

Smart Growth Tulsa Style Sheet

revised 1-15-2017

Articles submitted to SGT will ideally conform to current editions of the *Associated Press Stylebook* and *Webster's New World College Dictionary* subject to the following preferred exceptions, additions and reminders:

Headline: Always give this a sporting shot. If we recommend changes it will not indicate a failure on your part but rather an attempt to enhance the appeal of our followers so they will read the piece. Avoid using proper nouns unless necessary. People will assume you are writing about something in Tulsa, so the headline "Tulsa Man Writes Articles About Transportation" might appear a bit redundant.

Subhead: You know your story better than anyone so suggest a subhead as well. Proper nouns are more acceptable here, but we still prefer you avoid "Tulsa" or "local." The subhead uses sentence capitalization, while the headline uses title capitalization:

Reading the Updated Style Sheet (Head)

Writers just love reading this stuff (Subhead)

Byline: Please include your byline after the headline and subhead. Capitalize "By" and your first and last name.

Formatting: Single-spaced, Arial, 14 pt., single space after punctuation, no space between paragraphs. No weird tabbing – paragraph indention should be set to 0.18". Left justified. Please send your piece as a .docx or .doc file, not a .wpd, .txt, or anything else. Format the entire document that way, including the body and the items ahead of it, head, subhead. The correctly formatted submission will include the eyebrow (the name of your column or the kind of feature you are writing, a pull quote, headline, subhead and your byline:

Transportation

Pull Quote "Strategic transit investments pay big dividends."

Transit Plays a Key Role in Smart Growth Neighborhoods

Part one of a four-part series

By: John Q. Public

Apostrophes: Pay attention to these, especially with "its" the possessive vs. "it's" (contraction of "it is") and when you denote decades. '70s is correct, while '70's is incorrect.

Money: If you reference cost/money, write \$5 or \$5.95. Do not use five dollars, five bucks, or 5 bucks.

Addresses: If you reference a specific place – a gallery, restaurant, venue, list its address, its specific street address. Avoid the relative location, such as an intersection unless it has none such as a park or

block party that has no specific address. Style it correctly as in City Hall, 175 East 2nd Street. That's number, direction and street type.

Phone numbers: Use the entire number, including the area code. Style it with dashes, not parentheses or periods: 918-555-0000.

URLS: Use them only if they are simple. http://www.tulsaworld.com/gallery/best-in-the-world-tulsa-s-best-restaurants/collection_0f7e39bd-f8ba-53b6-a078-3de7cf83bc14.html is way too long. Use tinyurl or bit.ly to change it to a shorter version like <http://tinyurl.com/qcw4fna>. Don't include any capitalization and do not use www. in the web reference.

Said, says: We prefer 'said' not 'says.' John said. In general, don't use anything else, in others words "no explained, exclaimed, shared, stated or revealed unless absolutely necessary for the context of the quote. Unless you are describing who the person is, the name should precede the "said."

The comma: It is your friend but use it correctly.

Attribution: Attribute quotes as soon as possible so the reader knows who is speaking.

You: We prefer that you avoid including yourself in the story if possible as it can become distracting. Your story or column is after all not really about you, is it? Your name and profile will appear at the bottom of the piece so everyone will know who wrote it.

Italics/quotes: Art exhibits, plays, TV show, films, album, musicals and book/magazine/newspaper titles go in italics. Song names, specific art works, article titles, etc. go in quotes. Also, punctuation will go inside the quotes with few exceptions.

Time/dates: 7pm is the preferred style. If it's a range, use 7—10pm. If it's am to pm use 7am—10pm. Abbreviate the month unless using alone or with a year alone. Examples: "Saturday, Feb. 26" and "February 2014." If you use several date ranges, separate with a semicolon. Example: The event runs at 7pm Feb. 7—9; 10pm Feb. 16—17; and 2 pm Feb. 25.

Photos: High resolution graphics add to any blog post. Secure the best you can get and submit them with your article, but be sure you either own the rights to them or you have written approval to use them, that is our policy.

Quoting people/sources: Direct quotes can enhance any column but they must come from fresh sources. Never regurgitate press releases, media reports or website descriptions.

In general: When using dashes, the preferred is the **em dash**—not the hyphen -.

Numbers: Spell out any number between one and ten. Beginning at 11, use the Arabic number unless the number is the first word of the sentence, only then should you spell it out.

Percent: Write it out 100 percent of the time.

One space after a period: Most baby-boomers took a typing course and learned to put two spaces after punctuation but times have changed and people now take keyboarding or teach themselves. Old habits die hard but most publishers insist on one space after the period. We are flexible but prefer one space.

Length vs. Brevity: We seek clean, concise writing that conveys a compelling story. There is no need to be sesquipedalian. Avoid alliteration, sentences ending in prepositions, clichés, comparisons, generalizations, redundancies, exaggerations and rhetorical questions.

Your writing should be transparent, and your words should take a backseat to the subject and story. Basically: we all need to just get out of the way.

Still have questions? It is almost impossible to cover all grammar and citation issues, so you may want to consider the following resources: the [Chicago Manual of Style](#) available online by clicking the preceding link. It covers many questions that are not referenced explicitly in our style sheet. The *Brief English Handbook* is another excellent guide.