



# Author Handbook

*Your how-to guide for contributing  
to ASDA publications*

ASDA

American Student Dental Association

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## *Introduction to ASDA Publications*

For most dental students, almost everything they know about ASDA and other dental schools is learned by reading the association's publications and visiting the website. The quality and credibility of ASDA's publications are of critical importance if dental students are to be well informed about their national association, issues affecting their lives and events at dental schools across the country.

Congratulations, you're on your way to becoming an ASDA author. This how-to guide should make this an easy and fulfilling experience.

ASDA's publications include:

- ASDA News
- Mouth, Journal of the American Student Dental Association
- Mouthing Off

This section provides detailed outlines of the focus and content of each publication.

## ASDA News

American Student Dental Association News

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ASDA News is a newsletter that reports on news of interest to dental students. The publication includes departmental updates and features, an opinion section, member, faculty and chapter spotlights, and humorous columns. A number of sources provide articles, including editorial board members, ASDA national leaders, the central office staff, ASDA members and leaders of other dental organizations. ASDA News is published 10 times per year, from August through May (off June and July).

## Mouth

Mouth is a quarterly magazine dedicated to keeping students and new dentists up-to-date on the ever-changing, multifaceted world of dentistry. It offers articles on scientific and issue-oriented subjects of interest to its readers and sidebars that complement the feature. In addition to technical and feature articles, there are regular departments often found in Mouth.

# mouth<sup>ing</sup> off

**The Blog of the American Student Dental Association**

ASDA publishes a blog multiple times a week. Staff manages and contributes to the blog, but we incorporate ideas and submissions from guest authors each week. The tone of the blog tends to be lighthearted and humorous, with pop culture references and giveaways.

Check out Mouthing Off at [www.asdablog.com](http://www.asdablog.com).



## *Journalism Awards*

As a contributor, your hard work pays off! Each year at Annual Session, ASDA recognizes excellence in national and chapter-level publications with our Journalism Awards.

*All ASDA News and Mouth articles are in the running for an award:*

- Outstanding ASDA News Article
- Outstanding Mouth Article

*Additionally, chapters are invited to apply for the following:*

- Outstanding Newsletter Improvement
- Honorable Mention for Outstanding Newsletter Improvement
- Outstanding Newsletter Design
- Outstanding Quality of Information
- Best Newsletter in Competition
- Outstanding Website Design
- Outstanding Website Content
- Best Website in Competition



## *Assignments & Word Counts*

### **News Story (800 words)**

Reports the facts of an event or issue with no bias ... just clear, concise, timely, balanced reporting. Purpose is simply to inform the reader.

### **Feature Story (2,000 words)**

Similar to a regular news story, but more in-depth. Includes creative expression in the lead and throughout, but without editorializing. Often these stories are “soft,” meaning the time element isn’t essential, and there’s a human-interest component.

### **Editorial/Opinion (600 words)**

Covers a specific issue that explains, evaluates and persuades, expressing the writer’s opinion. It is important to remember that even though it is your opinion, your piece must still be based on facts, not assumptions. You should be able to back up what you say.

### **Column (600 words)**

Discusses an issue or event, presenting it from the personal viewpoint of the writer, often offering advice.

### **Profile/Spotlight (800 words)**

Reflects an interview with a person of interest in question and answer format.

### **Blog Post (150-300 words)**

Quickly provides one nugget of information. Often more playful in style and voice, this can include links to webpages, photos and videos. Topics range from dental news to YouTube videos to chapter highlights.



## Writing Guidelines

### **Be accurate**

The credibility of ASDA publications depends on the reliability of the information presented on their pages. If readers recognize inaccurate information in just one article, they will have little faith in any of the information covered in the publication.

### **Be timely**

News is perishable. It's important to include timely material in each issue.

### **Summarize important points in your lead paragraph**

If you don't capture the reader's interest in the opening sentences, he or she is not likely to read the rest of your article. Check out the "leads" in the front-page stories of your local newspaper for examples. Here are two ways to reel them in:

- Hard lead — immediately tells the reader the point of the story: who, what, where, when, why, how
- Soft lead — uses a quote, anecdote or other literary device to attract the reader first, then provides essential details

### **Avoid editorializing**

Separating the news from editorial opinion is fully supported in every area of responsible journalism. Factual accounts are presented in news articles; opinions appear in editorials/columns and are so labeled.

### **Use photos to support your story**

If the article is a column or opinion piece, include a headshot. If the article is a feature, spotlight or news article (especially in the case of Mouth), include a photo that correlates to the event or content. All photos must be high quality to print (*greater than 1MB*). Any photo saved from the Internet is too low quality to print.



## Other writing tips:

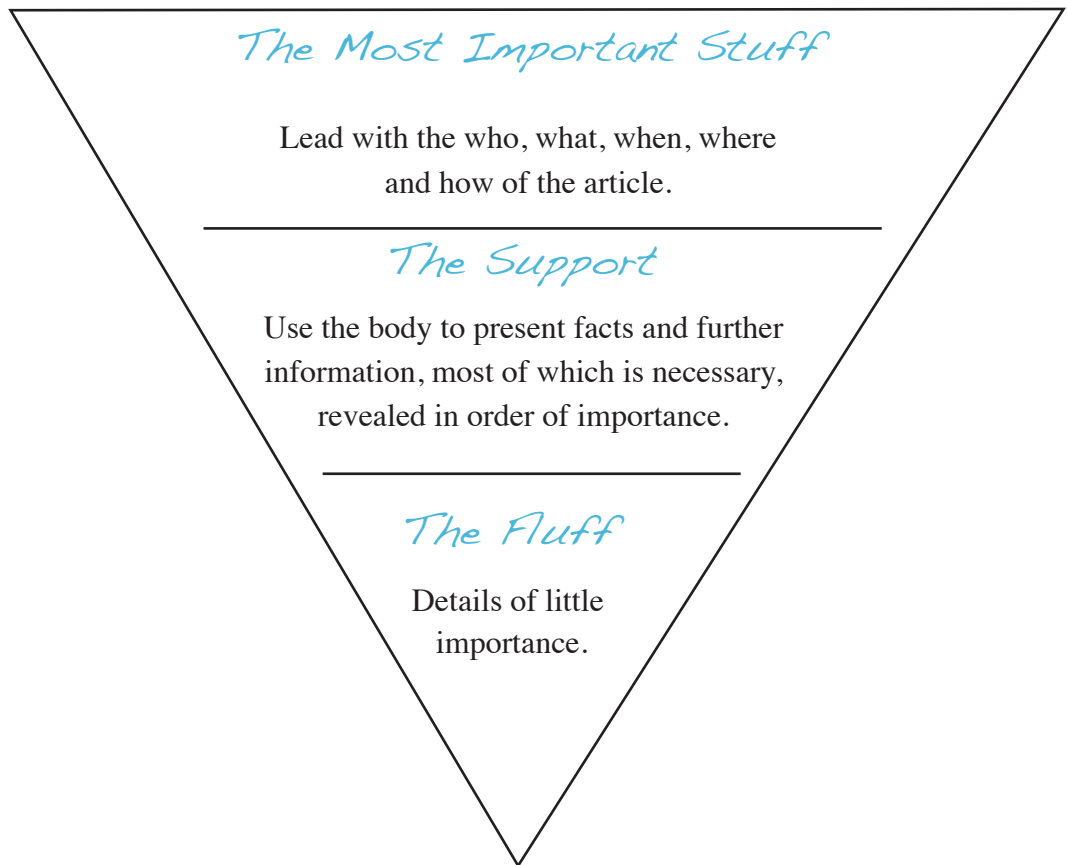
- Know your article's point before starting to write.
- Limit sentence length to 10-15 words. If you can't read a sentence aloud without taking a breath, it's too long.
- S-V-O: Subject-Verb-Object. Don't delay meaning.
- Use strong verbs and avoid empty words like "very." There's a word to describe "very happy."
- Don't use jargon or fancy words. Make it easy for the reader to understand.
- Get quotes from relevant stakeholders (students, faculty, industry, etc.). They add substance to any article.
- Be balanced. If you cover one side of an issue, always mention the other side's argument.
- Know your audience, but don't assume they know all the "insider" terms that you may know.



## Article Structure

### Writing an Article Using the Inverted Pyramid

With the inverted pyramid, information in an article is arranged from most important to least important. It saves readers time (and editors space).



## *Citing & Attributing Sources*

Attributing the sources of information is an essential part of all forms of journalism. It greatly increases the quality and reliability of your article upfront and shows the reader that you conducted the proper research. This adds a tremendous sense of trust between the writer and audience.

When citing, consider the age of studies or resources. Also, remember that numbers can sometimes mislead more than they inform. Say a recent study finds that 75 percent of recent dental grads are more than \$100,000 in debt. Before you report this, be sure to answer a few questions: how many people were surveyed? What does “recent” mean? What kind of debt? Seventy-five percent doesn’t mean much if only 150 people were surveyed.

### **Examples of citing print, surveys, studies:**

- According to the July 10, 2010 issue of The New York Times, Dr. Levine won the lawsuit filed against him by GO SMiLE.
- According to a January 2011 survey by the American Association of Endodontists, 70 percent of Americans want to avoid losing their natural teeth.

### **Examples of citing people, online sources, video:**

- “I love working with the editorial board,” said Kim Schneider, ASDA communications editor.
- Joel Seligstein, vice president of dentistry at ASDA, posted on Feb. 11, 2011 in the Facebook official blog “We’ve begun expanding the rollout of messages to everyone on Facebook. This will happen gradually over the next few weeks.”
- In her latest blog post on Editing Words, <http://editingwords.ghnewsroom.com>, Dayna Fields wrote about AP style blog titles.
- As Dorothy Gale said in “The Wizard of Oz,” “There’s no place like home.”



## ASDA Abbreviated Style Guide

ASDA uses AP style for all of its publications. Here are some of the most basic and commonly used AP style points. *Note: these represent only a tiny fraction of what's in the AP Stylebook, so don't use this page as a substitute for getting your own stylebook.*

### Numbers

One through nine are spelled out. 10 and above are written as numerals.

Example: He carried five books for 12 blocks.

### Percentages

Percentages are expressed as numerals, followed by the word “percent.”

Example: The price of gas rose 5 percent.

### Ages

Ages are always expressed as numerals.

Example: He is 5 years old.

### Capitalization

Do not capitalize seasons of the year or years in school. Capitalize the formal names of schools and departments, but use the informal names whenever possible.

Example: She will be a sophomore during the spring semester.

Example: WWU Department of Communications (but: communications department), WWU Financial Aid Office (but: financial aid office)

### Dates

Dates are expressed as numerals. The months August through February are abbreviated when used with numbered dates. March through July are never abbreviated. Months without dates are not abbreviated. “Th” is not used.

Example: The meeting is on Oct. 15. She was born on July 12. I love the weather in November.

### Time

Use a.m., p.m. Use figures except for noon and midnight. Do not use :00 after an on-the-hour time. Simply use the numeral.

Example: The meeting starts at 8 p.m. She was out until midnight.



### **Job Titles**

Job titles are capitalized when they appear before a person's name, but lowercase after the name. Do not use courtesy titles such as Mr. or Mrs.

Example: President Barack Obama. Barack Obama is the president. ASDA President Adam Shisler. Adam Shisler was elected 2011-2012 president.

### **Academic Degrees**

Academic degrees are lowercase and use apostrophes to show possession.

Example: bachelor's degree; she has her master's in education

### **Titles (Film, Book, Song, Magazine, etc.)**

Titles of books, movies, plays, operas, ballets, poems, songs, television shows, lectures, speeches and works of art are capitalized and placed in quotation marks. Capitalize the titles of magazines and newspapers, but do not italicize, underline or use quotation marks. Unless "magazine" is in the title, do not capitalize it.

Example: Vincent Van Gogh's painting "Starry Night" is one of the greatest of his works. He rented "Star Wars" on DVD. She read "War and Peace."

Example: I read The Post-Standard and Time magazine. She contributed to ASDA News. Her favorite Mouth article was written by Ryan Dulde.

### **State Abbreviations**

Never abbreviate the two non-continental states and those that are five letters or fewer: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah. AP style state abbreviations are different from the postal code (listed in parenthesis).

Ala. (AL) Ariz. (AZ) Ark. (AR) Calif. (CA) Colo. (CO) Conn. (CT)  
Del. (DE) Fla. (FL) Ga. (GA) Ill. (IL) Ind. (IN) Kan. (KS) Ky. (KY)  
La. (LA) Minn. (MN) Miss. (MS) Mo. (MO) Mont. (MT) Neb. (NE)  
Nev. (NV) N.H. (NH) N.J. (NJ) N.M. (NM) N.Y. (NY) N.C. (NC)  
Pa. (PA) R.I. (RI) S.C. (SC) S.D. (SD) Tenn. (TN) Vt. (VT) Va. (VA)  
Wash. (WA) W.Va. (WV) Wis. (WI) Wyo. (WY)



### Street Addresses

Numerals are used for numbered addresses. Street, Avenue and Boulevard are abbreviated when used with a numbered address, but otherwise are spelled out. Always write out Road, Drive, Court, Square, Lane, Alley and Terrace. On exact addresses, west, north, south and east are abbreviated with a capital letter.

Example: He lives at 123 Main St. His house is on Main Street.

### Quotes

When a partial quote is used, don't put quotation marks around words that the speaker could not have used. Suppose the individual said, "I am horrified at your slovenly manners."

Wrong: She said she "was horrified at their slovenly manners."

Right: She said she was horrified at their "slovenly manners."

### Apostrophes

Use apostrophes to form the plural of single letters but not figures or multiple letters.

Example: Four A's, early 1920s, IQs, temperature in the low 20s

### Over and More Than

Over refers to spatial relationships. More than is preferred with numerals.

Example: The plane flew over the city. The boy moved over there. Their salaries went up more than \$20 a week.

### Common Terms Used in ASDA Publications

- Internet (uppercase)
- website (one word, lowercase)
- health care (two words, lowercase)
- dentistry (lower case unless part of a school name)
- predoctoral, predoctoral (both one word, lowercase unless in title)
- United States (spell it out unless it's used as an adjective before a noun - "I love the United States" or "the U.S. hockey team")
- ASDA Annual Session (uppercase)
- ASDA Regional Meetings (uppercase)
- District (always spell it out, capitalize when forming a proper name - the 2nd District or District 10 trustee)
- trustee (lowercase unless preceding a name)
- board of trustees or house of delegates (lowercase)



## *Editing Content*

Every author should review content on three levels before formally submitting for publishing: global (is the article doing what it should), local (does it have good structure) and line by line (a detailed review).

### **1. Global Review**

- Are there any holes in the story?
- Are there questions left unanswered?
- Are all sources cited (and cited properly with source name and date)?

### **2. Local Review**

- Is there a lead (who, what, when, where, why)?
- What's the nutgraf (why write this story now/why is it newsworthy)?
- Does the body include supporting information?
- Is the ending (aka "kicker") strong and succinct?

### **3. Line-by-line Review**

- Sentence length (10-15 words)
- Grammar
- Spelling
- Proper punctuation
- Use of ASDA style



## *Editorial Policy*

The publications staff has established an editorial policy to guide writers and staff editors and clarify ASDA's editing process. Following are editorial policies pertaining to specific article types.

### *News*

ASDA editors review news article submissions for accuracy, completeness and objectiveness. News articles must be factually accurate and balanced and should not include opinions unless attributed to sources. ASDA publications staff may add and/or cut material from news articles as needed.

### *Opinions, columns, letters to the editor*

Unlike news articles, submissions for opinion articles, columns and letters to the editor may contain writers' opinions. ASDA publications staff will edit submissions for length, overall content, clarity and style without the express permission of the writers. The publications staff maintains the writer's opinion within the submission as best possible.

Letters to the editor will be edited the same as all publication submissions.

Time permitting, contributors will be able to review edited versions of their submissions before the publication goes to press. However, no publications will be delayed for writers to submit late pieces or review edited work.

### *Interviews*

For some articles, writers may interview sources for information or opinion to be included in articles, or writers may interview sources for Q&A articles. Quoted material may not be edited for content or word choice unless noted by brackets. Quoted material may be edited for grammar and punctuation. If time permits, interviewed sources may review only their own quotes for accuracy.



## *Submission Checklist*

**Before you submit your article to ASDA News or Mouth, please confirm the following:**

- My article includes a title
- My article includes a byline (my name, school, graduating year & chapter leadership position if applicable)
- I've edited my article (globally, locally & line by line)
- I've got a photo/graphic to accompany my content (and it's >1MB)
- I've completed the online copyright form on ASDA's website

Once you've checked off all of the above, please email your article (as a Word document) and photo to your contributing editor by the agreed upon deadline.

**To post a blog entry to *Mouthing Off*, you must:**

- Request a login from your contributing editor
- Include sources when appropriate
- Include hyperlinks when appropriate
- Upload your blog post and photo (if applicable) by the agreed upon deadline

If you have any questions, please contact your contributing editor or Kim Schneider, Communications Editor (Kim@asdanet.org).

**Thank you!**