# A quick reference writing guide
## for University of Georgia Extension

**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**
# EXTENSION

## EXTENSION-SPECIFIC TIPS

### Naming University of Georgia Organizations

The full, formal title is *University of Georgia Cooperative Extension*. Use it on first reference. Note that *Service* is no longer part of the name. Use *UGA Extension* thereafter.

Use *University of Georgia* on first reference, then *university* or *UGA.*

Use *University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences* or, if you've already said *University of Georgia*, use *UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences* on first reference, then *college* or *CAES.*

Use the rule above for the *College of Family and Consumer Sciences*. Its acronym is *FACS*.

### Agents

Use these titles on first reference: *Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) agent*, *Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) agent* or *4-H Youth Development (4-H) agent*. Thereafter, use the acronym.

> Example: *John Smith is the Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) agent for UGA Extension in Sample County. He has been an ANR agent for 12 years.*

### 4-H

4-H members are referred to as *4-H'ers.*

The formal program area name is *4-H Youth Development*. Note that *4-H and Youth* or *4-H & Youth* are no longer used.

### Master Gardener

The full, formal title is *Master Gardener Extension Volunteer*. Use it on first reference. Use *Master Gardener* or *MGEV* thereafter.

> Example: *Jane Smith is a Master Gardener Extension Volunteer for UGA Extension in Sample County. She has been a Master Gardener for 12 years.*

### Facilities

Research is carried out in the *agricultural experiment stations* or *research and education centers* (formerly called "branch stations"). The generic term is lowercase, but the individual names are capitalized.

> Example: *The Coastal Plain Experiment Station is in Tifton, Georgia. There is a research and education center in Blairsville, Georgia.*

## CAPITALIZATION

- Capitalize proper names (a specific person, state, country or organization).
- Capitalize formal titles that come before a name, but not after. (Note: If a title is long, put it after the name for easier reading.)
  > Example: *President Jere Morehead spoke yesterday. Morehead is the first alumnus of UGA to serve as president in more than 45 years.*
- Capitalize commonly established regions.
  Example: *the South,* but not *southern Georgia.*
- Don't capitalize *campus* when used with a city.
  Example: University of Georgia Tifton campus. On second reference use UGA-Tifton, UGA-Athens or UGA-Griffin.
  Do capitalize *North Campus*, *South Campus*, *East Campus* and *West Campus*.
- Extension districts and program areas are capitalized.
  > Example: *Northwest District; Agriculture and Natural Resources program*
- The formal titles of departments start with *Department of*, so capitalize *Department of Entomology*, but don't capitalize *entomology department* because it's not the formal title.

## GENERAL TIPS

1. When writing web addresses, don't put *http://* in front of the address unless it's needed to make the link work. Start with *www.* where applicable. Try to use hyperlinks.
   > Example: *extension.uga.edu or google.com*
2. There is only one space after a period, not two.
3. Don't use quotation marks, all caps, underlines, bold or italics for emphasis in long-form writing.
4. Periods and commas go inside quotation marks.
   > Example: *"Houston, we have a problem," astronaut Jim Lovell said.*

## TIMES AND DATES

- Times always use numerals and are always followed by *a.m.* or *p.m.* (Note the periods between the lowercase letters.)
  > Example: *8 a.m., 10:30 p.m.*
- Use *noon* or *midnight* instead of 12 a.m. or 12 p.m.
- Avoid redundancies like *10 a.m. in the morning*.
- Abbreviate months when used with a specific date and year, like *Jan. 1, 2016*. If you're only writing the month and year, don't abbreviate the month. Abbreviations are:
  Jan.    Sept.    Dec.
  Feb.    Oct.
  Aug.    Nov.
  (March through July aren't abbreviated.)
- Decades should use numerals. Only use apostrophes, if necessary, to stand in for numbers.
  > Example: *The 1930s or the '30s*

## COMMON SPELLING ERRORS

- all right *(Always two words)*
- barbecue *(Always one word)*
- email *(No hyphen, lowercase)*
- fundraising *(Always one word)*
- farmers market *(No apostrophe)*
- foodborne *(Always one word)*
- honeybee *(One word)*
- turfgrass *(One word)*
- online *(One word)*
- website *(One word, lowercase)*

For other UGA style guide references, visit brand.uga.edu/styleguide.

College and UGA Extension literature and materials are edited in Associated Press (AP) style. This allows consistency across materials coming out of the college.

## PUNCTUATION

### Apostrophes
Apostrophes stand in for letters or make words possessive.
> Example: *Don't* is a contraction for *do not*; the apostrophe represents the *o*.
> Example: *Leslie's waffles are better than her parents' waffles.*

### Commas
**Use commas to separate elements in a series**, but don't use a comma before the conjunction (*and*) in a simple series.
> Example: *Iron Man, The Hulk, Captain America, Thor, Black Widow and Hawkeye are the Avengers.*

**Use a comma to separate adjectives of equal rank.** (If you can plug the word *and* in for the commas without changing the meaning or sense of the phrase, the adjectives are equal.)
> Example: *It was a dark, dangerous night. = It was a dark and dangerous night.*

In most cases, use a comma before "which."

### Exclamation Points
Exclamation points are overused. They should be used rarely and only when exclaiming something. Never use multiple exclamation points after a sentence.

### Hyphens and Dashes
A hyphen (-) is smaller than a dash (–).

- Use a hyphen to join words and to avoid ambiguity.
  Example: *He recovered his wallet. vs. He re-covered his roof.*
- Use a hyphen with compound modifiers if the phrase is confusing otherwise (unless the adverb is *very* or ends in *-ly*). Example: *full-time job; well-known Extension agent*
  Example without hyphens: *very good camping trip; agriculturally inclined*
- Use a hyphen to avoid repeating letters, unless it's a double-e combination with re- or pre-.
  Example: anti-intellectual, shell-like, reelect
- Use hyphens when writing out numbers or in some ranges. Example: fifty-one, twenty-two
  Example: The agents were part of a three- to four-year program.
- Use hyphens in writing time ranges.
  Example: 8-10 a.m. or 8 a.m.-10:30 p.m.

**Dashes should be used mid-sentence** if a phrase needs to be set off or if there's a series within a phrase that uses commas. There is a space before and after the dash.
> Example: *The UGA Extension program areas – Agriculture and Natural Resources, Family and Consumer Sciences and 4-H Youth Development – were discussed.*

## NUMBERS AND MEASUREMENTS

### Numerals
- Generally avoid beginning sentences with a numeral. 4-H and 4-H'ers are exceptions, as are years.
- Spell out single-digit numbers less than 10.
- Use numerals, even if less than 10, for most measurements, including temperatures, distances, weights, etc., and for:
  - Addresses
  - Ages
  - Percentages
  - Dates
  - Money

### Addresses
With addresses, abbreviate only *Avenue*, *Boulevard* and *Street*; use *Ave.*, *Blvd.* and *St.*

### Ages
Hyphenate if the age acts as an adjective.
> Example: *Maggie is 2 years old. The 12-year-old boy, Bart, danced with his 10-year-old sister, Lisa.*

### Money
- Use a dollar sign ($) and numerals. Don't write *7 dollars* or *$7 dollars*.
- In money and generally, use *million* and *billion* instead of writing out the zeros.

### Percentages
Use the percent sign (%) when percentages are paired with a numeral.

### Temperature
Write *(numeral) degrees Fahrenheit* on first reference, then *(numeral) F.*
> Example: *86 degrees Fahrenheit, then 54 F on subsequent temperature references.*

## NEWS WRITING TIPS

1. In your first sentence, or lede, **use your most interesting information to draw in readers**.
2. The end of your story is likely to get cut first. **Don't put anything crucial at the end.**
3. Keep it short and concise. One-sentence paragraphs are OK.
4. **Keep similar information together.** Don't make the reader hunt for these elements.
   Note: *With an event, put the location, date, time, cost and other details in the same sentence or paragraph.*
5. **Every person gets a title on first reference.** After that, only use his or her last name. If the story includes more than one person with the same last name, use first and last names on all references.
6. **Consider alternate story formats:** Q-and-A, a list, a photo and caption, or an infographic. How would the information best be presented so that it's understood by the audience?
7. Always include a *For more information* at the end of your writing. List a contact name, title and any relevant contact information (phone number, web address, email address, etc.).
   Example: *For more information, contact Sample Name, Agriculture and Natural Resources agent for UGA Extension in Sample County, at 123-456-7890 or visit* **extension.uga.edu/county.**
8. In a caption, **identify all people in a picture**, what they're doing, the when and where, and the photographer.
9. When using acronyms, spell out the name on first reference and follow it with the acronym in parentheses.
   Example: *Spock and Captain James T. Kirk were collaborating with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).*