

TMTA Style Guide for Communications

Established August 2005; Revised January 2013

The major purpose of a Style Guide is consistency. Many of the items listed below may be done correctly in more than one way. This TMTA Style Guide was created to encourage consistency in all TMTA publications.

General Guidelines for Writing Articles for TMTA

When writing articles, avoid hyphens because they create spacing problems in printing the *Texas Music Teacher* and *TMTA Handbook*.

Do not give directions to see another page in the *TMTA Handbook* – just the section.

Do not use parenthesis if you can avoid them.

Alternate the use of “he” and “she” rather than use “he/she.”

Numbers

In *TMTA Handbook*, use numbers instead of bullets.

\$25, not \$25.00

2” w x 3” h, not 2 X 3”

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

Entries are due April 1, not April 1st

Use hyphens instead of dots in phone numbers.

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.

Italics

Avoid using italics and underlining for emphasis.

Links to websites may be underlined for active link on www.tmta.org.

TMTA Handbook in italics

Texas Music Teacher in italics. May be referred to as *TMT* as second reference.

Capitals

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

Do not capitalize: board reports, officer reports, TMTA members.

Capitalize Student Affiliate.

Capitalize TMTA Office.

Capitalize TMTA Convention (capitalize convention when preceded by TMTA).

President-Elect and Business Activities-Elect

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.”*)

Alphabetized Style Guide

All-Star Festival, not All Star Festival

and, not &

chair, not chairman

email, not e-mail

first-place winners; received first place

fundraisers not fund raisers

home-school students

MTNA/TMTA, not TMTA/MTNA

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

nonmembers, not non-members

online, not on-line

PDF not pdf

SA, not S.A.

SA Publication Contest, not SA Publication Competition

SA Performance Contests, not SA Performance Competitions

sight-read, not sight read or sightread

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

TMTA Officers, not Executive Officers

up-to-date reports; reports are up to date

VPBA is Vice President for Business Activities (for not of)

VPSA is Vice President for Student Activities (for not of)

webmaster, not web master

website, not web site

www.tmta.org, not TMTA website

Young Artist (Post-12)

Additional Writing Guidelines

Hyphens

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.”

Commas and Quotation Marks

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.* 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 in 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.