



Santa Clara County
Office of Education

Communication Style Guide and Use of Logo



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Office of Education

Punctuation, Grammar and Proofreading

It is recommended that an up-to-date reference manual, published within the last five years, be used. Be consistent with punctuation and grammar. Below are tips and suggestions:

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Person-first Terminology

In writing or speech, place the person before the label (e.g., a child with autism, instead of an autistic child). This practice acknowledges that a person has many different characteristics. A disability is only one aspect of a person.

Grammar

- Spell out first through ninth when they indicate sequence in time or location: first base, the First Amendment, she was first in line. Starting with number 10, use figures.
- Use a.m. or p.m.— always lowercase, with periods.
- Seasons of the year are not capitalized.
- Days and months are always capitalized. When used with a specific date, abbreviate only the months of Jan., Feb., Aug., Oct., Nov., and Dec. When listing only month and year, do not separate the year with commas. When listing day, month and year, set off the year with commas.
- When possible, spell it out, don't abbreviate.
- Spell out days of the week and months of the year (without specific dates).
- Use complete sentences.
- Using an acronym is acceptable, but only after it has been spelled out, i.e., Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE).

Proofreading

1. Always use software for spell check and grammar check when available.
2. Proofread and always have at least one other person proofread.
3. Read the text initially for content; read the text again for accuracy.
4. Have available:
 - a recognized dictionary published within the last five years,
 - an office reference manual published within the last five years, such as the *Gregg Reference Manual* and/or *The Associated Press Stylebook*.
 - a thesaurus published within the last five years,
 - resources from which the document was created.
Example: rough drafts, notes, articles.