

Writing Tips for Service Unit Volunteers

Whether you're new to communicating about Girl Scouts or a seasoned pro, here are some quick pointers and refreshers to guide you:

Say it straight, then say it great.

Be clear and concise. Then find a way to add color where appropriate to make your content more compelling.

Say more with less.

When we keep our writing concise, we invite readers to imagine more. We don't have to spell everything out to be understood.

Keep girls front and center.

Remember: as a girl-first organization, everything we say should focus on girls first and foremost. Sometimes it's appropriate to talk about Girl Scouts as an organization but limit these instances. Avoid language that brags about ourselves and our expertise, unless specifically appropriate. It's not about us, it's about her.

A good opening sentence makes eye contact.

Your own ears are your best editor. They'll be able to hear where any bumps are that you can smooth out with a quick edit.

Be a ruthless editor.

Good things come to those who spell check and proofread. Always review your writing once or twice (maybe even three times). And never underestimate the value of another set of eyes!

Big words aren't always better.

You don't have to have a huge vocabulary to write well. Instead, inventively and imaginatively use words that everyone understands. Avoid using acronyms or jargon.

Read it out loud.

Your own ears are your best editor. They can hear any bumps that need smoothing out.

Story and Structure

At Girl Scouts, all our copy tells a story. Here's the common structure we follow:

Headline

Be yourself with us.

Headlines should captivate. Consider what would capture your readers' attention and speak to their imaginations. Make this part of your story compelling and concise, giving them a reason to read on.

Body Copy

Girl Scouts follow their own convictions, take the lead in their own stories, and explore all the extraordinary things they're capable of. With programs in the outdoors; entrepreneurship; science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM); and life skills, girls have the space and support they need to grow, so they can see themselves how we've always seen them. Bright. Perceptive. Powerful.

The copy should move the story we teased in the headline forward—by welcoming, informing, or persuading readers. Now that we have the readers' attention, consider what they need to know to understand the full story.

Call to Action

Join us! The call to action exists to spur action. It should be direct and concise, motivating the reader to do something specific, like join, volunteer, or read more.

Naming Index

When writing copy, refer to this list for guidance on how to correctly use our name.

Do:

Girl Scouts

Girl Scouts of Orange County

Girl Scout Gold Award

Girl Scout Cookie Program

Girl Scout Law

Girl Scout Network

Girl Scout Movement

Girl Scout council

Girl Scout Central

Girl Scout Research Institute

Don't:

GS

The Girl Scouts OC

GSCOC

Girl Scouts Orange County Council

Girls Scout Council Orange County

Girl Scouts Gold Award

Girl Scouts Cookie Program

Girl Scouts Law

Girl Scouts Network

Girl Scouts Movement

Girl Scouts Council

Girl Scouts Central

Girl Scouts Research Institute

Scouts

How We Use Our Name

Here's some guidance on how we use Girl Scouts (our plural and predominant name), and Girl Scout (the singular version of our name that we use in special use cases).

When we use 'Girl Scouts':

When referring to Girl Scouts of the USA and its councils, as well as our overall Movement and our girls, we use 'Girl Scouts.'

For Example:

"At Girl Scouts, we support girls in the discovery and pursuit of their ambitions."

When we use 'Girl Scout':

When indicating possession, we use our singular brand name as an adjective. We also use it when referring to a Girl Scout.

For Example:

"Girl Scout Cookies"

"Girl Scout Law"

“As a Girl Scout she’s dreaming big.”

Words, Terms and Phrases

Here are some common writing scenarios and how to use our name accordingly.

On Highest Awards

When writing about our highest awards, use:

“Girl Scout Gold Award”

“Girl Scout Silver Award”

“Girl Scout Bronze Award”

When talking about a girl who earns her highest award, use the award as an adjective:

“Gold Award Girl Scout”

“Silver Award Girl Scout”

“Bronze Award Girl Scout”

On the Cookie Program

When writing about our Cookie Program, make sure our singular brand name is used as an adjective preceding it.

For example: “Girl Scout Cookie Program.”

On Councils

When writing about your council or other Girl Scout councils, do not abbreviate the council name as an acronym. It's best to fully spell it out on first reference and use "Girl Scouts" rather than an acronym for subsequent references, context allowing.

For example:

"Girl Scouts of Orange County"

Optional Second Reference: "GSOC"

On Service Units

When writing about your Service Unit, please be sure to include Girl Scouts of Orange County. It's best to fully spell it out on first reference "Girl Scouts of Orange County Service Unit ###: Service Unit Name", and use "Service Unit ###" or "Name Service Unit" on second reference.

For example:

"Girl Scouts of Orange County Service Unit 206: Santiago Creek"

Second Reference: "Service Unit 206" or "Santiago Creek Service Unit"

On Girl Scouting

When writing about the experiences we offer, you can use Girl Scouts as a verb. At the same time, always remember that Girl Scouts is not just something she does, it's who she is.

For example: "Always be yourself when Girl Scouting."

Avoid using "Scout" or "Scouting" without including "Girl"

The full brand name, Girl Scouts, must be used in conjunction with the verb.