

Writing for ASDA

Thank you for writing for ASDA! This document includes tips to help you write a good article or blog post as well as submission guidelines and ASDA's editorial policy. Work with your ASDA Editorial Board editor for additional support and ideas to complete your article.

By contributing to ASDA's publications (Contour magazine or the Mouthing Off blog), you are reaching more than 24,000 ASDA members, as well as deans and administrators throughout every dental school. In addition, your submission is automatically in the running for an ASDA Gold Crown Award in media (ASDA members only). Writing for an ASDA national publication also could be added to your CV, and you could increase your thought leadership and expertise in a particular area.

ASDA Editorial Policy

All content submitted for publication in Contour or Mouthing Off has to abide by the following guidelines:

All submissions must be relevant to our audience of dental students and are subject to approval or rejection by ASDA's Editorial Board. Submissions specific to pre-dental students will be considered for Mouthing Off. Publications are not read by consumers/patients.

Unsolicited articles are welcome per approval of editorial board. Authors will work with an editorial board member or ASDA publications manager to finalize any accepted article(s).

Word counts vary, depending on publication and department. Contour feature articles are up to 1,200 words; department content is 800-900 words. Mouthing Off blog posts are 500-750 words.

Content must be original and not previously published, either in part or in its entirety. Plagiarized articles will be rejected. Self-plagiarism counts as well.

Submissions should be educational or entertaining in manner — not promotional.

The editorial board has the right to revise articles to fit ASDA's editorial style, as well as for accuracy, length and clarity, without additional approval from the author, unless substantial edits are needed. ASDA follows Associated Press (AP) style as well as its own house style guide.

All articles should be accurate, fact-based and objective and not include any opinion, unless it is a letter to the editor or an op-ed column.

Photos, charts, graphs, etc., are recommended but not required. All visuals should be high resolution (at least 300 dpi or 1 MB). Any clinical photos must display proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE). Author must own submitted images or have written permission for use.

All authors must submit a high-resolution headshot. Student authors need to include their school name, graduation year and any ASDA position held nationally or locally. Other contributors should include their name and job title. Mouthing Off contributors must also submit a bio (max 50 words).

A reference list for articles and research cited within the story should be provided for fact-checking purposes. Sources should also be cited within the article itself, where necessary, including the name of the publication, the issue date and year. (*Example: According to a study published in the June 2017 issue of JADA...*) If interviews are included, the author should have received the source's approval for their comments prior to submission to ASDA. If writing for Mouthing Off, link to relevant websites as needed.

Copyright for all content accepted for publication will be assigned to ASDA. Student writers should select the copyright agreement in their ASDA member profile. Other contributors should sign an author agreement.

Authors are encouraged to share links to their articles via social media, email, etc. Posting or reprinting the full text of an article in another publication (not just sharing the link itself) requires permission from ASDA.

Style Guide

The AP Stylebook is a guide used by the news industry in the United States for grammar, punctuation and principles and practices of reporting. ASDA uses AP style for all of its communications. You can access commonly used AP style points, as well as ASDA terms, at: <https://www.asdanet.org/utility-navigation/Publications/Style-Guide/writing/asda-writing-style>.

Resources on Good Writing and Editing

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDzN0jOuEnU>

- Tips for Effective Writing and Communication (Presented by ASDA 2017-18 Editorial Board)

Grammarly: <https://www.grammarly.com/>

- This is a free extension you can add to Chrome, and it'll help you find grammar and other editorial errors in anything you write online. There's also a version you can use for Microsoft Word.

Grammar Girl: <https://www.quickanddirtytips.com/grammar-girl>

- Lots of tips and blog posts on editing and how you can improve your writing.

Article: <https://thewritelife.com/edit-your-copy/>

- 25 Editing Tips for Tightening Your Copy

Article: <https://www.copyblogger.com/brilliant-writing-tips/>

- 11 Smart Tips for Brilliant Writing

Article: <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/how-conduct-journalistic-interview/>

- How to Conduct a Journalistic Interview

Writing Tips

- Make sure your topic is timely, relevant and newsworthy. If you're writing about something that's been widely covered, explore new developments or tell a story about your personal experience with it.
- Write a headline and lead paragraph that pull the reader in.
- Vary your sentence length throughout the article. Average sentence length is about 10-15 words, but sprinkle in slightly longer or much shorter ones whenever possible.
- Use active voice.
 - *Example of active voice:* Joan mailed the letter. *Passive voice:* The letter was mailed by Joan.
- Use strong verbs (amble vs. walk, dashed vs. ran) and avoid empty words such as "very," "really," "I think," etc.
- Don't use jargon or fancy words (utilize vs. use). Make it easy for the reader to understand.
- Include sources (interviews with experts, studies, research reports, articles, etc.) to back up the main points of your article. Be sure to include a list of sources in the article for fact-checking purposes.
- Interview relevant stakeholders such as other students, faculty, industry experts, etc. Paraphrasing is fine, but direct quotes are more powerful. **Remember to have your sources approve their quotes before you submit the article.**
- Be balanced. If you cover one side of an issue, always mention the other side's argument.
- Be objective. Do not insert your opinion into an article, unless you're writing an op-ed or letter to the editor. If writing an opinion piece, include statistics and facts to back up your argument.
- Write for your audience. Don't assume they know all the "insider" terms that you may know.

Submitting Your Article to ASDA

1. Your ASDA editor will officially assign you an article or blog post, based on the story topic you both confirmed. He/she will send you an assignment letter that includes a description of the article, deadlines, potential sources and any other information you need to complete the article.
2. Feel free to connect with your editor at any time throughout the writing process. They are there to support you and offer any guidance you need.
3. Submit your finished article to your editor via email by specified deadline. Submission should include:
 - a. Finished article with a headline, your name as you want it to appear in print, school, graduation year and any ASDA position you hold

- b. High-resolution headshot (at least 1 MB)
 - c. 50-word bio if you're writing for the blog
 - d. Images to accompany the article, if appropriate. Photos should be at least 1 MB and include a caption that identifies the people in the photo or describes what's happening in the photo. You must own or have permission to publish the photo.
 - e. [Log in to](#) your ASDA profile to submit your copyright. (In your profile, check the box next to "I agree" in the Volunteer and Interests section).
4. Your editor will edit the article and send you their revisions and any recommendations/questions that you should address. After making those changes, the editor will send the draft to the ASDA editor-in-chief and publications manager for editing.
5. Your editor will send you any revisions from the editor-in-chief and publications manager. If they have any questions, you will address them at this time. If the revisions were minor, you will approve the article.
6. Once the article/blog post is published, feel free to share with your networks via email or social media.
 - a. To share a Contour article, access the current issue here: <https://www.asdanet.org/utility-navigation/Publications/Print/Contour>. Click the share button on the bottom bar. To link directly to the article, select "Copy."