

# Debtors Anonymous Style Guide

Rev. 10/16/17

This style guide has been developed by the Communications Committee of the General Service Board, with input from Literature Services, as a result of reviewing, attempting to conform to, and regularizing usage found in existing D.A. and A.A. literature—as much as that is possible. It is suggested that this guide be used for all future new and revised D.A. service and Conference-approved literature, the D.A. website, materials approved by the General Service Board for distribution, and D.A. correspondence. It may be updated periodically to meet future needs.

## Punctuation and Abbreviations

▶ Use periods for Twelve Step fellowship proper names, such as D.A., A.A. and in all other forms such as possessives or adjectives (D.A.'s, A.A.'s). However, D.A. may appear without periods in its logo or in other graphic representations of the D.A. name.

▶ Do not use periods for *World Service* committee abbreviations: *PI, RDC, BDA., etc.*

▶ Do not use periods *for the abbreviation of Higher Power (HP)*

▶ Do not use periods for D.A. organizational acronyms such as *PRG, PRM, GSO, GSB, GSR, ISR, WSC, etc.*

**BUT** use periods for outside organizations such as *the I.R.S., U.C.L.A., etc.*

▶ Use serial comma (aka the Oxford comma). *We will begin to live a prosperous life, unencumbered by fear, worry, resentment, or debt.*

▶ Use semi-colons to combine sentences within a list item. *We will cease to compare ourselves to others; jealousy and envy will fade.*

▶ Ways & Means **NOT** Ways and Means

▶ DA Focus **NOT** D.A. Focus

▶ Step One or Tradition Three **NOT** Step 1 or Tradition 3

▶ Use only one space after commas, colons, and semi-colons.

▶ Use only one space after the period between sentences. Typesetting no longer requires two spaces as many were taught years ago.

▶ Use quotation marks for names of pamphlets, titles of articles, and chapters in books. GSO reports that it has reprinted 5,000 copies of our pamphlet “Communicating with Creditors and Debt Repayment.”

The headline in today’s newspaper reads “Defeats Make Schools Reassess Funding.”

The first chapter in Herman Melville’s American classic, *Moby Dick*, is called “Loomings.”

▶ *Italicize* movie titles, radio and television programs, podcasts, titles of books, magazines, newspapers, and plays.

### **Time of day**

- ▶ Lowercase with periods (a.m., p.m.), and no :00s.  
10 a.m., 10:30 p.m., 6:15 a.m.  
10 a.m. to noon  
2 to 4 p.m.  
8 p.m. to midnight
- ▶ Avoid the redundant: 10 a.m. this morning or 12 noon.

### **Capitalization**

- ▶ *the Steps, the Twelve Steps, the D.A. Tools, the Promises, the Twelve Traditions, the Traditions, the Twelve Concepts, the Concepts*
- ▶ *Step One, Tradition Seven, Concept Eight, Steps One through Eight* **BUT** *the first eight Steps*
- ▶ *the First Step, the Seventh Tradition, the Eighth Concept*
- ▶ *The Tool of Sponsorship* or our *Tool of Pressure Relief Groups*, but *sponsorship* or *pressure relief group* when not preceded by “the Tool of,” “our Tool of,” or “the Fellowship’s Tool of. ”
- ▶ *Intergroup, World Service, World Service Conference, the Conference, Conference-approved, General Service Office, General Service Board, the Board, General Service Representative*
- ▶ *the Fellowship*, **BUT** *a twelve-step fellowship, a spiritual program, the D.A. program.*
- ▶ *God, Goddess, Higher Power, a Power greater than ourselves, HP, the Universe, God’s*
- ▶ *the Chair, the Vice-Chair, the Secretary, the Treasurer, the Intergroup Service Representative, the General Service Representative, a Trustee, the Trustees* **BUT** *a chair, a vice-chair, a secretary, a treasurer, an intergroup service representative, a general service representative*
- ▶ Capitalize committee names: *Public Information Committee, Fellowship Communications Committee, the Host Committee*, **BUT** *a committee or the committee or our committees.*
- ▶ Do not capitalize: *groups, the group, a group, group conscience, etc.*
- ▶ Do not capitalize *sponsor, our sponsor, sponsors, your sponsor, a vision, your vision*
- ▶ Do not capitalize *a compulsive debtor, an underearner, an overspender, etc.*
- ▶ World Service Conference *delegates*, **NOT** *Delegates.*

## Title Style

- ▶ Capitalize nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Do not capitalize articles and propositions.

*What Does the GSO Do?*

*Literature Distribution Service*

*Service to Groups and Intergroups*

*Service to the World Conference*

- ▶ Use italics for references to book titles within text.

Read the recovery stories in *A Currency of Hope*.

- ▶ Use quotation marks for references to pamphlet titles within text.

You can order “Communicating with Creditors and Debt Repayment” from the GSO.

## Use of Acronyms

- ▶ Spell out groups and organizations the first time they are mentioned, followed by the acronym in parentheses. Acronyms can be used alone after that.

*We come together in a Pressure Relief Meeting (PRM). At the PRM, we learn . . .*

**BUT** acronyms may be included in a title if they can be spelled out shortly after in the text that follows.

*What Does the GSO Do?*

The General Service Office (GSO) serves the Fellowship by . . .

## Numbers vs. Spelling Numbers Out

- ▶ Spell out *Twelve Steps* within titles. Use *12 Steps* within text.

*The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*

*Using the spiritual principles of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions . . .*

- ▶ With the exception above, spell out numerals from *one to ninety-nine*. Use numerals after that.

*. . . consisting of ourselves and two other people*

*. . . who have not incurred unsecured debt for at least ninety days*

*. . . there are more than 500 groups worldwide*

- ▶ Use numerals for informal titles, *the “72-hour Rule”*, *you can do a “90-and-90”*

- ▶ Use numerals for percentages: *contribute 45% to Intergroup*

- ▶ Use numerals for monetary amounts: *asked to contribute \$2 per meeting*

► Use a comma in numerals of one thousand and above, except for temperatures and dates:

2,957; 18,462

3000 degrees C

We look forward to the year 2016, when Debtors Anonymous celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

## Gender Neutrality; Voice

► Use “we” and “us” rather than “you” and “your.”

► The following motion was approved during convocation at the 2007 World Service Conference: *“The Literature Committee moves that all new D.A. literature, including literature in process, be written in such a way that all references to Higher Power and/or God are gender neutral, except for personal stories. The language of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions will not be changed as a result of this motion.”*

- Use *he or she, he and she, him and her, him or her*.  
*as he or she recovers, every debtor . . . OR in his or her own way, each debtor*
- Try to use *we* and *us* when possible:  
*as we recover, we . . . OR in our own way, we . . .*
- In references to God or a Higher Power, avoid use of pronouns *Him* or *Her*. Use *God* or *Higher Power* instead.  
*In my understanding of God, God isn't . . .*

## ► Suggested Gender-Free Language

### Instead of:

*businessman*

*chairman*

*clergyman*

*showman*

*housewife*

*insurance man*

*mailman*

*middleman*

*newsman*

*policeman*

*salesman*

*spokesman*

*sportsmanship*

*man/men,*

### Use:

*business executive, manager, entrepreneur*

*chair*

*priest, rabbi, minister*

*performer*

*homemaker*

*insurance agent*

*letter carrier, postal worker*

*wholesaler*

*news broadcaster, reporter*

*police officer, officer*

*salesperson, sales representative, sales clerk*

*representative, spokesperson*

*fair play*

*mankind human(s), human being(s), humanity, person(s), people, individuals, human race*

<i>man-hours</i>	<i>work hours, staff hours</i>
<i>manpower</i>	<i>workforce, workers, personnel, human resources</i>
<i>man-made</i>	<i>synthetic, artificial, constructed, manufactured</i>

**Please Note:** Recast sentence if the use of “person” suffixes seems awkward.

One way individuals and groups are excluded from consideration is by the use of gender-specific pronouns to denote “he” and “she.” To avoid this problem, some suggested alternatives are listed below.

*Eliminate the pronoun completely:*

*Instead of: Each faculty member marks the exams as quickly as she can.*

*Try: Each faculty member marks the exams as quickly as possible.*

*Replace pronouns with articles:*

*Instead of: A careful student consults his teacher regularly.*

*Try: A careful student consults the teacher regularly.*

*Use plural pronouns:*

*Instead of: A staff member can use his ID card to access the library.*

*Try: Staff members can use their ID cards to access the library.*

*Use both pronouns and either a) vary their order or b) use alphabetical order:*

*Instead of: Each student must speak to his instructor.*

*Try: Each student must speak to his or her instructor.*

*Or: Each student must speak to her or his instructor.*

*Address your reader:*

*Instead of: If he studies hard, the student’s grades should improve.*

*Try: If you study hard, your grades should improve.*

*Use genderless nouns:*

*Instead of: A chairman of a committee should speak his mind on issues.*

*Try: A committee chair should speak out on issues.*

## **Spelling**

► Use the following spelling conventions in D.A. literature:

<i>bylaws</i>	<b>NOT</b> <i>by-laws</i>
<i>cross-talk</i>	<b>NOT</b> <i>crosstalk</i>
<i>Debtors Anonymous</i>	<b>NOT</b> <i>Debtor’s Anonymous</i>
<i>email</i>	<b>NOT</b> <i>e-mail</i> or <i>Email</i>
<i>eNews</i>	<b>NOT</b> <i>Enews</i> or <i>ENews</i> or <i>eNews</i>
<i>Internet</i>	<b>NOT</b> <i>internet</i>

<i>non-debtor</i>	<b>NOT</b> <i>nondebtor</i>
<i>TV</i>	<b>NOT</b> <i>T.V.</i>
<i>website</i>	<b>NOT</b> <i>Web site</i> or <i>Website</i>

*Theater, theatre: Theater is the preferred spelling when used in text.*

*United States: Spell out on first reference and as a noun; abbreviate on second and subsequent references, and when used as an adjective: the United States, U.S. Court of Appeals*

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