

KCVC Style Guide

While not everyone who creates a KCVC post is expected to master these three areas, having these guidelines written down will help in two ways: first, it will help individuals learn some of the expectations for writing for the web; second, it will help whichever staff member is acting in an editing capacity to quickly determine which items of the blog post to change before publication.

Formatting

Titles and Subtitles

Capitalization

Titles should be written in title case, which is the capitalization of pronouns, adjectives, verbs, and nouns in the title. **Don't** capitalize articles (the, a, etc.), coordinating conjunctions (for, and, etc.) and prepositions (on, by, etc.).

Subtitles should be written in sentence case, in which the first word in the sentence and proper nouns are capitalized. [More examples →](#)

Title case example: What is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)?

Sentence case example: Learn about what NDEAM is and how you and others can celebrate it this month.

Wording

The best way to create a catchy title usually includes an interrogative word: Why, How, What, etc., specifically “How-to.” Using numbers, superlatives (e.g., “4 Greatest Tips on Networking”), questions (e.g., “How can I use Handshake as an Alumni?”), and the big reveal (e.g., “3 Things I Learned from My Internship”) are techniques you can use to write blog titles. [More examples →](#)

Section Headers

Section headers should be written in title case. Section headers should be introduced when text needs to be separated into distinct sections. This way, it's easier for the reader to view the article and easier for you to structure your writing. [More examples →](#)

Examples: “Titles and Subtitles” and “Section Headers” in this guide are section headers.

Opening Paragraph(s)

Similar to an introduction paragraph in essay writing, the opening paragraph of a blog gives insight to the reader about what they will be reading and should be about 3-5 sentences. Begin with an opening sentence (question, statistic, story, etc.) to capture your audience's attention and then give background information (who, what, where, when, why, and how) on your main argument and why it's important for readers to read it. Lastly, add a closing sentence summarizing what you'll be going over in the post.

Example: Opening paragraph from KCVC's "[Keeping Track of your Internship Career Competencies S.M.A.R.T. Goals](#)"

List Style

Both types of styles are written in parallel format. [More examples →](#)

Bullet Point

Lists are bullet-pointed when there is a list of items or options and no order of importance. Items should be in lowercase, and periods are not required.

Example:

For winter, wear the following:

- a hat
- coat
- gloves

Number List

Lists are numbered for tasks and when the items are needed in an order. Capitalize the first word and include periods. No list is needed if it consists of two or fewer items.

Example:

For a PB&J sandwich:

1. Add peanut butter to the first slice of bread.
2. Add jelly to the second slice.
3. Put the slices with the PB and jelly facing each other together and enjoy!

Images

Size and Captions Format

The blog post featured image (thumbnail) size is 480x320px (2:1).

Images should be used to break text to make it easier for the reader to view. Provide context in the image's caption (e.g., "A man wearing a blue backpack is standing on a peak of a rocky hill.") Format the caption in sentence case and align it in the center of the image.



An image of a Cardinal from Google Images.

Alternative Text (“Alt Text”)

[Alt text](#) is used in images for readers who need assistive technology. It should be 1-2 sentences and include descriptors (“screenshot of,” etc.). Alt text is unnecessary if the image has no relevant context (such as text or is just decorative). [Here's how to add it to your blog](#)→

Example for the cardinal image above: A cardinal sitting on a birdfeeder.

Citations

Make sure to give [credit to the sources](#) (footnotes are not necessary) by using hyperlinks. You can also include a reference list at the end of your blog.

If your blog post has a lot of information and citations, then a [reference list](#) might be needed.

Numbers

Numbers in paragraph text (NOT in a numbered list format) should be written out as a word if they are the number ten or lower. Numbers 11 and higher should use the numerical form (e.g., “Consider taking two classes.” “I spoke to a student who spent 30 hours volunteering last semester.”).

Text

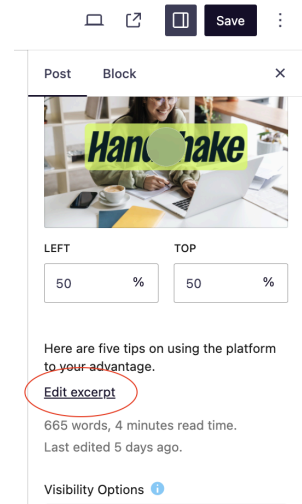
Text should be in the default color (black), size (automatically unknown, not s, m, l, or xl), and appearance (default). Text can be bolded, but be careful not to overuse it.

Tags

Choose tags you believe best relate to your blog’s topic.

Post Format under ‘Featured Blog Post’

Make sure to include an **excerpt** for your blog so the reader can get a sense of what it’s about. It can consist of one to three sentences. It should be located in



Grammar and Mechanics

Oxford Comma

For clarity, we recommend using the Oxford comma in blog posts. The Oxford comma is used “before the conjunction (such as *and*, *or*, *but*) before the final item in a serial list. [More examples](#) →

Examples from the [Purdue Global Oxford Comma blog post](#):

With: “On my bedroom wall I have a picture of my parents, Bob Dylan, and Michelle Obama.

Without: “On my bedroom wall I have a picture of my parents, Bob Dylan and Michelle Obama.”

Quotation Marks

Use double quotation marks for a direct quotation from an individual or text (e.g., *Karen Wong, Director of St. Kate’s Career Development, was overheard saying, “Legos are the superior form of a puzzle.”*)

Exclamation Point Usage

Try to keep exclamation point usage to a minimum. See more information under Tone.”

Active Voice vs Passive Voice

Writing for the web is most successful when it uses active voice. More examples from [Purdue OWL Active vs. Passive voice →](#)

Active

In this voice, the subject performs the action.

Example from Purdue OWL:

She slammed the brakes as the car sped downhill.

Passive

In this voice, the action precedes the subject (if there’s any), and the subject is “acted upon.” This type of voice is used in more scientific writing.

Example:

The brakes were slammed by her as the car sped downhill.

Abbreviations

Spell out the abbreviations the first time, and their shortened versions or acronyms should follow in parentheses. After the first mention, their acronym or abbreviation can be used.

Example:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Tone

Overall KCVC tone

The tone of KCVC blog posts should be that of a “friendly expert;” readers should feel that the author has a sense of authority and knowledge that they are sharing with the audience, and they’re doing so in an approachable and inclusive way.

Example: [“Resources for Entering the Workplace Post-Parental Leave”](#)

Idioms

In order to keep the blog posts as accessible as possible, we want to avoid idioms. Idioms often confuse neurodivergent readers and readers for whom English is not their first or primary language. [More examples →](#)

Example:

Idiom: It's a piece of cake!

Plain language: It's easy!

Jargon

In order to be accessible and friendly, we want to avoid complex terminology or “insider language” that only makes sense for one field or industry. We also don't need to make these blog posts sound overly formal or academic. [More examples →](#)

Example of jargon in journalism:

Jargon: Dek

Plain language: Subheading

Redundancy and Fluff:

Redundancy refers to language that restates something that has already been stated. “Fluff” is a term used to describe language that doesn't advance the main ideas of a piece of writing. Because we want blog posts to be concise, any sentences or phrases that don't elaborate on or “build” upon previous ideas might be considered “fluff.” The revision stage of writing a blog post should involve looking for redundancies and fluff.

Example from [Google's Material Design](#):

With fluff: “Send (and receive) money with friends and family in the US with an email address. It's a two-step process with little latency, and there aren't any charges for the recipients.”

Without fluff: “Send money to anyone in the US who has an email address. It's fast, easy, and free.”