

Commas cont.

- Between names of states and nations used with cities
 - *Los Angeles, California, is a big city.*
- For dates with month, day, and year
 - *October 30, 2007*
- When the day of the month is omitted, so is the comma
 - *June 2007*

Apostrophes

- Singular possessive - *PTA's office*
- Plural possessive nouns not ending in "s"
 - *children's books*
- "It's" means "it is"; not the possessive, "its size."
- Plural possessive nouns ending in "s"
 - *unit PTAs' collaboration*
- Not with plural nouns, figures
 - *PTAs advocated for arts education*
 - *legislation in the 2000s*

WRITING STYLE

Use:

- Active tenses, not passive;
 - Verbs, not adverbs;
 - 4 p.m., 10-11 a.m., noon and midnight;
 - Chairman, not chair or chairperson;
 - People, not persons;
 - Family engagement;
 - Either Dr. Jane Jones or Jane Jones, Ed.D., not Dr. Jane Jones, Ed.D.;
 - United States as a noun, U.S. as an adjective.
- Tip:
- Rewrite to avoid using *etc.*, *and/or*, *he/she*, *s/he*. (*Usually, a plural form does the trick:*
"A student likes his/her homework" becomes "Students like their homework.")
 - Beware singular noun plural pronoun problems.
"Speak with the teacher about your child's homework. Their success depends on it." This is incorrect because the antecedent of "their" is the singular "child." Better: "Speak with the teacher about your child. Your student's success depends on it."
 - The term *disability* is preferred to *handicap*.
 - Use "people first" style – "a student with a disability," rather than "a disabled student."
 - Include year of passage with names of all laws except those passed in current legislative session.
 - No all cap headlines (except CALL to Convention).
 - Conform to time, date, place format: meeting is at 10 a.m., May 4, at the Capitol.

OFTEN-USED PTA WORDS

after-school programs	fundraising activities	president-elect
at-risk	fundraiser (noun)	preteen
back-to-school	handout (noun)	school-based
bylaws	health-care clinics	seat belt
caregiver	HIV/AIDS	self-esteem
citywide	Internet	statewide
curricula (plural)	kindergarten	teenage/teenager
curriculum (singular)	nationwide	T-shirt
day care (noun)	noncommercial	vice president
day-care (adjective)	nonpartisan	Washington, D.C.
dropout	nonprofit	website
email	nonsectarian	well-being
extracurricular	online	year-round
flier (NOT filer)	preschool	

PTA'S VISUAL IDENTITY

Phoebe Apperson Hearst

PTA[®]

everychild. one voice.

See the National PTA website www.pta.org regarding use guidelines for the logo and tagline. Customize the logo for the unit, council or district PTA using Arial Black or Helvetica Black font for the PTA name. Use Times Roman font for the tagline. Black or dark blue color is preferred, or reverse white on a colored background.

Mission Statement of the California State PTA

The mission of the California State PTA is to positively impact the lives of all children and families by representing our members, and empowering and supporting them with skills in advocacy, leadership and communications.

California State PTA Board of Managers, October 2009

California State PTA

2327 L Street, Sacramento, CA 95816-5014
916.440.1985 • FAX 916.440.1986
www.capta.org • info@capta.org

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Style Guide

Capitalization, Number Use, Punctuation, Spelling, Terminology and Visual Identity for PTA Publications

CAPITALIZATION

California Congress of Parents, Teachers and Students, Inc.
California State PTA – not CSPTA or CAPTA State PTA
National Congress of Parents and Teachers National Parent Teacher Association
National PTA
Parent Teacher Association
Parent-Teacher-Student Association
PTA or PTSA – no periods
Founders Day
Sacramento County, but Sacramento and San Joaquin counties

Nouns or Adjectives Forming Part of Proper Name of an Organization

Sun Elementary PTA
Hillside Council PTA
Twenty-Fifth District PTA
University of California
Do not capitalize association or unit, council, district PTA, university when used alone.

Terms Specific to California State PTA

Advisory Board
Board of Directors
Board of Managers
California State PTA Annual Convention
CALL (to board or convention)
Continuing Service Award – CSA
“everychild. onevoice.”
Golden Oak Service Award
Honorary Service Award – HSA
Mission Statement of the California State PTA
Purposes of the PTA – as title or in a sentence
Vice President for Communications (etc.)
PTA Projects, Programs or Workshops
PTA Leadership Training
Reflections Program
“SMARTS: Bring Back the Arts!”
State or National Government Terms
Titles (Governor, Senator and Assembly Member) capitalized ONLY when preceding a name
Legislature, Senate and Assembly capitalized when referring to the California bodies

TITLE CAPITALIZATION

- For titles in text, capitalize the first and last words and all nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, and subordinate conjunctions (therefore, however).
- Articles (a, an, the), conjunctions (and, or, for, but), and prepositions of three letters or less (for, to, on) are lowercase, unless they are the first or last words of a title or subtitle.
- The infinitive “to” should be capitalized.
- Use typeset *italic* or **boldface** for titles of books, periodicals, movies, videos, plays, operas, reports, pamphlets, and kits.
 - *California State PTA Toolkit*
 - *The Communicator*
 - *National PTA Quick-Reference Guide*
 - *Parents Empowering Parents (PEP) Guide*
- When the title or designation precedes the name, it is capitalized. If it follows the name, it is lower case.
 - President-elect Jones
 - Jane Jones, president
 - Sarah Smith, president-elect
 - Henry Jones, the principal of the school
 - James McCay, Ed.D., principal
- Capitalize schools of a university, but not courses or departments. Capitalize languages.
 - School of Journalism
 - biology department
 - UCLA Spanish department

DO NOT CAPITALIZE

- Association, unit, council, district PTA, or board of education unless used as part of a name of a specific group;
- Titles after the word “the” or after a name;
- Organizational terms such as bylaws, chairman, committee, director, parent education, preschool, policy, scholarship, grant, vice president, workshop;
- Seasons of the year, directions (north, southeast), state, nation, federal, flag.

NUMBERS

When To Spell Out Numbers

- At the beginning of a sentence, except for years;
 - One through nine, 10 and above use numerals;
 - First through ninth, after 10th use numerals;
 - First grade, grade one, first-grader; 10th grade, grade 10, 10th-grader
- Note: More than 100 (not over 100) and fewer than 100 (not less than 100).

Use Numerals for

- Large numbers such as million and billion
 - \$12 million
- Percentages
 - 15 percent (spell out “percent”)
- Ages
 - age 3 to 6
 - 26-year-old (hyphenate)
- Pages
 - page 2
- Ratios 3-to-1; No. 1 killer of teens

PUNCTUATION

Quotation Marks

- Always set outside the comma and the period.
- Always set inside the colon and the semicolon.
- Set outside or inside the exclamation point, depending on whether the marks belong to the quoted matter.
- Use single quotation marks for quotations within quotations.
- A quoted passage of four lines or more may be used without quotation marks if indented from the body of material.
- Use quotation marks for themes, such as for conventions, workshops, or administrations.
- Avoid overuse of exclamation marks!
- Ellipses (...) should be treated as a word with a space before and after. At the end of a sentence, a period is still needed (for a total of four dots).
- Dashes require space before and after.

Colons and Semicolons

- Use a colon only if the introductory phrase can stand alone as a sentence.
- Do not use a colon after a verb.
- Capitalize the first word after a colon if it is a proper noun or the start of a complete sentence. For a vertical list, capitalize the first word of each item, use commas or semicolons with a final period if the phrases are lengthy.
- Use semicolons to separate elements of a series when the individual elements contain information that is set off by commas or to join two clauses when a coordinating conjunction (and, but, for) is not present.

Commas

- Use a comma:
 - Before the conjunction only when the series of items or phrases is complicated or lengthy.
 - *The flag is red, white and blue.*
 - Before an independent phrase: “*He gave me an apple, and I ate it.*”