



The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage : The Official Style Guide Used by the Writers and Editors of the World's Most Authoritative Newspaper

Allan M. Siegal

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For anyone who writes--a short story or a business plan, a book report or a news report--knotty choices of spelling, grammar, punctuation and word meaning lurk in every line: Lay or lie? Who or whom? None is or none are? Is touch-tone a trademark? Is Day-Glo? It's enough to send you for a Martini. (Or is that a martini?)

Now everyone can find answers in the handy alphabetical guide used by the thousand journalists of the world's most authoritative newspaper. The guidelines to correct hyphenation, punctuation, capitalization and foreign and English spelling are crisp and compact, created for instant reference in the rush of deadlines. Rewritten for the first time in twenty-three years and greatly expanded since the last edition, the manual tackles issues that will follow writers into the new century:

- How to respect the equality of the sexes without self-conscious devices such as "he or she"

- How to choose thoughtfully between terms like African-American and black; Hispanic and Latino; American Indian and Native American

- How to translate the vocabulary of e-mail and cyberspace for everyday readers, and how to cope with the eccentric capitalization and punctuation of Internet company names and Web site addresses

The authors have more than seventy years of combined newsroom experience, most of it at The Times. They recognize that our language is changing, but they tailor their responses to the paper's impression of its readership: "educated and sophisticated . . . traditional but not tradition-bound."

They counsel a fluid style, easygoing but not slangy, the unpretentious language of a letter to a literate friend. They invite readers of the manual to be precise while casting off the stodgy (among dozens of examples, writing before instead of the pompous prior to, and carry out instead of implement).

The authors also offer a thumbnail guide to newsroom ethics and standards in their entries on anonymous sources, attribution, fairness and obscenity. And they seed the rules with wry humor. (On vogue words: "Wannabe is the faddish slang of adults who, well, want to be teenagers." And about the late: "Do not fall into this error: Only the late Senator Miel opposed the bill. He was almost certainly alive at the time.")

For writers, editors, students, researchers and all who love language, **The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage** is an entertaining tool as well as an essential reference.

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Julie Kappel:

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Myra Hackett:

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