

Style Guide

This guide is to support the creation of consistent, succinct and professional publications that build a compelling, contemporary brand. Consistency is critical because it reduces errors and decreases frustration/confusion. Volunteers should refer to this guide when developing documents and correspondence for Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council. The style guide is mostly based on *The Associated Press Guide to Punctuation* and *The Associated Press Stylebook*. If you have questions, please refer to these publications or contact the communications department.

Content

The items below are required in all electronic and printed publications. These include fliers, posters, newsletters, brochures, manuals, forms, ads and press releases.

- The current Girl Scout logo with the council name (see above) must be included in the top left hand corner. If it does not fit, our council name needs to be somewhere on the publication.
 - The logo cannot be altered, reassembled or re-proportioned.
 - Margin and/or clearance space around the logo is determined by the height of the “g” in the logo.
 - Girl Scouts USA does not authorize volunteers to use the Girl Scout logo online or on business cards.
 - Volunteers wanting to use the logo should contact their Membership Development Coordinator. If this position is unfilled, contact the communications department.
- Use Arial font whenever possible to increase brand consistency across the movement.
- Don’t violate copyright law by using text from another publication, poetry, music, lyrics, videos, graphics and other copyrighted artwork. Girl Scout trademarks (trefoil shape, Girl Scout pins, badges, patches, etc.) require approval by GSBDC or GSUSA prior to production. If you are unsure, get permission.
- Please limit use of all caps, bolding large sections of text and exclamation marks.
- Whenever you are stating information about our council, use the information listed in the current *GSBDC Fact Sheet* available on the website.
- When mentioning documents and forms, be sure to use the complete document/form name to limit frustration.
- For the protection of our members, location details should not be included in the document if it can be viewed by an external audience and is not open to the public.
- Include if appropriate:
 - Contact information – name, phone and/or e-mail
 - 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

Proofreading and Publishing

- All content (fliers, posters, newsletters, brochures, manuals, ads and press releases) produced by the service unit team and their volunteers (volunteers planning events, or even vendors) must be proofread by the SU Publicist or Membership Development Coordinator prior to distribution. The SU Publicist will coordinate approval of ads and press releases with the director of communications, who will send approval or edits within 3 business days.
- 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 the requirements in this document and should be honest about the time they do or do not have to proofread a publication.
- Unless sending a working document, only attach PDF documents to e-mail. This is to prevent issues with viewing the document (i.e. various computing platforms and application versions; not owning the proper software or font). You can download free PDF creation software at www.cutepdf.com.

Capitalization

- Headlines and titles:
 - Prepositions of four letters or less (such as “of” and “with”) are lowercase, unless appearing as either the first or last word in a headline or title, in which case they are capitalized.
 - The first element of hyphenated compounds is always capitalized; the second element is also capitalized except for articles (“the,” “a,” etc.) and prepositions of four letters or less (examples: Self-Renewal, Not-for-Profit).
 - All trademarked names are capitalized (Girl Scout Daisy).
- Capitalize initial letters of:
 - Any title preceding a person’s name (Field Director Mary Jones, Director of National Meetings Mary Smith); titles that do not precede a person’s name are lowercase
 - Formal national volunteer titles (National Board of Directors, National Nominating Committee, National President, Chair of the National Board of Directors, Councils Committee); exception: generic references (National Board member, committee member, committee chair)
 - Names of projects, activities, events, and initiatives
 - Names of trademarked games (Trivial Pursuit)
 - Specific department and group titles (Program, Membership & Volunteerism, Executive Team). Do not, however, cap the word “department” when it immediately follows a title.
 - Book titles and book series (*It’s Your World—Change It!*)
 - **Note:** The first word after a colon is not initial-capped, even if what follows the colon is a complete sentence.
- Lowercase initial letters of the following:
 - Council titles* (chief executive officer of Girl Scout of Black Diamond Council; the council president) unless a person’s name immediately follows a title, in which case, capitalize (Chief Executive Officer, Susan Thompson)
 - Generic, stand-alone references to Girl Scout program, projects, and publications (“the project,” even if it’s referring to the Girl Scout Bronze Award Project)
 - Girl Scout council (but Girl Scout of Black Diamond Council)

Italics and Quotation Marks

- Italicize:
 - book titles (*Blue Book of Basic Documents*)
 - magazine names
 - movie titles
 - newspapers
 - plays
 - television show titles and series titles
 - titles of videos, DVDs, CDs, and cassettes
 - words in a language other than English (*muchas gracias*), unless familiar (e.g., pro bono, ex officio)
- Use quotation marks for:
 - book chapters or section names (“Be Healthy, Be Fit” chapter)
 - song titles
 - titles of television series episodes (the “Election Night” episode of *The West Wing*)

Numbers

Spell out numbers one through nine, and use numerals for higher numbers. Exceptions: when used with a unit, for example, 8 percent (not eight percent, not 8%); 4 inches, 2 centimeters; 3 billion people; in a series of three or more numbers, with one or more above nine (8, 9, 18).

Use an en dash to mean “to” for continuing numbers (examples: ages 12–14; pgs. 10–12).

Numbers that begin a sentence are always spelled out.

Specific rules by category:

- **Ages:** eight- to nine-year-old girls, six-month-old baby, five-year-old child, five years old, ages 15–18 (use en-dash), ages 16 and older, student in first grade, first-grade student, first-grader
- **Century:** twenty-first century
- **Dates:** September 1984; October 1, 1980, (commas before and after the year when the day is included after the month)
- **Fractions:** one-half, two and one-half days
- **Money:** \$150
- **Noun plus number:** Chapter 1, Activity 1 (not *Chapter #1* or *Activity #1*)
- **Page numbers:** pages 2–6 (use en-dash with date and other number spreads)
- **Phone numbers:** in print: 212-852-8000
- **Plurals of numbers used as nouns:** Add only an s to numbers being used as nouns, whether numerals or spelled out (the 1940s; fours and fives).
- **Plural acronyms and abbreviations:** Do not use apostrophes: IOUs, CODs, YWCAs, GSBDCs.
- **State abbreviations:** In running text, spell out names of states and territories. Use ZIP code abbreviations for addresses, in bibliographies, and wherever else abbreviations are appropriate.
- **Temperature:** 300 degrees
- **Time:** 3:00 a.m.; 24-hour period
- **Weight:** 1 ½ - to 2-pound sleeping bag

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 e-mail 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)

ampersand (&): Avoid using ampersands in text, unless referring to trademarks or GSUSA departments.

college degree: Do not use periods; separate each degree with a semicolon (e.g., BA; BS; PhD; MA, counseling, University of Maryland)

ellipsis (. . .): Used to indicate missing text, the ellipsis consists of three periods separated by spaces; when ending a sentence, an additional period should be added.

em dash (—), en dash (–), and hyphen (-): Do not use a space before or after dashes and hyphens.

- Use an em dash to set off clauses. (Choose a goal—saving money, for example.) An em dash should also be used before names in source lines, such as the author of a quotation. (To make an em dash in Microsoft Word, with NUM LOCK on, hold down CTRL and ALT while pressing the dash key in the number pad.)
- Use an en dash for number spreads and in other cases when the meaning is “to” (ages 12–14; 1997–99; 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.); also when making a compound adjective with a proper noun (Girl Scout–related case study). (To make an en dash, hold down CTRL while pressing the dash key in the number pad.)
- Use a hyphen only in compound words (one-half, mother-in-law) and in end-of-line word division.

exclamation point: Use sparingly to mark an outcry or following an emphatic comment. (Oh, no! or Woohoo, it's Friday!)

hyperlink: Pair each link to outside sites with title-like words or phrases that let the reader know where she or he is being led. Avoid link instructions (click here) and instead use “When planning a meeting, check out these meeting tips,” for example.

lists:

Use numbered lists if items are in a sequence.

1. Mix flour, macadamia chips, and baking powder.
2. Add 2 cups of water.
3. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes.

Use a bulleted list for items that are non-sequential.

Be sure to bring the following:

- canteen
- hiking boots
- matches
- poncho

Items within a list should be of parallel grammatical structure. Do not mix sentences and phrases within a list. Use title case and periods for bulleted lists only when the items are grammatically complete sentences, or if ambiguity would result. Either:

- Drive on the right side of the road.
- Eat only in designated restaurants.
- Sleep at official campsites.

or:

- driving on the right
- eating in designated restaurants
- sleeping at official campsites

percent: Should be written out in text; the % symbol should be used only in charts/tables and in scientific/statistical text.

serial comma: Always insert a comma before the conjunction in a series. (Girls from West Virginia, Virginia, and Maryland attended the event. Some girls choose English, others prefer science, and still others like art or music.)

Girl Scout Principles and Beliefs

Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:

To serve God and my country,
To help people at all times,
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be

honest and fair,
friendly and helpful,
considerate and caring,
courageous and strong, and
responsible for what I say and do,
and to
respect myself and others,
respect authority,
use resources wisely,
make the world a better place, and
be a sister to every Girl Scout.

Girl Scout Mission

Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

Girl Scout Motto

Be prepared.

About Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council (standard copy for use in press releases and other formal documentation)

Working in partnership with about 4,000 volunteers, Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council serves nearly 20,000 girls in 61 counties in West Virginia, Virginia, Ohio and Maryland. For more information on how to join, volunteer, or donate to Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council, call 1.800.756.7616 or visit the council's Web site at www.bdgsc.org. Girl Scouts is the preeminent leadership development organization for girls, with 3.7 million girl and adult members worldwide. Girl Scouts builds girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place.



Girl Scout Grade Levels

Girl Scout Daisy (grades K-1)

Girl Scout Brownie (grades 2-3)

Girl Scout Junior (grades 4-5)

Girl Scout Cadette (grades 6-8)

Girl Scout Senior (grades 9-10)

Girl Scout Ambassador (grades 11-12)

Common Girl Scout Words and Phrases

5 Flowers, 4 Stories, 3 Cheers for Animals! (always italic)

A World of Girls (always italic)

Agent of Change (always italic)

AGSES (Association of Girl Scout Executive Staff)

aMAZE! (always italic, always capital MAZE)

aMUSE (always italic, always capital MUSE)

Anna Maria Chávez, Girl Scout CEO

annual council meeting

annual giving (also called “annual appeal,” “annual campaign,” or “mission fund”)

Association of Girl Scout Executive Staff (AGSES)

award (no cap; exception are the highest awards)

ex: Journey award

ex: Leader in Action (LiA) award

ex: Monitor, Influence, and Cultivate awards

ex: Girl Scout Bronze Award

ex: Girl Scout Gold Award

Baden-Powell, Sir Robert

badge (no cap)

ex: Brownie Hiker badge (never use “legacy” in actual badge title)

ex: in this badge

ex: a Girl Scout National Proficiency badge

ex: Cookie Business badge

ex: Financial Literacy badge

ex: Girl Scout badges

ex: Legacy badge

ex: Make Your Own badge

ex: Skill-Building badge

Between Earth and Sky (always italic)

BLISS! (always italic)

Blue Book of Basic Documents

board development committee

board of directors (see “corporate board of directors”)

Breathe!

bridging

Brownie Friends (reference to the girls from the Brownie stories)

Brownie Quest

Brownie ring

bylaws

camp out (verb)

campout (noun)

campsite

candlelight ceremony

capital campaign

cause, the (refers to ToGetHerThere)

chair (not “chairperson”)

Chair, National Board of Directors

chair, council board of directors

chief executive officer (CEO) (capped only when it directly precedes a person’s name)

chief financial officer (CFO) (capped only when it directly precedes a person’s name)

chief of external affairs (capped only when it directly precedes a person’s name)

chief operating officer (COO) (capped only when it directly precedes a person’s name)

closing ceremony

color guard

committee chair

committee member

cooperative learning

Core Business Strategy

council

council board of directors

council shop

councils committee

councilwide (not council-wide)

court of awards

court of honor

Daisy (Juliette Gordon Low’s nickname)

Daisy Flower Garden

destinations (always lowercase; always in italics)

Discover, Connect, Take Action

Edith Macy Conference Center (EMCC) (does not take the article “the”; includes the John J. Crendon Center)

ELF (Explore, Link Arms, Fly into Action)

email (not e-mail)

emblem

enewsletter

Executive Team (Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Chief of External Affairs, and Senior Vice Presidents)

Facebook page

Facebook site

facebook.com/GirlScoutsUSA

facilitator

first aid (noun)

first-aid (adjective)

flag ceremony

flash flood

flash mob

flight attendant (not “stewardess”)

Flower Friends

ex: Tula the Tulip

ex: Vi the Violet

fly-up ceremony

flyer

Founder’s Day (October 31)

friendship circle

fundraiser

fundraising

GET MOVING! (always italic)

Girl/adult partnership: not adult/girl partnership
 Girl Scout (always singular as an adjective, e.g., “Girl Scout activities,” with the exception of “Girl Scouts Own”; “Scout” or “Scouts” should never be used independently)
 Girl Scout alumna (singular, former female member)
 Girl Scout alumnae (plural, former female members)
 Girl Scout alumni (plural, former male members or mixed male and female members)
 Girl Scout alumnus (singular, former male member)
 Girl Scout Ambassadors
 Girl Scout birthday (March 12, 1912)
 Girl Scout brand
 Girl Scout Bronze Award (second reference, “Bronze Award”)
 Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards
 Girl Scout Brownies (never Brownie Girl Scouts)
 Girl Scout Cadettes (never Cadette Girl Scouts)
 Girl Scout Constitution (for informal use; formally, “Constitution of Girl Scouts of the United States of America”)
 Girl Scout cookie activities
 Girl Scout Cookie Program
 Girl Scout cookies
 ex: Thin Mint cookies
 Girl Scout council
 Girl Scout council charter
 Girl Scout Daisies
 Girl Scout Gold Award (second reference, “Gold Award”)
 Girl Scout Gold Award recipient (not “winner”)
 Girl Scout grade levels (never “age levels”)
 Girl Scout handshake
 Girl Scout Journey (see **Journey**)
 Girl Scout Juniors
 Girl Scout Law (on second reference, “the Law”)
 Girl Scout Leader’s Day: Leader Appreciation Day (April 22; see also **Volunteer Appreciation Week**)
 Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)
 Girl Scout Merchandise (GSM)
 Girl Scout mission
 Girl Scout motto
 Girl Scout movement
 Girl Scout national headquarters
 Girl Scout pathways (camp, events, series, travel, troop, and virtual)
 Girl Scout policy
 Girl Scout processes
 girl-led
 learning by doing
 cooperative learning
 Girl Scout program (second reference, “the program”; never use “programs”)
 Girl Scout Promise (second reference, “the Promise”)
 Girl Scout Research Institute (GSRI)
 Girl Scout Safety Guidelines
 Girl Scout Seniors

Girl Scout servicemark
 Girl Scout sign
 Girl Scout Silver Award (second reference, “Silver Award”)
 Girl Scout trefoil (second reference, “the trefoil”)
 Girl Scout volunteer (not “Girl Scout leader”)
 Girl Scout Week
 Girl Scouting (never use “Scouting” alone)
 Girl Scouts Alumnae Association
 Girl Scouts Beyond Bars (not “Girl Scouts Behind Bars”)
 Girl Scouts of the United States of America
 Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) (not “Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.” or “Girl Scouts of America”)
 girlscouts.org
 Girl Scouts’ 100th anniversary
 Girl Scouts’ Own
 girl-led
 girl/adult partnership (not “adult/girl partnership”)
 Girls’ World Forum
GIRLtopia (always italic)
 Global Girl Scouting (not “Global Girl,” “Global Girls,” or other variations)
 GSUSA (not “G.S.U.S.A.”)
 hands-on (adjective)
 Hispanic (choose either “Hispanic” or “Latina”; do mix usage)
 hometown
 insignia
 Internet
 investiture
 It’s Your Business—Run It! (appears on each Cookie-business badge)
It’s Your Planet—Love It! (Journey series) (always italic)
Between Earth and Sky
WOW! Wonders of Water (always italic)
GET MOVING! (always italic)
Breathe! (always italic)
Sow What? (always italic)
Justice (always italic)
It’s Your Story—Tell It! (Journey series) (always italic)
5 Flowers, 4 Stories, 3 Cheers for Animals! (always italic)
A World of Girls
BLISS! (always italic)
It’s Your World—Change It! (Journey series, always italic)
Welcome to the Daisy Flower Garden (always italic)
Brownie Quest (always italic)
Agent of Change (always italic)
GIRLtopia (always italic)
Your Voice, Your World (always italic)
 Journey(s) (always capped in relation to Girl Scouting)
 Girl Scout National Leadership Journey
 Girl Scout Junior Journey (never Junior Girl Scout Journey)
 Girl Scout Brownie Journey (never Brownie Girl Scout Journey)

Girl Scout Daisy Journey (never Daisy Girl Scout Journey)
 Girl Scout Cadette Journey (never Cadette Girl Scout Journey)
 Girl Scout Senior Journey (never Senior Girl Scout Journey)
 Girl Scout Ambassador Journey (never Ambassador Girl Scout Journey)
 Leadership Journey
 take a Journey
 Juliette Gordon Low
 Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace (not “Juliette Low Center”; on second reference, “the birthplace”)
 Juliette Gordon Low Girl Scout National Center
 Juliette Low World Friendship Fund (JLWFF) (on second reference, “the fund,” or “JLWFF”)
 Juliettes
Justice (always italic)
 key(s)

- the Three Keys
- the Three Keys to Leadership
- Discover key
- Connect key
- Take Action key

 Lady Baden-Powell
 Latina (woman)
 Latino (general population) (choose either “Hispanic” or “Latina”; do mix usage)
 Leader in Action award (for Cadettes)
 Leader’s Day (April 22; see also **Volunteer Appreciation Week**)
 leaf (no cap)
 learning by doing
 lifetime member(s)
MEdia (always capital ME, always italic)
MISSION: SISTERHOOD! (always italic)
 My Promise, My Faith award
 National Board of Directors (“the board” on second reference)
 National Board member
 National CEO
 National Chair (also Chair, National Board of Directors; also National President)
 National Council of Girl Scouts of the USA
 National Council Session/convention
 national headquarters (never “headquarters” alone or “HQ” when referring to the New York office)
 national organization (referring to the Girl Scout organization in the United States)
 National President (also “Chair, National Board of Directors”)
 National Program Portfolio
 nonprofit
 not-for-profit
 Olave House (historic name for what is now known as **Pax Lodge**)

Online: not on-line
 Our Cabaña (one of the world centers, located in Cuernavaca, Mexico; never “Our Cabana”)
 Our Chalet (one of the world centers, located in Adelboden, Switzerland)
 outcomes
 outreach
 paperwork
 participation patches and pins
 Pax Lodge (one of the world centers, located in London, England; historic name: Olave House)
 Pearl (our corporate-wide extranet)
 petal (no cap)
 pin (no cap)
 pinning ceremony
 quiet sign
 rededication ceremony
 s’mores
 Safety Activity Checkpoints
 Sangam (one of the world centers, located in Pune, India)
 self-awareness
 self-confidence
 self-esteem
 Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
 service learning
 service unit (does not require capitals, example: Greenbrier service unit, or service unit team members)
 she or he (not “he or she” when addressing a primarily Girl Scout audience; with an external readership, there may be times when “he or she” is more suitable)
 Silver Award (see **Girl Scout Silver Award**)
 sister troop
 sleepover (noun)
 social media (include the blog, Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Tumblr, Pinterest, etc.)
Sow What? (always italic)
 strategic learning
 strategic planning
 Strategy Gap Team
 SWAPS (Special Whatchamacallits Affectionately Pinned Somewhere or Shared With A Pal)
 tagalong
 Take Action project
 text campaign (never “mobile campaign”)
The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting (always italic)
The Ambassador Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting (always italic)
The Brownie Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting (always italic)
The Cadette Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting (always italic)
The Daisy Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting (always italic)
The Junior Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting (always italic)
The Senior Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting (always italic)
 Thinking Day (do not use; see **World Thinking Day**)
 ToGetHerThere
 ToGetHerThere.org
 trefoil

troop crests
troop sponsor
troop volunteer (not “troop leader”)
Try-Its (discontinued)
Twitter
U.S. (adjective; use “United States” as noun)
uniquely ME! (discontinued)
United States (spell out as noun; use “U.S.” as adjective)
USA Girl Scouts Overseas (USAGSO)
virtual catalog (also “ecatalog”)
volunteer (not “leader”)
Volunteer Appreciation Week (the week that includes April 22)
Volunteer Essentials (always italic)

website: not Web Site, Website, webpage
webinar
Welcome to the Daisy Flower Garden
What We Stand For
World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS)
world centers
World Thinking Day (February 22)
World Trefoil Pin
Year of the Girl (YOTG) (avoid using “the” before, but if it is used, it’s never capped)
Young Women of Distinction (YWOD)
Your Voice, Your World (always italic)
zip code (all lower or all uppercase; never Zip)
ZIP code (all lower or all uppercase; never Zip)

Girls and Adults with Disabilities

Use language that reflects a person’s abilities. Use a phrase like “a girl who is blind” or “a person with cerebral palsy” rather than define a person in terms of her or his disability (e.g., “blind girl,” “disabled person,” “deaf person”). Avoid the terms “suffers from” and “physically challenged.” Emphasize abilities and not limitations (e.g., “person who uses a wheelchair” in place of “wheelchair-bound”; “girl who walks with crutches” for “on crutches”).

Avoid the terms . . .

autistic, epileptic, handicapped, disabled
birth defect
blind, deaf; afflicted with blindness
crippled
disabled girl
dwarf, midget
healthy, differently abled
mental illness
mentally retarded, retarded
victim of . . .
wheelchair-bound

Use instead . . .

developmentally disabled
congenital disability
girl who is blind or deaf
girl who walks with crutches, who uses crutches
girl with a disability
of short stature
girl without a disability
psychiatric or emotional disability
person with a cognitive disability
girl with . . .
girl who uses a wheelchair, wheelchair user