



# TEXAS FFA STYLE GUIDE

For the Texas FFA Association, it is necessary to ensure that our communication is professional. We are striving to create consistency from the chapter to the state level, and this style guide will be a valuable tool in helping us achieve that goal. This document is set up like a dictionary, with entries arranged alphabetically.

*Please note: This style guide reflects the National FFA Organization's [style guide](#) but has been condensed and adapted to add Texas FFA-specific terminology.*

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## A

### **advisor**

Always advisor, not adviser. The proper term for the agriculture instructor when he or she is performing FFA-related responsibilities.

### **ag**

Use the word "ag" only in informal (social media) writing – and with "Team Ag Ed." In formal writing, use "agriculture" or "agricultural" (see below). If someone is quoted using "ag ed" instead of agricultural education, then use "ag ed." Lowercase unless the term is part of a title or formal name.

### **AgExplorer**

The name of the organization's microsite that will help students explore careers within agriculture. Always use the phrase "300+ unique careers" when describing AgExplorer. When referring to the website, it's ok to use AgExplorer.FFA.org.  
agribusiness

### **agricultural/agriculture**

When used as an adjective (describing something), the term "agricultural" is appropriate (it's always agricultural education). When used as a noun, the term "agriculture" is correct. Note: always use agriculture teacher /instructor /educator/ student (remember that the teacher isn't agricultural, she's human. She teaches

agriculture.) The phrase "agricultural industry" is incorrect. Use either "agriculture" or the "industry of agriculture."

*The industry of agriculture encompasses 235 unique careers.*

*There are 235 unique careers in agriculture.*

### **agricultural education**

Term used in reference to the instructional program that includes FFA. Replaces the term "vocational agriculture" in most instances. Do not use "agriculture education." Lowercase unless the term is part of a title or formal name. If a high school teacher teaches agriculture, then she teaches agriculture, not agricultural education. Never use "agricultural science education." We will, however, make reference to the science connection in other verbiage, particularly the "science, business and technology of agriculture" phrase that works so well.

### **Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources**

Spell out full name on first reference. Use "AFNR" on second reference and thereafter. Uppercase Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources National Content Standards as well.

### **Agriculture Teachers Association of Texas**

On first reference, use the term Agriculture Teachers Association of Texas. On second reference it is acceptable to use the term ag teachers association.

### **agriculturist**

Someone who works in the industry of agriculture. Do not use agriculturalist.

### **agriscience**

Agriscience is the term for common use in reference to curriculum or career areas. Do not hyphenate.

### **American Star Awards**

Stars are named, not awarded. Chapter Star Farmer, State Star Farmer, etc. The four highest awards the organization can bestow are the American Star Farmer, American Star in Agribusiness, American Star in Agriscience and American Star in Agricultural Placement. Always use the full, formal title in formal writing. At FFA, we generally refer to the Star awards as a proper noun, and therefore, they are almost always capitalized.

## **ampersand (&)**

Only use an ampersand when it is part of an official title. Spell out in all other instances, unless space is an issue; then the & is OK to use.

## **B**

### **board of directors and/or board of trustees**

Never capitalize board of directors or board of trustees when they stand alone.

*The Texas FFA Association is headed by a board of directors.*

Capitalize them when linked with the organization's name.

*The Texas FFA Association Board of Directors met in January. The board passed a motion to...*

## **C**

### **career and technical education (CTE)**

The preferred term to the word "vocational." Uppercase when part of a formal title. The abbreviation CTE can be used after first reference.

### **career and leadership development event (CDE and LDE)**

Spell out on first reference. Use CDE/LDE on second reference and thereafter. When using "career development event(s)" or "leadership development event(s)," capitalize when the letters "FFA" are present, as the event now becomes a proper noun; do not capitalize without "FFA." When using the plural of the acronym, simply add an s; no apostrophe allowed (CDEs or LDEs). If you have already used the full name on first reference, use the acronym thereafter.

*...in the midst of the floriculture career development event.*

*Nancy participated in the FFA Parliamentary Procedure Leadership Development Event.*

*She placed in the National FFA Floriculture Career Development Event. Four members competed in this CDE.*

*As the floriculture CDE winner, she was interviewed by Tom Brand.*

### **chapter**

Capitalize the word "chapter" only when used with the name of a specific FFA chapter.

*The Salinas FFA Chapter is one of several FFA chapters participating in the community service event.*

Using only the name of the chapter without the word "chapter" is also acceptable.

*Salinas FFA is one of several FFA chapters participating in the community service event.*

Do not add the words "high school" to the chapter name unless it's officially part of the chapter name. It is understood that when the term "chapter" is used, it is referring to student chapters. Please specify when the term refers to alumni chapters.

### **corp or corps**

Do not use a period. National FFA Convention & Expo Courtesy Corps is the official name.

## **D**

### **degrees**

Exact titles for Texas FFA degrees include:

- American FFA Degree
- Lone Star FFA Degree
- Chapter FFA Degree
- Greenhand FFA Degree
- Discovery FFA Degree

## **E**

### **extracurricular**

No hyphen.

# F

## **4-H**

Use a hyphen between the number 4 and capital H.

## **FFA**

The official name is the National FFA Organization. Refer to the organization by the initials FFA. Do not use periods with the initials. Always treat the name of our organization with respect. On first reference, the full name, National FFA Organization, should be used and capitalized accordingly. For informal references, do not capitalize the word "national" with FFA, unless the full title is being used. It should always be referred to as FFA and not the FFA. The only time the word "the" should be used is in referring something that belongs to FFA.

*WRONG: John is a member of the FFA.*

*RIGHT: John is a member of FFA.*

*RIGHT: We attended the FFA workshop during the national convention and expo.*

## **FFA'er**

Refrain from using FFA'er when indicating an FFA member. "FFA member" is acceptable. Do not use "FFA student." Always use "FFA member."

## **FFA's**

Our brand is uncluttered and more powerful when the three letters FFA stand alone. Whenever possible, do not make the acronym possessive. Try to rework your phrase so that FFA stands alone. Attempt to avoid this when speaking as well as writing.

*WRONG: FFA's new programs*

*RIGHT: the new FFA programs*

## **FFA Creed**

On first reference, use FFA Creed. On second reference and after, use Creed. Always uppercase the "C" in "Creed" when referring to the FFA Creed. In general terms, "creed" is lowercase.

## **FFA degrees**

The names of FFA degrees should be capitalized and include the letters "FFA" on first reference, meaning the degrees become proper nouns. Discovery FFA Degree, Greenhand FFA Degree, Chapter FFA Degree, Lone Star FFA Degree, American FFA Degree, Honorary American FFA Degree. On second reference, they may be referenced more casually. The exception? Always capitalize "American."

*More than 2,400 FFA members received the organization's highest honor, the American FFA Degree.*

*He received his Greenhand degree last year.*

*She holds the American degree.*

## **FFA Week**

Use National FFA Week on first reference and FFA Week thereafter.

*Thousands of FFA members will celebrate National FFA Week this February.*

## **First Vice President**

Should never be 1st Vice President.

## **foundation**

See Texas FFA Foundation.

# **G**

## **general sessions**

There are five general sessions during the Texas FFA Convention. When referring to sessions in copy, lowercase.

## **Greenhand**

One word. No hyphen. The names of FFA degrees should be capitalized and include the letters "FFA" on first reference, meaning the degrees become proper nouns. On second reference, they may be referenced more casually.

## H

### **high school**

Two words. Capitalize only when part of a proper name.

### **high school agriculture**

Use "high school agriculture" only when referring to programs specifically for high school students (middle schools may feel left out). When referring to the instructional program, use the term "agricultural education." Use lowercase and do not abbreviate. It's "high school agriculture," not "high school ag."

### **Honorary American FFA Degree**

The names of FFA degrees should be capitalized and include the letters "FFA" on first reference, meaning the degrees become proper nouns. On second reference, they may be referenced more casually.

## I

### **intracurricular**

One word, no hyphen.

## J

## K

## L

### **Lone Star FFA Degree**

Two words. No hyphen. The names of FFA degrees should be capitalized and include the letters "FFA" on first reference, meaning the degrees become proper nouns. On second reference, they may be referenced more casually.

## M

### **mission**

In regard to the FFA mission, lowercase.

### **motto**

Do not capitalize the word "motto" in FFA motto.

## N

### **names**

After first reference in all hard news stories or press releases, use only the subject's last name. In feature stories, it is acceptable to use the subject's first name.

### **National FFA Organization**

The National FFA Organization changed to its present name in 1988, in recognition of the growth and diversity of agriculture and agricultural education. Refer to the organization by the acronym FFA.

*The National FFA Organization is located in Indianapolis.*

Express as "FFA" or "the organization" on second reference. Do not use the abbreviation NFFA. Ok to use the phrase "National FFA" when referring to both the organization and the foundation.

### **nonprofit**

One word. Do not use not-for-profit or non-profit.

### **nontraditional**

One word.

## O

### **officers**

See State FFA Officers or Texas FFA Officers.



## **Official Dress**

In all instances, uppercase.

## **on-site**

Never onsite. When the adjective "on-site" comes before the noun it is modifying, it takes the hyphen. When it comes after the noun, it takes no hyphen.

We have many activities on site. We have many on-site activities.

# **P**

## **past state officer**

Can use PNO on second reference, if needed.

## **postmarked**

One word. Do not hyphenate.

## **premier/premiere**

"Premier" means first in rank or performance. "Premiere" means debut of a performance, movie, etc.

## **principal/principle**

Principal is a noun and adjective meaning someone or something first in rank, authority, importance or degree. At FFA, we generally use principal to refer to a school principal, but it can also mean capital and monetary value. Principle is a noun that means a fundamental truth, doctrine or motivating force.

*Joe Smith is the principal at Pike High School.*

*He stands firm, deeply rooted in this principle.*

## **proficiency awards**

On first reference, use the official name: Texas FFA Agricultural Proficiency Awards. Proficiency awards should be written as follows: Texas FFA Agricultural Communications Proficiency Award.

## **Program of Activities (POA)**

Activities specified by the three standing committees, which are to be accomplished by the local chapter, district, region or state association. It is not referred to as the "Program of Work." On second reference and thereafter, use POA.

## R

### **record books**

Two words. Do not hyphenate.

### **record keeping**

Two words. Do not hyphenate.

### **resume**

Do not use accents.

## S

### **SAE**

The abbreviation for "supervised agricultural experience," which is defined as the individualized experience program designed in cooperation with the student, parents, agriculture instructor and, in some cases, employers to provide each student the opportunity to practice, in as near a real-life situation as possible, that which has been learned in the classroom. Correct use on first reference is "supervised agricultural experience (SAE)." Once you have defined the abbreviation, use it consistently thereafter within the context of a single document. SAE is a program, not a project. When using the plural, simply add an "s"; no apostrophe allowed (SAEs). It's OK to use "supervised agricultural experience."

### **service-learning**

Hyphenate in all instances.

### **state officers**

Do not uppercase.

### **STEM**

The acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math education. Always capitalize with no periods.

# T

## **task force**

One word. Do not hyphenate.

## **teammate(s)**

One word. Do not hyphenate.

## **Texas FFA Alumni Bylaws**

Use the official title on the first reference; use "bylaws" thereafter.

## **Texas FFA Association**

On first reference, use the term Texas FFA Association. On second reference it is acceptable to use the term Texas FFA.

## **Texas FFA Board of Directors**

Always use Texas FFA Board of Directors on first reference. After first reference, "board of directors" is appropriate.

## **Texas FFA Constitution and Bylaws**

When combined, use the full name on first reference. On second reference and thereafter, use "constitution and bylaws." When separated, use "Texas FFA Constitution" on first reference and "constitution" thereafter and "Texas FFA Bylaws" on first reference and "bylaws" thereafter.

## **Texas FFA Convention**

Refer to the annual meeting of Texas FFA as the "2016 Texas FFA Convention," or the "89th Annual Texas FFA Convention," or the "Texas FFA Convention" on first reference. The following are acceptable on second reference: "convention;" "state convention;" or just "convention." When referring to specific convention-only events, it is acceptable to use "convention" on its own.

## **Texas FFA Foundation**

On first reference, use the term Texas FFA Foundation. On second reference it is acceptable to use the term foundation.

## **Texas FFA Officers**

The correct name for the organization's state officers is the Texas FFA Officers. Capitalize whenever referring to this official group as a proper noun, but lowercase if referring casually to the group. In text, biographies and introductions, capitalize

only when the national officer title immediately precedes the student's name. Lowercase officer titles when they stand-alone. Do not hyphenate vice president.

### **Texas Team Ag Ed**

Texas Team Ag Ed is a united effort in promoting local program success and includes the following organizations and groups: Texas FFA Association, Texas FFA Foundation, Agriculture Teachers Association of Texas and the Texas Education Agency Agricultural Food and Natural Resources.

### **three-component model**

The full name is Three-Component Model for School-Based Agricultural Education. Do not spell out 3. The three-component model is NOT the three-circle model.

## **U**

### **U.S. Department of Agriculture**

Use full name in first reference. Use USDA after that.

### **U.S. Department of Education**

Both the national FFA advisor and national FFA executive secretary are employees of the U.S. Department of Education. Do not use "USDE" as this abbreviation could be confused with the U.S. Department of Energy. On second reference, use "the Department" or the "Department of Education."

### **United States**

Use periods in the abbreviation, U.S.

## **V**

### **vocational**

The more modern and acceptable term is career and technical education (spell out "and"; do not use "&"). The word "vocational" should only be used in the name Office of Vocational Education (OVAE) and in reference to legislation that contains the word "vocational" in the title.

# W

## **webpage**

Use as one word. Refers to a specific page within a website.

## **website**

Use as one word. Refers to the entire site, usually directed to the homepage. Do not italicize web addresses in copy.

# Y

# Z

A FEW TEXAS FFA / AGRICULTURE EDUCATION ABBREVIATIONS	
AAAE	American Association for Agricultural Education
AFNR	Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
ALDC	Area Leadership Development Coordinator
AO	Area Officer
ASF	Agriscience Fair
ATAT	Agriculture Teachers Association of Texas
CASE	Curriculum for Agricultural Science Education
CDE	Career Development Event
CTE	Career and Technical Education
CTSO	Career and Technical Student Organizations
DO	District Officer
FLS	Ford Leadership Scholars
LDE	Leadership Development Event

MANRRS	Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences
NAAE	National Association of Agricultural Educators
NASAE	National Association of Supervisors of Agricultural Education
NFA	New Farmers of America
PSO	Past State Officer
SAE	Supervised Agricultural Experience
SDE	Speaking Development Event
SLC	State Leadership Conference
SO	State Officer
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Math
TEA	Texas Education Agency
The Council	The National Council for Agricultural Education
TYFEA	Texas Young Farmer Educational Association, Inc.

The Texas FFA Association uses the Associated Press (AP) stylebook as its source; however, the Texas FFA Style Guide takes precedence over AP style on matters where the two guides differ. Additional standards may be determined as the organization adopts new words, phrases, and acronyms.