

PROBE STYLE MANUAL

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Preface

In 1989 PROBE produced the first edition of the *PROBE Style Manual*, a guidebook that could be used by the average bulletin editor and could serve as a standard usage guide for Society publications.

This second edition represents the collective wisdom of several barbershoppers with extensive backgrounds in journalism, writing, and editing. It covers the basic issues presented in the first edition but includes updates and additions in several categories, revisions and enlargements of other categories, and adds sections of new material.

The *PROBE Style Manual* is not a comprehensive guide. For this reason, editors and writers should have access to other reference tools such as *The Associated Press Style Guide and Libel Manual*. A good college-level dictionary is also a must. Other useful references are listed in the bibliography.

Several men submitted suggestions for improvement of the first edition. Users are welcomed to offer suggestions for later revisions. Please send correspondence to the following address:

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Abbreviations

Avoid abbreviating words except in the following instances:

Titles before or after a name

Dr. Mr. Mrs. Rev.
Jr. Sr. B.A. M.A.
Ph.D.

With dates or numerals

a.m. p.m.
44 B.C. A.D. 320 (note that A.D. comes before the date)

Indicate noon and midnight with the words noon and midnight; writing 12 p.m. and 12 a.m. will only lead to confusion.

Months used with days

Jan. 1 Feb. 3 Aug. 4 Sep. 5
Oct. 6 Nov. 7 Dec. 8

Always spell out the names of months with five or fewer letters (March through July). Spell out all months when writing a month and a year, with no comma after the month. Spell out all months standing alone.

The campaign will begin January 1996.

Addresses

According to the *Associated Press Style Book*, use the following abbreviations only with a numbered address:

Ave. Blvd. St.

Spell out all other words when part of a formal street name without a number:

Avenue	Boulevard	Street	Route	Drive
Court	Circle	Lane	Terrace	Trail
Alley	Road			

The Postal Service requests that all addressed mail be written in capital letters; abbreviations may be used but without terminating punctuation.

Acronyms

Names of Society organizations and titles are written without periods. See Abbreviations and Acronyms in Barbershopping.

Master of Ceremonies

The first instance of use of this word should always be written out in full and in lower case. All subsequent uses may be written with capitals and no punctuation. As mentioned in the Associated Press Style Guide, avoid the coined word "emcee."

We were lucky to have Bob Cearnal as master of ceremonies for our show. He has been an MC at many barbershop functions over the years.

States

Do not use the Postal Service's two-letter designators except when addressing mail. Writers may use the following abbreviations in all other instances:

Ala.	Md.	N.Y.
Ariz.	Mass.	Okla.
Ark.	Mich.	Ore.
Calif.	Minn.	Pa.
Colo.	Miss.	R.I.
Conn.	Mo.	S.C.
Del.	Mont.	S.D.
Fla.	Neb.	Tenn.
Ga.	Nev.	Va..
Ill.	N.C.	Vt.

Ind.	N.D.	Wash.
Kan.	N.H.	W.Va.
Ky.	N.J.	Wis.
La.	N.M.	Wyo.

Always spell out the following states' names in full:

Alaska	Hawaii	Idaho
Iowa	Maine	Ohio
Texas	Utah	

Canadian Provinces and Communities

For Canadian provinces and territories, use these abbreviations after the name of a community:

Alta.	Nfld.	P.E.I.
B.C.	N.W.T.	Que.
Man.	N.S.	Sask.
N.B.	Ont.	

Use "Yukon" rather than Y.T. (Yukon Territory). When it stands alone, use "the Yukon."

Generally, do not abbreviate the names of countries, provinces, or states when each stands alone or is used as an adjective.

The chapters along the British Columbia and state of Washington border hosted a genuine "international" celebration.

According to the *Canadian Press Stylebook*, use a hyphen instead of a period after "St" and "Ste" in Quebec place names:

Ste-Agathe	St-Eustache
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Abbreviations and acronyms used in barbershopping

Society organizations and titles should be spelled out the first time they are used. Thereafter, the abbreviation or acronym may be used. However, the *Associated Press Style Guide* states the following: "Do not follow the full name with an abbreviation in parentheses or set off by dashes. If the abbreviation or acronym would not be clear on second reference without this arrangement, do not use it. Names not commonly known by the public should not be reduced to acronyms to save a few words."

The Irish Association of Barbershop Singers was organized in 1988. Since then, IABS has held a convention each year.

AAMBS	Australian Association of Men Barbershop Singers
A & R	Analysis and Recommendation session; the post-competition evaluation given to quartets and choruses by certified judges
ACDA	American Choral Directors Association
ad lib	freely; at the performer's or speaker's will
AFA	Auditions for Admission
AH=SOW	Ancient and Harmonious Society of Woodshedders (with an equal sign)
AIC	Association of International Champions (quartets)
AICJC	Assistant International Contest and Judging Chairman
AISQC	Association of International Seniors Quartet Champions
ASCAP	American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers
BABS	British Association of Barbershop Singers
BE	Bulletin Editor
BMI	Broadcast Music, Inc.
BETY	Bulletin Editor of the Year
BOTM	Barbershopper of the Month
BOTQ	. . . the Quarter,
BOTY	. . . the Year
C&J	Contest and Judging
CAPAC	Canadian Association of Publishers, Arrangers, and Composers
CAR	Cardinal District
CIS	Category Information Sheet; used in the judging program
COJ	Chairman of Judges
COTS	Chapter Operations Training Seminar
CS	Category Specialist; the person assigned to supervise and to administrate a C & J category
CSD	Central States District

DABS	Dutch Association of Barbershop Singers
Decrepets	Wives of past International Board members
Decrepits	The Association of Discarded Past Members of the SPEBSQSA Board of Directors Without Voice and Without Portfolio, Not. Inc. (official organization of past International Board members)
DIX	Dixie District
DMVP	District Music Vice President
DO	District Officer
DP	District President
DYNAMO	Develop Your Numbers and Musical Organization; the name of a program promoting a music team concept through implementation of the Music Leadership Manual; a person who is certified as eligible to conduct DYNAMO programs is a DYNAMO coordinator. Since the word "coordinator" is part of a title, similar to chapter president, it is not capitalized unless used in front of a person's name, as DYNAMO Coordinator Joe Fortacram.
EVG	Evergreen District
FWD	Far Western District
G&S	Grammar and Style; bulletin judging category
HEP	Harmony Education Program
HSC	Harmony Services Corporation
HOD	House of Delegates
HX	Harmony Explosion
IABS	Irish Association of Barbershop Singers
IBM	International Board Member
ICJC	International Contest and Judging Committee
ICS	International Category School; a training program to prepare judges for certification and recertification
ILL	Illinois District
JAD	Johnny Appleseed District
L&R	Layout and Reproduction; bulletin judging category; Laws and Regulations
LOL	Land o'Lakes District
M-AD	Mid-Atlantic District
MD	Musical Director
MENC	Music Educators National Conference
MuVP	Music Vice President
MVP	Membership Vice President
NED	Northeastern District
NZABS	New Zealand Association of Barbershop Singers
ONT	Ontario District

PIO	Pioneer District
PR	Public Relations
PRO	Public Relations Officer
PROBE	Public Relations Officers and Bulletin Editors
PRVP	Public Relations Vice President
PVP	Program Vice President
RMD	Rocky Mountain District
SingAmerica/ SingCanada	A Society service project designed to promote development of music programs in communities and schools. SingAmerica/SingCanada is written as if it were one word with no spaces.
SLD	Seneca Land District
SPEBSQSA	Article I, Section 1.01 of Society Bylaws, dated Sept. 21, 1987, indicates that the Society acronym is abbreviated without the use of periods.
SPATS	Southern Part of Africa Tonsorial Songsters
SUN	Sunshine District
SWD	Southwestern District
WHC	World Harmony Council
YMIH	Young Men in Harmony
YO	Youth Outreach



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Active/Passive Voice

A verb's voice refers to the relationship between the subject and the verb in the sentence (the actor and the action). Active voice means that the actor in the sentence performs the action; passive voice means that the actor receives the action of the verb. In passive voice constructions, the actor usually appears in a prepositional phrase at the end of the sentence. Notice the placement of the verbs in each of the following sentences:

The national anthem was sung by our chorus.

(passive)

Our chorus sang the national anthem.

(active)

The decision has been made.

(passive--actor implied)

The judges have made their decision.

(active--actor stated)

In most instances, prefer the use of active voice because doing so creates stronger sentences.



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Apostrophes

Omission of letters

Use an apostrophe to signal the omission of a letter or series of letters in words of contraction.

did not = didn't

of the clock = o'clock

Bits and Pieces = Bits 'n' Pieces

It was the night = 'Twas the night

Forming plurals

Use an apostrophe to form the plural of letters, figures, or words referred to as words only if confusing or awkward plural formations would result. When no confusion would result, do not use the apostrophe.

He's a tough judge, so you'd better watch your p's and q's.

Your editorial has too many you know's in it.

Our treasurer makes his 9's look like 4's.

Many of the quartets from the 1940s took less liberty with song interpretation than quartets from the 1990s.

Omission of numerals

Occasionally, an apostrophe may be used to mark the omission of numerals when writing dates in situations involving names, titles, or slogans.

the Roaring '20s

the Spirit of '76

We're singin' more in '94

Do not shorten a date when it is used simply to refer to a particular yearly date.

I attended Harmony College in 1994.



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Attribution

Attribution means identifying the source of a direct quote or paraphrase. If an editor wishes to use the direct words or ideas of another, he should indicate by including a short statement that identifies the source. Notice the following example:

"The chorus needs an extra rehearsal," the director said.

In most instances, put the quote first and the attribution after it.

When changing speakers, however, identify the new speaker ahead of his/her comment so that the reader knows the speaker is changing.

"The chorus needs an extra rehearsal," the director said. The assistant director added, "We also need sectional rehearsals."

Identify who is speaking at the first natural break in a quote or paraphrase, usually at the end of the first sentence.

"Of course the chorus needs an extra rehearsal," the director said. "It's only sensible. We simply aren't ready for the show as things now stand."

Identify the speaker as often as necessary to clarify who is speaking. It is not necessary to attribute every sentence in a running quote, but it is advisable to insert attribution periodically to help the reader keep track of who is speaking.

Don't be afraid of using the verb "said" for attribution. Most alternative attributive verbs carry some editorial connotation: asserted, demanded, charged, insisted, pointed out, etc. Readers are accustomed to seeing said as an attributive verb and tend to pass over it without thinking. Do, however, use a particular attributive verb when special meaning or emphasis is intended. For example:

The category specialist emphasized that the quartet would be disqualified if it sang that song in the contest. "The rules require that we do so, and we would have no choice," he warned.

Altering quotes

Should an editor change or edit a speaker's grammar, whether from an oral or written statement?

It is usually the responsibility of the editor to correct such statements that contain apparent grammatical errors. There is no need to embarrass someone in print for this. If, however, ungrammatical speech is characteristic of the speaker's/writer's style, the editor may prefer not to make corrections.

A special problem arises for editors when quoting material that some readers might consider offensive. If there is any question about whether or not a particular passage or phrase is in good taste, the editor should not use it, or he

should paraphrase to retain the central idea. The decision to delete indecent or insensitive language in print is ultimately the editor's. He must always keep his readers in mind, recognizing the sensitivity of all members and their families. The editor's audience extends beyond his chapter; therefore, he must be alert to the image of the Society and his chapter that his bulletin projects.



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Bold face

(see also [Italics](#))

Editors may choose to print names of quartets, choruses, chapters, districts, and individuals in bold face. However, as with all forms of punctuation, excessive use produces copy that is harder to read. While names may be more readily apparent, the flow of the text is interrupted. If an editor does not have access to equipment to produce bold face, he may use other special punctuation to designate names (italics or underscoring). However, the editor must be consistent in this use throughout the bulletin.

It is not recommended that an editor change a type font to highlight names or words unless the name has been specially designed with this typographical feature in mind. For example, the Acoustix quartet has a distinctive way of producing the "A" and the "X" in the name; however, the printed appearance is more for marketing and public relations purposes. Even if the editor could duplicate the typography through scanning, no real purpose would be served by using the variant type face in text. Trademark infringement might also be involved.



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Italics

Most editors are now capable of producing italic text by means of computer software. However, if an editor uses equipment that will not produce italics, he should indicate it by underlining the appropriate portions of the text.

The following text items should be italicized:

--titles of books, magazines, newspapers, plays, movies, works of art, long poems, and long musical compositions.

The Harmonizer
The Christian Science Monitor
 the *Chicago Tribune*
 Eliot's *The Wasteland*
 Shakespeare's *Othello*
 the movie *High Noon*
 Mozart's *Don Giovanni*

--Names of ships, aircraft, and spacecraft

Lindbergh's *Spirit of St. Louis*
Apollo 13
U.S.S. Kitty Hawk

--Words, letters, or figures when referred to as words, letters, or figures.

The *g* in align is silent.
 I always have trouble spelling the word *trouble*.
 You should mind your *p's and q's*.
 He signed the document with an *X*.

--Foreign words and phrases that have not been naturalized in English. This also applies to most musical terms as well.

<i>aere perennius</i>	<i>que sera, sera</i>
<i>ich dien</i>	<i>sans peur et sans reproche</i>
<i>allegretto</i>	<i>andante</i>
<i>rubato</i>	<i>allegro con grazia</i>
<i>sforzando</i>	<i>accelerando</i>
<i>molto cantabile</i>	<i>vivace</i>

--Many foreign words and phrases have become Americanized, so they would not need to be italicized.

pasta chutzpah
ad hoc ex officio

--Latin scientific names for botanical or zoological classes

a thick-shelled American clam (*Mercenaria mercenaria*)

--Legal cases, both in full and shortened form; however, the letter v for versus is not italicized in legal cases.

Jones v. Michigan

Brown v. Topeka Board of Education

the *Jones* case



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Capitalization

The word "barbershop"

- barber shop -- Two words are used only in the Society name or when referring to the business establishment "barber shop"
- Barbershop -- One-word form is used in all cases related to our music organization and singing style. The only exception is in the Society name when written in full. The Laws and Regulations Committee has recommended that the word be capitalized because it is a distinctive label for our organization, carrying almost the weight of a trademark or copyrighted name.
- Barbershopper -- Always capitalize when used as a title before a proper name: *Barbershopper Joe Dugan*. The L&R Committee recommends it be capitalized in other instances as well.
- Barberpole Cat -- A program for learning basic barbershop songs. Also, a person who has been certified in the program by demonstrating his ability to sing his part in all of the Barberpole Cat songs. Do not spell the phrase Barber Polecat or just as Polecat, which refers to a skunk.

Other Barbershop terms

Concerning other words unique to our organization, the following four words should be capitalized only when each is used as a shortened expression to stand for the full organizational name.

- Board refers to the International Board of Directors
- Foundation refers to Harmony Foundation
- Heartspring refers to our service organization, formerly the Institute of Logopedics
- Society refers to SPEBSQSA, Inc.

Examples:

The Society requires all contest music to be legal.

We visited Heartspring last summer while attending the international convention.

I belong to a Barbershop harmony society.

The Board heard the report on the future of the Society.

Capitalize common nouns such as chapter, district, president or other office, or committee only when each is used as part of the name of a person or unit. Do not capitalize these words when each stands alone.

Hidden Hills Chapter is famous for being the home of District President Abner Haynes and Secretary John Smythe. Curently, the chapter does not have any district chorus championships to its credit. The chapter's nominating committee is hard at work seeking a qualified person for treasurer.

The words chapter and district are not capitalized when used in a series of two or more.

The Tacoma and Seattle chapters met to discuss hosting an international convention.

The Evergreen and Sunshine districts showed the greatest membership gain last year.

Capitalize the word international in the following two instances:

1. When referring to a specific convention for which the word International is used as a shortened form. Always use the full title of the convention the first time in the text and then the shortened form for subsequent use.
2. When referring to the International Board of Directors.

All other uses of international should be lower case.

The Society encourages new members to attend the 56th International Convention, which will beheld in Pittsburgh, Pa. At that time the International Board of Directors will meet to select a new executive director.

Because of confusion that may result from non-capitalization of international when the word is used as an adjective, substitute Society whenever possible.

Several Society officials will be present at the international convention to discuss relocation of Society headquarters.

The same rule applies to the word "midwinter": capitalize both parts of the non-hyphenated word when it refers to a specific convention; do not capitalize the word when it refers to a general seasonal meeting.

The Sarasota Midwinter Convention was the best attended in years. However, the Society is rethinking the value of holding midwinter conventions.

Personal office titles are capitalized only when preceding a name.

Executive Director Darryl Flinn will conduct the mass sing.

Darryl Flinn is the executive director of the Society.

Communications Specialist Brian Lynch will be sending out new PROBE manuals in the next few months.

Brian Lynch is a communications specialist in the Society.

SingAmerica/SingCanada

The new Society service project was designed with this rather unusual method of presentation: No spaces between words and with the proper nouns America and Canada properly capitalized.

Other capitalization rules

Proper nouns and adjectives

Owen C. Cash	Dixieland jazz
Kenosha, Wisconsin	Gregorian chant
Harmony College	Irish ballad
Heritage of Harmony	Swedish meatballs

Notice in the second column that only the first word (the adjective) is capitalized because it derives from a proper noun. The second word is not capitalized because it can stand alone as a generic noun. Words in the first column are capitalized because each is considered a whole unit acting as a single concept. Capitalize names of languages, races, nationalities, religions, and the adjectives that are derived from each.

Geographical Names

Lake Erie	Dakota Badlands
Salt Lake City	Grand Canyon
New Jersey Turnpike	Southeastern Alaska

First word of a sentence

His love of singing is evident.

First word of a direct quotation

He yelled, "Sing on key!"

A.D., B.C., the pronoun I and the interjection O

Names of sections of the country but not directions on the compass

The South has produced many fine composers.

The contest auditorium is south of the hotel.

Names and Titles

Capitalize important words in the names of organizations, judging categories, committees, buildings, firms, schools, churches, and other institutions. Do not capitalize coordinating conjunctions or prepositions. Capitalize initial articles (a, an, the) only if each appears as the first word in a name or title. In quartet or chorus names, capitalize articles and prepositions only if each is part of the group's official name.

Vocal Majority

Harmony Hall

Heartspring

Chiefs of Staff

Harmony Marketplace

Masters of Harmony

Capitalize words that show rank, office, or profession if each is used as part of a person's name (usually preceding the name). Capitalize the name of a family relationship when it is used as part of a person's name.

Professor Warren Dewey taught choral arrangement at Berkeley. He is the senior professor in the music department.

Police Chief Mac Warren is planning to retire. This will mean the city needs to hire a new chief of police.

Uncle Harry is the only one of my uncles to have served in Vietnam.

The word judge is not capitalized unless used as a title.

He is a Presentation Category judge.

Presentation Judge Al Baker gave the quartet a perfect score.

Titles

Capitalize the first word and every important word in titles of books, stories, plays, poems, motion pictures, works of art, and musical compositions. (See also Italics and Quotations)

My Life in Barbershopping

Meet the Press

Hemingway's "Big Two-Hearted River"

Gainsborough's "Blue Boy"

"Sweet and Lovely"

"The Mem'ry of Love That Is Gone"

Days of the week and seasons

Capitalize the names of the days of the week, months, and holidays. Do not capitalize the names of the seasons.

George M. Cohan was born on Tuesday, July 4, Independence Day, during the summer of 1878.

Contest time always sneaks up on us during the busy spring and fall months. That's why I wish our annual show wasn't held two weeks before spring contest.



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Colons

Use the colon to introduce a list, an explanatory statement, or a long quotation. To be grammatically accurate, the group of words in front of the colon should be able to stand as a complete sentence.

The following men were present at the board meeting: Smith, Jones, Williams, Brown, and Ford.

There's only one reason why the board voted to extend meeting hours: we need the extra rehearsal time for the show.

When asked about the reason why he resigned, Smith offered this explanation: "I've been spending too much time with Barbershopping and not enough time with my family. It's a no-win situation because I love both very much, but my family has to take top priority."

Stylistically, an editor might prefer to avoid using colons in the above situations and thereby simplify the writing. Consider how these examples become more direct by rephrasing without the use of a colon:

Smith, Jones, Williams, Brown, and Ford were present at the board meeting.

The board voted to extend meeting hours because we need the extra rehearsal time for the show.

When asked why he resigned, Smith replied, "I've been spending too much time ..."

When a list is written, a colon should never be used immediately following a verb.

INCORRECT: *Those planning to attend are: John Jackson, Will Smith, and Fred Duplet.*

CORRECT: *Those planning to attend are John Jackson, Will Smith, and Fred Duplet.*

OR

John Jackson, Will Smith, and Fred Duplet plan to attend.



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Commas

Commas are forms of punctuation used to suggest momentary pauses in the flow of writing or divisions of information. For this reason, commas should be used sparingly according to the following writing situations.

Compound sentences

Use a comma between two independent clauses (complete sentences) connected by the coordinating conjunctions and, but, for, or, nor, yet, so.

We lost our director, but Joe quickly filled the position.

Last year's score was our best ever, yet this year we scored 50 points higher.

For a comma to be needed with a coordinating conjunction, complete sentences should appear on either side of the connecting word. The following sentences do not contain two complete thoughts that can stand alone; therefore, no comma is necessary in either.

Everyone is asked to bring his music and join the mass chorus.

The Timber Notes hosted the show and provided the entertainment.

He once sang lead but now sings tenor.

Items in a series

Use commas to separate a list of items (words, phrases, or clauses) that appear in a series.

words *A quartet consists of a lead, a bass, a tenor, and a baritone.*

phrases *Our chapter goals this year are to increase membership, to book more performances, and to enter the spring contest.*

clauses *Hal bought the brats, Ted brought the beans, Sam brought the beer, and I brought the pitch pipe.*

A comma is not necessary between the next to last and last item in a series (for example, red, white and blue) unless the meaning is unclear. However, for many years, writers were required to insert a comma before the conjunction as a way of clearly distinguishing that three (or more) separate items are involved in the series. Whatever choice the editor makes, he should consistently apply it throughout the bulletin.

Caution: Some modifiers are so closely linked that a comma is not needed even if they do make up a series. Notice the differences in the following sentences:

The baritone is the tall, slender one on the left.

The chorus wore bright yellow uniforms.

To determine whether a comma is needed between modifiers in a series, insert the conjunction "and" between them. In the first example above, the phrase "tall and slender one" makes sense; therefore, a comma is used in place of the conjunction. In the second example, the phrase "bright and yellow" isn't as idiomatic. The word bright is acting as an adverb to describe the intensity of the color yellow. Therefore, no comma is needed.

Another choice to avoid unclarity might be to make the phrase bright yellow a hyphenated compound adjective:

Bright-yellow tuxedo greenish-blue background whippet-thin frame

Dates and Addresses

Use a comma after major units of a complete address or date, including the state and the year. However, a comma is not necessary to separate a month-year date.

He lived at 251 Fifth Street, Canyon City, Colo., before he moved.

He was born May 17, 1949, in Queen City, Mo.

The next judges' accreditation session will be in September 1996.

Interrupters

Transitional expressions

Use commas around words and phrases that interrupt the flow of the main clause. Some of these interrupters are however, moreover, finally, of course, I think, by the way, on the other hand, and therefore.

No one has suggested, by the way, that we should outlaw the use of non-member coaches.

Others in our chapter, however, argue that admitting women for membership would be a good idea.

Appositives

Use commas to enclose a word or group of words that renames the word that comes before it.

I don't think that Mike, our new director, would mind our complimenting him on his first directing job.

I've always liked "The Mem'ry of Love That Is Gone," a song composed and arranged by Bob Brock.

Direct Address

Use commas to enclose the name or title of individuals directly addressed.

*Mr. President, I move that the chapter purchase new risers.
We're delighted, John, to welcome you as a member.
What do you think we ought to do about his voice problems, Fred?
What do you think, guys, about a new chorus outfit?*

Introductory expressions

Use a comma after an introductory word, phrase, or clause that leads to the main clause.

*Yes, we sang the best we could.
Therefore, the music committee selected two new contest songs.
During the intermission, we played recorded music of champion quartets.
Running onto the stage, Willie slipped and broke his ankle.
After everyone else had left the afterglow, John and Pete stayed around to clean up.*

Non-essential material

Use commas to enclose material that may be interesting and informative but isn't necessary in order to convey the sentence's main idea.

*Marty Johnson, who used to sing with the Flat Foot Four, recently was promoted to assistant director of our chorus.
"My Gal Sal," written by Paul Dresser, was an immensely popular song.
The song that we selected for our finale has been changed.*

In the first example, the clause "who used to sing with the Flat Foot Four" is not essential to the main idea of the sentence. Therefore, it should be enclosed in commas. In the second example, the phrase "written by Paul Dresser" could be left out without changing the meaning of the sentence. It, too, should use enclosing commas. In the third example, the clause "that we selected for our finale" is essential to the main idea of the sentence. Without it, the sentence would read "The song has been changed." However, readers have no idea which song.

Miscellaneous uses of commas

Contrasting expressions

Use a comma to set off contrasting or opposing expressions within sentences.

*He sang baritone, not lead.
The cost is not \$50, but \$500.*

Quotations

Use commas to introduce a direct quotation, to terminate a direct quotation, or to enclose split quotations.

Mike said, "I can sing tenor."

"I can sing tenor," said Mike.

"I can sing tenor," Mike said with determination, "even if you pitch up the songs."

Note that if the quotation is not being presented as actual dialogue, commas are not used.

He said he wanted to leave immediately to go home; however, he stayed for over an hour to sing tags.

Interrogative clauses

Use commas to separate a declarative sentence and an interrogative clause which immediately follows.

That's a great arrangement, isn't it?

Wayne is expected to become our show chairman, isn't he?

Omissions

Use commas to indicate the omission of a word or words, especially in sentence forms that show an immediate dual structure.

Some quartets prefer ballads; others, up tunes.

Titles

Use commas to separate proper names from a following corporation, academic, honorary, governmental, or military title.

Val J. Hicks, Ph.D.

Fred Wismer, Vice President

Letters

Use commas following the salutation in informal correspondence and the complementary closing in formal or informal letters.

Dear Mark,

Sincerely yours,



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Contractions

(see also [Pronouns](#))

Contracting is the process of joining two or more words while omitting one or more letters to reduce the newly created word to a shorter word, usually of only one syllable. An apostrophe is inserted in the place of the omitted letter or letters. Using contractions produces a more informal, conversational style. However, overuse or forced use creates a distraction for the reader.

I am	I'm
you are	you're
are not	aren't
can not	can't
will not	won't
we will	we'll
it was	'twas
of the clock	o'clock
heaven	heav'n
chapter will	chapter'll (awkward)



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Pronouns

(see also [Subject-Verb agreement](#))

Pronouns can be classified according to how they are used in sentences. Such classification can help in determining the appropriate pronoun to choose in certain situations. The following chart identifies these pronouns and how they function:

Used as Subjects	Used as Possessives	Used as Objects
I	my, mine	me
we	our, ours	us
you	your, yours	you
he	his	him
she	her, hers	her
it	its	it
they	their	theirs, them
who	whose	whom
whoever	whomever	whomever

Most of the time, choosing the appropriate pronoun presents few problems, but a couple of situations should be noted.

-- Pronouns in compound constructions

Each of the pronouns in the following sentences is used as the object of the verb:

The judge gave John and me a vote of confidence.

After the show, the reporter interviewed him and his father.

To determine which pronoun form is correct in the above examples, omit the other element and select the pronoun that sounds appropriate to complete the sentence.

The judge gave me a vote of confidence.

After the show, the reporter interviewed him.

-- Pronouns in prepositional phrases

Pronouns that appear in prepositional phrases are always object pronouns.

The judge awarded the novice trophy to Jim and me.

The battle for top sales team was between us and them.

-- Pronouns following linking verbs

Pronouns that appear following linking verbs (forms of the verb to be) are always "subject" pronouns. That means the order of the sentence could be reversed with the pronoun functioning as the subject of the sentence.

The person who has to decide is I, not you. (I am the person who has to decide, not you.)

The hosting chapters for the spring convention will be either we or Springfield. (We ... will be the hosting chapter for the spring convention.)

-- Pronoun/appositive noun constructions

If a noun immediately follows either the pronoun "we" or "us" and this noun renames the pronoun, then imagine as if the appositive noun were omitted.

Select the pronoun that sounds appropriate.

We tenors will supply the beverages for the picnic.

(We will supply ...)

The director told us basses to sing brightly, not darkly.

(The director told us to sing ...)

-- Who/Whom?

In situations involving choices between who/whom or whoever/whomever, rephrase the sentence by replacing the troublesome pronoun with "he" for who/whoever ("subject" pronouns) or "him" for whom/whomever ("object" pronouns). Select either who or whom based on whether the similar pronouns he or him are grammatically appropriate in the sentence. (Remember: The "m" in "him" matches with "whom.") For example:

Who gave you this arrangement? (Did he give you this arrangement?)

Whom did you contact about the show date? (Did you contact him about the show date?)

The man who arranged the song had little formal training. (He arranged the song.)

You may invite whomever you like to guest night. (You may invite him.)

Scholarships to Harmony College are awarded to whoever applies first. (He applies first.)

In the last example, if the pronoun is preceded by a preposition, always begin the rephrasing with the pronoun in question. Ignore the rest of the sentence.

Al Jolson is the performer about whom the movie "The Jazz Singer" was made. (The movie "The Jazz Singer" was made about him.)

-- Pronoun--antecedent agreement

A pronoun should agree with the noun it replaces in terms of number. This means that if a pronoun stands for a singular noun, then the pronoun should also be singular; if the pronoun stands for a plural noun, the pronoun should be plural. For example:

John forgot his uniform.
The tenors lost their place.

In the first example, the singular pronoun *his* replaces the singular noun *John*; in the second, the plural pronoun *their* replaces the plural noun *tenors*.

In other words, the pronouns and their antecedents (words that come before) agree in form.

-- Indefinite pronouns

Problems in agreement arise because some classes of words are not clearly singular or plural. Words in one such group are called indefinite pronouns. The following is a list of most of the indefinite pronouns. They are considered singular:

each	either	neither	another
one	someone	anyone	everyone
no one	none	body	anybody
nobody	somebody	everybody	

Because the above indefinite pronouns are considered singular, the following sentences illustrate correct agreement:

None of the invited guests could find his place.
Somebody should know better than to leave his music on the chair.
Each of the wives was given her own special memento.

The following indefinite pronouns are considered to be plural; therefore, each requires a plural antecedent.

several few both many

Several were missing their cummerbunds.
Only a few were unable to share their memories.

The following indefinite pronouns may be singular or plural depending on the context of the sentence. Each is singular if it refers to a total quantity; each is plural if it refers to a number of individual items that can be

counted.

some most all none any

Some of the scenery was destroyed in the fire. (quantity)

Some of the tickets were destroyed in the fire. (number)

Most of our show is hilarious. (quantity)

Most of our singers are excellent musicians. (number)

All of the performance was a sheer delight. (quantity)

All of the seats in the auditorium were filled. (number)

-- Plural antecedents

Two or more singular antecedents joined by the words "or" or "nor" should be made to agree with a singular pronoun.

Either Jack or Hal hums his part first.

Neither the president nor the membership VP knows what has happened to his COTS registration form.

Two or more singular antecedents joined by the word *and* should be made to agree with a plural pronoun.

Jack, Herman, and Joe receive their membership cards tonight.

Both he and I demand our money back.

-- Collective nouns

Determining agreement with collective nouns, or names of units (chorus, committee, council), may be a problem because whether they are singular or plural depends on the context of the sentence.

If the intent is that the collective noun operates as a single unit, then the antecedent should be singular.

The chorus did its best, but it fell short of its goal.

After the contest, the quartet had its picture taken.

If the intent is that the collective noun identifies one or more individuals within the group so that it doesn't operate as a single unit, then the antecedent should be plural.

The chorus rushed to their places on the risers as soon as the break was over.

After the contest, the quartet took their uniforms to the dry cleaners.

In the first set of examples, the collective nouns chorus and quartet are operating as single units and require singular pronouns. In the second set of examples, these same collective nouns are presented in such a way that the reader's focus is on the individuals within the group rather than on the group itself; therefore, a plural antecedent

is needed.

The same rule applies for names of specific groups:

The Future 2000 committee held its annual meeting in Kenosha.

The Future 2000 committee debated their positions on admitting women as full Society members.

Chiefs of Staff made its first appearance back in 1984.

Chiefs of Staff displayed their medals proudly around their necks.

The Alexandria Harmonizers gave its best performance at the Kennedy Center last Friday.

The Alexandria Harmonizers looked sharp in their new white cutaway tuxedos.



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Subject-verb agreement

Problems with indefinite pronouns

The following is a list of most of the indefinite pronouns. They are considered singular:

each	either	neither	another
one	someone	anyone	everyone
no one	none	body	anybody
nobody	somebody	everybody	

The following indefinite pronouns may be singular or plural depending on the context of the sentence. Each is singular if it refers to a total quantity; each is plural if it refers to a number of individual items that can be counted.

some most all none any

Some of the scenery was destroyed in the fire. (quantity)

Some of the tickets were destroyed in the fire. (number)

Most of our show is hilarious. (quantity)

Most of our singers are excellent musicians. (number)

All of the performance was a sheer delight. (quantity)

All of the seats in the auditorium were filled. (number)

If the subject of a sentence is singular, the verb must also be singular. If the subject is plural, the verb must be plural.

Problems with interrupters

Do not be distracted by words and phrases (especially prepositional phrases) that appear between the subject and the verb of a sentence. In the following sentences, the interrupting word or phrase has been underlined.

One of the songs causes us problems.

None of the men in our family of singers was responsible for the destruction in the hotel suite.

The bus, loaded with barbershoppers, was late.

The leads, who don't know how to sing thirds, are the problem.

Problems with compounds

Compound subjects joined by the word *and* are considered plural.

Good vowel matching and good breath support make singing much more dynamic.

Singular words joined by "or" or "nor" to form a compound subject are singular.

Either Carl or Jesse knows the baritone part.

If a singular and a plural subject are joined by or/nor to form a compound subject, the verb agrees with the nearer subject.

*Neither the director nor the members of the chorus know how to make the key change.
Neither the members of the chorus nor the director knows how to make the key change.*

Problems with collectives

(see [Pronouns--collectives](#))

A singular verb is used with a collective noun if the collective group is perceived to operate as a single unit.

*The chorus is appearing in Racine next week.
The audience showed its appreciation by demanding a second encore.*

A plural verb is used with a collective noun if the members within the collective group are perceived to be acting separately and individually.

*The panel of judges were in disagreement about the use of foreign language lyrics.
The audience took their time returning to their seats after intermission.*



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Dash

Most word processing software contains commands for creating a dash. Editors should familiarize themselves with the procedures for producing this punctuation. There are two kinds of dashes: the em (-) dash and the en dash. The en(-) dash is used to separate years or figures or separations as in a dictionary volume:

1941- 1946 (as opposed to use of a hyphen)

The score was 21-20.

Volume 1 contains A-BA

If an editor is using a typewriter to produce copy, the en dash is created by typing the hyphen key twice. Do not type a space on either side of the dash.

Change in thought

Use a dash to indicate an abrupt change in thought or expression or as a form of parenthetical expression.

The Odor Eaters' comedy routine--there's no delicate was of saying this--stunk.

Emphasis

Use a dash to indicate an emphatic or summarizing thought at the end of a sentence. The dash may be a more visible form of punctuation than the colon in such circumstances.

I'm definitely going to go on that Barbershop trip to England--maybe.

The director's comment was quite clear--learn the music at home.

Unfinished statements

Use a dash to indicate an unfinished statement of dialogue, especially one that is abruptly ended.

Our director abruptly stopped the chorus and spoke through clenched teeth, "If you guys don't slow down, I'm going to--"

Note that when a dash comes at the end of an unfinished statement, no period is used because the sentence is not completed.

Introductory items in a series

Use a dash after a series of items that begin a sentence when the series functions as a summary.

Precise vowel matching, evocative facial expressions, creative interpretation--all these earned Fortuosity the

gold medal.

Series with commas

Use dashes to set off a phrase containing a series of words that must be separated by commas.

John described the costume--black shoes, black pants, white shirt, red vest, red tie--that will be used in the performance.



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Dates

Dates and Ordinal Numbers

Do not use the ordinal designators (st, nd, rd, th) when writing dates if both month and day are given. Prefer writing Jan. 12, not Jan. 12th. However, if the date comes before the month, use the ordinal designator.

Reports are due by Jan. 15.

Please have your report filed by the 15th of the month.

Abbreviating months

When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate only the following months: Jan., Feb., Aug., Sep., Oct., Nov., and Dec. Spell out March, April, May, June, and July. In addition, spell out all names of months when using the month alone or with a year alone.

In February, we will have our divisional contest, but by March 1998, we will discontinue divisional contests completely.

Punctuating dates

When a phrase lists only a month and a year, do not separate the year by commas. When a phrase refers to a month, day, and year, set off the year by commas.

January 1992 was a bitterly cold month.

Jan. 2 was the coldest day of the year.

Her birthday is May 15.

April 14, 1996, is the target date.

Do not use the contracted form for years ('94; '20s) unless each is a part of a specific title or phrase. Using an apostrophe and the two digits saves only one space. Always write out year dates in full (1994; 1920s).



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Electronic Communications

Because much of the technology in electronic/internet communications is in an embryonic state, rules for bulletin editors are open to modification. Someday, we may all be communicating electronically with no printed text except what we choose to print out. At that time, a whole new concept of "publishing" will have to be devised to fit the growing development of web page design and communications.

Part of the assumption here is that if an editor is conversant with electronic data transmission, then he is probably already aware of the specialized rules. However, a few general guidelines can be offered for editors still producing paper documents sent through the postal system.

e-mail addresses

e-mail addresses are as varied as the companies that provide the service, but a few generalities apply:

1. Never put a space in an e-mail address.
2. Usually characters are printed out in lower case unless otherwise indicated.
3. Avoid printing part of an e-mail address at the end of a line of text and continuing it on the next line. Always keep the address as intact as possible regardless of what this might do to justified margins.

Web Pages

The same rules apply for printing web addresses as it does for e-mail addresses. They tend to be longer, so an editor will have to be careful about how he prints them out in a line of text. Certainly, it may be necessary to split a line of text; if so, be sure to do so at a forward virgule (/) in the address line. For example, an editor might print the following:

*If you want a good idea of what's going on in our neighboring chapters,
be sure to check out the district's web site at [www.districtmusic.edu/
members/index.html](http://www.districtmusic.edu/members/index.html)*

Notice that no terminal punctuation is used because it might be considered part of the address, even though any user familiar with the Internet would know that no period will ever end an address.



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Ellipsis

Ellipsis is a form of punctuation signified by three periods with a space before and after the periods (...). Its function is to indicate the deletion of words from a direct quotation when an editor condenses what has been spoken or written by another. If the words that come before the ellipsis will stand as a grammatically complete sentence, place a period after the last word, then add a space, and finally add the ellipsis. For example:

According to the letter, "Quartets that fail to register ... will not be permitted to compete. ... They must submit a renewal application 30 days prior to the contest."

Hesitation

Use ellipsis to indicate a pause or hesitation in speech or to indicate a thought that the speaker or writer does not complete. In the latter instance, use ellipsis if the tone of the statement fades out; if the statement ends abruptly, use a dash.

With a puzzled expression that showed his confusion, he said, "I can't see why anyone ..."

Notice that no period is need to end the incomplete statement because it isn't a complete sentence.

Special effects

Occasionally, an editor may wish to assemble a potpourri of information that ordinarily couldn't be developed into full articles. In this instance, ellipsis may be used to separate the separate items within a paragraph of random observations, facts and trivia, gossip. Use periods after clauses that are complete sentences. This is the only instance outside of direct quotations in which ellipsis may be used.

The food sure was good at our annual Sweetheart Banquet. At least no one complained. ... All 4 One did an outstanding job for us. Let's hope it's an indication of how well they'll do in the contest. ... By the time you read this, we'll have completed our symphony performance, so be ready to buckle down to work on our show songs. ... Congratulations to Doren Tennis for earning the quarterly BOTY.



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Headlines and titles

[These guidelines apply only to editor-generated titles]

In almost all newspaper formats, only the first word and all proper nouns and adjectives are capitalized in the headlines for news. Other publications may capitalize all main words or use special fonts with all capitals. While minimal capitalizing is preferred, whatever system an editor uses should be consistently applied throughout. In addition, headlines may contain certain shortened methods of writing, because of space limitation, that are inappropriate in text. For example:

Headlines	Text
%	percent
&	and
single quotes (')	double quotes (" ")
single digit numerals (1 through 9)	numerals one through nine spelled out

Hard news

For news stories of an objective nature--activity reports or informative articles--keep the headlines as objective and straightforward as possible. Always include a verb form in the headline to give the title strength and action.

Providence wins district

Fanfare captures first place

Cavemen urged to sell annual show tickets

Christmas party, installation banquet dates set

The goal is objective clarity. If an editor tries to be creative with headlines for hard news, he runs the risk of misleading readers who might then bypass the article.

Features

For feature articles, human interest stories, or interviews and profiles, the editor can be a little more creative in preparing headlines in order to attract the reader's attention. Consider the following examples and the general content of the articles:

A wife, a barbershop chord, and a job!

(an article by a Society president's wife)

Were you there?

(an article from a chapter member concerning declining participation at contest)

If you gave it, we sold it!

(an article about a yard sale for Heartspring)

Columns and standing headlines

Articles from contributing authors, such as chapter president, membership VP, or Heartspring chairman, may often have uniquely phrased standing headlines. In these instances, the headlines should have the first letter of all major words capitalized. Here are some rather clever examples indicating a recurring column:

Our Man Up Front

(the director's article)

Direct Lyne

(an article from Dr. Greg Lyne)

Sounds from the Graham-o-phone

(column from Past Illinois District President Jim Graham)

Jim's Gems

Harmony and Tone with Mel Stone

Once Upon a Pitch Pipe

Recurring standing heads, each should be accompanied by a subhead that describes what the column is about. Usually, the standing head is in a larger font while the subhead is in a smaller font or in italics. For example:

Thor's Thunderings
Good PR builds membership

Once created, these headlines serve as very effective devices for establishing continuity from one bulletin to the next. Whenever possible, position the column in the same location in every issue. For example, a reader always knows where to find the Society president's column in *The Harmonizer* because of its position and heading.



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Hyphenation

Type a hyphen without a space on either side.

Separation of word at end of line

Use a hyphen to separate a word at the end of a line. In most instances, words should be divided between syllables. When in doubt, check a dictionary.

Other instances, however, require special consideration.

Avoid dividing the last word in a paragraph, or the last word of a page if it is necessary to jump the column to another page.

--A single-letter syllable should not be separated from the rest of the word.

Correct: abil-ity **Incorrect:** a-bility

Correct: alas **Incorrect:** a-las

Correct: enough **Incorrect:** e-nough

If a final consonant is doubled before a suffix, the added consonant goes with the suffix. If the root word ends in a double consonant, divide it after the double letter:

Correct: allot-ted **Incorrect:** allott-ed

Correct: pass-ing **Incorrect:** pas-sing

--Do not divide words of one syllable.

weight	thought	strength	scheme	thought
weighed	trimmed	passed	shipped	broached

--Avoid dividing words of five or fewer letters even if a word has more than one syllable.

idea	tiny	odium	torso	table
------	------	-------	-------	-------

--Do not divide acronyms, contractions, or figures.

ASCAP	AH=SOW	A&R	SPEBSQSA
doesn't	o'clock	\$10,000	1990s

--Divide a word after the prefix rather than within the prefix.

Correct: intro-duce	Incorrect: in-troduce
Correct: inter-national	Incorrect: in-ternational
Correct: circum-stances	Incorrect: cir-cumstances

--However, do not divide a word, even by syllables, when its division would confuse the reader.

read-just	rear-range	opera-tion
mate-rial	bar-riers	coin-cidence

Because of these special instances, an editor may have to rephrase a sentence in order to avoid an awkward hyphenation pattern, excessive white space, or cramped copy.

Compound modifiers

Use a hyphen to form a compound modifier from two or more words that express a single concept. If the newly created modifier comes before the noun, use hyphens to link all the words in the compound except the adverb "very" and all adverbs that end in -ly.

a first-quarter report, a bluish-green vest, a full-time job, a well-known man, a better-qualified director, a know-it-all attitude, a very good time, an easily remembered rule, a newly appointed director

In most cases, if the compound modifier comes after the noun, hyphens are not needed.

*The report was due in Kenosha by the end of the first quarter.
The vest, a bluish green, was reversible.
He works full time as a museum curator.
His attitude suggested that he knew it all.*

However, if the modifier comes after a form of the verb "to be", the hyphen usually must be retained to avoid confusion.

*The arranger is well-known.
The performance was certainly second-rate, at best.*

Ambiguous wording

Use a hyphen whenever ambiguity would result if it were omitted.

Music services has sent a special packet of information to all small-chorus directors. (Without the hyphen, the sentence would imply that the directors are short.)

He recovered his balance on the risers, which we had recently re-covered with new carpet.

Writing numbers

--Use a hyphen when it is necessary to spell out numbers larger than 10 (at the beginning of a sentence, for example) and when the first number ends in -y.

Fifty-five men were on stage for the performance.

One hundred twenty singers filled the risers at the benefit.

One hundred twenty-one singers filled the risers at the benefit.

--Use a hyphen with numbers written in suspended form.

All 20- to 30-year members will receive special awards.

The chorus had a six- to eight-minute wait before it could take the stage.



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Modifiers

Misplaced modifiers

Place modifying words and phrases as close as possible to the word being modified. Otherwise, changes in meaning can occur.

We talked to Joe Smith, who once sang on the international stage at breaktime.

The misplaced modifier is the phrase "at breaktime." Its location produces ambiguity. Several ways to clarify the meaning are as follows:

At breaktime, we talked to Joe Smith, who once sang on the international stage.

We talked at breaktime to Joe Smith, who once sang on the international stage.

We talked to Joe Smith at breaktime. He once sang on the international stage.

Another example:

Do not give music to a member that is copied.

Clarified:

Do not give music that is copied to a guest.

Do not give copied music to a guest.

Dangling modifiers

Modifiers must be able to modify (or limit) a specific word or phrase in a sentence. If there is no word or phrase within the sentence for the modifier to limit, then the modifier is said to "dangle" (a reference to grammar school sentence diagramming activities for modifiers).

While directing the chorus, the rain began to fall.

(Who was directing the chorus?)

While John directed the chorus, the rain began to fall.

To get a shot at international, a score of 1800 must be earned.

(Who gets a shot at international?)

To get a shot at international, a quartet must score at least 1800 points.

Comparative forms

Adjective and adverbs describe words and tell what their qualities are. These qualities may be compared by using comparative and superlative form. The comparative is used to compare two things; the superlative is used to

express the highest degree of a quality when three or more are compared.

comparative adjective: *Your quartet is classier than mine.*

superlative adjective: *Your quartet is the smoothest in the contest.*

comparative adverb: *Your quartet can sing louder than mine.*

superlative adverb: *Your quartet can sing the loudest of all.*

The comparative may be formed by either adding "-er" at the end of the adjective/adverb or by preceding it with the word "more" or "less"; the superlative may be formed by either adding "-est" to the end of the adjective/adverb or by preceding it with the word "most" or "least." Never mix the two methods. The choice of formation is determined on the basis of syllables in the adjective or adverb:

--If the modifier is a one-syllable word, use the -er/-est form.

dull	duller	dullest
quick	quicker	quickest

--If the modifier is three or more syllables, use the more or less/most or least form.

beautiful	more beautiful	most beautiful
rapidly	less rapidly	least rapidly

--If the modifier is two syllables, either method is acceptable depending on the sound of the formation.

quiet	quieter	quietest
	more quiet	most quiet
lonely	lonelier	loneliest
	less lonely	least lonely

Irregular Comparisons

The comparative and superlative forms of some frequently used adjectives and adverbs are irregular. They are made by changing the words themselves.

adjective	comparative	superlative
good	better	best
well	better	best
bad	worse	worst
ill	worse	worst
little	less or lesser	least
much	more	most

many	more	most
adverb	comparative	superlative
well	better	best
much	more	most
little	less	least
late	later	latest, last

Illogical comparison

The word "other" or the word "else" is required in comparisons of an individual member with the rest of the group.

Illogical Our chorus scored more points than any chorus in the contest.
(Our chorus was also in the contest.)

Clear Our chorus scored more points than any other chorus in the contest.

Illogical John is as talented a bass as anyone in the chorus.
(John is part of the chorus, so he can't be compared to himself.)

Clear John is as talented a bass as anyone



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Numerals

A numeral is a figure, letter, word, or group of words expressing a number. For example:

figure -- measure 13; 139th Street Quartet

letter -- Mark IV; Future II

word -- Plus Four; "One More Song"

group of words -- "Forty-five Minutes from Broadway"

Roman numerals

Use the capital letters I, V, X, L, C, D, and M. Use Roman numerals to designate wars and to show personal sequence for people and animals.

World War II

Mark IV

Clyde Taber III

Future II committee

Trigger III

Arabic numerals

Use the figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 0. Use Arabic forms unless Roman numerals are specifically required as noted above.

Cardinal numbers

The figures 1, 2, 40, 73, 101, etc. and their corresponding words, one, two, forty, seventy-three, one hundred one, etc. are called cardinal numbers.

Ordinal numbers

The figures 1st, 2nd, 40th, 73rd, 101st, etc. and their corresponding words, first, second, fortieth, seventy-third, one hundred first, etc. are called ordinal numbers.

Figures or words?

For cardinal numbers, spell out whole numbers below 10; use figures for 10 and above (unless the numeral begins a sentence).

They have learned only three new songs.

*The chorus has 97 members.
Ninety-seven men will appear on stage.*

For ordinal numbers, spell out first through ninth when each represents sequence in time or location. Use figures starting with 10th (unless the numeral begins a sentence).

*Our chorus finished in first place.
He was 15th in line.
Fifteenth was the best we could place.*

Use 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc. when the sequence has been assigned in geographic, military, or political designations.

*7th Fleet
1st Sergeant
2nd Congressional District
3rd Court of Appeals*

Special cases

Act numbers -- Use figures in all cases.

*Act 1, Scene 2
The first act, second scene was a classic.*

Addresses -- Always use figures for an address number.

*9 Morningstar Road
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue*

Spell out and capitalize First through Ninth when used as street names. Use figures for 10th and above.

Ages -- Always use figures.

*The boy is 5 years old.
The woman was a 2-month-old daughter.
The quartet has a 92-year-old tenor.*

Betting odds -- Use figures separated by a hyphen.

He won, despite 9-2 odds against him.

Decades -- Use Arabic numerals to indicate decades of history.

For historical eras referred to by decades, use an apostrophe to indicate numerals that are left out. However, do

not omit numerals for ordinary years. Show plurals by adding the letter s, but with no apostrophe.

The Gay '90s
The Roaring '20s
the blizzard of '88
the Crash of '29
in the 1890s

Television channels -- Use figures.

The quartet will appear on Channel 4.

Decimal units -- Use figures.

Our last three contests have averaged 845.6 points.
Drive 8.7 miles and turn left at the barn.

Fractions -- Spell out amounts less than one, using a hyphen between the words.

two-thirds *three-quarters* *four-fifths*

For fractions greater than one, use figures. In addition, use a hyphen to separate the whole number from the fraction and a virgule (/) to separate the numerator from the denominator of the fraction.

1-1/4 *4-3/8* *10-9/16*

In tabular material, use the virgule for all fractions below one as well.

Measures -- Use figures for amounts under 10 in dimensions, formulas, and speeds. Spell out numbers below 10 in distances.

This sheet music is only 8 inches by 10 inches.
He slowed down to 8 miles per hour.
He drove the van five miles with a flat tire.

Monetary units -- Spell out the word cents and use numerals for amounts less than a dollar; for amounts more than a dollar, use figures and a \$ sign.

5 cents *96 cents*
The tickets cost \$14 each.

For specified amounts, subject-verb agreement requires that the amount be considered a single unit and thus it would take a singular verb form.

At this time, \$11,000 is our target for contributions to Heartspring.

For amounts more than \$1 million, use the \$ sign, numerals up to two decimal places, and the word million/billion/trillion/etc. If greater accuracy is required, use figures for the entire number.

*Last year, the Society raised \$3.75 million for Heartspring.
The total operating budget for the Society is \$4,356,900.*

Page numbers -- Use figures.

page 4 page 756b

Percentages -- Use figures.

Use decimals rather than fractions for partial amounts. For amounts less than 1 percent, precede the decimal with a zero. Always print the full word "percent" rather than use the percent symbol (%), except in a table, a chart, or a headline.

*I find that 20 percent of all leads sing flat.
There was a 0.5 percent increase in membership.
Dues went up by a staggering 35.2 percent.*

Scores -- Use figures exclusively.

*The tenors beat the basses 15-12 in volleyball.
The Milford Chorus received a -9 in arrangement but still managed to win the small chorus contest by a 3-point margin.*

Sizes -- Use figures exclusively.

a size-9 shoe a size-8 hat
size 40 long a 34-1/2 sleeve

Telephone/fax/numbers -- Use figures exclusively.

1-800-876-SING (7464) FAX (414) 654-4048
(210) 555-1100 (090) 442-2388 ext. 2

Temperatures -- Use figures for all except zero.

Use a word, not the minus sign (-) for temperatures below zero. Use temperature scale designators (F for Fahrenheit, C for Celsius) only if confusion might result.

The day's low was minus 5.

The temperature rose to zero by noon.

We expect temperatures in the 30s. (No apostrophe)

Note that temperatures get higher or lower; they don't get warmer or colder.

Incorrect Temperatures are expected to warm up in the area on Friday.

Correct Temperatures are expected to rise in the area on Friday.

Years -- Use figures without commas.

Use an s without an apostrophe to indicate spans of decades or centuries.

1975 the 1990s

Note that years are the single exception to the rule that numerals should not be used to start a sentence.

1976 was our Bicentennial year.

Casual expressions -- Spell out numerals used in casual expressions.

A thousand times no!

Thanks a million.

He walked a quarter of a mile.



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Parallelism

When writing a series of words, phrases, or clauses, write the series using parallel grammatical forms. Notice that the items in the following series have different grammatical structures:

We found the new risers have four advantages: (1) easy to set up; (2) They can be moved to performances; (3) storing is easy; (4) more comfortable for performers.

The following revision demonstrates how the four items can be made grammatically equivalent:

We found the new risers have four advantages: (1) easy to set up; (2) simple to move to performances; (3) easy to store; (4) comfortable to stand on.

Here are additional examples of phrases and clauses that should be written in parallel form:

Incorrect: The secret to good quartet singing is matching vowels and to breathe from the diaphragm.

Correct: The secret to good quartet singing is matching vowels and breathing from the diaphragm.

Incorrect: We need a chapter president who is willing to take charge, his personality is outgoing, and if he can delegate responsibility.

Correct: We need a chapter president who is willing to take charge, who has an outgoing personality, and who can delegate responsibility.



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Parentheses

Parentheses, along with commas and dashes, often set off supplemental or explanatory material. To determine which marks to use, consider how close in thought the explanatory words are to the main sentence.

-- Commas usually set off material that is close to the main thought of the sentence.

The Williamsburg Chapter, after finishing third in the recent contest, has decided to reinstate a system for qualifying for contest.

-- Dashes set off material that is loosely related.

With all the props on stage--papier maché palm trees, a bamboo hut, and a bubbling cauldron--the men had little room to maneuver.

-- Parentheses set off material that is not part of the main sentence but is too relevant to omit.

Chauncey Olcott's songs (as arranged by Dave Stevens) will always be suitable for contest.

Punctuation with parenthesis

-- Commas, semicolons, and periods are place outside the closing parenthesis.

I went to the chapter's rehearsal (my third attempt this week), but no one was there.

-- Question marks and exclamation points are placed inside if the parenthetical material is itself a question or an exclamation.

We had no intention (who could think otherwise?) of sitting out the fall contest.

-- Do not capitalize the first word inside the parentheses unless it is the pronoun I or a proper noun or adjective.

The song "Keep America Singing" (Canadians might disagree) ought not have the lyrics changed to "Keep the whole world singing."

-- When a phrase placed inside the parentheses might normally be a complete sentence but is dependent on surrounding material, do not capitalize the first word or end with a period. An independent sentence standing by itself within parentheses is separated from the preceding sentence and the subsequent sentence by two spaces. In this case, all terminal punctuation goes within the parentheses.

Take a deep breath through the nostrils. (Do not lift the shoulders.)

The quartet No Holds Barred piled up an incredible 155-point lead in first round of competition. (For a more in-

depth analysis of the quartet's performance, see page 4 of this issue.)



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Periods

(and other terminal punctuation)

Use periods in the following instances:

-- To indicate the end of a declarative sentence

*The quartet sang for the Boy Scout banquet.
The order was shipped from Kenosha yesterday.*

-- To indicate the end of an imperative sentence

*Ship the order immediately.
Please sing that phrase more softly.*

-- To make a courteous request

Will you please reply promptly.

-- To punctuate abbreviations and initials

Dr. Val J. Hicks Mr. Smith 7:00 a.m.

-- To punctuate numerals or letters used in vertical lists.

a. Tenors	1. President
b. Leads	2. Chapter Development VP
c. Baritones	3. Performance VP
d. Basses	4. Secretary/Treasurer

-- When a sentence ends with an abbreviation, one period is sufficient for both the abbreviation and the end of the sentence.

Send the package to Smith and Webber, Inc.

Question marks and exclamation marks

These two terminal punctuation marks are used in obvious situations. Problems arise, however, when an editor uses them to produce emphasis. For this reason, use exclamation marks sparingly, and never in multiples. A strong statement will usually stand on its own without the addition of an exclamation mark. Some writers never use them.

Similarly with question marks, never use them in multiples or in combination with exclamation marks. Editors sometimes refer to these excessive punctuation marks as "screamers."

Avoid I can't believe we won the contest!!!

What did he mean when he said our show would be "acoustically great"?!?!?



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Possessives

Use of the apostrophe to form possessives means to show ownership. While a number of usage rules exist, the following are the commonly accepted methods of forming possessives:

Singular nouns

For years, the standard was to form the possessive of all singular nouns by adding the apostrophe and s ('s). This rule was followed regardless of the final consonant. Today, however, the following exceptions are generally permitted:

Singular nouns not ending in "s"

The standard rule of adding 's applies.

the boy's toys (one boy)
the baritone's pitch pipe
a full day's pay

Singular nouns ending in "s"

Add 's unless the next word begins with s.

the hostess's invitation
the hostess' seat
the witness's answer
the witness' story

Special expressions

Some words ending in sibilants ("s" sounds) take only the apostrophe when followed by words beginning with the letter s.

for goodness' sake
for appearance' sake
Butz' statement

Singular proper names ending in "s"

The use of only the apostrophe is recommended.

Charles' friend Joe Liles' arrangement Moses' laws

Plural nouns

Plural nouns not ending in "s"

Add the 's to form the possessive.

the alumni's contributions

women's rights

Plural nouns ending in "s"

Add only the apostrophe.

the tenors' music

the boys' mother (more than one boy)

states' rights

Nouns plural in form, singular in meaning

Add only the apostrophe

United States' wealth

a Thoroughbreds' victory

Joint possession, individual possession

Use a possessive form after only the last word if ownership is joint.

Fred and Vern's choreography plan is great.

Joe and Greg's arrangement needs fine tuning.

Use a possessive form after both words if the objects are individually owned.

Fred's and Vern's uniforms were at the cleaners.

Lou's and Earl's arrangements are copyrighted.

Quasi possessives

Follow the rules above in composing the possessive form of words that appear in specialized phrases.

a day's pay

two weeks' vacation

your money's worth

Possessive pronouns

Possessive personal pronouns ending in s do not use the apostrophe.

yours ours theirs
his hers its
whose

Notice that it's is a contraction of it is, not the possessive of the pronoun it. If an editor uses an apostrophe with a pronoun, he should double check to be sure that the meaning of the sentence calls for a contraction.

you're (you are) it's (it is)
there's (there is) who's (who is)

It's (it is) a wise dog that scratches its (possessive) fleas.



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Quotation marks

Quotation marks are used for three primary purposes: (1) to indicate direct quotation; (2) to indicate some types of titles; and (3) to indicate special usage of words or phrases.

Direct quotation

Quotation marks are used to enclose a direct quotation whether oral or written. Their use indicates the repeating of someone's exact words.

The judge said, "Well, your quartet is not hopeless."

"I look forward to serving a second term as your chapter president," said Nash.

Quotation marks are used to enclose each part of an interrupted quotation. Notice in the second example below that the second part of the quotation is capitalized because the speaker begins a new sentence.

"Where," he asked, "do you keep the shoes to this uniform?"

"We need to raise \$150,000 for our concert tour of England," he said. "Where will we get that much money?"

Do not use quotation marks in an indirect quotation (one in which the editor is not citing the exact words used by the speaker).

The judge said that our quartet was not without hope.

He noted that it would take \$150,000 to finance the trip to England, and he wondered how the chapter could raise that much money.

Quotations marks are not used with "yes" or "no" unless each is part of direct discourse.

Mike always answers yes to our request; he can never say no to a friend.

When asked if he were feeling better, he weakly responded, "Yes."

Long direct quotation

If a full paragraph of quoted material is followed by a paragraph that continues the quotation, do not put close-quote marks at the end of the first paragraph. Do, however, put open-quote marks (") at the beginning of the subsequent paragraphs. This procedure should be continued for each paragraph of direct quotation. Use close-quote marks (") only at the end of the entire quoted passage. The following example is taken from Joe Liles column in the May/June 1994 Harmonizer:

"If you were to reflect a moment, obvious heroes would immediately come to mind. Most likely, your first list would contain those who have achieved a high office or who have attained a remarkable level of performance or ranking within Society life--all clearly pronounced leaders. We recognize their awesome, dynamic administrative and/or musical abilities.

"This publication could be literally filled with nothing but famous names: those who have gone on before or who live today. The roll is increasing annually.

"The thought occurred to me: where would heroes be without all of us common guys? They would have no one to lead, no one to perform for or with, and no one to complete the tasks."

Whenever possible, avoid long, multi-paragraphed direct quotations. The reader can lose track of the fact that it is a direct quote, and the appearance of the directly quoted text will blend in too easily with the rest of the article. Academic documentation requires that if a writer directly quotes anything longer than five typed lines (or approximately 50 words), he should indent all the material so that the quoted text becomes readily apparent and not use quotation marks (the indentation functions as a cue to direct quotation).

Notice how this procedure is used in handling the above long direct quotation. The following might have appeared as part of a column in a chapter bulletin:

All too often, we lose sight of just how important our past members are in our chapter. These men have played an important role in the history of your chapter. That's why Joe Liles' comments are so appropriate:

If you were to reflect a moment, obvious heroes would immediately come to mind. Most likely, your first list would contain those who have achieved a high office or who have attained a remarkable level of performance or ranking within Society life--all clearly pronounced leaders. We recognize their awesome, dynamic administrative and/or musical abilities.

This publication could be literally filled with nothing but famous names: those who have gone on before or who live today. The roll is increasing annually.

The thought occurred to me: where would heroes be without all of us common guys? They would have no one to lead, no one to perform for or with, and no one to complete the tasks.

That's why each of us needs to be aware of who these past members are, not because we're interested in enticing them back to sing with us, but because their character and personality have shaped the way we are today.

As a way of handling a long direct quotation, the special indentation pattern is a much more effective method. Again, the technique should be used sparingly; paraphrase whenever possible.

Titles

(see also [Italics](#))

The titles of books, magazines, or collections of individual works should be italicized or underlined. Quotation marks are used to enclose the titles of magazine articles, essays, short stories, songs, poems, lectures, chapter titles, or radio and TV programs.

Darryl Flinn's column, "Let's Harmonize," appears in each issue of The Harmonizer.

139th Street Quartet appeared on NBC's "Cheers."

Clay's solo in "Old Man River" always thrills the audience.

Special use of words and phrases

An editor may use quotation marks to show that he is using a word or phrase as someone else has used it. The word choice is not what the editor would ordinarily use.

Among these "old crows" are some of the men who have made our chapter the success it is, so we shouldn't be too quick to "turn them out to pasture."

Are these choreography plans your so-called "simple directions"?

-- **Words used as words** A word referred to as a word is italicized (underlined) in print. However, when that word and its definition appear in the same sentence, the word is italicized (underlined) and the definition is placed in quotation marks.

Singing in a scherzando manner means "to sing lightheartedly."

Our director used the term curtainitis to indicate "sheer terror when the curtain opens."

Punctuation with quotation marks

Periods and commas -- Always go within the quotation marks.

"I'm leaving," he said in a huff.

He said, "The program will begin at 9 o'clock."

Semicolons and colons -- Always go outside the quotation marks.

He said, "Wait until Friday"; however, Friday will be too late.

We forgot the words to the fourth verse of "Amazing Grace": "The Lord has promised good to me ..."

Question marks and exclamation points -- Each of these marks goes inside the quotation marks when it refers to the quoted material only. Each goes outside when it refers to the whole sentence.

He asked, "When did he leave?"
Did you hear me say, "Come in and have a seat"?
The director shouted, "Sing loudly!"
Don't you dare say, "Do it yourself"!

Editors frequently have problems with these marks when writing song titles. Notice how the above rules are applied to these titles:

I like to sing "My Wild Irish Rose," but Joe likes to sing "Lida Rose."
Did we sing "My Wild Irish Rose"?
We sang "Are You From Dixie?"
I can't believe we sang "You're the Reason Our Kids Are Ugly"!

Quotations within quotations -- If a situation requires the use of quoted material within quoted material, place the internal item within single quotation marks while enclosing the primary quote in double quotation marks.

In this case, the single quotation marks go before the punctuation while the double quotation marks go after in accordance with the above rules.

The district president closed the meeting with these words: "Gentlemen, let's stand and sing 'Keep the Whole World Singing'."
"Was it Jim Miller who said, 'Sing the same notes, the same way, at the same time'?"



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Redundancy

Redundancy is the habit of repeating similar ideas in close succession. Correcting problems in redundancy is a more complicated task than proofreading because an editor is reviewing entire concepts rather than correcting mechanical errors.

One form of redundancy involves rephrasing a previous sentence. For example:

If we are going to succeed at contest, we're going to have to put more effort into our practices. We're not doing enough work at rehearsal, so we need to try harder if we plan to remain in the top five.

Notice how the following revision reduces the repeated phrases into a more concise statement:

If we are going to remain in the top five at contest, we need to put more effort into our practices.

Another type of redundancy involves repetition words and phrases. For example, "the end result" is a commonly used phrase, but "the result" is sufficient. "At this point in time" is another example; "now" usually is sufficient. Yet a third example is "each and every"; "each" is sufficient. Rudolph Flesch's book *The ABC of Style* provides numerous examples of repetitious phrasings and gives advice on how to simplify the expressions.

A third example of redundancy is writing numbers both as words and as equivalent Arabic numbers in parentheses.

There are four (4) men in a quartet.

The Arabic number in parentheses is unnecessary. In fact, all numbers 10 or greater are written in Arabic form.



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Semicolons

Use a semicolon to link two independent clauses that are logically related. This means that a period could be used instead of the semicolon to separate the two sentences; however, the semicolon is preferred for logical linkage of ideas. Many times a conjunctive adverb (followed by a comma) such as consequently, however, therefore, furthermore, is used to signal the logical relationship. For example:

Some of the men in the chapter spend a half-hour on the risers; other members spent a half-hour in vowel matching.

In the second number of our contest set, the back section of risers collapsed; consequently, we were given the opportunity to perform again after they were repaired.

In one situation, an editor should use a semicolon to join two word segments that are not independent clauses. If the sentence construction features a list requiring a number of commas that would be confusing to follow, it is permissible to use a semicolon as the main unit of separation. Here's an example:

Several Barbershoppers from our district attended Harmony College: Joe Williams, Lockport Chapter; Eddie Haskell, Delavor Chapter; Mickey Mounce, Dixon Chapter; and William Scoth, Tiskawa Chapter.

Using semicolons to separate the four individuals' names and chapters is a clearer way to present the information. An even simpler method is construct a table:

Several Barbershoppers from our district attended Harmony College:

*Joe Williams, Lockport Chapter
Eddie Haskell, Delavor Chapter
Mickey Mounce, Dixon Chapter
William Scoth, Tiskawa Chapter*



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Sentence construction faults

Fragments

A sentence fragment is a group of words that cannot stand alone as a complete sentence because either the subject, the verb, or both are missing. This word group often can be joined to the preceding or to the subsequent sentence to eliminate the fragment.

Fragment The audience got very quiet. When Chiefs of Staff started to sing.

Solution The audience got very quiet when Chiefs of Staff started to sing.

Fragment Our chapter decided to sit out the fall contest. Which upset a few members.

Solution Our chapter decided to sit out the fall contest, which upset a few members.

Fragment Carlson preferring to wait until everyone quieted down before he continued.

Solution Carlson preferred to wait until everyone quieted down before he continued.

Editors may use a fragment for stylistic or emphatic effect, but the practice should be kept to a minimum. The technique loses its effectiveness when overused.

The district is considering a rebate on dues because of the recent membership increase. What a deal!
Our chorus is competing against choruses four times our size, and our director thinks we can win. No way.

Run-togethers

Joining two complete sentences without appropriate punctuation or with no punctuation at all is called a "run together" or "run-on" sentence.

Run-on Boggs stated his view about the new uniforms he regretted it immediately.

Solutions Boggs stated his view about the new uniforms. He regretted it immediately.

Boggs stated his view about the new uniforms; he regretted it immediately.

Boggs stated his view about the new uniforms, but he regretted it immediately.

This problem in sentence construction is sometimes called a comma splice if only a comma is used to join the sentence without the appropriate connecting word.



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Sentence variety

Develop the ability to vary the length and type of sentences. By doing so, an editor can avoid choppy or monotonous sentence phrasings. A writer's goal is to convey his ideas as clearly and as smoothly as possible. If readers have to reread passages to figure out the meaning, or if they get trapped in repetitive sentence patterns, the writer reduces effective communication.

The following paragraph from a chapter bulletin is written with short, choppy sentences. In addition, the first word of each sentence is the subject of the sentence.

We went to Atlanta to the international convention. It was quite an experience. We drove about 10 hours in Phil's Buick. We listened to barbershop tapes all the way. I recognized many of the songs, and I have sung in a car many times, but I haven't sung with guys who harmonize so well. Phil's tenor is soft and sweet. Stu sang lead or baritone parts. Bob sang bass. The harmony was easy to listen to. They used many sevenths and transposed keys. One voice often had moving tones during a held chord.

Notice how the previous paragraph sounds almost juvenile in its style. The following paragraph is a revision that improves sentence variety by combining ideas and by using introductory words and phrases.

Our recent trip to the international convention at Atlanta was quite an experience. We drove for about 10 hours in Phil's Buick, listening to barbershop tapes all the way. Even though I recognized many of the songs, I've never had the opportunity to sing them in a car with guys who harmonize so well. Phil's sweet tenor blended well with Bob's bass while Stu pitched in at lead or baritone. We experimented with seventh chords, transposed a few keys, and even tried some moving tones during held chords. I could harmonize with these guys all day.

Advantages of the revised paragraph are the varied sentence lengths and types, the use of introductory words and phrases to avoid beginning every sentence with the subject, the use of more precise verbs and modifiers, and a concluding sentence that brings the paragraph to a natural end.



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Shifts

Shift in voice

(see also [Active/Passive Voice](#))

Whenever possible, prefer active verb voice in sentence construction, but if the passive voice is more appropriate, do not mix active and passive voice in the same sentence. In the following example, the use of the passive voice (was arranged by) is appropriate:

The song that our chorus sang for the finale was arranged by Don Gray.

However, in this next example, the verb voice is mixed, producing an awkward sentence:

The videotape was watched by the chorus while our director critiqued the performance.

Prefer the following revision:

As the chorus members watched the videotape, our director critiqued the performance.

Shift in person

Pronouns are often categorized as first person (I), second person (you), or third person (he). Keep the point of view consistent. The following two sentences mix the points of view.

Shift *Everyone should report to your hotel room by 6:00 p.m.*

Revised *Everyone should report to his hotel room by 6:00 p.m.*

Shift *If you try hard enough, a person can learn to sing this arrangement.*

Revised *If you try hard enough, you can learn to sing this arrangement.*

or

If one tries hard enough, one can learn to sing this arrangement.

Shift in tense (time)

Keep the verb tenses (time) consistent in terms of past and present. Note the following example and its revision:

Shift *We drove around Kansas City in Herb's van for what seems like hours, and then we find we have taken a wrong turn and are heading toward Wichita.*

Revised *We drove around Kansas City in Herb's van for what seemed like hours, and then we found we had taken a wrong turn and were heading toward Wichita.*



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Spelling

The obvious advice here is if you doubt the spelling of a word, then consult a dictionary. However, Noah Webster developed the following rules for the frequently troublesome question of whether to double a final consonant in forming -ing or -ed endings on verbs:

-- If the stress in pronunciation is on the first syllable, do not double the consonant: travel, traveling, traveled; cancel, canceling, canceled.

-- If the stress in pronunciation is on the second syllable, double the consonant: control, controlling, controlled; refer, referring, referred.

-- If the word has only one syllable, double the consonant except for those words that have a double vowel before the final consonant: jut, juttied, jutting; coat, coated, coating.

Every usage manual includes a listing of words frequently misspelled. The following list represents 30 words most writers assume they know how to spell, but often don't.

accommodate	memento
achieve	noticeable
auxiliary	occasion
believe	occurrence
benefited	paid
camaraderie	pastime
commitment	prerogative
definitely	privilege
desperate	recur (not reoccur)
embarrass	reference
excellent	rehearsal
exercise	rhythm
fliers	separate
grammar	truly
harass	weird

Don't use shortened forms of words such as thru (for "through"), tho (for "though"), or til (for "until").

Caution: Many word processing computer programs, as well as some electronic typewriters, are equipped with spell-checking features that can automatically correct misspelled words. However, often a writer's misspelled word is another word (such as "bran" instead of "brand" or "fist" instead of "first").

Don't trust any writing tool to catch all your errors. Proofread your product.



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Symbols

Avoid using typographical symbols within the text of your articles.

% -- Use only in typing a table or chart; in all other instances, write out as the word percent.

& -- Use in a company's name, in tabular work, or in commonly used Society abbreviations.

G&S A&R L&R C&J Little, Brown & Co.

-- Use only in tabular work; in all other instances, write out the word number. This symbol is sometimes used to indicate pounds, which should also be written as a word.

w/ w/o -- Never use these forms of written shorthand; always write out the words with or without.

!!! -- These superfluous marks are known as "screamers"; never use them.

???

?!?!

Xmas -- Never use this shortened form; always write out the word "Christmas."

Other symbols that are often used in technical or scientific writing should not be used unless the editor feels confident that most of his readership would understand their meaning.

Some editors may feel that using symbolic shorthand is acceptable in local publications. While each editor should focus on serving his local chapter, all of our Society publications can and sometimes do come under review by others outside our chapters and organization. Therefore, we should all aim for clarity. Keeping to the basic elements of grammar and usage will ensure that readers are not distracted by symbolic elements. One only needs to scan a daily newspaper or the major news magazines to see that the symbols and shortcuts listed above are rarely used. If editors are unsure about such usage, then the best guide is to model the grammar, usage, and style of *The Harmonizer*.



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Usage glossary

a lot

A "lot" can be (1) a piece of land; (b) a chance, as in "drawing lots" or "casting lots"; (c) a movie studio; or (d) a group of items to be sold at a sale. Whenever possible, avoid use of "lot" as a measure of a quantity of people or things. Prefer the word "many." Editors frequently err by spelling the two-word phrase as one word "alot."

a while/awhile

Use a while only when it is preceded by a preposition.

He plans to stay around for a while.

Use awhile in all other instances.

He plans to stay awhile.

"above" or "preceding" vs. "below" or "following"

Prefer the word "preceding" when referring to information that appears earlier in the text; prefer the word "following" when referring to information that appears later in the text. Unnatural page breaks and columns arrangements can often cause the statements "above" or "below" to be illogical.

accept/except

Accept (a verb) means "to receive something with favor" or "to approve."

I hope John will accept the position of Heartspring chairman.

Except (usually a preposition) means "excluding" or "rejecting."

We covered everything in the coaching session except breathing techniques.

advice/advise

Advice (a noun) means "information given as an aid."

Our director's advice is usually helpful.

Advise (a verb) means "to give information or aid."

Our director will advise you on the voice part to sing.

affect/effect

Affect (a verb) means "to influence."

The dense cigarette smoke in the room can seriously affect your vocal cords.

Effect (usually a noun) means "the end result" or "the outcome."

Ten more men on stage had a noticeable effect on our Singing score.

all right

All right, meaning "all is right," always should be spelled out as two separate words. Editors frequently misspell it as one word "alright."

Even with our tenor section stricken with flue, we'll be all right by show time.

already/all ready

Already (an adverb) means "previously."

The chorus had already committed to the performance, so we couldn't schedule our open house for that evening.

All ready means "all is/are ready."

Exactly at 7:30 p.m., the chorus members were all ready to perform.

altogether/all together

Altogether means "wholly" or entirely.

We did not altogether approve of the decision to sit out the contest.

All together means "a group acting as a unit."

The leads managed to sing the pick-up notes all together.

amount/number

Amount refers to "a quantity thought of as a single unit." Generally, the quantity is uncountable.

The amount of time we devote to our hobby is immeasurable.

Number refers to "a quantity thought of as a collection of single units." Generally, it is possible to count the quantity.

The number of tickets sold was less than we had expected.

annual

An event cannot be described as "annual" until it has been held in at least two successive years. Do not use the term first annual. Instead, note that a group plans to hold the event annually.

biannual/biennial

Biannual refers to an event that occurs twice within a year.

Our chorus is gearing up for our biannual appearance at contest.

Biennial refers to an event that occurs every other year.

The Pekin Chapter hosts a biennial Caribbean cruise.

champion(s)/champ(s)

Prefer champion/champions in all instances.

chord/cord

A chord is a musical term describing the simultaneous production of two or more tones to produce a harmonious result.

We never succeeded at singing the tune-up chord correctly.

A cord is a length of string, leather, wire, or muscle tissue.

Compare a bass's vocal cords with the bass strings on a piano.

co-

Use a hyphen when forming nouns, adjectives, and verbs that indicate occupation or status.

co-author	co-worker
co-chairman	co-star

Use no hyphen in other combinations.

coeducation coordinate
coexist cooperate

compared to/compared with

Use compared to when the intent is to assert that two or more things are similar.

He compared his plan for revising the Society's judging system to the Sweet Adelines' current judging system.

Use compared with when juxtaposing two or more items to show either similarities or differences.

Our score was 875, compared with 785 from last year.

complement/compliment

Complement means "that which completes."

These new shirts will complement our uniforms.

Compliment means "to flatter or to praise."

Let me compliment your quartet on its sound.

complimentary

Complimentary means "given free as a courtesy."

We gave complimentary tickets to news media and district officers.

continual/continuous

Continual means "steady repetition over and over again."

The issue of raising Society dues has been a continual headache for the Board of Directors.

Continuous means "uninterrupted, steady, unbroken."

All we saw in front of us was a continuous sea of faces in the audience.

could have/may have/might have
must have/should have/would have

Use these verb forms rather than the incorrectly written forms based on slurred speech patterns (could of, might

of, should ...)

Many of the conventioners in the lobby should have been quieter during the contest sessions.

different from/different than

The preposition *from* is preferred to the conjunction *than*.

Barbershopping in Britain is no different from barbershopping in America.

ensure/insure

Use *ensure* to mean "guarantee."

We hired a Presentation coach to ensure that we wouldn't overlook any part of our performance.

Use *insure* only in reference to financial arrangements involving insurance.

Our chapter decided to insure our property.

entitled/titled

Use *entitled* to refer to "the right to do or have something."

Our victory entitled us to advance to the next round of competition.

Use *titled* to refer to titles and labels.

Our next song is titled "Huggin' and Chalkin'."

etc.

The abbreviation *etc.* is often used when a writer is not sure of what else to include in a list of items. The classic *Elements of Style* by Strunk and White says that *etc.* is "least open to objection when it represents the last (unstated) terms of a list already given almost in full, or immaterial words at the end of a quotation." However, at the end of a list introduced by "such as" or "for example," the use of *etc.* is inappropriate because the introductory words already indicate an incomplete list. Because of imprecision, writers should avoid using *etc.*

farther/further

These two terms are generally thought to be interchangeable; however, the word *farther* more appropriately refers to physical distance while the word *further* more appropriately refers to time, quantity, or degree.

He has to travel farther to chapter meetings than I do.

The music VP discussed further the changes in copyright law.

fewer/less

Fewer is an adjective used to modify nouns that can be counted and that are temporarily grouped yet retain their individuality.

Since contest, fewer of our members are showing up for rehearsal.

Less is an adjective used to modify nouns always taken as wholes (money, work, time) that cannot be individually counted or to describe values and degrees.

Because of our upcoming show, we spend less time quartetting and more time polishing our show songs. Our new director has less stringent rules for chorus rehearsal than our previous director.

good/well

Good (an adjective) should be used only to modify nouns.

We had a good time at the convention.

Well (usually an adverb) is most often used to modify a verb, telling "how" something is done. It is also used to indicate the condition of one's health.

*The reason they sang so well is that they have good breath control.
John, you don't look very well. What did you have to eat?*

hopefully

This once-useful adverb meaning "with hope" has been distorted and is now widely used to mean "I hope" or "it is hoped." Use the word sparingly and in adverbial situations.

*The little boy stared hopefully at the clown passing out toys.
I hope (rather than hopefully) we'll be able to put 75 men on stage for contest.*

imply/infer

Imply means "to hint at something"; a speaker implies.

He implied that we did not sing very well.

Infer means "to reach a conclusion"; a listener infers.

I inferred from the audience's response that we sang very well.

Internet

While usage is still evolving, the general preference is that the word should always be capitalized.

its/it's

Its is a possessive pronoun. No apostrophe is needed.

The only good thing about that song is its tag.

It's is the contraction for "it is." An apostrophe is needed.

Some say it's not possible for a quartet to win a gold medal at an international contest its first time in competition.

like/as

Usually, *like* functions as either a verb or a preposition.

I like songs like "Lida Rose."

As is a conjunction usually used to signal a subordinate clause; this means the word group following the word *as* should be a complete sentence unit.

Shape your mouth as I do.

loose/lose

Loose is an adjective meaning "not tight."

These pants are far too loose.

Lose is a verb meaning "to misplace or not win."

Now, don't lose your temper if we lose this contest.

master of ceremonies

This phrase should be written out in full on first usage and in lower case unless it precedes the name of the person. For subsequent usage, use the non-abbreviated MC with capitals.

At our afternoon matinee, Master of Ceremonies Freddy King had the audience laughing uncontrollably. I have never seen a better barbershop MC.

The phonetic spelling of the abbreviation "emcee" is permitted in those instances when a suffix is needed.

Freddy King MC'd our last show and will be MC-ing our 50th Anniversary Show next year.

maybe/may be

Maybe, an adjective phrase meaning "perhaps" or "possibly," is different from the verb phrase may be.

Maybe we're afraid that we may be beaten in this contest.

microphone/mike

Prefer the word microphone. The word mike is the informal usage often used in oral situations.

midwinter

The word midwinter, in reference to the annual Society convention and Board of Directors meeting in January, is not capitalized unless the word is used as a part of a specific convention title. Neither is the word hyphenated.

I have never attended a midwinter convention, but I'm currently making plans to attend the Honolulu Midwinter Convention.

off/-off

Check a dictionary for proper usage of hyphens since there is no consistent rule. Some examples of correct usage are as follows:

off-white	offstage
off-key	offset
off-Broadway	offhand
standoff	takeoff
send-off	stop-off

off of

The "of" is unnecessary.

The music fell off the stand.

ongoing

A recently coined adjective, the word ongoing should be avoided. Prefer "continuing."

We've have a continuing problem with lost music.

parentheses

The following information is taken from the AP Stylebook:

Parentheses are jarring to the reader. ... The temptation to use parentheses is a clue that a sentence is becoming contorted. Try to write it another way. If a sentence must contain incidental material, then commas or two dashes are frequently more effective. Use these alternatives whenever possible.

passed/past

Passed, the past tense of "to pass," means "moved by or completed satisfactorily."

The shuttle bus driver passed the hotel drop-off point without stopping to unload passengers.

Past, a noun, means "in former times."

At the Pioneers convention, dyed-in-the-wool woodshedders reminisce about the great impromptu quartets of the past.

pitch pipe

The word is always spelled as two words.

I panicked because I had forgotten my pitch pipe.

podium/lectern

A podium is an elevated platform.

The chorus sang in informal groups on the podium.

A lectern is a stand used to hold notes or books.

The master of ceremonies stood at the lectern.

precede/proceed

To precede means "to go ahead of."

The director preceded the chorus as they entered the warm-up room.

The preceding paragraph discussed the differences between podium and lectern.

To proceed means "to begin and carry on an action, process, or movement."

When the quartet walked up to receive its award, the lead proceeded to the microphone to accept the honor.

principal/principle

Principal is a noun or adjective meaning "someone or something first in rank, authority, importance, or degree."

Our new bass is a retired school principal. He is the principal reason our chorus has improved its tonal production.

Principle is a noun that means "fundamental truth, law, doctrine, or motivating force."

One of the most important barbershopping principles is in-tune singing.

quartet/quartette

Quartet is the word for any group of four, including four females. The word quartette may be used to describe a female foursome, but this spelling is the predominant form in Britain for a male foursome. The verbal derivatives of quartet are quartetted and quartetting.

reason is that/reason was that

Whenever possible, avoid use of *reason is that* phrasing because of its wordiness. However, if a sentence states a reason or reasons for some action, prefer the word *that* to follow the linking verb. Many people use the subordinating conjunction *because*, but the relative pronoun *that* is the grammatical unit to use to follow the linking verb.

Our quartet doesn't do many weekend performances. The reason is that our bass works the weekend shift at the hospital's emergency room.

Our quartet doesn't do many weekend performances because our bass works the weekend shift at the hospital's emergency room. (prefer this phrasing)

recur/recurred/recurring

Many writers mistakenly create the word reoccur in situations requiring the use of the word recur.

I get these recurring headaches every time I sing one of Mortimer's arrangements.

the "Star-Spangled Banner"

The United States' national anthem is treated as if it were any other song title. The words national anthem are always lower case.

Our chorus was granted permission to sing the national anthem at a Cubs game, so we used Mac Huff's arrangement of "The Star-Spangled Banner."

there/their/they're

There is used as an adverb to indicate place or as an expletive to reverse the normal subject-verb order.

There are too many people over there behind the fence.

Their is a possessive pronoun.

A few of the conventioners lost their way to the contest site.

They're is a contraction of they are.

Oh, goody! They're going to sing another song.

than/then

Than is primarily used as a conjunction in statements of comparison.

I think our uniforms look a lot sharper than theirs.

Then is primarily used as an adverb of time.

He was much younger then and had little problem singing tenor.

to/too/two

To is used as a preposition or as part of an infinitive verb form.

Most people just love to sit and listen to barbershop harmony.

Too is an intensifier (adverb). It is also used to mean "in addition."

By 11:00 p.m., most men are too tired to sing anymore. I, too, am worn out.

Two is a number.

Prepare two songs for contest.

that/which vs who

When used as relative pronouns, that and which refer to inanimate or non-human nouns or pronouns. Use that to

introduce a restrictive or essential clause (a clause not enclosed in commas); use *which* to introduce a non-restrictive or non-essential clause (a clause enclosed in commas).

This song is the one that Jay arranged.

This song, which Jay arranged, has a haunting tag.

Who is a relative pronoun used to refer to a human being or groups of human beings in both essential and non-essential clauses.

Most men who join this chapter bring excellent singing credentials.

Our director, who has a degree in music education, has been appointed the district's music educator.

try to/try and

Though wordy, *try to* is the preferred form in all cases. The verb *try* ordinarily should be followed by a direct object, in this case the infinitive phrase *to ...* In many cases, the phrase could easily be omitted from the sentence.

I will try to help you learn your music.

I will help you learn your music.

television/TV

Television is the preferred word, but the abbreviation TV--in capitals and with no periods--is an acceptable form.

used to/supposed to

Used to refers to an action completed in the past. *Supposed to* expresses a conditional or imperative action. In both cases, the phrases are misspelled as "use to" and "suppose to" based on pronunciation. A speaker has difficulty pronouncing clearly the "d-t" sounds; consequently, the "d" becomes silent when spoken. It is equivalent to writing "should of" because that's how it sounds when the contracted form "should have" is spoken.

He used to sing tenor and is supposed to sing lead, but he always wants to sing bass.

weather/whether

Weather is a noun referring to atmospheric conditions.

Regardless of the weather, we'll be singing at the gazebo in the park on Sunday.

Whether is a conjunction meaning "if it is so that" and is used as a form of indirect quotation to introduce an alternative.

It many also mean "either."

Whether we win or lose, this is our last contest. I don't know whether to go or not.

who/whom

Who is a subject case pronoun and should be used in all instances in which the similar pronoun he would be used. To verify, rephrase the sentence and substitute the pronoun he in place of who.

*I couldn't tell who sang baritone in the quartet.
(He sang baritone in the quartet.)*

Whom is an object case pronoun and should be used in all instances in which the similar pronoun him would be used. To verify, rephrase the sentence and substitute the pronoun him in place of whom. (Remember, the "m" in him matches the "m" in whom.)

*I wonder whom I should ask.
(I should ask him.)*

your/you're

Your is a possessive pronoun meaning "something belongs to you."

Do you think your chorus can learn the song by next week?

You're is a contraction of "you are."

I'm afraid you're going to find discrepancies in judging panels no matter how closely these panels are monitored.



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