

## WSO PUBLICATIONS DEPARTMENT STYLE GUIDE

NOTE: For all publications, follow *The Chicago Manual of Style* (CMS), 15th Edition, other than the exceptions noted. For *Lifeline*, newsletters and pamphlets, follow *Associated Press (AP) Style Guide* (© 2002) only for serial commas and numerals. Our dictionary is the *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th Edition.

### Spelling/Capitalization/Hyphenation

AA (no periods except when quoting from AA literature)

Ask-It Basket (only hyphenate first two words)

\* a.m., p.m. (no space, lowercase)—put a space after the number.

assembly (lowercase, unless a specific assembly name, e.g., Region Nine Assembly)

Big Book (note: When citing Big Book as source, cite as *Alcoholics Anonymous* and the edition cited by writer, unless the quote is from the first 164 pages, then cite as from most recent edition (currently fourth edition))

bingeing

\* Board of Trustees (BOT)  
the board

British spellings: change to American spelling

Business Meeting (initial cap specific meeting, e.g., I, II, etc.)  
business meeting (lowercase when nonspecific meeting)

bylaw; the bylaws; Bylaws of Overeaters Anonymous, Inc. (No cap when used with other items, such as Steps, i.e., Steps and bylaws of OA.)  
Bylaw 3.10  
the Bylaws Committee

carefrontation (one word)

chairman of the board; BOT chair; Chairman Joe Aker; Joe Aker, chairman; the chair (lowercase titles; exception is when title is second line or following comma in closing of letter or report)

\* indicates an in-house exception to CMOS or AP style

the committee

the Hospitality Committee; the Executive Committee

cochair; delegate cochair (see CMS 7.90 for more info); cofounder

complimentary—given as a courtesy or favor (free); expressing a compliment to another

complementary—completing the lack, mutually supplying needs

\* Conference (when referring to WSBC)

conference (when referring to a nonspecific conference)

\* Convention (when referring to World Service Convention or any specific convention, e.g., Region Five Convention)

convention (when referring to a nonspecific convention)

cross talk

delegate

email

\* the Fellowship (of OA)

fellowship (in general)

other fellowships

fall, spring, summer, winter (lowercase); try to use months rather than seasons for the benefit of an international audience

general service trustee (GST)

God

half measure

HP (no periods)

\* Higher Power, when referring to one's personal, chosen deity

higher power (lowercase) when not referring specifically to a spiritual HP or deity

No caps for any pronoun referring to Higher Power or God; spell out whenever possible

IDEA Day (acronym; no periods)

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insure—to make certain by taking measures and precautions in advance

ensure—to remove doubt, make certain

assure—give confidence to; reassure

(These three are listed as synonymous by Webster; the differences are subtle and we may occasionally have to guess which one the author means.)

health-care professional, health care

IG (no periods)

intergroup (nonspecific); the Southwest Intergroup (specific)

Internet

judgment

long-term abstinence

longtimer

main motion

managing director; Managing Director Naomi Lippel; Naomi Lippel, managing director

NSB (no periods); LSB; N/LSB

national service board; language service board; national/language service board  
(lowercase nonspecific)

Great Britain National Service Board (initial cap specific)

newcomer (one word)

newfound (one word)

newly found

OA (no periods)

OA-HOW

OAs (not OAs; used when abbreviating "OA members")—use the term OA members  
wherever possible

old-timer—don't use; use the term "longtimer" instead

**\* indicates an in-house exception to CMS or AP style**

online

overeatersanonymous.org (all lowercase)  
oa.org

pen pal  
pen pal list (no hyphens)

people pleasing (no hyphen; if used as modifier, then hyphenate)

policy statement

promises (OA promises or AA promises; don't cap promises)

purging

region (nonspecific)  
Region Eight (specific)—spell out numbers of all regions, including Ten

region(al) chair  
region(al) trustee  
region assemblies  
region representative

Serenity Prayer

Service and Traditions Workshop

Service by Mail program/form—Service by Mail is the title of the Service by Mail program. As such, it can be used as a modifier without hyphens. There is no sponsor by mail program, sponsoree program or pen pal program, so those phrases are always lowercase and not hyphenated, unless they are used in some other context. If speaking generically about doing service by mail, do not initial cap and do not hyphenate.

sponsor by mail

sponsee (not sponsoree), but in Lifeline stories and other personal sharings leave whichever word the author has chosen

the June 1995 issue (no commas)  
June 1995, page 12

**\* indicates an in-house exception to CMS or AP style**

- \* the Twelve Concepts
  - \* the Concepts (only when speaking of the Twelve Concepts)
- \* the Twelve Steps; the Steps
  - \* Step One, Step Two (spell out all numbers)
  - \* First Step (when referring to Step One); the first two Steps
  - \* Step sponsor
  - \* Step study; Step-study meeting
  - \* another Twelve-Step program
  - \* Step Principles (cap principles only when used with Step)
- \* the Twelve Traditions
  - \* Tradition One (spell out all numbers)
  - \* First Tradition

Twelfth Step Within - no hyphens when used as a noun

Twelfth-Step-Within meeting

\* Twelfth-Step work or Twelfth-Step Committee (not Twelve-Step)

“Twelve and Twelve”

tools

too -- No comma before too at the end of a sentence

trustee(s)

type 2 diabetes

US

USA

vice chairman; vice chair (no hyphen)

weight loss

weight-loss program

World Service Office; WSO

World Service Business Conference; WSBC

World Service Convention

world service; world services (preferred usage over “world service”); world service level  
(no hyphen)

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Web site (two words)  
webmaster  
the Web  
World Wide Web

## PUNCTUATION/USAGE

When questions of punctuation or usage arise, refer to the *Chicago Manual of Style* (CMS), 15th Edition or the *Associated Press Stylebook* (AP), except as noted below.

### Abbreviations

When abbreviating months, put a period after the abbreviation, unless it's in tabular material, then don't put a period.

### Bylines

Unless specifically requested otherwise, bylines should read as follows:

Marie W., Van Nuys, California USA. If author is from a foreign country, byline should read: Mary B., Ottawa, Ontario, Canada (note comma prior to country name). If anonymity is requested, then the byline should read: Anonymous (location optional). If an article is signed with the first name only, and no initial or last name, then sign the article with the first name only. If a writer requests that the city or state not be printed, then omit in either case as follows: Marie W., California USA. DO NOT PRINT LAST NAMES.

### Capitalization in Titles

Refer to guidelines in AP, page 55 ("composition titles")

### Colons

Capitalize the first word after a colon only if it is a proper noun, quotation or introduces two or more sentences. Single space following a colon. Colons go outside quotation marks unless they are part of the quotation itself.

### Commas

*Serial commas* (refer to AP for Lifeline, newsletters and pamphlets; use CMS for all books): no commas before the conjunctions "and" or "or" in a series of three or more, e.g. "red, white and blue."

Three exceptions to this are (1) when a clause within a series has internal conjunctions, (2) when a comma is needed to aid readability in a complex series, and (3) when a series contains independent clauses. In these cases, use a comma before the last conjunction.

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*Compound sentences:* When the clauses of a compound sentence are joined by a conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so), a comma should be placed before the conjunction if the two clauses could stand alone as separate sentences, unless the clauses are short and closely related. Also, use a comma to separate an introductory clause or phrase from the main clause, unless the introductory phrase is short, provided no ambiguity results. Use a comma if its omission would slow comprehension, e.g., “On the street below, the curious gathered.”

Refer to CMS for further guidance regarding comma usage.

When writing the name of the corporation, write it as Overeaters Anonymous, Inc., or OA, Inc. Also insert a comma after Inc. when using in a sentence. (See CMS 6.50.)

### **Ellipses**

Refer to CMS, section 11.57.

### **Hyphens**

Use a hyphen whenever ambiguity would result if it were omitted. When a compound modifier precedes a noun, use hyphens to link all the words in the compound except the adverb “very” and all adverbs that end in “-ly,” e.g., a full-time job. Many combinations that are hyphenated before a noun are not when they occur after a noun, e.g., She works full time. Words containing a “non” prefix do not need to have a hyphen separating that prefix from the word, e.g., nonaligned.

Do not hyphenate written out numbers with the word “half” e.g., eight and a half, 16 and a half. However, if the written out fraction is a phrase that modifies a noun, then hyphenate for clarity, e.g., three-and-a-half-year success story. Hyphenate other written out fractions, as in two-thirds.

Do not use hyphens with the prefix “co” when forming a compound word—e.g., cofounder, coauthor, coeditor. Use hyphens if the compound formed might be read incorrectly without hyphenation, e.g., co-worker, co-opt.

Em-dashes should not have spaces before or after. Use thin spaces/kerning where necessary to slightly separate text from em-dash.

Use hyphens for area codes on phone numbers, rather than parentheses. See CMS ,section 7.82-7.90 for more on hyphen usage.

### **Numerals**

*For Lifeline, newsletters, pamphlets:* (AP style) Spell out whole numbers up to and including nine, use figures for 10 and above, except for Steps, Traditions, Concepts and regions. Spell out first through ninth; use figures for 10th and above (with same

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exceptions). Spell out a numeral at the beginning of a sentence, unless the numeral identifies a calendar year. Numbers applicable to the same category do not have to be treated alike within the same sentence. For example: Of the 12 cats, 11 are male and one is female.

Ages, decades, sizes, weights, dimensions always use numerals. Percent expressed as numeral and one word (percent, not per cent). Do not use “%” symbol.

*For books:* (CMS) Spell out whole numbers 100 and below; use figures for 101 and above, except for whole numbers followed by *hundred*, *thousand*, *hundred thousand*, *million*, and so on. Approximate figures should be spelled out as well. Spell out a numeral at the beginning of a sentence, even if the numeral identifies a calendar year. Numbers applicable to the same category should be treated alike throughout a paragraph. For example: Of the 204 jelly beans, 5 are black. Refer to CMS, sections 9.1-9.71, for further guidance.

*For all publications:* When large numbers must be spelled out, use a hyphen to connect a word ending in “y” to another word, e.g., one hundred forty-three.

Commas in numbers over 999: starting at right side of the number, put commas every three digits in, except for page numbers, addresses and years.

### Measurements

I'm 5 feet 5 inches tall.

The 5-foot-6-inch man weighed 250 pounds.

Print it on 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>-by-11-inch paper

*For Lifeline:*

- 1) When an author gives a weight in kilograms, give the abbreviated pound equivalence in parentheses after it.
- 2) If weight is given in stone, in parentheses include conversion to *both* kilograms and pounds, abbreviated.
- 3) If weight is given in pounds, include in parentheses conversion to kilograms only, abbreviated.
- 4) When author gives height in feet/inches, include conversion to centimeters in parentheses.

For example:

I came into OA weighing 93 kilograms (205 lbs).

I came into OA weighing 14 stone (89 kg.;196 lbs).

I came into OA weighing 205 pounds (93 kg).

I was only 5 feet 5 inches tall (165 cm)

To convert kilograms to pounds, multiply kilograms by 2.2 and round off.

To convert pounds to kilograms, divide pounds by 2.2 and round off.

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To convert pounds to stone (always singular), multiply pounds by 14.  
To convert inches to centimeters, multiply total inches by 2.54.

Note: Metric measurements are preferred everywhere except the US. Stone is used in England and Ireland by the older generation; the younger generations learn the metric system.

### **Page References**

Use p. or pp., unless it appears in text, then spell out “page(s).” Cite page number references as follows: “Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet” (p. 21).

### **Quotations**

When quoting from OA literature, it’s okay to change to our current style, even if it’s different than the original. But in quotations from other literature, quote exactly.

Where “ibid” is called for, just use the page numbers.

### **Quotation Marks**

In running quotations, 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. Put open-quote marks at the start of the second paragraph.

The period and comma always go within the quotation marks; the dash, colon, semicolon, question mark and exclamation point go within the quotation marks only when they apply to the quoted matter. They go outside when they apply to the whole sentence.

*Lifeline* features and department titles (e.g., Living Traditions, Stepping Out) are not put in quotation marks. Article titles are set in quotation marks.

### **Spacing**

Use only one space between sentences, not two.

### **Steps and Traditions**

Always check quoted Steps and Traditions for accuracy in both wording and number (e.g., if Step Four is quoted, make sure that it is quoted correctly *and* that it is Step Four and not a different Step being quoted).

### **Time**

Use figures except for noon and midnight. Refer to time of day as either “a.m.” or “p.m.” Put one space between the time and the a.m. or p.m.: 1 p.m., 3:30 p.m. Instead of 12 p.m. or 12 a.m., use noon and midnight (not 12 noon and 12 midnight).

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## **Titles**

*Lifeline* features and department titles (e.g., Living Traditions, Stepping Out) are initial capped only and not set in quotation marks.

Article titles are initial capped and set in quotation marks.

Italicize all OA literature and audiovisual titles.

Web site section names (e.g., What's New, All About Meetings) are initial capped and not set in quotation marks. For breaking URLs between lines, see CMS section 7.44.

If "The" is part of a book title, it should be initial capped and italicized along with the rest of the title (e.g., *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous*). If it is the name of a newspaper or periodical, do not include "the" as part of the title, e.g., the Chicago Tribune. See CMS, section 8.180.