



VIS WRITING STYLE Guide

For Webmasters

Volunteer Information Specialists (VIS) Committee

Approved by the National Board NSDAR

VIS Writing Style Guide

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Why a Writing Style?

Surely no language known is as fluid and changeable as the English language, American style. A single comma can be hotly debated – and both debaters can be absolutely correct – according to the style of writing they use. We are a diverse people with great tolerance for the difference in others, and it shows in our language and its use.

Many Daughters were taught a modified British method of punctuation which is now considered sadly out of date. Others were weaned on “friendly” business language in the 1980s and 1990s, where commas were scarce and nearly everything was a contraction.

In order to have consistency in DAR websites, a writing style for websites was adopted by the VIS Committee. Many of the guidelines contained in the VIS Writing Style are taken from the recommended style guide adopted by the National Society.

Acronyms & More

AIR:	Additional Information Requested
CMR	Chapter Master Report
C.A.R.	Children of the American Revolution C.A.R. has societies and periods in its acronym
DAR	Daughters of the American Revolution or
NSDAR	National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution or National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution DAR has chapters and NEVER has periods in its acronym
JAC	Junior American Citizens
JROTC	Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps
LRLV	Lineage Research Look-up Volunteers
NIP	National Information Packet
ROTC	Reserve Officers Training Corps
SAR	Sons of the American Revolution
VAVS	Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service
VIS	Volunteer Information Specialists

Some DAR Terms – A Capital Idea!

DAR titles are capitalized when the title comes immediately before the name or immediately after the name. They are not capitalized if there is a “the” before the name.

- **Upper case** is used **only** for proper nouns (complete names of individual people, chapters, committees, scholarships, and geographic locations); otherwise, use lower case unless specified below.
- DAR Insignia, DAR Library, DAR Magazine, DAR Members’ Website, DAR Museum, The DAR Store, The DAR Insignia Store, DAR Application, DAR Supplemental
- *American Spirit* magazine
- **armed forces** are not capitalized, but the names of specific branches are, ex. the armed forces of America, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard.
- **award(s)** is not capitalized unless it’s the name of a specific award, ex. essay award winner; American History Essay Award winner; DAR Good Citizen Award; certificate of appreciation; certificate of award.

- **chair** is not capitalized, unless part of a title, ex. National Chair Mary Jones; Mary Jones is the national chair of the Membership Committee. (See DAR titles above.)
- **chapter/chapter regent** are capitalized when the official name of the chapter or title of a person, ex. the chapter; Jen Bond, Chapter Regent of the John Doe Chapter, NSDAR.
- **committee** is capitalized when used as part of the official name of a particular committee, ex. the Americanism Committee, the committee.
- **Daughter(s)** is capitalized when referring to a member, or members, of the DAR, and for *Daughters* newsletter.
- **Division** is capitalized when used as a name, ex. South Central Division award winner; division award winners.
- **Executive** is capitalized when used as part of the name of the committee, ex. the Executive Committee, but not for executive liaison. Ex. Georgia Lopez; the executive liaison.
- **Flag** is capitalized when it is in the name of the committee, ex. The Flag of the United States of America Committee, or the name of a publication, ex. Flag Code. Otherwise, *flag* is not capitalized, ex. West Virginia state flag.
- **Founder(s)** should be capitalized when used with a specific name, ex. Founders Mary Desha and Ellen Lockwood; the founders of NSDAR.
- **History** and **heritage** are capitalized when used as part of the name of a specific committee or scholarship, ex. American Heritage Committee; American History Scholarship; our American heritage; the study of American history.
- **member** is not capitalized, ex. Junior member. Exceptions: Members' Website; Members' Oath, Junior Membership Committee
- **nation** is not capitalized unless part of a name, ex. the nation's capital, our nation, the nation, the Cherokee Nation.
- **National** is capitalized when it is used with society to refer to the NSDAR or is used in a title or name; it is not capitalized when used as an adjective to modify a noun. Ex. national winner; National Chair Katy Stein; national executive officers, the national Resolutions Committee, the National Society, Sequoia National Park.
- **Office/officer:** Office of the Recording Secretary General (meaning the physical place in the building), the office of Librarian General, chapter officer, this officer.
- **Patriot** should be capitalized when referring to a Revolutionary War Patriot.
- **Society** is capitalized when it is used to refer to the National Society or a specific state society, ex. Utah State Society.
- **state** may be capitalized when used with society in reference to a particular state, ex. Kansas State Society, state flags, state winner, the great state of Montana.
- **state regent** is capitalized when part of a person's title, ex. Texas State Regent Jane Doe or Jane Doe, State Regent of Texas; the state regent of Utah; or when part of a report title, "The Report of the Maine State Regent." (See DAR titles above.)
- **veteran** or **vet** is only capitalized when part of a name: Veterans Day; the Omaha Veterans Hospital; Vietnam vets; WWII veterans; veterans hospitals.
- **webpage** is capitalized when referring to a committee-specific page, ex: The Junior Membership Committee Webpage
- **DAR terms that should be always be capitalized:** American's Creed; *Annual Proceedings* (*in italics*); Colors; Continental Congress; Junior; Page; Real Daughters; The DAR Store and The DAR Insignia Store; The DAR Application and The DAR Supplemental.
- **DAR terms that should not be capitalized:** docent, fundraising (one word); national headquarters; member(s); oath of office; teller; officer.

Internet and Computer Terminology

Computer terminology is as diverse as our language. For DAR usage, please use these spellings and capitalizations:

- DAR Members' Website
- the DAR website
- email (no hyphen)
- eMembership (no hyphen)
- webpage (one word, not capitalized unless referring to a specific committee's webpage)

Punctuation

Modern usage now dictates **only one** space at the end of a sentence, not double. Use **only** one space after a comma, colon, or semicolon.

- Use commas to separate items in a series: apples, pears, plums, and oranges.
- Semi-colons may be used to separate items in a series if the individual items contain commas. Ex. Jean Doe, Iowa State Regent; Dr. Lisa Foile, Kansas State Vice Regent; and Maddy Wright; Ohio State Regent.
- Veterans Day – if written as Veteran's Day it implies the day belongs to only one veteran.
- Commas, periods, and semi-colons are to be placed inside quotation marks. Ex. "The meeting will come to order," said the chapter regent. The state regent said, "The meeting will come to order."
- Non-political and non-profit should be hyphenated

Dates/Time:

For dates, always use numerals without st., nd, re, or th in the date. Ex. Valentine's Day is February 14. Ex. On Oct. 1, 2018, my mother turned 100.

- Write dates as March 5, 2020 or Jan. 27, 1958. Year format should be 2020, not 20
- Only abbreviate months that are six letters or longer, ex. Aug. or Sept.
- Years are never spelled out, even at the beginning of a sentence. Ex. 2019 was a very good year for fundraising.
- Add an 's' for the first year of a decade. Ex. The 1960s were a turbulent time in world history.

Numbers/Money:

- Spell out numbers one to ten in text and always spell out numbers that begin a sentence, ex. Seven hundred thousand attended Congress. Attendance at Congress was 700,000, including six Real Daughters.
- When listing award winners, there is no need to use the word *place*. Ex. 1st Abigail Adams Chapter, MA; 2nd Dolley Madison Chapter, NY; 3rd Martha Washington Chapter, VA. Numbers to indicate order (first, second, 10th, 11th, etc., are ordinal numbers. Spell out whole numbers up to and including ninth when indicating sequence in time or location (e.g. first kiss, 11th hour) - AP Style.
- Round off all dollar amounts. Ex. Not \$345.78, but \$345

Titles:

- Put quotation marks around the titles of magazine articles, newspaper articles, songs, poems, programs, radio programs, and television programs.
- *Italicize titles of books, newspapers, magazines, and movies.*