

House Style Guide for Communications for TMTA

Submitted by Debra Hadfield, August 20, 2005; Revised May 2011

Do not give directions to see another page – just the section.

Capitalize Convention when referring to the TMTA Convention, even if used as a single word without “TMTA.”

Capitalize TMTA Office.

TMTA Handbook in italics

Capitalize Student Affiliate

TMTA June Leondar Chamber Music/Ensemble Contest (not Contests)

TMTA Officers, not Executive Officers

MTNA/TMTA, not TMTA/MTNA

Use “an,” not “a” before MTNA because of the phonetic vowel sound.

Do not capitalize “chair,” “coordinator,” or “assistant coordinator,” unless it is part of the full title. Example: *The TMTA Convention Chair will make the decision.*
Mail entries to the chair

All-Star Festival, not All Star Festival

SA Publication Contest, not SA Publication Competition

SA Performance Contests, not SA Performance Competitions

and, not &

chair, not chairman

email, not e-mail

fundraisers not fund raisers

nonmembers, not non-members

online, not on-line

PDF not pdf

sight-read, not sight read or sightread

webmaster, not web master

website, not web site

www.TMTA.org, not TMTA website

2" w x 3" h, not 2 X 3"

Use the article "the" when needed.

Alternate the use of "he" and "she" rather than use "he/she."

Spell out a number when it begins a sentence.

Spell out whole numbers below 10, use figures for 10 and above. Exception: Grades 7-12.

9 a.m. to 5 p.m., not 9-5 p.m.

Entries are due April 1, not April 1st

Do not use parenthesis if you can avoid them.

Avoid using italics and underlining for emphasis.

In SA Handbook, use numbers instead of bullets.

Post-12, not P-12 (The hyphen is needed when used as a compound modifier. Example: *Post-12 entrants are exempt from theory requirements.* For unity, always use the hyphen.

Use hyphens instead of dots in phone numbers.

Use a hyphen when a compound modifier (two or more words that express a single concept) precedes a noun, except after "very" and all adverbs that end in "ly." Example: *He received first place. First-place winners receive trophies.*
Example: *home-school students.*

Use commas to join items in a series. This includes a comma before the conjunction that links the last item to the rest of the series. Example: *Before making a decision, he studied the proposition, interviewed many of the people concerned, and tried to determine if there were any historical precedents.*

In titles, capitalize:

1. The first and last words
2. All nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives
3. Any conjunction or preposition of five letters or more

In titles, do NOT capitalize, unless the word is the first or last word of the title:

1. Articles - a, an, the
2. Prepositions and conjunctions of four letters or fewer
3. The particle “to” used with an infinitive
(Example of “to” capitalized at the end of a title: “It’s My Participle, and I’ll Dangle It if I Want To.”)

Periods and commas always go inside closing quotation marks, even if it is a single word (but not if it is a single letter or number.); semicolons and colons go outside closing quotation marks.

The only grade that will satisfy her is an “A”.

On this scale, the highest ranking is a “1”, not a “10”.

Placing the comma and period inside quotation marks is all other instances is strictly American usage. The British are inclined to place commas and periods logically. Americans do place question marks and exclamation points logically:

Have you read the assigned short story, “Music in the Light”?

No, but I did read last week’s assignment, “Mother Made Me Practice!”

Here’s an illogical, but correct placement of a period inside a quotation mark:

To get to the next page, just press the button marked “Enter.”

Historical note: When type was handset a period or comma outside of quotation marks at the end of a sentence tended to get knocked out of position, so the printers tucked them inside the quotation marks to keep them safe. Apparently only American printers were more attached to convenience than logic, since British printers continued to risk the misalignment of their periods and commas.

Specific Teacher Spellings:

A.J. Collins-Thompson