



GSGLA Editorial Style in a Pinch

Can't remember if a Girl Scout word should be capitalized, or how to punctuate a sentence that includes a quote? Use this as a quick guide for those Girl Scout style and grammar rules that tend to make you pause. The goal of a council-wide editorial style is to both empower those writing on behalf of Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles and elevate the council's professionalism and consistency as a whole. Words are our verbal identity!

Rules regarding the beloved name of our organization:

- "Scouting," "scout," and "scouts" are no-nos—whether they begin with an upper- or lowercase "s." None of these are our name. Never take the "Girl" out of "Girl Scouts/ing."
- Our name is regarded as singular, regardless of its "s" ending—e.g., Girl Scouts has (not "have") announced its (not "their") fall product lineup. Exception: when actual girl members—rather than our organization at large—are being referred to.
- Use singular "Girl Scout" when using as an adjective. (e.g., Girl Scout activities.)

Council boilerplate 2014:

Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles serves more than 40,000 girls in partnership with more than 20,000 volunteers throughout the diverse communities of Los Angeles County and parts of Kern, San Bernardino, and Ventura counties. The council engages girls through programs in Leadership, Business and Financial Literacy, Outdoor Adventure, STE[A]M (science, technology, engineering, art, math), and Healthy Living. To join, volunteer, reconnect, or support, visit www.girlscoutsla.org or call 213-213-0123.

Capitalization, grammar, and punctuation style rules:

- **Capitalize any title preceding a person's name:** Chief Executive Officer Lise L. Luttgens. Titles that do not precede a person's name are lowercase: Lise L. Luttgens is chief executive officer.
- **In running text or lengthy headlines:** Spell out numbers one through nine, and use numerals for numbers 10 and above.
- **Quotation marks and how to punctuate:** Periods and commas always go within quotation marks. Dashes, hyphens, semicolons, question marks and exclamation points go within the quotation marks when they apply to the quoted matter only. They go outside the quotation marks when they apply to the whole sentence.
- **Dates:** Do not add "th" "st" "nd" to numbers. For instance: Feb. 25th is simply Feb. 25. We read it the same, even without the "th," and it saves space.
- **Who vs. that:** Use "who" when linked with human beings and animals with names. Use "that" with inanimate objects and animals with no names: All girls who attended last year are eligible this year.
- **Italics vs. quotation marks for titles:** Italicize the titles of longer documents; use quotation marks for smaller pieces within that document. Do not italicize names of Girl Scout events/programs. For example, italicize book titles: *The Daisy Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*; "Be Healthy, Be Fit" chapter.
- **Commas in a series:** Use commas to separate elements in a series. DO include a comma before the conjunction (and): I bought a jacket, pants, and a scarf.

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Sources:

Rules based on Girl Scouts of the USA resources, *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*; *Garner's Modern American Usage*; *The Chicago Manual of Style*; *Associated Press (AP) Stylebook*; as well as *The Elements of Style, Fourth Edition, Strunk & White*.

badge (no cap; exceptions for highest awards: Thanks Badge) e.g., Girl Scout badges; Cookie Business badge
council-wide
destinations (lowercase and italicize)
e-form, e-newsletter
email
Family Partnership Campaign (second reference, Family Partnership)
first aid (noun); first-aid (adjective; there is a hyphen when first aid is modifying a noun) e.g., Girls will learn all about first aid at this event; Girls will learn first-aid skills at this event.
flier (not flyer)
Girl Scout Cookie Program (Avoid “sale,” “cookie program” OK on second reference.) Girl Scout Cookies (but “Girl Scout cookie” when referring to a singular cookie or cookie variety, e.g., Thin Mint cookie, Tagalong cookies) Thin Mints Samoa s Tagalongs Do-si-dos Trefoils Savannah Smiles
Girl Scout council
Girl Scout Fall Product Program
Girl Scout grade levels: Daisy Girl Scout , grades K–1 Brownie Girl Scout , grades 2–3 Junior Girl Scout , grades 4–5 Cadette Girl Scout , grades 6–8 Senior Girl Scout , grades 9–10 Ambassador Girl Scout , grades 11–12
Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles programs: Leadership Business and Financial Literacy Outdoor Adventure STE[A]M (science, technology, engineering, art, math) Healthy Living
Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) Always capitalize.

Girl Scout Leadership Journeys (Journeys on second reference) It’s Your Planet—Love It! <i>Between Earth and Sky</i> <i>WOW! Wonders of Water</i> <i>GET MOVING!</i> <i>Breathe!</i> <i>Sow What?</i> <i>Justice</i> It’s Your Story—Tell It! <i>5 Flowers, 4 Stories, 3 Cheers for Animals!</i> <i>A World of Girls</i> <i>aMUSE</i> <i>MEdia</i> <i>MISSION: SISTERHOOD!</i> <i>BLISS!</i> It’s Your World—Change It! <i>Welcome to the Daisy Flower Garden</i> <i>Brownie Quest</i> <i>Agent of Change</i> <i>aMAZE!</i> <i>GIRLtopia</i> <i>Your Voice, Your World</i>
LA (not L.A. when abbreviating Los Angeles, unless branded title of something says otherwise, e.g., L.A. Lakers)
nonprofit (one word)
pin (no cap, except for highest adult awards) e.g., Girl Scout membership pin, Appreciation Pin, Honor Pin
service unit (lowercase unless part of official title: Crown Poppies Service Unit)
service center (lowercase unless part of official title: Montclair Service Center)
sing-along
s’mores
SWAPS (Special Whatchamacallits Affectionately Pinned Somewhere)
T-shirt (never “t-shirt”)
troop (lowercase unless w/ number: Troop 123)
tag-along (younger sibling, not registered as a member)
website, web page, webinar, web forum