**AHEAD Blog Style Guide**

The American Home Education and Discipleship (AHEAD) blog generally follows the following style guides:

* AP Style Guide
* Yahoo Style Guide
* Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS)

AHEAD Styles

On first use, American Home Education and Discipleship (AHEAD). The initials, AHEAD in caps, may be used in subsequent uses.

Use “conference(s)” when referring to AHEAD events.

Permissions

AHEAD blog content manager will seek permission, if not already noted, from the article author. The original publication will be posted at the end of the article.

Length

Articles should be between 500 and 750 words. Longer articles may be divided into parts and posted consecutive weeks.

Headlines and Titles

Article headlines and/or titles should follow the standard subject/verb format. Blog headlines are generally 60 to 80 characters long. Headlines and titles may be edited to follow this format.

Editing

We edit for grammar, style, length, and clarity. If it is not major, we do not refer back to the author. If there is a technical question or if we may be altering meaning by making a change, we will check with the author first. If we believe there needs to be a big change that can be made without a major re-write, we will check with the author first. If we are interested in the article, but it needs a major revision (due to lack of clarity, poor writing, lack of focus, or inappropriateness), we will send it back to the author for re-write. Our philosophy of editing is that the editor should work invisibly. Any changes an editor makes should not change the integrity of the author’s style or intent.

Photos

You are welcome to provide photos for your blog post. We strive to have photos that will be shared on Facebook and Pinterest. Photos should be in JPEG (JPG) format and scaled for Internet use. We may or may not use your photo.

If your photo includes people, a model release needs to accompany the photo. Permission for use information also needs to be included, along with the original source of the image.

State Organizations and Conferences

* Use the name and abbreviations that the state organization uses.
* Use “convention” or “conference” based on the word the individual organization uses.

Examples:

 CHEA of CA uses “Christian Home Educators Convention.”

 CHOH (Hawaii) uses “CHOH Conference.”

Capitalization

* Capitalize words used to refer to God including pronouns. Also, the Bible, the Scriptures, God the Father, Word of God, the Gospel of Christ or when referring to the books of the Bible.
* No caps on the following godly, godlike, biblical, scriptural, gospel when used as an adjective, as in gospel music.

Punctuation

* Use a comma before the final conjunction in a series.
* Commas are always inside quotes
* Do not use commas after a conjunction at the beginning of a sentence.
* Use a semicolon between items in a list if there are commas within the series. (Bring your books, paper, and pen; sit down at the table; and wait for my instructions.)
* Do not use a comma when noting month and year (June 2009).
* Use ellipsis points (. . .) to indicate a break in a quotation. Leave one space before, after, and in-between each point. No ellipsis is needed at the beginning or end of a quotation.
* Use em dash (double hyphen) with no space between the dash and the words before and after it when there is an interruption in thought.
* No exclamation points.

Numbers and Symbols

* In general, numbers through nine are written out; all numbers beginning with 10 and up, whenever preceding measures (He walked 4 miles) or referring to ages of people (a 6-year-old girl) are to be written numerically. Beginning with million, use numbers and words (4 million).
* Use numerals with mathematical usage: Multiply by 4, divide by 6. He added 2 and 2 but got 5.
* When numbers are used together, as in eight to eleven, use words. Don’t mix words and numbers.
* Numbers used at the beginning of a sentence are written out.

Quotations

* Bible quotations need to have a reference before or after. When indicating the scripture reference before the quote, put the version in parenthesis. Example: In John 3:16 (MSG) we read, “This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son.” When the reference is put after the quote, put the reference and initials of the version in parenthesis with the period following. Even if the quoted scripture ends with a period, the period is always put after the closing parenthesis. Example: “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want” (Ps. 23:1 NAS).
* If one version of the Bible is used throughout the article, please note the version under your byline.
* Use quotation marks for short quotes within the main text of the article.
* Quotations of four or more lines, including scripture, should be formatted in a block quote. No quotation marks are needed.

Gender

 All writing should be gender-neutral, except when the subject is gender specific. For example, an article for dads would be written with the use of masculine pronouns. Use of he/she, s/he, or the use of the plural pronoun “they” in the place of a singular pronoun is not acceptable.

Examples:

“Of course, if a student changes jobs, he will need a new permit since each permit is issued only for a particular job location.”

should be

“Of course, if a student changes jobs, a new permit is needed since each permit is issued only for a particular job location.”

or

“A copy of test scores will be sent to the college administrator. They will review the scores as part of the application process.”

should be

“A copy of test scores will be sent to the college administrator for review.”

Spelling

Below are common spelling conventions used:

* homeschool, homeschooler, homeschooling -- always one word.
* setup (noun or adjective), set up (verb)
* car pool (noun) carpool (verb)
* website (one word)
* use an hyphen for terms using “e” in the place of electronic (e-mail, e-reader, etc.)
* online (no hyphen)
* Internet (begins with upper case)
* coursework (one word)
* six-year-old (hyphenated in all uses)
* hands-on (hyphen)
* in-service (hyphen)
* record keeping (two words)
* co-author, co-authored, co-founder, co-leader (hyphenated)
* spell out the word “and”
* on-site and off-site (hyphen)
* curriculum is used for both singular and plural
* preschool (one word)
* download (one word)

Technology Abbreviations

* upper case letters for the various file formats, such as PDF, EPUB, MP3, etc. Only use a period with a complete file name, such as mydocument.doc
* upper case for CD or CD-ROM
* MP3 disk, MP3 CD

Websites

Include the complete URL for all website references. If you are using the name of the website or organization, place the URL after the name (HSLDA http://www.hslda.org)

Time

a.m. or p.m. (all lower case with periods)

Dates

May 8 not May 8th