



WRITING STYLE GUIDELINES

Marketing & Communications
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INTRODUCTION

Following are preferred styles and correct usages for written material at East Central Independent School District. While many style guides exist, MarCom generally conforms to AP Style because this is most commonly used by media.

Questions about style and usage may be addressed to the MarCom staff: marcom@ecisd.net.

REMINDERS

A few reminders about common areas of confusion:

- Check capitalization rules for words that may be capitalized unnecessarily: kindergarten, winter, etc.
- Only a single space is necessary between sentences. Most style guides have eliminated the double space "rule" with the advent of computer-based word processing.
- Avoid the ordinal indicator in dates: Jan. 1, *not* Jan. 1st
- Avoid underlining for emphasis or any other purpose. Readers equate underlined words with hyperlinks. Use bold type or other approaches instead.

EAST CENTRAL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Correct formats in order of preference. Note the capitalization of District when used alone.

- East Central Independent School District, on first reference.
- East Central ISD or the District, on second reference.
- The abbreviation, ECISD, for more informal documents on the third reference.



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BASICS

- annual: An event cannot be annual until it has been held for two years. Use inaugural instead of "first annual."
- bachelor's degree, but Bachelor of Science
- dean's list, lowercase
- double-click (noun and verb)
- drop-down list
- email, no hyphen
- Facebook, capitalize, one word
- faculty, when used as a collective noun, faculty is singular
- flyer, not flier
- government, lowercase (as in the U.S. government)
- high-quality, always takes a hyphen when used as an adjective
- home page
- iPad, use *iPad* only when the word starts a sentence or headline
- Internet, capitalize
- kindergarten, lowercase
- login name (adjective/noun)
- log in to (verb)
- master's degree, but Master of Education
- multicultural, no hyphen
- one-to-one, never one-on-one
- Parent Portal account
- postsecondary, no hyphen
- Pre-K (cap "p" and cap "K")
- tweet, lowercase (as in "composing a tweet" or "tweeting about an event")
- Twitter, capitalize
- U.S. takes periods, USA does not take periods
- username (one word)
- web page
- website
- world language, never foreign language
- YouTube, one word, no hyphen. Note the special capitalization

DAYS & DATES

- Capitalize days and dates. Use the day of the week followed by the date whenever possible, BUT consider whether you really need to include the year. In most cases, the year will be obvious and unnecessary.
- Always use numerals 0-9 without the st, nd, rd or th. CORRECT: They will meet on Tuesday, Jan. 4. INCORRECT: They will meet on Tuesday, Jan. 4th.
- Abbreviate the longer months when used with a specific date, as specified by AP Style: Jan. 8, Feb. 9, Aug. 10, Sept. 11, Oct. 12, Nov. 13, Dec. 14.
- Spell out months: January, February, March, when used on their own or with a year only, April 2021.
- Use commas after the year only after a month and a day. CORRECT: The event will be held on Dec. 3, 2020, at the Performing Arts Center. The meeting took place in September 2020 at the school's auditorium (no comma after September).

GRADES IN SCHOOL

- Case-by-case decisions are made by the writer. Be consistent within each piece.
- Examples:
 - Advanced courses for eighth graders include Algebra 1 and Spanish 1.
 - World language options starting in third grade include Spanish, French, German and Latin.
 - Now accepting 9th grade applications! (in an email)

NUMBERS

- Use numerals for numbers 10 and above, but spell out numbers one through nine when they appear in a sentence by themselves (Exception: when multiple numbers occur in text, it may be necessary to use numerals for clarity.)
- Use numerals with percents and ages. United Way giving is up 10 percent this year. The 7-year-old student attends child care at the campus.
- Spell out fractions less than 1; use numerals above 1. Almost one-half of the student body participates in extracurricular activities.

PUNCTUATION

- Colons
 - Should be placed OUTSIDE quotation marks and parentheses
 - In headings and running text, put one space after a colon
 - If a colon is followed by a complete sentence, capitalize the first word of the sentence
- Commas
 - AP Style's stance is to omit the serial comma except when it prevents misreading.
 - I like to pet kittens, puppies and bunnies.
 - Rebecca was proud of her new muffin recipes: blueberry, peanut butter, and chocolate chip and coconut.
- Quotation marks
 - "Punctuation almost always goes inside quotation marks," she explained.

TIME

- When a time falls on the hour, do not include ":00" in the listing: 9:30 to 10 a.m.
- When listing two times, both in the morning or both after noon, only list a.m. or p.m. once: 1-4 p.m.; 9 to 10 a.m.
- To avoid confusion, generally use noon and midnight instead of 12 a.m. or 12 p.m.
- CORRECT: 8 p.m., 9:30 a.m., 10 o'clock in the morning, 12 noon, 10:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.
- INCORRECT: 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.; 8 am – 10 am; 9 PM- 11 PM

TITLES

Lowercase and spell out titles when not used with an individual's name. Very long titles are more readable when placed after a name. Do not capitalize when it follows a name or stands by itself. Exception: In formal contexts as opposed to running text, such as a displayed list of names for promotional items and titles in a report, titles are usually capitalized even when following a name.

- Superintendent Roland Toscano spoke at the student assembly. Roland Toscano, superintendent of East Central ISD, plans to speak at the student assembly.
- Pecan Valley Principal, Kristin Wurzbach, announced that the school won the game last night. Kristin Wurzbach, principal at Pecan Valley, announced that the school won the game last night.