

Satchidananda Ashram–Yogaville

Writing Style Guide



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The following Satchidananda Ashram–Yogaville Writing Style Guide has been created to ensure that all written promotional material—flyers, newsletters, announcements, etc.—being sent from the Ashram to the public conforms to the highest standards of grammar, punctuation, style, and communication, as well as to Ashram conventions.

Commonly used Ashram words, phrases, and abbreviations

Ashram: When the word “Ashram” is used to refer specifically to Satchidananda Ashram, “A” is capitalized. When referring to an “ashram” or “ashrams” in general, it is written in lower case.

Referencing Yogaville

Satchidananda Ashram–Yogaville: When writing the name of our organization, “Satchidananda Ashram” and “Yogaville” are separated by an en dash “–”, with *no* spaces before or after the hyphen and *no* registered trademark symbol.

Incorrect: Satchidananda, Yogaville®, Satchidananda Ashram-Yogaville

- Note: The proper preposition that precedes Yogaville is “at” and not “in.”
Example: “free all-day laughter Yoga workshop “at” (not “in”) Yogaville.”
Satchidananda Ashram–Yogaville – use this full title when referring to the organization as a whole.
- **Yogaville** – this can be used in subsequent references to the first reference of Satchidananda Ashram–Yogaville. (Note: depending on the context, it may be more appropriate to use “the Ashram” in subsequent references when referring to physical location; e.g., “Many people from the community take their meals at the Ashram” or “The egg hunt will take place at the Ashram.”)
- **Yogaville OR Yogaville community**– use either one of these terms when referring to the larger community. “Community” should not be capitalized, unless in a headline.

SAYVA – Do NOT use SAYVA in distributed material, as it violates an existing copyright. It’s okay to use it inter-departmentally.

Yoga

Yoga:

The word “Yoga” is always capitalized. Examples: Yoga teacher, Yoga class, Yoga community, Yoga teachings, techniques, and philosophy.

Branches of Yoga:

When used in sentences, Yoga branches should be capitalized. Examples: Hatha Yoga, Karma Yoga, Raja Yoga, etc.

When referring to a Hatha Yoga class, always include term “Yoga.”

Integral Yoga:

Use “®” symbol on first reference of Integral Yoga®. Subsequent references do not need ®.

Restorative Yoga:

When referring to restorative Yoga, capitalize “restorative” only if it is the title of the class/workshop, but not if it refers to the general practice.

Correct: I try to incorporate restorative practices into my Yoga classes.

Correct: I am taking Restorative Yoga Teacher Training.

Yogic / yogi / yogini:

The adjective “yogic” is not capitalized, nor are the nouns.

Satsang, sangha, sannyasin, sadhana, puja:

These are Sanskrit nouns; therefore, they should be italicized and lower case.

Common Capitalizations

Self (when referencing the “true Self”) / Gurudev / Guru /Teacher Training/ Reverend (Rev.):
capitalize these words only.

ALL CAPS: Do not use all caps for emphasis. Instead, use italics.

Incorrect: Find out what makes you, **YOU!**

Correct: Find out what makes you, *you!*

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Yogaville Building Names

Sivananda Satsang Hall (SSH) – Do not write “Satsang Hall” w/o “Sivananda”

Sivananda Dining Hall (SDH) – Be specific when naming locations

Vivekananda Vihar (VV)

Ramalingam Nilayam (RN)

Shri Nivas

Vidyalayam (Temple of Learning)

Teaching Academy

Lotus Conference Center (LCC)

Light Of Truth Universal Shrine (LOTUS): There is no “The” in this title, but when used in a sentence, “the” can be added in lowercase letters. “Of” should always be capitalized.

LOTUS & LOTUS–India (like Satchidananda Ashram–Yogaville, use en-dash)
(not The LOTUS or the LOTUS). Example: I led a tour to LOTUS.

LOTUS Center for All Faiths (LCAF): There is no “The” in this title, but when used in a sentence, “the” can be added in lowercase letters. “Faiths” is not possessive.

Swamis

When used as a common noun “swami” is italicized (*swami*) and not capitalized. When used as a proper noun, “swami” is capitalized and not italicized (Swami Satchidananda).

Current Integral Yoga swamis: Swami Gurucharanananda (Mataji); Swami Karunananda; Swami Sarvaananda; Swami Priyaananda; Swami Dayananda; Swami Jyotirmayananda; Swami Vidyananda; Swami Daasyananda; Swami Hamsananda; Swami Murugananda; Swami Nirmalananda; Swami Bhaktananda; Swami Suddhananda; Swami Sugunananda; Swami Sharadananda; Swami Asokananda; Swami Ramananda; Swami Divyananda; Swami Lalitananda; Swami Chidananda; Swami Vimalananda

Addresses

DC Quadrant Directions in Addresses – do not place a comma before the quadrant designation in a Washington, DC address.

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Example:

Incorrect: 1111 16th Street, NW

Correct: 1111 16th Street NW

Nation’s capital – when referring to this geographic area in a sentence, do not capitalize the *n* or the *c*. Also note the correct spelling of capital (not capitol, which refers only to an actual building).

Example:

Incorrect: The Yoga conference will be held this year in the Nation’s Capital.

Correct: The Yoga conference will be held this year in the nation’s capital.

Ampersands (“&” Symbol)

Use “&” in headers, subheaders, and footers only. Choose “and” in place of “&” if possible.

Do *not* use “&” in text.

Attributions

Use Em-dash before the name, for example: —Sri Swami Satchidananda

Credentials / Degrees

Use periods for degrees: Ph.D.; D. Ay.; M.D.; D.C.; M.A.; B.A; titles: Dr., Rev.

Other certifications, such as: RN, LCSW, E-RYT, CRYT, etc. do not need periods.

Yoga Alliance Titles are formatted as follows: E-RYT 500, RYT 500, E-RYT 200, RYT 200.

Commas, Serial Comma

Use **serial (commas) / Oxford comma** – use a comma before the last item in a list.

Examples:

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Incorrect: meditation, deep relaxation and breathing practices

Correct: meditation, deep relaxation, and breathing practices

Use commas after states, after dates, including years (i.e., Thurs., Jan. 4). Do not use “th” after the date

For example: “I went home on January 4, 2015, to see my family,”

Dates: See Years/Date Ranges

US / DC

U.S.: – abbreviate as US without periods between the letters.

Washington, DC: – do not place periods in DC. Do include the comma between Washington and DC. Place a comma after DC when the initials appear in a text, i.e., “We are visiting Washington, DC, this weekend.”

Gender Neutral Language

(God vs. Lord; God vs. He. Use the plural pronoun (they) when too wordy to say “he or she.” Use “you” when too wordy to say “he or she.”

Time Formats

Times should be indicated with “am” and “pm.”

Times beginning on the hour do not need the zeroes. Anti-meridian and post-meridian abbreviations appear in lowercase without periods and are preceded by a space.

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Incorrect: 8:00 p.m. or 8:00 PM or 8:30p.m. or 8:30PM

Correct: 8 pm or 8:30 pm

Times listed in schedules:

Incorrect: 9:15 AM, 11:30 A.M., 3 P. M., 7PM, 10 p.m.

Correct: 9:15 am, 11:30 am, 3 pm, 7 pm, 10 pm;

Percent

Write out percent vs. %.

Incorrect: There is a 20% difference in cost.

Correct: There is a twenty percent difference in cost.

Titles: Books, Articles, Movies, Television Programs

Book, magazine, blog, and movie titles are written in italics. Magazine articles, short story titles, chapter titles, essays, blog entries, radio, and TV program episodes are written in quotes.

Example: She is the author of the novel *Daring Greatly* and the article “Learning to Love Me,” which appeared in *Harper’s*, as well as a star of HBO’s *Breaking Bad* (most notably for the episode “IFT.”

Possessives

Possessives of one- and two-syllable names ending in “s” add an apostrophe-s (boss’s, Jones’s, Kansas’s, Adams’s).

Possessives of classical proper names ending in an *eez* sound add apostrophe-s (Xerxes’s armies),

Nonprofit

No hyphen necessary. Do not use not-for-profit.

Numerals

Spell out numbers if in a title.

Telephone and Fax Numbers

All Yogaville phone and fax numbers should be formatted in print materials and on the website with periods, followed by a comma and the extension. An exception is in the database, where phone and fax numbers should be entered with hyphens to comply with conventional formatting.

If the phone and extension number appears in the middle of a sentence, then the extension number is also followed by a comma.

Example:

Incorrect: 434-969-3121 or (434) 969-1303

Correct: 434.969.3121, ext. 153

Incorrect: Please call 434-969-3121 ext. 153 for more information.

Correct: Please call 434.969.3121, ext. 153, for more information.

Years and Date Ranges

Do not spell out specific years or decades. For example, the 1950s vs. *the nineteen-fifties*. Do not spell out centuries, for example, the 19th century vs. *the nineteenth century* **Range of dates:** Use En-dash: November 9–11, 2015.

Sanskrit and Foreign Words–Italics

Sanskrit terms, other foreign terms, emphasized words (e.g., *divine*) are italicized.

The only Sanskrit *not* italicized are the following common-use terms:

Yoga, Guru, karma, mantra and branches of Yoga (Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga, etc.).

Superscript

Use superscript for *th* (7th) *nd* (2nd), *st* (1st), etc.

Slashes

Use the slash if the meaning is literally “and/or.”

Typically, slashes are misused and misleading, as in “owner/designer” and “husband/partner in crime.” Instead, use “*owner-designer*” and “*husband and partner-in-crime*.”

Well-Being

Not “wellbeing”

Websites/Email

Websites should include “www” when written. Write “website,” not “Web site” or “Website” “Email” should not be capitalized or hyphenated.

Bulleted Lists

In general, bulleted lists should be preceded with an introductory clause/sentence and a colon. Each list item should not be punctuated. Note: Make sure first items in list are grammatically parallel (ie, all are nouns, gerunds, etc.)

Example:

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This is how the ashram would create a list:

- **Think** of a topic
- **Write** down ideas
- **Type** it into a document
- **Edit** the page

A Note on Voice and Tense

If Yogaville were writing, what would it sound like?

The voice of the text refers to the tone or feeling that the writer wishes to communicate. The voice of Satchidananda Ashram–Yogaville should be strong and dynamic without being aggressive, boastful, or arrogant; warm and personal without being corny, clichéd, or trite; inviting without being pushy. Our voice should convey our values of peace, non-violence, optimum physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being, and living a peaceful, easeful, useful life.

Please write in the **active tense**, not in the future or past tenses. Address readers as “you” as opposed to “we” to evoke a connection.

For example: “This weekend, *discover* your inner self.”

Not: “This weekend, you *will discover* your inner self” or “You *will have discovered*...” or “This weekend, *we will* discover our inner selves.”

Capitalization Points

Lowercase:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. guru (non-specific guru) | 4. divine - when adjective |
| 2. cosmic energy | (generally lowercase) |
| 3. cosmic, cosmic consciousness | 5. goddess (the goddess within) |

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- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 6. higher power | 13. scripture |
| 7. love | 14. supreme peace |
| 8. nature | 15. truth |
| 9. pope (the pope) | 16. witness |
| 10. rabbi (the rabbi) | |
| 11. reality | |
| 12. spiritual master | |

Upper Case:

1. Brahman
2. Divine (when noun only)
3. Goddess _____ (as in Goddess Kali)
4. Guru (when referencing a specific Guru)
5. Non-Dualism (a term and concept used to define various strands of religious and spiritual thought)
6. Pope (as in Paul VI)
7. Rabbi (as in Rabbi Schneerson)
8. Spirit (if referring to “The Spirit”)
9. The Self
10. Earth (when referring to the planet)

Common Homonym Errors

Its, It's

its as a possessive adjective (possessive form of the pronoun “it”): The crab had an unusual growth on its shell.

it's as a contraction for “it is” or “it has” (in a verb phrase): It's still raining; it's been raining for three days.

Your, You're

Your as a possessive pronoun: Bring me your book.

You're as a contraction of "you are": You're about to be called on.

There, Their, They're

There as an adverb of place: Let's sit over there. There's a book over there.

Their as a possessive pronoun: Do they have their mats?

They're as a contraction of "they are": They're all here.

Lead, Led

Lead as the present tense of the verb "to lead": Who would like to lead the chants?

Led as the past tense of the verb "to lead": I led them yesterday!

Lead as a noun: Lead is a toxic substance.

Lay, Laid, Lain / Lie, Lied, Lied

Infinitive	Definition	Present	Past	Past Participle	Present Participle
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to lay:	to put or place something down	lay(s)	laid	laid	laying
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to lie:	to rest or recline	lie(s)	lay	lain	lying
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Examples: "I laid down the law." "She lay down to take a nap." "I had laid the casserole in the oven this morning." "It had lain there all morning."

Lay and **lie** both mean to set something down, while **lie**, **lay**, **lain** all mean that the subject is setting itself down.