

Joseph T. Simpson Public Library Style Guide

Adopted April 10, 2018

Mission: Joseph T. Simpson Public Library is a community center for learning and leisure.

A

Abbreviations

- NE, NW, SE, SW
- Spell out United States

Acronyms – Spell out organization names on first reference. Use acronyms later. As a rule, only use acronyms if they are well known. For example, “Cumberland County Library System” – spell out full name (capitalized) on first reference, and CCLS is acceptable on second reference.

Active voice is always better than passive voice. (Anytime it is not clear from a sentence who is doing the action, it is probably passive.) **Passive:** *A decision was reached that you should be fired.* **Active:** *I decided to fire you.*

Address format – Follow this format in writing the library’s mailing address:
Joseph T. Simpson Public Library
16 N Walnut St
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

And should be spelled out. The ampersand (&) should only be used if it is officially part of a proper name or organization.

B

Board is singular and is not capitalized. **Board members** is plural, two words, and not capitalized. *The board is meeting in the conference room. The board is excited about its new strategic plan.* OR *The board members are ready to meet. They have worked hard on this strategic plan.*

Board chair is preferable to chairman, chairwoman, or chairperson.

Book sale is two words.

Borough or Borough of – use Mechanicsburg Borough and Shiremanstown Borough instead of Borough of Mechanicsburg.

Bylaw is one word, no hyphen.

C

Capacity building is two words when used as a noun. *The organization is engaging in capacity building.* However, it is hyphenated when used as an adjective. *The organization has a new and exciting capacity-building strategy.*

Check-in and Checkout – Check-in is hyphenated when it is being used as a noun. *There were a lot of check-ins today at the main desk.* Or, if using as an adjective, you would say *I walked up to the check-in counter.* It is two words, unhyphenated, when it functions as a verb. *Can you check in my books?* Checkout is a noun and an adjective and written as checkout. If used as a verb, it is two words. *When ready to check out books at the library, you wait in the checkout line.*

Checkout desk – Use checkout desk instead of circulation desk.

Colors – The official RGB color for the Joseph T. Simpson Public Library tree logo is R 31, G 95, and B 49.

Committee should be treated like the word board, and not capitalized. *We are inviting the investment committee to meet on Thursday.*

Contractions – Avoid use of contractions. *It is in the conference room* versus *It's in the conference room.*

Courtesy titles – Refer to both men and women by first and last name: Jill Jones or Mike Jones. Use the courtesy titles Mr., Miss, Ms., and Mrs. only in direct quotations or when specifically requested.

Credentials – Use MLS not M.L.S. and CFRE not C.F.R.E.

Cumberland Valley School District – The official name is Cumberland Valley School District, abbreviated as CVSD after the first reference to the school is spelled out.

D

Dashes and Hyphens – There are differences between hyphens, en dashes, and em dashes.

- Hyphens are used within words, as in “write-ups” (use hyphen/dash key). See also **Hyphenation**.
- En dashes are used like the word “to,” as in “ages 3 – 5”
- Em dashes are used to separate out a phrase for emphasis or dramatic effect. *The fundraiser was so successful — bringing in \$5 million — that we decided to do another one next year.*

Data can be plural or singular. Our preference is to use data as singular. *The data is stored in the research folder.*

Dates – Write numbers using only numerals (cardinal number) rather than 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 21st (ordinal number). *The fiscal year starts July 1.* Using ordinal numbers is more common and acceptable in speech or conversational writing. *We had a delightful picnic on the 4th of July.* Use date format: September 20, 2016. Do not use September 20th. If you do not use the numeric day in the date, it should read September 2016 not September, 2016 (no comma required). When writing a date as numbers use the format 3/6/2018.

Dine out – If used as a verb, use two words, no hyphen. *Let's dine out at Diener's today.* If used as noun, use dine-out. *The Friends dine-out is at Diener's today.*

E

Electronic media – Below is a list of common terms and their preferred spelling.

1. database
2. eAudiobooks
3. eBooks email
4. eNewsletter
5. eBlast
6. LISTSERV – the generic term is electronic mailing list
7. online – one word
8. PDF
9. URL

Email address – Use simpson@cumberlandcountylibraries.org as our generic library email address on printed materials instead of mechanicsburg@ccpa.net.

Email signatures – Use a standardized format for library staff who use Outlook.

E

Facebook – Capital F, one word. www.facebook.com/simpsonlibrary

For-profit is hyphenated.

Font – Arial font, size 12, is our standard font size for emails, committee notes, minutes, and general documents. This does not apply to designed documents such as posters, brochures, and booklets. The website is subject to CCLS's website style guide and thus is different from our style guide.

Footnotes – Do not use footnotes to reference information. Use an in-text citation such as: "According to the Standards for Excellence codes, a style guide for business writing is highly recommended."

Use the same method of citation regardless of your source. Books and journal articles, for example, should both be cited in the same method.

Foundation is capitalized on second reference when referring to a specific foundation (not foundations in general). *The Mechanicsburg Area Foundation held their annual luncheon last week. The Foundation announced the recipients of their grants for 2016.*

Friends of the Joseph T. Simpson Public Library is the proper name for the Friends. Acceptable alternate forms of the name in preferred order are:

1. Friends of the Simpson Public Library
2. Friends of the Simpson Library

Make sure the noun - verb agreement is correct. *The Friends are an organization that raises money for the library. The Friends group is an organization that raises money for the library. Members of the Friends are involved in fundraising for the library.*

Fundraising and **fundraiser** are both one word and not hyphenated.

G

Grantmaking and **grantmaker** are both one word.

Grassroots is one word.

H

His and **Her** – Do not use his and her together either as separate words or with a slash between them. Same applies with using he and she. Instead use the word they. Do not say the following: *The child picked up his or her toys. The child did not listen to what he or she said.* Instead, say *The child picked up their toys. Or, The child did not listen to what they said.*

Hyphenation – Hyphenate terms like “decision making” and “conflict of interest” only when used to modify a noun. Do not hyphenate these words when used as nouns. *Improve your decision-making skills. Let young people get involved in organizational decision making. I suspect there is a conflict of interest there. Every board should have some sort of conflict-of-interest policy.* Exception: policymaking, which is one word.

In general, avoid hyphenating words when creating posters, flyers, and brochures. Hyphens are used within words, such as in “write-ups.”

I

iPad and iPhone – Use lower case i and capital P in describing Apple products.

In-kind is hyphenated when it is used as an adjective, as in “in-kind donation”

Internet terminology

1. **email** – not hyphenated, lowercase
2. **internet** – not capitalized
3. **online** – one word, no hyphen
4. **web** – one word, not capitalized
5. **web page** – two words, used when referencing a specific page on a website
6. **web-based** – one word, hyphenated
7. **website** – one word
8. **WiFi** – one word, no hyphen, capital W and F
9. **hotspots** – one word, not capitalized

Instagram – Capital I. www.instagram.com/jsimpsonlibrary

J

Joseph T. Simpson Public Library – Joseph T. Simpson Public Library is our legal name. In order of preference, our name should be listed in one of the following ways, depending on audience and space available.

1. Joseph T. Simpson Public Library
2. Simpson Public Library
3. Simpson Library

When using our name within a document, you should first use Joseph T. Simpson Public Library and can refer to us as Simpson Public Library or Simpson Library later in the document.

L

Less vs. fewer – Less should be used with nouns that *cannot* be counted. *Let us talk in here where there is less noise.* Fewer should be used with nouns that *can* be counted. *Fewer people showed up for the rally than we expected.*

Logos – Logos can be found in the network “Reference” folder under Logos.

The official logo for the Joseph T. Simpson Public Library is the tree logo. The Friends of the Joseph T. Simpson Public Library have a logo. We also use program specific logos on the website and display screens.

Long sentences containing many clauses, commas, semicolons, and that run-on to several lines should be shortened. If a sentence contains a long list of items, particularly complicated items, separate them into a bulleted list.

Low-income is hyphenated when used as an adjective. If *low* and *moderate* are both descriptions of kind of income, they both require hyphens, even if separated from *income*. *Kathy's 24- hour clinic serves children from low- and moderate-income families.*

M

Mechanicsburg Area School District – Mechanicsburg Area School District is the official name of the school district. It can be abbreviated as MASD after spelling out the first reference to the name of the school district.

Media is plural. Make sure your verbs and possessive pronouns agree in number. *Media are onsite for today's program.*

More than vs Over – Both are now acceptable to indicate greater numerical value. Originally more than was the correct grammar. The same is true for less than vs under.

N

Nonprofit – One word, no hyphen.

Not-for-profit – Two hyphens.

Numbers and currency

1. Numbers 10 and above are written in numerals, nine and under should be spelled out. **Exception** – if a sentence contains numbers like nine and 103, you should default to the numerals, and make them 9 and 103.
2. Decades should be written as 1930s not 30s or '30s.
3. Use hyphens between numbers of rulings, *a five-to-four ruling.*
4. Format phone numbers using dashes and include the area code, for example, 717-766-0171.
5. When writing toll-free or long distance numbers, do not list the 1 before the area code: *800-883-6262*
6. When writing percentages, use the numeral for all values and spell out percent. *4 percent.*
7. Use % when in a table or figure.
8. When writing monetary values, always use the dollar sign and the numeral

for values under 1 million. Spell out million or billion and round down the nearest tenth. Never spell out dollars except in general use. *I found a dollar. I have \$1.50. He won \$4.2 million in the lottery.* Use dollars and cents, even if there are no cents. *\$50.00*

9. When exact amounts are not critical to report, it is generally preferable to use rounded amounts. In general, do not use cents for dollar amounts over \$99.99 or a decimal for amounts in the three digit millions or billions. *The \$700 billion rescue package was approved. The state has a \$243 million projected shortfall this fiscal year.*

10. **First** – Not 1st for numerical order. *Marilyn was the first person to arrive at the meeting.*

O

Ongoing is one word.

Onsite is one word, no hyphen.

Organization is singular. Make sure your verbs and possessive pronouns agree in number. *The organization has 10,000 members.*

P

Paragraph spacing – It is preferred to use an extra line of space to distinguish a new paragraph instead of indenting.

Percentages – See Numbers.

Policymaking is one word.

Program titles

1. Story Time
2. Toddler Time
3. Rhyme Time
4. Family Story Time
5. STEM Club
6. LEGO Club

Punctuation

1. Use commas before “and” and “or” at the end of a series: *We bought apples, oranges, and bananas.*
2. Use a comma between the name and a suffix: *Sammy Davis, Jr.*
3. Do not use slash “/” in text unless part of a name.

4. Place one space before — and after — em dashes.
5. Dashes and hyphens – see Dash
6. Put one space between sentences, not two.

Q

Quotation marks – Double quotation marks are used in the following ways:

1. around directly quoted material
2. song titles
3. short-story and short-poem titles
4. articles appearing in any periodical (newspaper, magazine, journal, newsletter)
5. episodes of television or radio series
6. chapter titles of books

R

Really – Do not use the word really. It undermines the effectiveness of the word that you are modifying. Make your point without it, or choose a new word as your subject.

Role-playing is hyphenated.

S

Self-assessment is hyphenated.

Simpson Library – See Joseph T. Simpson Public Library.

Standards for Excellence® – Requires the registered federal trademark (®) superscript when referenced. In written documents it is only necessary to use a symbol with the first instance of the mark, or with the most prominent placement of the mark. If used online, the symbol should be used on first instance of the mark, or with the most prominent placement of the mark on each web page it appears. Refer to the Standards for Excellence Institute Style Guide for additional details.

T

That vs. which

1. Use **that** to introduce a clause that contains information essential to the meaning of the sentence. Do not use a comma before “that.” *The Nile is the river that gives Egypt life.*
2. Use **which** to introduce a clause containing information that is not essential to the meaning of the sentence. Set off the nonessential clause with commas. *The Nile, which flows into the Mediterranean, gives Egypt life.*

They – It is acceptable to use they as a singular pronoun. *The patron insisted they returned the book last week.*

Time – Make sure am and pm are always lowercase without periods and a single space between the time and the am or pm reference.

10:00 am – 3:00 pm (space between time and am or pm and spaces before and after the dash)

If they're both pm, you only need to indicate the “pm” on the last time.

1:00 – 3:00 pm

Include minutes following the hour with a colon even if referring to a time that starts at the top of the hour. 1:00 pm

Titles – Titles of books, magazines, and newspapers are always capitalized and italicized. *The Catcher in the Rye, To Kill a Mockingbird, New York Times*

Twitter – Capitalized: www.twitter.com/jsimpsonlibrary

Trustees – Board of Trustees is singular and capitalized except when used to reference such boards in general. *The Board of Trustees is scheduled to meet 10 times per year.*

V

Very – Do not use the word very. It undermines the effectiveness of the word that you are modifying. Make your point without it, or choose a new word as your subject.

W

Web-based has a lowercase w and is hyphenated when used as an adjective.

Work plan is two words.

Y

Year-round — Hyphenated only when used as an adjective. *We have year-round events. We have meetings year round.*