



People's Liberation Training Committee Style Guide

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Introduction

The goal of this document is to provide guidance on how to write for the People's Liberation Training Committee. The style guide aims to cover everything from web based articles and features to training manuals and handouts, providing clear guidelines on design, voice, and content.

Sections

Grammar

The first section will cover grammar and other technical aspects of writing. Consistent and correct grammar in each published language is important when communicating and teaching.

Style

How we write to our audience is just as important as what we write. This section will cover our audience, and writing style. Who we are writing to and how we say it.

Book Design

This section will cover the layout and formatting of books, manuals, and other print and print style publications. This will cover student and instructor manuals, as well as physical handouts.

Web Design

This section will cover the layout and formatting of web based publications. While manuals will also be published on the web, this section is focused on web pages, articles, slide decks, and other web native content.

Print Design

This section will cover the layout and formatting of printed publications, such as pamphlets, post cards, handouts, etc.

General guidelines

- Use version control wherever possible, such as Git for text based materials.
- Use AsciiDoc and similar widespread, easy to learn markup languages for manuals and other books.
- Use open source formats when necessary, such as the Libre Office formats for slides.

Grammar

The following section will describe a few common grammar issues, as well as set the standards where grammar rules are ambiguous or neutral.

Active Voice

Wherever possible, make sure that you write in the active voice ("Hand the student the dummy round.") instead of passive ("The dummy round can be handed..."). There will be some situations where the passive voice is necessary, typically when the focus of the sentence should be the actor or subject, rather than the action or verb.

Agreement

Always ensure the parts of a sentence coordinate correctly. In English there are two types of agreement, *subject-verb agreement* and *pronoun-antecedent agreement*. While subject-verb agreement is beyond the scope of this manual, make sure that you follow standard English rules.

Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

The important part of pronoun-antecedent agreement is to make sure that nouns are used with singular or plural pronouns as appropriate. * Singular nouns must be referred to with singular pronouns. * Plural nouns must be referred to with plural pronouns. * Collective nouns must be referred to with singular pronouns.

They/Them

Contrary to many proscriptive grammar guides, they and them can be used as singular pronouns. This has been the case for hundreds of years, and is much easier to understand than overly formal and complex *his or her* formations. Using they/them also has the advantage of being gender neutral.

Sentence Structure

Sentence Length

Keep sentences short and focused, without falling into a telegraphic style. Avoid run on sentences and sentence fragments wherever possible. Do not use unnecessary adjectives and adverbs.

Ambiguity

Avoid ambiguous phrasing. A good example is "you should then insert the dummy round in the chamber", where *should* can be unclear. Instead use "insert the dummy round in the chamber".

Contractions and Abbreviations

Do not use contractions or abbreviations when writing formal documents. For example, *can't*

should be written *cannot*, and *i.e.* should be *that is*.

Punctuation

The full usage of punctuation is outside the scope of this guide, but here are a few key points: * Do not overuse commas, but do use the Oxford Comma. * Do not use exclamation points unnecessarily. This is not a chat. * Consistently punctuate lists like this one; use periods for lists of sentences and avoid them for lists of items. * Be consistent with the usage of *italics*, **bold type**, and parenthesis.

Book Design

This section will cover books and manuals. All books should be written in asciidoc and follow the relevant best practices for formatting.

Document Structure

Documents should be *modular*, with major sections such as chapters contained within separate files. Module or chapter names should start with a number representing the order they are pulled into the master file. See below for the recommended structure.

File Structure

```
.
├── attributes.adoc <-- File with attributes for the whole book.
├── docs <-- Directory with assemblies and modules.
│   ├── assembly-1.adoc <-- Assembly files with include statements for modules.
│   └── modules (chapters)
│       ├── module-a.adoc <-- Module files.
│       ├── module-b.adoc
│       ├── module-c.adoc
│       └── module-d.adoc
└── master.adoc <-- Master file that defines the whole book.
```

Module or chapter level sections should be tagged with an asciidoc anchor.

Asciidoc Anchor

```
[id="anchor-name_{context}"]
= Section Title
```

Asciidoc Settings

Cover Design

Tables

Images

Logos

Logos should be sized appropriately from vector or web formats, such as SVG or PNG. Use variables instead of filenames so that the logo can be switched out for different publishers.

Logo Variable Example

```
= Document Title
:logo-pic: logo.png

...

[#logo]
.Logo
image::{logo-pic}[logo,]
```

Additional Reading

- [Asciidoctor User Manual](#)