McMinnville Education Foundation

**Online Writing and Style Guide**

\*Please refer to McMinnville Education Foundation’s [blog](https://mef97128.blogspot.com/)

and the Facebook [post](https://www.facebook.com/McMinnvilleEducationFoundation) about the end of the year wine sale to see these guidelines in action.

*The purpose of this style guide is to share tips that will help your organization have a cohesive look and feel to its blog and Facebook posts. This is especially important for blog posts because there will be multiple writers. This document is also meant to familiarize board members with the particularities of online writing.*

**General Guidelines**

1. Plan to post on the blog at least two times a month. Post the links to each on Facebook.
2. Sponsor both blog posts on Facebook to increase your audience size.
3. On the weeks when there isn’t a blogpost, post a link on Facebook to an article or event. See the Post Ideas and Resources page for ideas.
4. Read and reply to comments on the blog and Facebook posts quickly.
5. If someone asks a question and you do not know the answer, acknowledge the post and say, “Thank you for reaching out (or posting), I will find out and get back to you.”

**Blog Posts**

1. It is highly recommended that you create your post in Word.
2. The star of each post should be teachers, students or a program—not your organization.
3. Include at least one photo(s)of what you are writing about in each post. If none are available, find one that ties into your topic on pixabay.com, unsplash.com or pexels.com, which have thousands of photos to choose from.
4. Each post should tell a story, not be a sales pitch for MEF.
5. Tell readers what the story is about in the first paragraph.
6. Include who, what, when, where, why and how.
7. For consistency, all writers should use the same friendly, smart, casual, helpful, cheerful and upbeat “voice.”
8. Keep it light and use plain English. Avoid educational jargon that readers may not be familiar with unless you are going to explain its meaning.
9. Include names of teachers.
10. Use facts and figures to add credibility to posts but keep it to a minimum. Posts should be like a feature story —not a hard news story.
11. Include quotes and/or anecdotes in each story. Contact teachers for these.
12. Use humor or a joke when fitting.
13. After your story is complete, give your post a title. Clever titles are okay if they clearly communicate the content of the post. Viewers tend to click away if they see a title and then read a story that has nothing to do with it.
14. Share your blog post with your family, friends, co-workers, etc.

Grammar

1. Use correct grammar and conventional punctuation but keep it informal. Due to the casualness of blogs, it is okay—even encouraged—to use contractions like don’t, isn’t, aren’t, etc.
2. Forget what you learned about advanced writing. Use simple noun/verb sentence structure, active verbs and active voice as much as possible. It makes posts more interesting to read.
3. Proofread your work before you post it. Use the review feature in Word and follow up with reading it aloud. The ear will often catch what the eye glosses over. If writing is an area of struggle for you, you can still tell a great story--just ask someone else to proofread what you write.

Formatting

1. For blog posts, aim for at least 250 words but not more than 600.
2. Omit needless words. Aim for sentences of 20 words or less.
3. Keep paragraphs short. Poynter Institute defines short as one or two sentences long.
4. Online readers skim rather than read every word. Break up stretches of text with images, “pull-quotes,” numbers or bullet points. To create a pull-quote in a blog post, retype a key phrase or quotation from the post, highlight it and then click on the quotation mark up on the right side of the tool bar at the top of the page. Then bold it and make the text a couple sizes larger than the rest of the text on the page.
5. Add labels to each blog post so people searching for a particular topic or event can find it. Click on the “separate labels by commas” on the righthand of the screen. Type right over the gray text. Type in a related label(s) or select one or more from the dropdown.
6. End each post with the following text centered at the bottom of the post: To learn more about MEF visit our website [mac40kids.org](http://mac40kids.org) (Copy and paste the words from the last sentence or from the initial [post](https://mef97128.blogspot.com/2022/04/mcminnville-high-schools-language-arts.html).)

Steps for Posting to Blogger

1. Log in to Mac Ed Foundation at [mef97128@gmail.com](mailto:mef97128@gmail.com)
2. Click on the Google apps icon, which is by the purple M in the righthand corner of the screen. Look for nine dots arranged in a square.
3. Scroll down to the orange Blogger icon and click on it.
4. Click on the orange New Post button on the left.
5. Click on TT in the tool bar at the top and set the font size to large. Large size is easy to read on both a desktop and a cell phone.
6. Click on the small black square with two white triangles on it in the tool bar to insert an image.
7. Select an image from your computer, upload it and then click the blue Select button. Repeat to insert more images later in your post.
8. Click on the image in the post to set it to align left, right or center. After you write the post, you can move the photo to make the text appear alongside it. You can also adjust the size by clicking on the image.
9. Write your post or copy and paste the one you created in Word.
10. Type in labels for your post right on top of the gray words “Separate labels by commas” and/or select labels from the dropdown.
11. Click on the orange Publish button at the top right-hand corner of the screen.
12. If you need to go back and make changes to your post later, go back to the page where you clicked on the New Post button and click on the post you want to change from the list of posts in the middle of the page.
13. Make the changes.
14. Click the orange Update button up in the corner where the Publish button was when you originally posted the story.

**Facebook Posts**

Steps for posting on Facebook

1. Click on “Create post.”
2. If you are posting an image or images, click on the Photo/video icon and follow the directions. You can upload as many photos as you like. Then proceed to step six.
3. Please note: You cannot post both an image and a link to a webpage in one post. But you can add photos in the comment area after the webpage link is posted.
4. To post a link to a webpage, highlight and copy the web address for the webpage you want to link to and paste it into the text box. At this point, an image from the site will appear. People will click on the image to go to the site.
5. Place your curser at the end of the web address and backspace until its gone.
6. Add a short bit of descriptive text.
7. Insert hashtags below the text. See the Hashtags section for more on that.
8. Click the blue “Post” button.
9. To post photos on a post that has a website link, upload the photos in the comment section.

Formatting Facebook Announcements

1. Use correct grammar and punctuation. One explanation point is more powerful than two or three.
2. Use minimal text, leave enough blank space so that the message will really stand out.
3. Keep the background simple. Messages get lost in bold graphics and/or busy backgrounds.
4. Use dark font on a light background. Light fonts on dark backgrounds are difficult to read.
5. Check to see if your image can be read on a phone since that’s where a large part of your audience will view it.

Hashtags

1. Hashtags are used on Facebook posts so the post will come up on a list when people search for the terms.
2. Here are specifics on their usage:
   1. The tags should be related to the content of the post. The wording below can be used for both Facebook and blog posts. For blog posts, just omit the # sign.
   2. There are no spaces in a hashtag.
   3. Possible hashtags:
      1. #McminnvilleOregon

Put this on every post. Please note: There is no comma.

* + 1. #McMinnvilleEducationFoundation
    2. #visitmcminnville
    3. #news-register

Use if you are writing or posting about something that the newspaper might write a story about.

* + 1. #McMinnvilleCommunityCenter

Use this if you are posting about a local activity.

* + 1. Hashtag school mascots #MHSGrizzlies
    2. #schoolname
    3. #teachername
    4. #battleofthebooks
    5. #scienceexperiences
    6. #teacherminigrants
    7. #namebusinessesnamedinlinkofpost
    8. #mcminnvillepubliclibrary
    9. #Mcminnvilleparksandrecreation
    10. #Mcminnvilleaquaticcenter