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WHY STYLE MATTERS

The short and easy answer is consistency. The longer answer goes beyond mere consistency as a group of advisers and media professionals explain. Teaching journalistic style is another way of nurturing copy that gains credibility with the reader.

MAKE THE STORY EMERGE

Consistency is the key to using a style. The reader doesn't want to interpret meaning from page to page in variations of presentation of materials. **As the language falls away with consistency, the story emerges.** My students take daily style quizzes in Journalism I. This past week, I've had many college kids back to visit. Each one of them majoring in journalism told me about style quizzes they were taking now. They, believe it or not, were grateful for the high-school quizzes that gave them a jump start on Associated Press usage.

*Lori Oglesbee, CJE
teacher/adviser
McKinney (Texas) High School*

IMMEDIATE UNDERSTANDING

One of the most important reasons for using AP style in publications is that any stylebook has standardized spellings, grammar, punctuation and references such as numbers, addresses, ages, military ranks, etc. in the easiest possible way so that readers immediately understand them. **This immediate recognition keeps readers from slowing down their reading to understand the language.** The minute they slow down, they may move to another article that is easier to read. Using standard AP style means writers can keep readers concentrating on the writers' articles. As a result, writers can deliver more information.

*Connie Coyne
reader advocate, The Salt Lake Tribune
Salt Lake City, Utah*

ONE VOICE

A continuous style helps the newspaper read with one voice. The standard means that readers, especially regular ones, will become so used to the newspaper's style that they find information conveyed seamlessly. I also think that, in most cases, AP style is a logical way to convey information so that there is less space used and little room for confusion.

*Erin M. Howard, CJE
teacher/adviser
Sandra Day O'Connor High School
(Glendale, Ariz.)*

LIVE FOREVER

When I am judging yearbooks for various organizations, the staff's use of a stylebook is either evident, or its lack is incredibly obvious at a mere glance. Because the book is a permanent publication, students

should be aware that their school will be judged not only in competitions but also by any individual who reads the book ... forever. If there is no use of a stylebook evident, I always make the remark that the staff should strongly consider using one in their next year's book because it will help every staffer do a uniformly better job of creating a more accurate and more consistent book.

Without style, inconsistencies in treatment of a wide variety of facts — from repetitive name use in a single story, to grade identification of individuals or groups, to how quotes are placed in sidebars — will appear throughout the yearbook. **Those inconsistencies make the book (and by association, the school) appear to be significantly less than perfect.** Sometimes, the appearance is a terrible misrepresentation of the school's and of the faculty's performance with its students.

Presented in the beginning of the year and used throughout the year, the stylebook serves as a valuable asset to any yearbook staff as it guides the writing of stories, the creation of layouts and the editing of spreads and proofs. To be effective, the stylebook should include items that are specific to a school, such as special places or traditions, and give specific directions and examples on how to treat those terms.

Every year my staff and editors create the following year's stylebook. We have tried different kinds of class identifications, choosing to identify teachers with courtesy titles or not, and treated sidebar identifications differently each year. Not because we like change, but because we are still trying to find the perfect fit for our readers as well as for our staffers. Sometimes the changes we make fly, and sometimes they flop. But each staff always presents the information consistently in the yearbook it creates.

*Lizabeth A. Walsh, MJE
teacher/adviser
Reno (Nev.) High School*

COMPREHENSION

Style helps establish a level field of reader/writer comprehension.

*Don Vardell
teacher/adviser
Moss Point (Miss.) High School*

SAME PLAYBOOK

In sports, it's important for all players to be on the same page with plays. If the quarterback wants to throw a deep pass, he knows he can call for a Hail Mary and his players will know what he's talking about without going into deep explanations. The stylistic name saves time and ensures that everyone is consistent in the play. The same is true for journalism style. If a sports writer wants to write the score of the game, he should know how to do it without having to ask his sports editor or other sports writers. **Also, the specific style ensures that all sports writers will be consistent in what they do.**

*Chad Rummel, CJE
teacher/adviser
Oakton High School (Vienna, Va.)*

CONSISTENCY

Style lends credibility, professionalism and consistency to the publication.

One of my mantras this year has been consistency. If we are going to do something, we will do it throughout the publication and for the rest of the year. There are few questions about why from my students because they understand that what they report has long-lasting repercussions.

*Sandra H. Coyer, CJE
teacher/adviser
Puyallup (Wash.) High School*

USER ORIENTATION

Writers who neglect style details imply to prospective readers, "My time is more valuable than yours. Here are the symbols. Piece them together as you can."

Writing is a service. It should be user oriented, not server oriented. Journaling may occur for the writer to express ideas to himself or to herself, but other writing inherently aims to benefit the reader.

In journaling the purpose of writing may be only to express, to see how an idea sounds or simply to relieve the burden of containing an idea, not to communicate a message to anyone. From blogging to persuading, writing's purpose is to transfer an idea from giver to receiver. The art of writing is to transfer that idea so clearly that the recipient will receive the idea intact. The person who chooses writing as a medium to communicate faces a hurdle: the effort the intended recipient must give to receive the message.

Reading requires skill, work and time. The reader has to get to the end of the

word, then to the end of the sentence, to the end of the paragraph and then to the end of the piece before the whole meaning is revealed. Even then sometimes the piece must be read again and pondered. If the reader is willing to give such effort to receive the message, certainly the sender should make every effort to lessen the burden on the receiver.

Style matters, such as spelling, capitalization and punctuation, require extra time for the writer, but attending to style matters makes accurate comprehension faster and easier for the reader.

Remember, writing is oriented toward the customer, not the creator as in the old expression: Easy writing makes hard reading. Hard writing makes easy reading.

*Anne G. Whitt, MJE
JEA state director
Orlando, Fla.*

EASE ON DOWN THE ROAD

Style definitely eases the road to communication. Style is much like the routine parents establish with their children so that the kids know what's coming. Style also keeps readers confident about what they read because the various newspapers can report the same event using the same "rules."

*Jo Ann Mastin
teacher/adviser
Farrington High School (Honolulu, Hawaii)*

DON'T IGNORE CONVENTIONS

Style allows us to understand what we read without slogging through the morass of personal peculiarities. In *Eats Shoots and Leaves*, Lynne Truss shows over and over what happens to meaning when conventions are ignored or improperly used. The classic example she uses is the phrase "A woman without her man is nothing." Without punctuation, we are left with a slam of women. Another way to punctuate it leaves the reader with a slam of men: "A woman: without her, man is nothing."

People spend so little time on news stories that, like résumés in a job search, every dot and space matters to communicate the idea clearly.

*David Fayram, CJE
teacher/adviser
Ferndale (Wash.) High School*

A quick reference based on
The Associated Press Stylebook 2005

STYLE

■ ABBREVIATIONS

Academic degrees • Avoid degree abbreviations such as B.S. Use an apostrophe in the spelled out version. *Ex: bachelor's, master's.*

Acronyms • On first reference, do not put an abbreviation or acronym in parenthesis. On second reference, with lesser-known organizations, use a shortened form of the name rather than an acronym. *Ex: First reference: The Committee to Fight Smoking; Second reference: the committee or the anti-smoking group.*

Christmas • Never abbreviate as Xmas.

Days of the week • Never abbreviate except in tabular format.

Months • Abbreviate months with six or more letters if they are used with a specific date. Spell out those with five or fewer letters. Always spell out the month when it is used without a specific date. *Ex: Aug. 13 but July 17, in August.*

Names • Abbreviate junior or senior after a name; don't use a comma to set it off. *Ex: John Jones Jr.*

States • States spelled with six or fewer letters aren't abbreviated when used with a city name. Six fit that category: Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas, Utah. Also, don't abbreviate the last two states admitted to the Union: Alaska and Hawaii. Do not use U.S. Postal Service abbreviations. Instead, see AP listing under "state names."

Street names • Abbreviate avenue (Ave.), boulevard (Bldv.) and street (St.) when a complete address is given. Otherwise, spell out. *Ex: 1208 Wilderness Drive, 120 N. Main St., Third Street, North Main Street and 42nd Street.*

Titles • Usually spell out titles with names used in direct quotations with the exceptions of Dr., Mr., Mrs., Miss and Ms. *Ex: "Governor Schwarzenhager is a new leader."*

Units • Spell out percent except in tabular material when % is acceptable. Spell out cents; don't use ¢. Spell out "and" unless the & is an official part of the name.

■ CAPITALIZATION AND TITLES

Classification • Lowercase freshman, sophomore, junior, senior unless part of an organization's proper name. *Ex: senior Nick Bratkovic; the Junior Spirit Team.*

Academic departments • Use lowercase. *Ex: the department of athletics, the English department, the department of English.* Do not abbreviate department. Lowercase the department when it stands alone.

Geographic regions • Capitalize specific geographic regions and popularized names for these regions. *Ex: Midwest, the South, the Panhandle.* The same rule applies for some geologic regions.

Proper nouns • Capitalize proper nouns and common nouns such as party, river and street when they become an integral part of a full name for place, person or thing. *Ex: Democratic Party or Mississippi River.*

Lowercase common nouns when they stand alone in secondary references. *Ex: The party leaders met.*

In all plural uses, lowercase the common noun elements. *Ex: The Democratic and Republican parties charged admission.*

Rooms • Capitalize the word room when used with the number of the room. *Ex: Room 316, Welch Hall.*

Seasons • Lowercase seasons.

■ NUMBERS

10 • As a general rule, spell out numbers less than 10.

Exceptions

- **Addresses:** 5 Downing St.
- **Ages:** 2-year-old
- **Dates:** July 1 (not July 1st)
- **Dimensions:** 6 feet tall
- **Highways:** Loop 1; U.S. Route 1
- **Millions, billions:** \$2 million; 5 billion
- **Money:** 4 cents; \$4 (not \$4.00)
- **Percentages:** 7 percent
- **Proportions:** 8 parts Mercury
- **Speed:** 4 miles per hour
- **Temperature:** 1 degree
- **Time:** 3 a.m.

>999 • Use Arabic numerals for numbers with two or more digits. In figures more than 999 (except years), use commas to set off each group of three numbers. *Ex: 3,486 people; \$2.3 million.*

At beginning of sentence • Spell out numbers, except years, at the beginning of a sentence.

■ ATTRIBUTION

Said • Use said, past tense, as the verb of attribution unless you have an exceptional and rare reason not to.

Names • On first reference, use a person's full name and, perhaps, title, grade and/or major. *Ex: Nick Pironio, a senior in biology; James Nelson, vice president.*

On second reference, use only the name with no title. *Ex: Pironio said; Nelson said.*

Titles • Capitalize formal titles before a name. *Ex: Director of Parks Austin Dowd.*

Lowercase them and set them off with commas after a name. *Ex: Austin Dowd, director of parks.*

Place long titles after the name. *Ex: Austin Dowd, director of parks, recreation and tourism for the city.*

Don't capitalize titles that are only job descriptions. *Ex: coach, band director, lawyer.*

Don't use courtesy titles such as Miss, Mr., Mrs. or Ms. unless absolutely necessary to differentiate between individuals with the same last name.

■ PUNCTUATION

In quotations • Periods and commas always go inside quotation marks. *Ex: "I was sweating hard," clarinet player Jeff Lucas said, but "I still had the best performance of my career."*

Apostrophe • Apostrophes are used to form possessives and to indicate missing letters.

- **Contractions:** it's (contraction of it and is); wasn't (contraction of was not); you're (contraction of you are); who's (contraction of who is).
- **Missing letters:** rock 'n' roll; 'Tis the season; ne'er-do-well.
- **Possessives:** men's, United States' resources, player's, fox's, justices' verdict.
- **Letters:** Single letters require the s with an apostrophe. *Ex: M's.* Multiple letters require the s but no apostrophe. *Ex: ABCs.*
- **Numbers:** Numbers require the s but no apostrophe. *Ex: 3s; 1970s.*
- **Pronouns:** personal interrogative and relative pronouns never take an apostrophe. *Ex: mine, ours, your, yours, his, hers, its, theirs, whose.*
- **Team names:** Use boys or girls (people under age 18), men's or women's to designate sports teams.

Hyphen • Use a hyphen to link two or more words modifying a single word. *Ex: The 128-member band, the man-eating shark, the 16-year-old dog.*

A hyphen (-) is not the same as a dash (—). Use dashes to denote abrupt change. *Ex: We will win — if we remember the fundamentals.* Use a hyphen to avoid ambiguity or to form a single idea from two or more words. *Ex: The principal spoke to the small-business owners.*

All-around, all-star, all-state, all-clear, all-out, all-time high, all right

playoff (n. and adj.)

Series • Don't use a comma before a conjunction in a simple series. *Ex: cyan, magenta, yellow and black.*

Time • Use periods in a.m. and p.m. in time. Do not use :00 in time. Do not use 12 a.m. or 12 p.m. Instead, use noon or midnight without the 12. *Ex: 3 a.m., 5:15 a.m., midnight.*

A summary quiz based on the latest edition
of the Associated Press Stylebook



DIRECTIONS: In the space at the left, write the correct Associated Press style choice for the boldface words in each sentence.

ANSWERS

SENTENCES

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____
- 8. _____
- 9. _____
- 10. _____
- 11. _____
- 12. _____
- 13. _____
- 14. _____
- 15. _____

- 1. Skipping school is also called playing **hooky/hookey**.
- 2. "**Goodbye**"/"**Goodby**" was the actor's final line.
- 3. The students, all with an interest in agribusiness, were active in the **Four H Club/4-H Club**.
- 4. The number of **drop outs/dropouts** has increased this semester, board members learned from the superintendent.
- 5. The do-it-yourself solution required use of any brand of **Coke/cola**.
- 6. Former **coach/Coach** Steve Cruz developed a good basketball team.
- 7. There were four **runners up/runner ups/runners-up**.
- 8. He caught the ball on the **five-yard line/five yard line/5-yard line**.
- 9. Their **full back/full-back/fullback** is injured.
- 10. The team will play a **double header/double-header/doubleheader**.
- 11. She scored a **lay up/lay-up/layup**.
- 12. Cynthia Yu made the **All-State/All State** Wrestling Team.
- 13. **Alot/A lot/Allot** of ducks were killed by motorists during migration.
- 14. "They received no more than their just **desserts/deserts**," quarterback Tanner Ehmke said.
- 15. The **affect/effect** of this approach was to deny everyone access to the public documents.

A summary quiz based on the latest edition
of the Associated Press Stylebook

QUIZ 2

DIRECTIONS: In the space at the left, write the correct Associated Press style choice for the boldface words in each sentence.

ANSWERS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

SENTENCES

1. Neither Sarah nor Alice brought **her/their** stylebook.
2. The student **that/who** won the spelling bee deserves extra credit.
3. Many researchers attempt to study how the media **affects/effects** children.
4. The computer **that/which** has all my thesis files is missing.
5. **Who/Whom** did you dance with last night?
6. Shelley said it was **she/her** who took the picture.
7. Bradley said it would be **alright/all right** to call him in the middle of the night.
8. The dog became very protective of **it's/its** owner.
9. The committee announced **its/their** decision.
10. The professors made **they're/their** suggestions to the dean.
11. Getting ready for the incoming students **is/are** a lot of work.
12. There are **over/more than** 80 people in this class.
13. None of the cards **was/were** in its right place.
14. There are **less/fewer** shoes in the room.
15. **Irregardless/Regardless** of the results, you'll still get an A.

A summary quiz based on the latest edition
of the Associated Press Stylebook

QUIZ 3

DIRECTIONS: In the space at the left, write the correct Associated Press style choice for the boldface words in each sentence.

ANSWERS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

SENTENCES

1. The athletic director earned his **masters/master's** degree from Elon University.
2. On **Mon./Monday**, Jan. 9, school starts.
3. School starts **Jan./January** 9.
4. The bassoon camp begins at Ball State University on June **9/9th**.
5. The tuba players convened in **IA/Iowa/lo**.
6. The professor gave the organic chemistry final in **room/Room** 1.316.
7. Of the 25 people in the class, 7 **%/percent** earned an A.
8. In the astronomy class, however, only **3/three** people earned an A.
9. The cheerleaders started practice in the heat of the **summer/Summer**.
10. The fancy outfit, covered in sequins, was **hers/hers'**.
11. They woke up at 5 **a.m./am** ready to go fishing.
12. A **2-year-old/2 year old** boy found his way into the gym during practice.
13. The administrators asked for a **\$3 million/three million dollar** increase in the budget.
14. The construction on U.S. Route **One/1** caused significant delays.
15. It was only worth 5 **¢/cents**.

A summary quiz based on the latest edition
of the Associated Press Stylebook

QUIZ 4

DIRECTIONS: In the space at the left, write the correct Associated Press style choice for the boldface words in each sentence.

ANSWERS

1. _____
2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

9. _____
10. _____
11. _____

SENTENCES

1. **Womens/Women's** sports accomplishments have advanced during the past two decades.
2. The volleyball team loaded the busses quickly. **It/They was/were** a well-organized away game.
3. The Cowboys played hard. **It/They was/were** playing to win.
4. The band members came up on Saturday to practice. **It/They was/were** committed to learning their parts.
5. When the team came, **it/they** surely didn't expect the reception.
6. The Texas Longhorns earned **its/their** place in the College Football Hall of Fame.
7. The Jazz **was/were** winning more games than any team in the conference.
8. The hockey team went **farther/further** in the **play-offs/playoffs** than any other team in school history.
9. The blue class ring was **hers/hers'**.
10. In the **1960s/1960's**, rock 'n' roll became popular.
11. "**It's/Its** going to be a long season," the coach said after the first loss 45-0.

A summary quiz based on the latest edition
of the Associated Press Stylebook

QUIZ 5

DIRECTIONS: In the space at the left, write the correct Associated Press style choice for the boldface words in each sentence.

ANSWERS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

SENTENCES

1. Wang Bin Rui, park administrator, said adults paid between **\$0.5/50 cents** and \$1.25 per ride depending on how far out they caught the bus.
2. "Depending on where they start, each ride costs us four times what the students were paying", **,/,"** manager Tahnia Black said.
3. "**Its/It's** just not possible for us to continue offering all those discounts," Matt Huffman, owner of the local Dunkin' Donuts, told the police officer.
4. Krispy **Kreme's/Kremes** profit margin took a nose dive in the second quarter.
5. "I like chocolate, lemon-filled, **and/ and** plain doughnuts," she said.
6. Finding a good swim team in the **Midwest/midwest** was a challenge.
7. There was a flood where the Knight and Onondaga **Rivers/rivers** join.
8. Amy York was an agent with the **F.B.I./FBI**.
9. The reporter for **ABC/the American Broadcasting Cos.** challenged the school's rule because it violated the First Amendment.
10. The reporter attended school in Austin, **Texas/Tex.**
11. Tyler Dukes, who has a **doctorate/Ph.D.** in science technology, led the symposium.
12. The **History Department/history department** gave away a \$25,000 scholarship.
13. After graduating, the engineer wanted a **full-time/full time** job.
14. On **Fri./Friday**, Jan. 9, the rodeo comes to town.
15. The foreign-exchange student said his preference was to move to Topeka, **KS/Kan.**

A summary quiz based on the latest edition
of the Associated Press Stylebook

QUIZ 6

DIRECTIONS: In the space at the left, write the letter for the sentence that illustrates correct Associated Press style as required for each question.

ANSWERS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

SENTENCES

1. Which of the following is correct regarding capitalization of proper nouns/adjectives?

- a. The History department is located on the second floor.
- b. The English Department will sponsor a used-book sale.
- c. Officials in the Department of Athletics said they checked the player's academic record.
- d. The English and science departments will sponsor the next cake sale.

2. Which of the following is correct regarding formal titles?

- a. Department Chair Tyler Dukes will monitor the American College Testing sessions.
- b. Rebecca Heslin, Editor of the publication, defended the editorial.
- c. The Wake County Chair of the school board is opposed to creating student smoking areas.
- d. When the team meets for the first time next week, player Drew Brees will serve as Team Captain.

3. Which of the following is correct regarding abbreviations with addresses?

- a. The school's address is 601 Westlake Dr.
- b. He lives at 4100 Bee Caves Rd.
- c. The school is on Westlake Drive.
- d. She found the dog in front of 2105 51st. Street.

4. Which of the following is correct regarding time of day?

- a. The band starts playing at 12 noon.
- b. The pep rally was over at 4:32 p.m.
- c. The last trombone player finished his solo competition at 3 o'clock.
- d. She wanted to leave at 6 a.m. in the morning.

5. Which of the following is correct regarding proper style of ages?

- a. The dog was only four years old.
- b. The four-year-old dog finally got adopted.
- c. The 6-month-old puppy barked constantly.
- d. Five beagles, all five years old, ate canned food.

6. Which of the following is correct regarding style for titles?

- a. Senate President Whil Piavis abstained from the vote.
- b. Whil Piavis, Student Body President, voted before anyone else.
- c. Senior in computer engineering and student body president Whil Piavis disagreed.
- d. The Student Body President, Whil Piavis, traveled to Washington, D.C.

7. Which of the following is correct regarding proper use of numbers?

- a. Nineteen eighty four was a good year.
- b. He ate \$45 dollars worth of food.
- c. The boat only traveled four miles per hour.
- d. The concert was the last day of school, Dec. 19.

8. Which of the following is correct regarding proper use of attribution on first reference?

- a. The Chancellor said he wanted to win.
- b. Chancellor Sharon Justice said, "It was the best game in history."
- c. "I wanted to win", said drum major Eric Garrett of the marching competition, "but it just didn't happen".
- d. "We performed well," exclaimed Saxophonist Chris Wright when asked about the competition.

9. Which of the following is correct regarding proper use of numbers?

- a. The stadium held 55,034 people.
- b. He won \$2.3 million dollars on "Jeopardy."
- c. The phone returned ten cents.
- d. He needed \$5.00 for lunch.

10. Which of the following is correct regarding punctuation?

- a. Its a warm day outside.
- b. At the press conference, the coach, said, with confidence, "Were going to win."
- c. After the team lost to it's arch rivals, the coach tried to pump up the crowd by asking, "Whose the best team around?"
- d. The car, its muffler dragging the ground, still crossed the finish line first.

Answers to quizzes based on the latest edition
of the Associated Press Stylebook

ANSWERS

QUIZ 1

1. hooky
2. "Goodbye"
3. 4-H Club
4. dropouts
5. cola
6. coach
7. runners-up
8. 5-yard line
9. fullback
10. doubleheader
11. layup
12. All-State
13. A lot
14. desserts
15. effect

QUIZ 2

1. her
2. who
3. affects
4. that
5. whom
6. she
7. all right
8. its
9. its
10. their
11. is
12. more than
13. was
14. fewer
14. Regardless

QUIZ 3

1. master's
2. Monday
3. Jan.
4. 9
5. Iowa
6. Room
7. percent
8. three
9. summer
10. hers
11. a.m.
12. 2-year-old
13. \$3 million
14. 1
14. cents

QUIZ 4

1. Women's
2. It
was
3. They
were
4. They
were
5. it
6. their
7. were
8. further
playoffs
9. hers
10. 1960s
11. It's

QUIZ 5

1. 50 cents
2. "
3. It's
4. Kreme's
5. and
6. Midwest
7. rivers
8. FBI
9. ABC
10. Texas
11. doctorate
12. history department
13. full-time
14. Friday
15. Kan.

QUIZ 6

1. d
2. a
3. c
4. b
5. c
6. a
7. d
8. b
9. a
10. d

A GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

Keep your class moving and learning. SPONGE ACTIVITIES

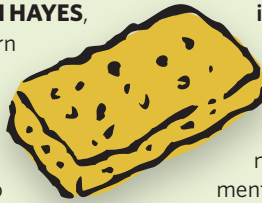
In an early edition of a JEA curriculum guide, **RON HAYES**, CJE, wrote, "It is important that student writers learn to recognize and use the elements of style. It is also important to have them use the tools of writing."

Hayes, a former Dow Jones Newspaper Fund Teacher of the Year and Idaho journalism adviser of the year, suggested that an appropriate way to teach style was to use short style exercises as "sponge activities," a phrase he learned from **Madeline Hunter's** material on mastery teaching.

"We can invest time wisely in activities that result in students' learning, or we can fritter time away on inconsequential matters or in waiting," Hunter said. **"When students are waiting (waiting for class to convene, waiting for materials ... waiting while roll is called, waiting for a turn) little learning is taking place. Sometimes waiting is inevitable, but lack of learning is not."**

To that end, Hayes suggested using style exercises as sponge activities that soak in time that otherwise might be lost. Sponge activities review, reinforce and provide practice or application of something the students already know — or at least should know.

Concerning training style-conscious writers and editors, Hayes, a former JEA vice president, said, **"Constant practice will**



increase their reaction, thinking and speed."

Short, five- or 10-question quizzes on Associated Press style can serve as sponge activities. Hand them out as students walk into the classroom so they get into the habit of using every valuable moment of class time for learning. Like other departments, journalism should nurture a time-on-task atmosphere in the classroom.

Have students complete the quizzes while other students are arriving or while individuals are confirming specific assignments. Require students to complete the quizzes at some point during the class when they have a few minutes. Or have students complete the quizzes during the first five or seven minutes of the period. It doesn't really matter when the students complete the exercises as long as they know that class time is valuable and not a minute should be wasted.

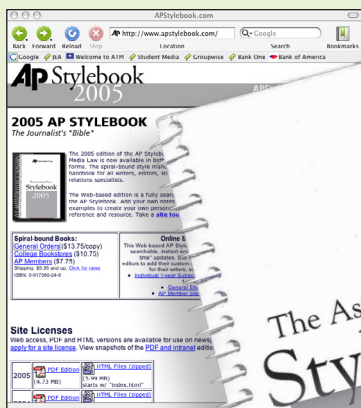
The method is also helpful for introductory journalism classes. At the beginning of the class, develop quizzes that target specifics such as numbers, punctuation and capitalization. Later mix the changes. Use names of places and programs in your school and community. Occasionally encourage group work for variety. Keep expanding your quizzes in a special folder on your computer. For more complex challenges, include sentences that require editing changes, such as word choice, unifying the focus (numbers, per-

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The JEA bookstore has five books available at a discount to JEA members on style and a number of other books on various aspects of writing. **Visit jea.org.**

- *Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law*, 40th ed. (Norm Goldstein, editor; \$13.75/\$12.35 JEA)
- *The Elements of Style*, 4th ed. (William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White; \$7.95/\$7.15 JEA)
- *OJEA Stylebook*, 4th ed. (OJEA Stylebook Committee; \$9.95/\$8.95 JEA)
- *The Official CSPA Stylebook*, 20th ed. (Helen F. Smith, editor; \$8.95/\$8.05 JEA)
- *The Elephants of Style: A Trunkload of Tips on the Big Issue and Gray Areas of Contemporary American English* (Bill Walsh; \$14.95/\$13.45 JEA)

The Associated Press Stylebook is available from www.apstylebook.com and is now available in online editions.



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