I can't find my book anywhere. I guess it's gone for good."
"I can't find my book anywhere," she said. "I guess it's gone for good."

Parentheses We bought a pint of vanilla ice cream. (Chocolate and strawberry are also available.)

We bought a pint of vanilla ice cream (it's Ann's favorite).

TIME List times as follows: 7:30 am to 3 pm not 3:00 p.m.
am & pm are lowercase, no periods.

Days Spell out if used in a headline/subhead: Wednesday, Nov. 4, 1997

Months When month is used with a specific date, abbreviate only Jan., Feb., etc.
Nov. 2 was the coldest day of the month.
Spell out when using alone or with a year alone. His birthday is May 9.
When a phrase lists only a month and a year, do not separate the year with commas. May 2007.
When a phrase refers to a month, day and year, set off the year with commas.
Feb. 14, 2004 is the target date.

WEB INFO Website (one word). When listing websites, skip the http:// unless it is truly needed. HYPERLINK "http://www.sandiegofamily.com"
www.sandiegofamily.com. HYPERLINK "http://sandiegoresources.org"
http://sandiegoresources.org. Check all links to make sure they are still active. Capitalize Internet and Web. Email (one word).