



Guidance **for** Writers

In order to maintain high quality articles across all sections of our site, we're reminding existing contributors and offering guidance to new writers on how they can produce content to the best standard possible. The overall aim is to attain a level of uniformity and consistency in our articles, and by following the following rules, you can do your part to make the editing process as simple as possible. The editorial team sees a lot of the same mistakes repeated time after time, and with the advice listed below we're aiming to eradicate all of them. If you've wrote even one article for the website, chances are you've fell foul of something listed below, either due to your personal style or through a lack of clarity, so please read through carefully. None of us are perfect!

Length of entries/ intro

One of the most frequent issues with articles regards the length of entries and introduction. Generally speaking, in list based content entries should be no more than 250 words at the absolute maximum. If you can put your point across clearly and succinctly in fewer words, that is always preferable. Our sort of content does not demand meaty introspection; there's no need to write a 500 word essay on why Randy Savage's trunks are iconic.

Intros should be as direct as possible - 200 words is about right. Remember that the purpose of the intro is to capture the reader's attention by giving them a brief overview of the topic, whilst enticing them to read on by touching upon some of your article's contents. Don't waste the reader's time writing about unrelated subjects, or by padding out the intro with unnecessary background. As a general rule, you should be able to glean the article's purpose from the intro without knowing the title; if it fails this test, it isn't doing its job.

Lead-ins

Stay away from article lead-ins which simply restate the title, i.e. "Here are 10 reasons why Randy Savage's trunks are iconic." Chances are the reader already knows the concept of the article having clicked on it, so instead finish your intro energetically and enticingly, rather than with a boiler-plate phrase which says nothing.

Use of personal tone

Apart from exceptional circumstances where an article specifically demands it, avoid all use of first-person and personal tone. Whilst these techniques can imbue an article with personality, more often than not they undermine the authority of the piece. It is much more convincing to say "The Secret of Monkey Island is the finest adventure game of all time" than "In my opinion, I think The Secret of Monkey Island is the finest adventure game of all time".

Don't litter your piece with irrelevant details from your personal life, even if you think they add character to the piece. What's humorous to you is likely annoyingly esoteric to the reader. Overall, avoid writing in a style which would be more appropriate for a personal blog.

Overuse of adverbs

Adverbs such as "very", "really", "truly", and so on are generally superfluous. More often than not, adverbs clutter writing whilst adding nothing - as ever, clarity is key. When used for emphasis, they have their place, but use with caution. In the words of Stephen King, "the road to Hell is paved with adverbs."

Incorrect use of semi-colons

It should go without saying, but if you don't feel comfortable employing a semi-colon, **don't**. One frequent mistake writers make is to use a semi-colon where a comma is needed, e.g. 'Because he is hungry; the bear eats honey' instead of 'Because he is hungry, the bear eats honey.' Likewise, writers frequently use a comma where a semi-colon should be used, e.g. 'The bear loves honey, who doesn't?' as opposed to 'The bear loves honey; who doesn't?' As a general rule of thumb, if both clauses can exist as independent sentences but are closely linked, a semi-colon can be used. If you're unsure on the precise function of a semi-colon, please take the time to learn before using them in your article.

Commas

Avoid comma splices at all costs, that is, using a comma to join two independent clauses. E.g. 'The honey tasted great, the bear ate even more.' Instead, write 'The honey tasted great, so the bear ate even more.' This is a peculiarly common problem, and makes at least one of our editorial team want to end it all. Don't be the one to bear that guilt.

Avoid repetition

Almost nothing makes an article boring as effectively as repetition. Don't labour over the point, effectively writing the same thing in different ways (see: Length of entries), and especially don't repeat the same word several times within a paragraph or sentence. It's very important to maintain the reader's attention, and that breaks the second they lapse into boredom.

Stay away from 'weasel words' and qualifiers

As with personal tone, 'weasel words' and qualifiers diminish the authority of your points, whilst also needlessly cluttering your writing. Weasel words are those phrases and expressions which produce ambiguity under the pretence of fact, i.e. "Many people say Final Fantasy IX is the best game in the series," or "There is evidence to suggest alligators are more likely to attack humans than crocodiles." In both these scenarios, questions can be asked: which people? What evidence? Rather than supporting an argument, these vague statements undermine it.

Like adverbs, qualifiers add little apart from uncertainty to your writing. Using words such as "probably", "possibly", "perhaps" and so on make you seem unsure of your points, reducing

their legitimacy in the process. Don't say "Monkey Island 2 is probably the best adventure game ever." Instead, write with conviction.

Avoid tired expressions

Clichés such as "let's face it", "to be honest", "admit it" and so on pad out an article without adding anything. Similarly, tired, overused expressions such as "Without further ado" are extremely dull, and yet again disengage the reader. Try to flourish your writing with originality.

Possessive Apostrophes

Incorrect use of the possessive apostrophe is a common error. Use an apostrophe when referring to an item belonging to something:

Pikachus: Multiple pikachus

Pikachu's: Belonging to pikachu

Pikachus': Belonging to a group of pikachu

Pikashoes: Pikachus' footwear

Word Choice

It should be obvious, but if you're not absolutely certain on the meaning of a word, don't use it. It's better to have a sentence that makes sense rather than one that doesn't. Similarly, don't employ unnecessarily flowery language just for the sake of it. Yes, we encourage flair in our writing, but the ultimate objective is to convey your point, not dazzle the reader with a vast but poorly used vocabulary.

Entry Subheaders

Make sure to capitalise the first letter of **EVERY** word in your article title and entry subheadings, e.g. '10 Reasons Sunderland Are Doomed', not '10 Reasons Sunderland are doomed'.

Offensive Content

Any content deemed overtly and intentionally racist, sexist, homophobic, ableist, or in any other way bigoted and prejudiced is not welcome, and will be rejected out of hand. Even if your intention is comical or ironic, such content cannot and will not be permitted.

Who/That

"These are the directors **who** defined a generation." NOT "These are the directors **that** defined a generation."

Tense

Be consistent with tense. Don't flit between past and present. Likewise, don't describe past events in present tense, for example, descriptions of wrestling matches. Absolutely do not use 'would' to describe the past, except when talking about the future from a time in the past. Keep in mind that 'would' is the past-tense of 'will'

Incorrect: "Shawn Michaels would climb the ladder. Then he would take the belt, and would win the match."

Correct: "Shawn Michaels stated he would definitely win the ladder match."

'Would' can also be used in the past tense in conditional statements, e.g. "It would have been very difficult for Shawn Michaels to win the ladder match."

If you're unclear, please take the time to revise this word.

Proof-reading

Absolutely, **ABSOLUTELY** proof-read your work *thoroughly* before submission, carefully checking for typing and formatting errors. Editors can spot a rushed piece of work in a heartbeat, and won't think twice about rejecting content that has not been afforded the proper care.

Proof-reading

This point is so important, it's worth mentioning twice. Proof-read your work!

Failure to Comply

If you've read and understood the guidance offered here, you should have no problems with your articles. Adherence streamlines the editorial process, and your content is more likely to be published. By the same token, failure to follow the advice given is likely to see articles quickly rejected: there can be no excuses!

General Rules

Abbreviations

Abbreviations spelled in full on first usage (e.g.. Royal Rumble, then 'Rumble')

MONTHS - Avoid abbreviating month names, so January, not Jan, October, not Oct.

Accents

Use on proper-nouns as intended, e.g. Finn Bálor not Finn Balor. Use on French, Spanish, Portuguese, and German words unless word has become common English (eg cliché).

Acronyms

Spelled in full on first usage, unless in common parlance (e.g.. WWE, NXT).

CAPS/PERIODS - Write in all-caps, without full-stops/periods except two-letter acronyms (except where standard, e.g.. AJ Styles, not A.J. Styles).

PLURALS - Add lower-case 's' without apostrophe to form plurals of acronyms.

DATES/TIME - a.m., p.m., not am or pm. A.D., B.C., not AD, BC or ad, bc.

Commas

Use the serial comma (the so-called 'Oxford comma') where it eliminates any ambiguity:

Incorrect: "For breakfast, I normally have tea, cereal and beans on toast."

Correct: "For breakfast, I normally have tea, cereal, and beans on toast."

Dates

Write dates in full, using little-endian format. Eg '11 March 2016', not '11th March 2016', '11th March, 2016', etc.

Decades

1980s, not 1980's. '80s, not 80s or 80's. The eighties, not the Eighties or the eighties'.

Ellipses

Three dots followed by a space, so '... ', not '...', '..', or '....'.

Figures

Spell out one to ten inclusive, use numerals from 11 onwards. Spell out 'million' on first usage (e.g. "watched by over seven million people."). Follow same rules for percentages.

Foreign words

In italics (e.g. *de facto*) unless they have entered common parlance (e.g. en route). Don't italicise proper nouns in foreign languages (eg Korakuen Hall).

its/it's

'It's' is a contraction of 'it is' (e.g. it's raining today), whereas 'its' is possessive (e.g. each building has its quirks).

lets/let's

'Lets' means to loan/rent out an item/property. 'Let's' is a contraction of 'let us'.

Nicknames

Write in inverted commas, e.g. 'The Immortal' Hulk Hogan, Bret 'Hitman' Hart.

Quotations

Direct quotes written in double quotation marks. For quotes within quotes, use single quotation marks.

Seasons

Write without capitalisation, e.g. summer not Summer.

Titles

Names of TV programmes, events, books, films, songs, and games unadorned: not italicised or placed between inverted commas. Eg The Secret of Monkey Island, not 'The Secret of Monkey Island' or *The Secret of Monkey Island*.

Use of definite article

Capitalise 'the' when part of a name, ie 'The Godfather', not 'the Godfather'.

Specific Words/Phrases

defeat

Defeat by, not defeat to. E.g. The Undertaker's defeat by Brock Lesnar, not The Undertaker's defeat to Brock Lesnar.

fiancé, fiancée

Fiancé for male, fiancée for female

led

past participle of 'lead'. E.g. "This **led** to major repercussions," not "This **lead** to major repercussions."

pay-per-view

Not Pay-Per-View. PPV, not P.P.V.

SmackDown, SmackDown Live!

Not 'Smackdown', 'Smackdown Live'.

SummerSlam

Not 'Summerslam'

The Undertaker

Not 'the Undertaker'. Abbreviate as 'Taker, not Taker.

Vs.

Versus, vs. or Vs. Never 'vs'.

WrestleMania

Not 'Wrestlemania'. Abbreviate as 'Mania, not Mania