

Okanagan Life Editorial Style Guide

Our editorial voice is semi-formal with a warm, yet lively, conversational tone. Feel free to use contractions. Writing needs to be tight, clear and definite. We like to see active verbs unless there's a specific reason for using the passive voice.

Humour—satire or a tongue-in-cheek approach—is often appropriate. Use interesting direct quotes. We like to hear people's own words provided that they advance the story.

Canadian Press Stylebook

With the exception of certain *Okanagan Life* conventions, the Canadian Press Stylebook is our standard reference. Use it.

Okanagan Life Conventions and Style Tips

Don't write like you've swallowed a thesaurus or encyclopedia. You won't go far wrong by following George Orwell's six rules of writing.

1. Never use a metaphor, simile or other figure of speech, which you are used to seeing in print (clichés).
2. Never use a long word where a short one will do.
3. If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.
4. Never use the passive where you can use the active.
5. Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.
6. Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous

Addresses

10–1753 Dolphin Avenue, Kelowna

Ampersands

Replace with and – except to save space in sidebars

Attribution

Whenever possible, use “says” vs. “said” to keep the tone more current.

Keep it simple.

“Our chef has to be on his toes when the kids are here,” says John.

Not: Our chef has to be on his toes when the kids are here,” laughs John.

British Columbia

Abbreviate as BC

Composition titles are written in italics.

Okanagan Life, Pirates of the Caribbean, Macbeth, Canadian Idol

Dates

Watch publication dates to avoid listing events that have already passed, unless specifically noted.

First Nations

Aboriginal is the umbrella term for three distinct groups of people - First Nations, Inuit and Metis. The Okanagan Nation Alliance (Okanagan Indian Band, Westbank First Nation, Upper Nicola Indian Band, Penticton Indian Band, Lower Similkameen Indian Band, Upper Similkameen Indian Band and the Osoyoos Indian Band) advises that its people “may be correctly referred to as First Nation, native or indigenous peoples of this land.”

Gender-neutral language

Don't sacrifice agreement when trying for gender-neutral language

Not: Each athlete must pass a drug test before they compete.

Try: Athletes must pass a drug test before they compete.

Each athlete must pass a drug test before competition.

Last resort: Each athlete must pass a drug test before he or she competes.

Internet

Capitalize Internet and Web

Email / email (no hyphen)

Websites: www.okanaganlife.com

Okanagan Life Editorial Style Guide

Less / fewer

Fewer than 100 people attended

Not: Less than 100 people attended

Numbers

Phone: 250.861.5399

Money: \$20; \$20 million; US\$200

Metric: use metric – no need for Imperial equivalent in brackets

Decades: 1990s or 90s

Redundancies

Avoid using the same word or related word in the same sentence or even the same paragraph. (Now's the time for that thesaurus.)

Not: "The rapid *growth* has prompted Jones to develop a master plan to keep the airport's *growth* meeting demands."

Don't make a statement and then follow up with a quote that says essentially the same thing (or vice versa).

Over / more than

More than 50 participants

Not: Over 50 participants

Okanagan Lake

Not: Lake Okanagan

Per cent

Not: percent *or* %

To save space in sidebars: %

Photos

Supply caption and credit

Proper Names

First reference: Jane Smith

2nd and subsequent references: Jane

Show don't tell

Not: Smith is a colourful character.

Show the reader why Smith is colourful.

Spelling

Use Canadian version – colour, traveller, centre

Double-check the spelling of proper names

Time

Body text: 2 p.m.

To save space in sidebars: 2 pm

Valley

Capitalize when referring to the Okanagan

Proofread!