



The DC Voice



Style Guide

Property of:

THE DC VOICE | PO Box 91296 Washington, D.C. 20018

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Basic Writing

This style guide will serve as the guidelines that must be followed in order for a post to be considered “publish ready”. Publish ready means that the writer/creator has followed the most basic writing guidelines. These guidelines start with the [Society of Professional Journalist Code of Ethics](#). These guidelines are broad and cover the ethical approach to writing. They are supplemented by the Kenyon University Basic Writing Checklist.

Basic writing fundamentals include, but are not limited to:

- Use proper sentence structure
- Use correct punctuation and grammar
- Spell check all posts
- Write in active voice as much as possible
- Properly reference/attribute any material not gathered or obtained on your own
- Obtain permission to use any copyrighted/licensed material (when in doubt, leave it out)

Another source to check for proper punctuation, capitalization, abbreviations, etc. is the [AP Style Book](#). An electronic Stylebook may be made available, upon request, while contributing to The DC Voice.

WordPress and Elementor

WordPress

The DC Voice uses WordPress as its publishing platform. Contributors to The DC Voice should become familiar with how to post articles in this platform. There are several websites that provide training on how to use this platform. [Wordpress.org](#) is the official source of information on how to use the platform, starting with Writing Posts: <https://wordpress.org/support/article/writing-posts/>. Here is a short YouTube demonstration

Elementor

Elementor is a popular drag-and-drop page builder plugin for WordPress that allows users to create and design custom websites without requiring coding skills.

Purpose:

Elementor provides an intuitive interface and a variety of pre-designed templates, widgets, and design tools, enabling users to build visually appealing and fully responsive web pages efficiently.

Publish Ready

To be considered “Publish Ready” a post must meet the following criteria.

1. Basic writing principles

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- Proper sentence structure
 - Correct punctuation and grammar
-

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- Spell check
- Writing in present tense as much as possible
- Properly referenced material
- Permission to use any copyrighted material
- Attribution for any published works

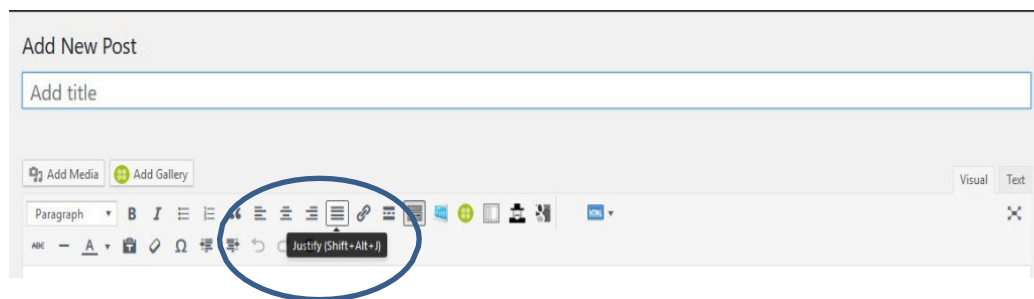
USE A GRAMMAR CHECK TOOL ON ALL POSTS

The cleaner your post is, the faster it will get through the copyedit process. A recommended tool is [grammarly](#) by Grammarly Inc. There is a free plugin that works well with [Chrome](#), [Safari](#), [Firefox](#), and [Edge](#)

- [Chrome](#)
- [MS Office/Word](#)
- [Firefox](#)
- [Safari](#)
- [Edge](#)
- [Internet Explorer](#)

You are free to choose whatever tool works best for you. A word of caution is that Word and other word processing tools may not be as accurate as dedicated grammar checking tools.

2. Justification. All text should be justified using the “justify” feature. The easiest way to do this is “right-click” in the body of the post. Select All (everything should be highlighted), then press the justify icon circled in the image below.

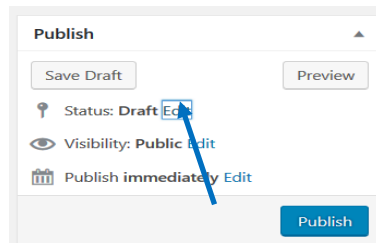


Your post does not need your byline (name) in the body of the post. Bylines are usually set automatically when you log in. The date should be included in the post **only if it is relevant to presenting a proper timeline**. Otherwise leave it out. The Editor will make the final determination on the relevancy of a date being included.

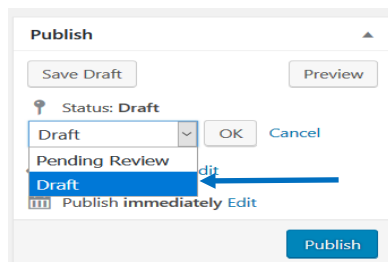
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3. Keep your post in draft mode until you are ready to submit it for review.

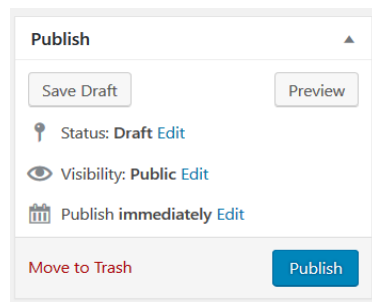
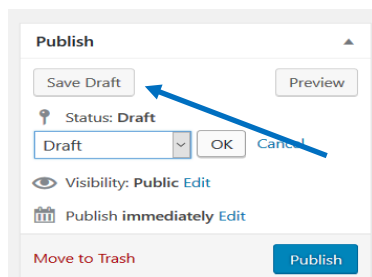
a. Click on the Edit Button



b. Select Draft from the Dropdown menu

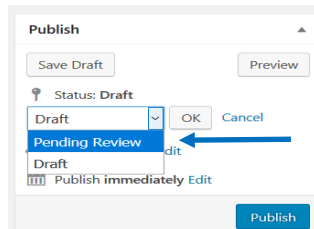


c. Save Draft

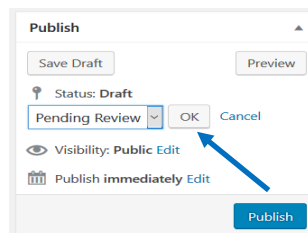


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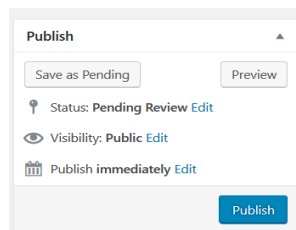
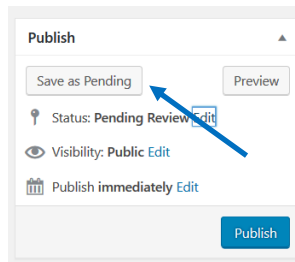
4. When you are finished editing your post and it's ready to be reviewed, set it Pending by using the Save as Pending Feature under the Publish Section.
 - a. Select Pending Review from the Dropdown menu



- b. Press OK

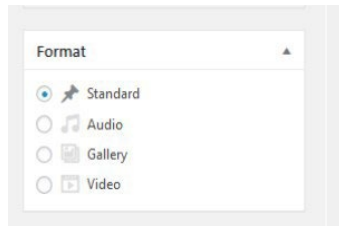


- c. Select Save as Pending

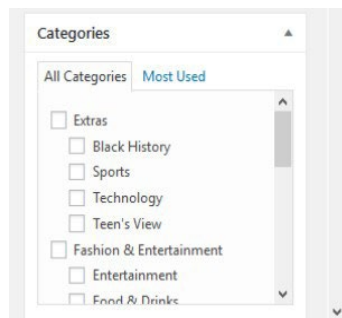


The Copy Editor and Editor will be notified by email when your post is in Save as Pending status. Email the editors if you do not receive confirmation, edit requests, or an acknowledgement within 2 days. Email immediately after setting to Save as Pending if the post is time sensitive.

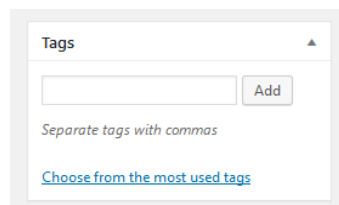
5. Use the Standard Format unless instructed otherwise



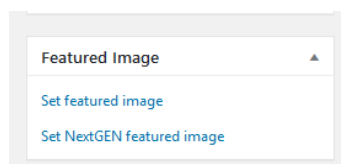
6. Select the correct category (Copyeditor reserves the right to change category)



7. Leave Tags blank unless instructed otherwise



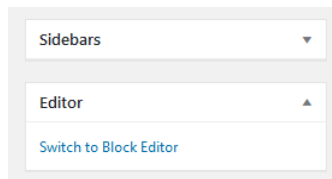
8. Set the featured Image (optional). The featured image is used to add a graphic/image to you post. (This is different from adding an image within the text of the post)



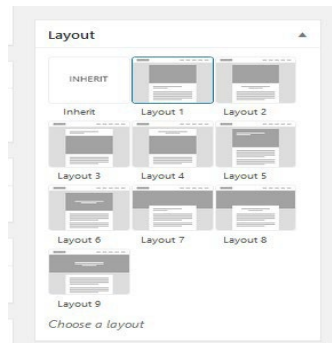
Images should be 700px X 300px (unless instructed otherwise)

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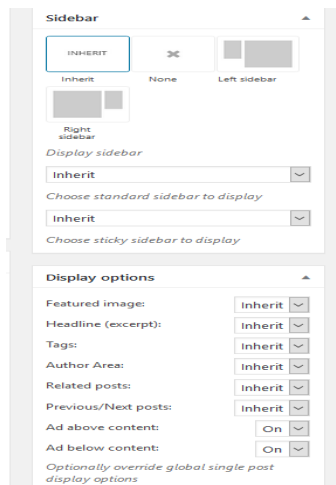
9. Ignore Sidebars and Editor (unless instructed otherwise)



10. Use Layout 1 (unless instructed otherwise)



11. Ignore Sidebar and Display Options (unless instructed otherwise)



Photography & Videography

Photography

- Use clear, precise images
- Shoot all relevant subject matter
- Shoot in Raw & JPG formats
- Images submitted on electronic media (thumb drive, memory chip, etc.) should use the following folder structure
 - YYYY-MM-DD_EventName_PhographersName

Videography

- MP4

Workflow Process

Basic Process

Please follow these guidelines to ensure a smooth workflow process. Communication is critical to make sure everyone is on the same page.

1. The Editor and Copy Editor have the final decision on what posts are published
2. The Copy Editor has the final approval on all content with respect to format, punctuation, and adherence to The DC Voice Style Guide
3. Contributors should obtain approval on any topics being considered for posts. That approval can be provided by the Editor or Copyright Editor using email or text as long as both the Editor and Copy Editor are included in those messages

Work Product

Each contributor should refer to their agreement regarding the quota they need to fulfill each month. The baseline for most writers will be 2000 words per month on average. Those 2000 words can be reached in any combination, such as: (4) 500-word posts, (3) 667-word posts, (2) 1000-word posts. The term average considers that not every post will be written with an exact number of words. For example, if you plan on doing (4) 500-word posts your word count might be like the following example:

(4) 500-word Posts
Post 1 = 562 words
Post 2 = 473 words
Post 3 = 600 words
Post 4 = 365 words
2000 words

Writing exactly 2000 words is also not practical as well so there is a 5% over/under allowance. In other words, you should average between 1900 and 2100 words per month.

All topics must be approved! Approval will be based on three basic criteria:

Topic -what's the subject?
Angle – what point of view are you trying to convey?
Due Date – when will it be ready to post?

Failure to follow the criteria set forth in the style guide will delay your ability to produce a publish ready work product, thus delaying your compensation.

Editing Images

Featured Images should be 770 px wide X 300 px high. An easy and free tool to use for this is [GIMP](#).

Although it's very powerful, there are only two features you may use frequently for these posts; Crop and Scale Image. Here is a link to a brief overview of how to perform those two functions.

https://www.gimp.org/tutorials/GIMP_Quickies/#changing-the-size-dimensions-of-an-image-scale



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Checklist of Basic Writing Skills (Kenyon University)

Category	Criterion	Exemplary	Competent	Unacceptable
Content	Approach to subject matter	Original, logical approach to topic that acknowledges complexity and/or ambiguity; sustained, consistent analysis	Logical, appropriate approach to topic; adequate analysis with some inconsistencies	Illogical, inappropriate or oversimplified approach to topic; inadequate analysis with frequent inconsistencies
	Development of primary ideas	Main ideas well-defined and developed with depth and thoroughness	Main ideas reasonably well-defined and developed	Main ideas poorly defined, underdeveloped
	Use of evidence	Evidence is germane, critically evaluated, and convincingly interpreted	Supplies evidentiary basis for argument	Lacking or faulty evidence
Organization	Introduction	Engages reader as it develops focus and Purpose	Develops focus and purpose	Fails to develop focus and purpose
	Sequence and development of paragraphs	Logical, coherent sequence of paragraphs demonstrating clear analytical development; fluid transitions between ideas	A few lapses in coherence and analytical development of paragraphs; occasional lack of transition	Paragraph sequence lacks logic; paragraphs often lack analytical development; failure to provide transitions between ideas
	Conclusion	Sums up main ideas and points to larger implications or places ideas in broader context	Sums up main ideas	Superficial or cursory summing up of main ideas
Style	Grammatical norms	Consistently uses standard spelling, punctuation, and grammar	Uses standard spelling, punctuation, and grammar with occasional lapses	Frequent errors in spelling, punctuation, or grammar
	Diction	Thoughtful, clear word choice	Word choice appropriate to purpose	Frequent inappropriate word choice
	Voice	Writer's unique sensibility revealed	Writing is clear but sometimes clichéd or Generic	Writing is often clichéd or generic
	Sentence clarity and conciseness	Clear, vigorous, concise sentences	Sentences are readable but lack conciseness and Vigor	Sentences lack clarity, conciseness, and vigor
Research	Choice of sources	Number and types of sources thoroughly address topic	Number and type of sources appropriate for Project	Insufficient or inappropriate sources
	Integration of sources	Source material thoughtfully and smoothly integrated	Occasional awkwardness in integrating source Material	Source material inserted into text without sufficient context
	Documentation of sources	Consistently uses standard documentation procedures in text and bibliography	Uses standard documentation procedures with a few lapses	Fails to use standard documentation procedures