

# Kansas City Star Style Guide

## The Star Copy Style

Use short sentences. Use short first paragraphs. Use vigorous English. Be positive, not negative. The style of local communications is *To The Star*, in italics, not-out-of-town communications in this form. Salina, Kas. - *To The Star*. Never use old slang. Such words as *stunt*, *cut out*, *get his goat*, *come across*, *sit up and take notice*, put one over, have no place after their use becomes common. Slang to be enjoyable must be fresh.

Use *Kan.*, not *Kan.* or *Kans.*, as an abbreviation for Kansas: use *Ok.*, not *Okla.*, for Oklahoma, *Col.*, not *Colo.*, for Colorado, *Cal.*, not *Calif.*, for California.

Watch your sequence of tenses. "He said he knew the truth, not 'He said he knew the truth.' "The community was amazed to hear that Charles Wakefield was a thief," not "was amazed to hear that Charles Wakefield is a thief."

The style of *The Star* is 9:30 o'clock this afternoon or this morning or tonight; not 9:30 this forenoon, 9:30 p.m. or 9:30 this evening. Also let the hour precede - not this morning at 9:30 o'clock. He walked twelve miles, not a distance of twelve miles; he earned \$10, not he earned the amount or sum of \$10; he went there to see his wife, not for the purpose of seeing his wife. He was absent during June, not during the month of June.

"Goods valued at about \$25 were stolen," not "about \$25 worth of goods were stolen."

"Several fountain pens were stolen," not "a number of fountain pens" - if you know the number, specify.

Eliminate every superfluous word as "Funeral services will be at 2 o'clock Tuesday," not "The funeral services will be held at the hour of 2 o'clock on Tuesday." He said is better than he said in the course of conversation.

In reference to specified time the word *on* is superfluous. Write *on January 16*, not *on Tuesday January 16* and Tuesday are enough.

Don't split verbs. He probably will go, not he will probably go. It previously had been shown better, not it had previously been better shown.

The verb precedes the time. He sold yesterday afternoon, not he yesterday afternoon sold. In certain instances, euphony or smoothness may admit a deviation from this rule.

Be careful of the word *also*. It usually modifies the word it follows closest. "He, also, went" means "He too went." "He went also" means he went in addition to taking some other action.

Be careful of the word *only*. "He only had \$10," means he alone was the possessor of such wealth. "He had only \$10," means the ten was all the cash he possessed.

The Rev. Q.Z. Smith, D.D., not the Rev. Dr. Q.Z. Smith.

Mr. Smith or Dr. Smith, not the Rev. Smith or the Rev. Mr. Smith or the Rev. Dr. Smith. Never call a minister a doctor unless he is a doctor of divinity.

He went to police headquarters, not he came to police headquarters. "He came to the office of The Star" would be correct.

"The police tried to find her husband," not tried to locate her husband. To locate, used as a transitive verb, means to establish.

"He was ill in February" not "He was ill during February." During February would mean every fraction of a second of the month's time. A body may deliberate during the day, but that means no recess was taken in the entire period.

Don't split infinitives - He wanted to live longer, not to longer live.

Avoid the use of adjectives, especially such extravagant ones as splendid, gorgeous, grand, magnificent, etc.

Say the girl was of light complexion, not light complected.

Say evening clothes, not full dress.

Say patrolmen not in uniform, not plain clothes men. Do not use *cop*.

A burglar enters a building where persons are sleeping - use thief or robber in other cases.

Use revolver or pistol, not gun, unless a shotgun is meant.

The thief seized her purse, not grabbed or snatched.

State things in writing, otherwise say, assert, declare, etc.

Say, "She was born in Ireland and came to Jackson County in 1874" not "but came to Jackson County." She didn't come here to make amends for being born in Ireland. This is common abuse of the conjunction.

"Smith asserted he had been arrested falsely," not claimed he had been arrested.

Use *we should*, they would. For instance, not, "We would like to see these abuses corrected." That would be an appeal. The simple statement is, "We should like to see these abuses corrected."

Don't say "He had his leg cut off in an accident." He wouldn't have had it done for anything.

"He suffered a broken leg in a fall," not "he broke his leg in a fall." He didn't break the leg, the fall did. Say a leg, not his leg, because presumably the man has two legs.

"The work began," not the work was begun.

He was graduated from Manual, not "he graduated from Manual."

Say Mary went shopping with Mabel - not "in company with Mabel."

"Honor the memory of J.V.C. Kames" not "honor J.V.C. Kames" after his death.

Say "John Jones of St. Louis," no comma between Jones and of.

"Mr. Roosevelt is a leader who, we believe, would succeed," not "whom, we believe, would."

"Mr. Roosevelt is a leader whom, we believe, the people will choose," not "who, we believe."

"None saw him except me," not "none saw him but me." Don't use *but* as a preposition.

Use *or* after *either*, not *and* neither, as a general rule. Certain deviations from this statement are good English, but extreme care in usage is best.

Indorsement of a candidate, not endorsement.

Say Chinese, not Chinamen.

Bodies are not shipped or sent - say "The burial will be in Ottumwa, Ia."

Several persons were in the room, not "several people." "The people of Kansas City" is correct.

Both persons were pleased, not "both parties were pleased." "Both parties to the contract" is correct.

He knew no good reason that he should not run, is better than "He knew no good reason why he should not run."

"He threw the stone," not "He threw the rock." Rock is unqualified stone.

Write 250,000, 500,000, 750,000 and 1,000,000, 1/4 million, 1/2 million, 3/4 million and 1 million respectively.

Numbers less than 100 should be spelled out, except in matter of statistical nature, in ages, time of day, sums of money and comparative figures or dimensions.

In writing of animals use the neuter gender except when you are writing of a pet that has a name. Then it is permissible to use the masculine or feminine.

"The man left the car while it was in motion is simpler and better than 'slipped from the car.'"

"The man was sentenced to be hanged," not to be hung.

"The death sentence was executed," not "The man was executed."

The execution of the death sentence, not "the execution of the man."

The prisoner was electrocuted, not electrocuted.

"None of them is so sorry as myself," not "none of them are so sorry."

He was "eager to go," not anxious to go. "You are anxious about a friend who is ill."

"If I were king," not if I was king.

"The building was partly insured," not partially insured.

"It seemed as if he meant business," not as though he meant business. Do not say "she looked like she would faint. Say as if."

A long quotation with out introducing the speaker makes a poor lead especially and is bad at any time. Break into the quotation as soon as you can, thus: "I should prefer," the speaker said, "to let the reader know who I am as soon as possible."

Try to preserve the atmosphere of the speech in your quotation. For instance in quoting a child, do not let him say "Inadvertently, I picked up the stone and threw it."

"He was more than one thousand ducks flying" - not "over one thousand ducks." Also say "fewer than" instead of "less than," when numbers, not quantity, are considered. It is proper to write "He had more than \$10."

He was made unconscious, not "he was rendered unconscious."

He died on the sidewalk, not "He fell dead on the sidewalk."

Never say "The deceased."

Such words as "tots," "urchins," "mites of humanity" are not to be used in writing of children. In certain cases, where "kids" conveys just the proper shading and fits the story, it is permissible.

Watch out for true phrases such as "Barly negro," "cripp bank note," "cold cash," "hard cash," etc.

Avoid expressions from a foreign tongue. "He received \$2 a day" is English, not "received \$2 per day."

A man marries a woman (she is married to him).

"The voters will choose among the several candidates," not "between" the several. "Choose between two candidates is correct."

"Twenty attended the meeting among others, C.W. Amour, J.C. Nichols." The word *others* implies that the persons mentioned are apart from persons already mentioned, but the implication does not hold true. The sentence should read: "Twenty attended, among them, C.W. Amour and J.C. Nichols."

He died of heart disease, not heart failure - everybody dies of heart failure.

Representative Bland, not Congressman Bland. The members of both the house and senate are Congressmen. The titles "Representative" and "Senator" distinguish them.

"He suspected the negro was guilty," not "He suspected the negro was guilty." "The police were suspicious of him," not "The police considered him suspicious." Do not use *suspect* as a noun.

The words *donate* and *donation* are barred from the columns of *The Star*. Use *give* or *contribute*.

The use of *raise* in the sense of obtaining money has been forced into usage where no other word seems to do so well. But *raise* is not a noun.

Don't confuse the words *habit* and *custom* as "John Jones was a victim of the drug habit." It was the custom of John Jones to go to the bank at 11 o'clock each day.

A man is not arrested for "investigation." There is no such charge as "investigation."

The Star does not use "dope" or "dope fiend."

Use *habit* forming drugs or narcotics and addicts.

Don't say: "Three men put in an appearance." Just let them "appear."

Do not use *picnic* as a verb.

Say *luncheon*, not *lunch*.

You expect a record crowd, not anticipate it. But you can anticipate some legal action, for example, by taking some step of precaution, and be correct in usage.

Portion in almost all cases refers to food.

"Portion" of an estate is correct, however.

Watch for plural collective nouns; they take singular verbs. "The committee was discharged."

"The company was solvent." Three thousand dollars was stolen.

Spell it program, quarter, quintet, etc.

Call it parent-teacher association.

Do not use the term *squad* in referring to motor cars or traffic policemen. Write "Sergeant Jones of the motor cycle police," or "Lieutenant McCormick of the traffic police." A *squad* is a fixed and limited number of men.

In Jefferson City, preferable to at Jefferson City.

Probably with not likely will.

As to use of state after name of a city. Use state except where city is so well known as to make the name of the state entirely superfluous. Use state where there are two or more cities of that name.

In connection with this, however, use Independence, when Independence, Mo., is meant; use Independence, Kas.

Avoid using *that* too frequently, but govern use largely by euphony, and strive for smoothness.

Say the morning edition of *The Star*.

In most cases, *desire* is preferable to *want*.

Say *crippled boy*, but not a *cripple*.

Each other applies to two, one another to three or more.

Latter applies to one of two. Where more than two are considered, *last* is the word.

If is used to introduce a supposition clause, as, I shall not go if it rains. It is incorrect to say: I do not know if I can go. The correct form is whether: I do not know whether I can go.

Resolutions are adopted, not passed. Bills are passed and laws are enacted. The house or senate passes a bill; congress or the legislature enacted a law.

Do not use *evidence* as a verb. This wrong use is especially common and the past tense form *Burglarized* and *jailed* are equally objectionable.

Both simplicity and good taste suggest *home* rather than *residence*, and *lives* rather than *resides*.

"John Jones, who was arrested yesterday, and who furnished release bond, was arrested again today." The second who is superfluous.

Equally *As - The as* is superfluous.

*He Was Presented With* - This is an old offender, which gets in despite all injunctions and a general knowledge that the *with* is entirely superfluous.

A *Woman of the Name of Mary Jones* - Disrespect is attached to the individual in such sentences. Avoid it. Never use it even in referring to street walkers.

*Admittance and Admission* - *Admittance* is better than *admission* in relation to admittance fees and admittance to places, lodges, etc.

*Motor car* is preferred but *automobile* is not incorrect.

In marking typographical style in copy, conform to the adopted style sheet of *The Star*.

**Kansas City Star Style Guide** is an essential resource for journalists, editors, and writers associated with the publication. Established to maintain a high standard of clarity, consistency, and professionalism, this guide serves as a vital tool for anyone involved in producing news content for the Kansas City Star. The guidelines cover everything from grammar and punctuation to ethical

considerations and style preferences, ensuring that all published material meets the publication's expectations. Let's delve deeper into the Kansas City Star Style Guide, exploring its key components and significance in the realm of journalism.

## **History of the Kansas City Star**

The Kansas City Star has been a significant player in American journalism since its founding in 1880. Over the years, it has earned numerous awards for its reporting and writing. To uphold its reputation, the publication developed the Kansas City Star Style Guide, aimed at fostering a cohesive voice throughout its articles and editorial content.

## **Purpose of the Style Guide**

The primary purpose of the Kansas City Star Style Guide is to ensure that all content produced by the newspaper adheres to a consistent format and tone. This consistency is crucial for maintaining the publication's credibility and professionalism. The guide also serves to:

- Enhance readability: A uniform style helps readers navigate articles more easily.
- Reduce ambiguity: Clear guidelines minimize confusion over word choice and punctuation.
- Foster a professional image: Adhering to a style guide presents a polished front to the audience.

## **Core Components of the Kansas City Star Style Guide**

The Kansas City Star Style Guide encompasses several core components that outline the preferred writing style, grammar, punctuation, and ethical practices.

### **Writing Style**

The writing style advocated by the Kansas City Star emphasizes clarity and conciseness. Writers are encouraged to:

1. Use active voice whenever possible to create more engaging content.
2. Avoid jargon and overly complex language to ensure accessibility for all readers.
3. Be precise in language, using specific terms rather than vague descriptors.
4. Maintain objectivity in reporting, presenting facts without bias.

### **Grammar and Punctuation**

Adherence to proper grammar and punctuation is critical in journalism. The Kansas City Star Style Guide offers specific rules, such as:

- Comma Usage: The guide follows the Chicago Manual of Style, which recommends using the Oxford comma.
- Quotation Marks: Punctuation should generally be placed inside quotation marks.
- Capitalization: Specific terms, titles, and organizations are capitalized according to established norms.

## Numbers and Dates

The guide provides detailed instructions on how to write numbers and dates. For example:

- Numbers: Spell out numbers one through nine and use numerals for 10 and above.
- Dates: Use a comma to separate the day and year, e.g., "October 3, 2023."

## Ethical Considerations in Journalism

Ethics are an integral part of journalism, and the Kansas City Star Style Guide emphasizes the importance of integrity and accountability in reporting. Key ethical guidelines include:

- Accuracy: Always verify facts before publication.
- Attribution: Properly attribute sources to maintain transparency.
- Avoid conflicts of interest: Journalists should not engage in relationships that could compromise their impartiality.

## Inclusivity and Sensitivity

The Kansas City Star Style Guide also prioritizes inclusivity in language and representation. This includes:

- Avoiding stereotypes: Language should not perpetuate stereotypes based on race, gender, sexual orientation, or other characteristics.
- Using people-first language: This approach emphasizes the individual rather than defining them by a condition or characteristic.

## Additional Resources and Tools

In addition to the Kansas City Star Style Guide, several other resources can help writers and journalists refine their skills and adhere to best practices. These include:

- Associated Press (AP) Stylebook: A widely used reference for journalists that covers various aspects of writing and reporting.
- Chicago Manual of Style: Often used in publishing, this manual provides comprehensive guidelines on grammar, usage, and citation.
- Grammar and Writing Tools: Online platforms like Grammarly and Hemingway can assist in

proofreading and enhancing writing quality.

## Training and Workshops

The Kansas City Star often conducts training sessions and workshops for its staff to familiarize them with the style guide. These initiatives are designed to ensure that all employees, from seasoned journalists to new hires, are well-versed in the guide's principles.

## Conclusion

The **Kansas City Star Style Guide** is more than just a set of rules; it is a framework that upholds the integrity and professionalism of one of America's leading newspapers. By adhering to its guidelines, writers and journalists foster a consistent and reliable voice that resonates with readers, ultimately contributing to the publication's continued success. Whether you are a seasoned journalist or an aspiring writer, understanding and utilizing the Kansas City Star Style Guide is crucial for producing high-quality, ethical journalism. Embracing these standards not only enhances your writing but also upholds the values of the profession as a whole.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the Kansas City Star Style Guide?

The Kansas City Star Style Guide is a set of editorial guidelines that outlines the preferred language, style, and formatting used by the Kansas City Star newspaper to ensure consistency and clarity in its reporting.

### Why is a style guide important for newspapers like the Kansas City Star?

A style guide is important for newspapers as it helps maintain uniformity in writing, enhances readability, and ensures that all journalists and editors are on the same page regarding language usage, punctuation, and citation standards.

### What type of content does the Kansas City Star Style Guide cover?

The Kansas City Star Style Guide covers a wide range of content including grammar, punctuation, capitalization, usage of names and titles, abbreviations, and guidelines for multimedia elements.

### How does the Kansas City Star Style Guide address digital media?

The Kansas City Star Style Guide includes specific guidelines for digital media, focusing on aspects such as SEO best practices, social media usage, and formatting for online articles to enhance user

engagement.

## Can the public access the Kansas City Star Style Guide?

Generally, the Kansas City Star Style Guide is intended for internal use by staff members; however, some excerpts or summaries may be available through journalism resources or educational institutions.

## How often is the Kansas City Star Style Guide updated?

The Kansas City Star Style Guide is typically updated periodically to reflect changes in language usage, journalistic standards, and new media practices, ensuring it remains relevant in a rapidly evolving media landscape.

## What are some common guidelines found in the Kansas City Star Style Guide?

Common guidelines include rules for hyphenation, the treatment of numbers, guidelines for writing dates and times, and recommendations for reporting sensitive topics with accuracy and respect.

## How can journalists at the Kansas City Star ensure they are following the style guide?

Journalists at the Kansas City Star can ensure they are following the style guide by regularly consulting the guide, attending training sessions, and collaborating with editors to clarify any uncertainties in style and usage.

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Explore the Kansas City Star style guide for essential writing tips and best practices. Enhance your content with clarity and precision. Learn more today!

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