

Style Guide for Volunteers

When you write on behalf of Girl Scouts, you're helping people get to know and understand what we're all about – building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place! Using this guide when you write will help you create messages that are clear, helpful and on-brand – all things that help make Girl Scouting great.

If you're a style and grammar guru, it may interest you to know that we used *The Associated Press Guide to Punctuation* and *The Associated Press Stylebook* to build this guide. Have a question? We're here to help! Email communications@girlscoutsosw.org.

Content

Anything you write on behalf of Girl Scouts (fliers, posters, newsletters, etc.) should include or consider the following:

- **Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington's logo:** Include the logo on all volunteer-produced documents. The logo should be placed on the left third of the first page. If the logo doesn't fit, list our full council name instead. Here are some important notes about using the logo:
 - Contact your service unit communications coordinator to obtain a copy of the logo and for help with usage rules. If your service unit doesn't currently have a communications coordinator, email communications@girlscoutsosw.org for help.
 - The logo must not be altered, reassembled or re-proportioned.
 - Required space around the logo is determined by the height of the "g" in the logo.
 - Volunteers must not use the Girl Scout logo online or on business cards.
- **Arial font:** Use Arial font whenever possible.
- **Include if appropriate:**
 - Contact information: name, phone and/or email
 - Service unit and/or troop number
 - Revision date (any document that changes frequently)
 - Page numbers (all multi-paged documents)
 - Event name & description including date, location, cost, registration information/form, registration deadline, refund policy (see below for guidelines)
- **Copyright law:** Be careful not to violate copyright law by using text from another publication, poetry, music, lyrics, videos, graphics and other copyrighted artwork without permission. Girl Scout trademarks (trefoil shape, Girl Scout pins, badges, patches, etc.) require approval by GSUSA prior to use. If you're unsure, ask us!
- **Emphasis:** In Girl Scouts, we have lots of important things to say! We also want our messages to be readable, so please limit use of all caps, bolding large sections of text and exclamation points. Use emphasis wisely.
- **Know your facts:** Whenever you state information about our council, use the current *GSOSW Fact Sheet* found at girlscoutsosw.org.
- **Form names:** When mentioning documents and forms, use the complete document/form name as listed on the form.
- **Think safety:** For the protection of our members, full location details of camp properties and troop/group activities should not be included in a document if it can be viewed by an external audience and is not open to the public.

Proofreading & Publishing

- Publications produced by or on behalf of the service team must be proofread by the service unit communications coordinator prior to distribution. The communications coordinator will coordinate approval of ads and press releases with the GSOSW communications department.
- Troop and girl publications are encouraged but not required to be proofread unless they are using the Girl Scout logo.
- Please provide a reasonable timeline to complete proofreading. Proofreaders must proof the document to ensure it meets *Style Guide* requirements and should be honest about the time they have to proofread a publication.
- It is recommended to PDF all documents that are being attached to email, unless they're meant to be a working document. This is to prevent issues viewing your document (i.e. various computing platforms & application versions; not owning software or font). Free PDF creation software is available at <http://www.cutepdf.com/products/cutepdf/Writer.asp>.

Council Standards

Terminology

- **Girl Scouts of the USA** – First reference: Girl Scouts of the USA; Second reference: GSUSA or Girl Scouts USA
- **Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington** – First reference: Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington; Second reference: GSOSW, Girl Scouts of Oregon & SW Washington, Girl Scouts OSW.
- **Properties**
 - **Camps** – Camp Arrowhead, Camp Cleawox, Camp Whispering Winds
 - **Outdoor program centers** – Homestead Outdoor Program Center, Mountindale Outdoor Program Center, Ruth Hyde Outdoor Program Center
 - **Program centers** – Albany Program Center, Lebanon Program Center, Newport Program Center, Seaside Program Center, Winema Program Center
 - **Service centers** – Bend Service Center, Eugene Service Center, Medford Service Center, Portland Service Center, list Eastern Oregon contact information when listing all service centers; do not refer to these as program centers
- **Financial assistance** – membership dues financial assistance; girl uniform and books financial assistance (not girl assistance); event financial assistance; travel financial assistance; resident camp financial assistance and day camp financial assistance (camperships also acceptable); adult learning financial assistance
- **Annual membership dues**; not registration fee or membership fee when referring to annual membership dues
- **Volunteer meetings**; not leader meetings
- **Council-wide**; not councilwide or statewide
- **Online**; not on-line
- **Email**; not e-mail
- **Web page and website**; not Website, web site, webpage or web page
- **Girl/adult partnership**; not adult/girl partnership (emphasizes girl-led)
- **Girl Scout Gold Award**, Girl Scout Silver Award, Girl Scout Bronze Award; on second reference Gold Award, Silver Award, Bronze Award
- **Girl Scout Cookie Program**; on second reference: cookie program; never cookie sale
- **Girl Scout council shop**; on second reference: council shop; never council store
- **Girl Scouts or Girl Scouting**; never scout, scouts or scouting
- **Girl Scout grade levels**; not program levels
- **Girl Scout Junior**; not Junior Girl Scout (same for all grade levels; helps clarify that all grade levels are Girl Scouts)
- **Service unit and troop numbers**: Spell out service unit/troop with the numeric number and do not use the # sign (e.g. Troop 12345, Service Unit 99)
- **Girl Scout Leader's Day or Leader's Day**; not Leader Appreciation Day

Punctuation

- Only capitalize proper nouns (e.g. formal & complete name of a program, event, form); common nouns are not capitalized
- Capitalize someone's title when it's used before a name, on a business card or in an email signature; it should be lowercase any other time
- Put in italic publication, form and badge names; everything else is in quotations (e.g. book titles, chapters, section names, articles, plays, movies, songs, television shows)
- Consider these common examples:
 - The **service unit** invited **troops** to the event being hosted by **Service Unit 99 and Troop 2689**.
 - All **Girl Scout service centers** will be open Friday, except the **Eugene Service Center**.
 - There will be a sale on **Journey** books at the **Girl Scout council shop** beginning Friday!
 - We are working on the ***It's Your World: Change It!*** **Journey** and the ***Rocks Rock*** badge.
 - **Girl Scout Leader Sarah Jones** just purchased ***The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting***.
 - Girl Scout leaders need to read ***Council Volunteer Policies and Procedures*** and complete the ***Troop Financial Report*** by June 30.
 - We can't wait for the ***Program Guide*** to arrive in our mailbox!
 - **Girl Scout Daisy** is the name of a **Girl Scout grade level**.
 - **Camp Arrowhead** is a safe and fun **resident camp**.