



6450 S Lewis Ave, Suite 250 | Tulsa, OK 74136 | PH: 918-587-6828 | FAX: 918-582-6772 | [www.nala.org](http://www.nala.org)

## ***Facts & Findings Style Guidelines***

*Facts & Findings* is published and printed quarterly: Q1 (January), Q2 (May), Q3 (September), and Q4 (November).

Feature/General/Educational articles should be approximately 1,500 words and be an in-depth analysis into a case, situation, or topic. Columns are standard in the publication covering a variety of topics. These are solicited works only and should be approximately 600 words.

Please submit a bio of no more than 100 words, along with a high-resolution photo with any articles submitted. These should focus on the author's professional accomplishments and what makes them an expert in the field, not personal information.

The publications include articles written by lawyers, paralegals, and others concerning substantive legal issues, court rules, current trends, and recent developments, as well as articles of general interest to paralegals. The typical reader has 10 years of experience as a paralegal and has a college degree as well as specialized education and/or training in the legal profession. Articles should be aimed at paralegals and written in a clear, accurate, and conversational style. Articles should be a refreshing departure from "legalese."

These guidelines are primarily a reference for the editorial team, but authors are encouraged to review them if they wish to understand how content is reviewed and revised in the interest of consistency, accuracy, and readability...and space requirements. It is important for authors to understand that NALA reserves the right to edit—heavily if necessary. Such editing is not undertaken lightly. Considerable effort goes into preserving the author's "voice" during the editing process, and edited content is returned to the author for review prior to publication to ensure that nothing has been misconstrued. The review process is not intended as an opportunity for authors to completely rewrite, but to correct any substantive errors in the original content or that may have been introduced during production editing. Authors should keep in mind that it is their ideas that are the heart of their article for publication. Stylish writing is a highly subjective matter, but accurately expressing your ideas is a universally admired attribute.

**\*Important Note: NALA will refer to the most recent AP Stylebook for grammar reference unless otherwise stated below.**

### **Acronyms**

- When introducing an acronym, spell out all the words the first time with the acronym in parentheses; *e.g.*, United States Public Law (USPL). This acronym might be well known to you, but USPL is most commonly used in connection with the United States Paintball League. Some acronyms, such as IRS, FBI, or USA, are in such common usage that they need not be spelled out unless they refer to other entities. It is unlikely that anyone reading *Facts & Findings* will not know the NALA acronym.

### **Affiliated Associations**

- NALA Affiliated Association should be caps. If just “affiliate” or “affiliated association” then lower case.

### **ALL CAPS (Please Do Not Use)**

- Avoid use of all caps for emphasis in text. Use **bold** instead. This may become a flexible call if an author is *adamant* and can make a reasoned argument for all caps.

### **America and United States**

- Although commonly misused, “America” is a continent (actually two continents), not a nation. The nations in North America are the United States of America, Canada, and Mexico. Do not refer to the United States as “America” unless there is a compelling rhetorical reason.
- Always spell out United States on first mention unless used as an adjective (*e.g.*, she was a U.S. citizen working for a U.S. government agency in the United States).
- When referring to a rule, law, or condition that applies to all the contiguous states, write “nationwide,” not “across the United States.”

### **And vs. &**

- Use of the ampersand (&) is reserved for parenthetical and tabular text. It may sometimes be suitable in a headline, but for the most part, use “&” only as part of a firm name or title (*e.g.*, Johnson & Johnson).

### **Author Biographies (100 words or less)**

- New author bios and bios that need updated should be included in the article submission in the provided space. The information should include professional training (degrees), employment experience, awards, and professional email address. Personal interests, hobbies, family, and travel should not be included.

### **Bylines**

- First letter is capitalized (*e.g.*, By Janet R. Jones, ACP). The byline should include the middle initial and the proper professional credentials.

## Capitalization

- Capitalize “President,” “Board of Directors,” etc. only when used as proper nouns. A fair test for this is if the word is preceded by “the,” “that,” or “this” (e.g., “this Board stands for fairness in all such matters, whereas another board might not”).

## Chair

- The style adopted by NALA is to truncate “chairman” to the gender neutral “chair.” The preceding capitalization rule also applies here (e.g., “She was Ethics Chair for two consecutive terms and also chaired a number of other committees.”)

## Citations/References

- The style adopted by NALA is based off the Chicago Style, particularly focusing on the use of endnotes. Please see the final pages of this document for a full explanation and examples.

## Colons

- Used to start a list

## Commas

- *Facts & Findings* style uses commas after the Latin abbreviations in parenthetical references (e.g., *i.e.*).
- The Oxford comma is used before the and/or (e.g., first, second, and third).

## Company Names

- Since *Facts & Findings* is oriented to matters of legal interest, the full legal name of companies and law firms, including their corporate structure (e.g., LLP, PC, etc.) should be used in the first reference. Subsequent references need not include the corporate structure letters.

## Compound Words

- Hyphens are used to join two words together to ensure clarity (e.g., self-driving car). According to AP Style, they are used to avoid ambiguity or to form a single idea from two or more words.
- Using a hyphen can be a matter of taste or judgment. Some words, such as chocolate chip cookie, are so well-known that they do not need a hyphen. The goal is to make it as clear and logical to the average reader.
- Do not use a hyphen to designate dual heritage (e.g., Italian American)

## Contractions

- Please do not use contractions unless it is in a direct quote from a source.

## Copyright

- *Facts & Findings* authors retain original copyright to their articles and the entire magazine is copyrighted by NALA.
- When the United States joined the Berne Convention (March 1, 1989), the requirement to use the copyright symbol (©) was eliminated. The copyright notice on the *Facts & Findings* boilerplate page is all the formal notice needed.

## Credentials

- Paralegal credential abbreviations (CP and ACP) are set apart from the name by a comma.
- The credential for lawyers is “Attorney,” spelled out.
- We will defer to those who request “Esq.” in their bylines.
- Academic credentials such as PhD, MBA, BA, EdD, etc., are not internally punctuated.

## Dashes and Hyphens (three different kinds)

- The normal hyphen is used for words such as e-reader, or to separate syllables in a word at the end of a line.
- The “n-dash” is slightly longer and is used in place of “through” for expressions such as “pages 1–20.”
- The “m-dash” is the longest and is used for an emphatic pause in a sentence (*e.g.*, The attorney blustered and sputtered — obviously at a complete loss for words.)

## Exclamation Points

- Use the “!” only when the text is truly exclamatory. For the most part, you should pretend that this mark does not exist on your keyboard.

## Facts & Findings

- The magazine title is italicized upper and lower case, whether spelled out or abbreviated as *F&F*.

## Foreign Terms

- Avoid gratuitous use of foreign expressions when an English term will work as well. For example: “reason for being” works as well as “*raison d’tre*”.
- Foreign words, including Latin terms and abbreviations such as *pro bono*, *quid pro quo*, *voir dire*, etc., should be italicized.
- Foreign words that have been absorbed into common English usage (*e.g.*, resume) need not be italicized.
- Abbreviations such as *i.e.*, *e.g.*, etc. should be italicized. Use commas with “*e.g.*,” and “*i.e.*” and a period after *etc.*
- Correct diacritical markings should be used with foreign words such as *mañana*, or *Cañada* (so that the California locale is not confused with the country of Canada).

## Headlines and Subheads

- Author suggestions for headlines and subheads are welcome. Short is better than long, and the final decision for these lies with the editorial staff. As a general rule, headlines and subheads should be limited to four words.

## He/She/They

- Pronouns should match the noun in number. “He or she” should be used when referencing a single entity, whereas “they” should be used when referencing multiple entities. (*e.g.*, It was assumed that he or she would be taking lead at the retreat. The students said they were having a great school year.)
- This does not apply to gender pronouns. Please ensure what pronoun the referenced individual uses.

## **Internet Terminology**

- Email, online, offline, and website are not hyphenated and are single words.
- The words internet and website are not capitalized.

## **Italics**

- Use Italics for titles of books, magazines, films, and case titles. See exceptions under “Quotation Marks.”
- Individual articles within publications are set off with quotation marks (*e.g.*, the seventh chapter in *The Hobbit* is “Queer Lodgings.”)

## **JPEGS**

- Author photos should be high resolution pictures of at least 300 dots per square inch (DPS) and saved as a JPEG file. This should be submitted as a separate file with the article.

## **Legal Citations**

- A reference to a specific legal case (*e.g.*, *Kramer v. Kramer*) should be in italics.

## **Lists**

- Lists may be presented with numbers, bullets, or with the initial three or four words set in bold.
- If a list item is a complete sentence, it should have a period and the other items in the list should also be complete sentences with periods. If all list items are sentence fragments, then no periods are needed.

## **More Than/Over/Under**

- Use “more than” when expressing a number, amount, or dimension larger than a given number (*e.g.*, there were more than 150 lawyers in the room).
- Do not use “over” unless it refers to a physical position.
- Likewise, use “less than” rather than “under.”
- Use “older than” or “younger than” rather than “over” or “under” when defining ages.
- Reserve the “under” and “over” prepositions for directional references (*e.g.*, “over the top”) or in well-worn expressions such as “overstated.”

## **Noon/Midnight**

- Do not put a “12” in front of noon or midnight (see “Time”).

## **Numbers**

- Single digit numbers should be spelled out.
- All others should be written as Arabic numerals unless the number begins a sentence, or the number refers to millions/billions of dollars (*e.g.*, \$2 million).
- When referring to someone’s age, always use Arabic numerals.
- School grades: spell out first through ninth grades. Use numbers for grades 10 and above.
- Constitutional Amendments: spell out the First Amendment through the Ninth Amendment. Use numbers for the 10th Amendment and beyond.
- Roman numerals are used only when so used in their original source (*e.g.*, *Title IX*).
- The use of Arabic numerals exclusively in charts, tables, and headlines is acceptable.

- If you are using several adjacent numbers in a sentence, do not mix numerals and words, but use all numerals (*e.g.*, “There were 4–20 blackbirds...”)

### **Percent vs. %**

- According to AP Style, the percent sign (%) should be used in text, charts, and tables. Do not write out the word unless you are specifically discussing a percentage point.
- Use percentage, rather than percent, when not paired with a number (*e.g.*, The percentage of people who enjoy football is rather high.)

### **Period**

- There is only one space after a period.
- The period **always** goes within quotation marks.

### **Persona**

- Write articles in third person unless it is an invited editorial or a personal perspective type story.

### **Possessive Singular of Nouns**

- Following the guidelines of *The Elements of Style*, form the possessive singular of nouns by adding 's (*e.g.*, James's cat).

### **Quotation Marks**

- Used for direct quotations (needs a source citation).
- May be used to indicate a word used in an unusual way or with a different meaning (*e.g.*, these are more than “toys” in the modern courtroom). This need only be done on first use of the term. It may be assumed that the reader will know your meaning from that point on.
- Periods and commas always go within the quotation marks.
- Dashes, semicolons, colons, and question marks go within the quotation marks only if they apply to the quoted material. They go outside the quotation marks when they apply to the whole sentence.
- Use single quote marks in headlines.

### **Rhetorical Clichés**

- Rhetoric is a wonderful thing both in speech and writing. However, clichés that can make spoken presentations sparkle are gone in a flash, whereas the written word is there to stay and risk marking the writer as unprofessional. A good example: “*It goes without saying* that the deadlines must be met.” If this statement truly “goes without saying,” then do not say it. Conversely, if “the deadlines must be met” needs to be said, then it makes no sense whatever to precede it with “it goes without saying.”

### **Rhetorical Questions**

- Rhetorical questions can be used as thought-provoking material and are excellent ways to engage the reader. However, use these with caution. Too many rhetorical questions take away the impact and quickly become cumbersome.

## Semicolons

- Use to separate clauses with internal comma punctuation-

## Succinct Sentences

- Short and punchy sentences are easier to read and generally more effective in communicating than compound, complex sentences. However, please take caution when beginning a sentence with “And” or “But” and avoid accidental fragments.
- Avoid run-on sentences such as are commonly found in legal writing.

## Telephone Numbers

- Avoid telephone numbers unless absolutely necessary (a published wrong number can precipitate a crisis—and possibly a lawsuit).
- Follow official telephone company display of numbers using hyphens rather than the former practice of separating the area code from the rest of the number with parentheses (*e.g.*, 918-587-6828, not (918) 587-6828).

## Time

- Omit the “:00” for even times such as 6 a.m. or 4 p.m. Please note that periods are used in a.m. and p.m.
- When minutes must be indicated, write 6:15 a.m. or 4:25 p.m.
- When indicating a range of time, use a.m. or p.m. only once (*e.g.*, 8:30–10:00 a.m. or, if the range crosses noon or midnight, 8:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.
- Noon and midnight require no meridian reference.

## Trademark Symbols

- The trend in most popular publications, and even textbooks, is to eliminate the trademark and service mark symbols from text. In *Facts & Findings*, if an article deals specifically with intellectual property matters, then use of the symbols may be appropriate—just be sure they are correct. Use the ® immediately following first reference of a registered company such as Microsoft,® and use the “TM” after the first reference of an actual product such as Word™ or PowerPoint.™ Use of the registered trademark or copyright symbols in subsequent mention is not needed.

## “v.” Versus “vs.”

- In reference to case law, use the conventional legal style of “v.”
- In ordinary English, the “vs.” should be used.

## NALA Endnotes Style

As a uniform guide, *Facts and Findings* has adopted the *The Chicago Manual of Style*. For complex legal citations our authority is *Columbia Law Review: A Uniform System of Citation*, (16th ed. Cambridge: Harvard Law Rev. Assn., 1996).

Using endnotes, writers refer their readers to citations and references using a number at the end of a sentence, phrase, or clause containing the language or idea requiring citation. The number appears in the text as a superscript at the end of the sentence with no space between the period and the superscript number. The endnotes appear at the end of the manuscript with their

corresponding superscript numbers and are written with the first line indented.

**Authors are encouraged to simply incorporate references and attributions into the text**, and to avoid repetitive endnote references where an initial citation will serve.

The editors reserve the prerogative to change endnotes to conform to *Facts & Findings* style. If an author has specific questions, they can reach out to the *Facts & Findings* Proofreader Callie Spencer at [cspencer@nala.org](mailto:cspencer@nala.org).

Below are examples of endnotes, specifically in the section at the end of the article titled “Resources.” The point of the resource section is the following: attribute words and ideas to original authors, avoiding plagiarism; provide a guide for the reader to learn more about the subject; and provide a resource for the reader to check facts.

—Examples—

**Internet Source**

<sup>9</sup><http://nala.org/facts-findings>

**Book**

<sup>10</sup>Pepin, Ronald E. *Literature of Satire in the Twelfth Century* (1988).

**Magazine or Journal**

<sup>11</sup>MacDonald, Susan Peck. “The Erasure of Language.” *College Composition and Communication* (2007)

**Newspaper**

<sup>12</sup>Manegold, Catherine S. “Becoming a Land of the Smoke-Free, Ban by Ban,” *New York Times* (22 Mar. 1994).

**Legal Source**

<sup>13</sup>*United States v. MacDonald*, 531 F.2d 196, 199-200 (4th Cir. 1976), *rev'd*, 435 US 850 (1978).