

Editorial Graphics and Publishing Services

The Manual is Just a *Guide*

Many of you help your principals craft correspondence (memos and letters) and, often, you find that your principals and supervisors have their own signature style, which may differ slightly from the guidance given in the correspondence manual.

Remember that the manual is just a *guide*.

Following are the key points to keep in mind as you work on correspondence:

1. Practice consistency in how you use words and phrases. For example, stick with either *Grade 9 students* or *ninth grade students* throughout the document (both are correct).
2. Do your research. Don't question the use of a word or phrase until you look it up. The dictionary is your friend.
3. Be clear and concise. Write so that there is nothing in your information that could be misunderstood.
 - Use the least amount of words to make your point.
 - Make sure all the facts are there and your contact information is accurate. That way, readers can get back to you if they should have questions.
4. Remember that your e-mail signature should include, at a minimum, the name of the sender and his or her position. For school-based personnel, the name of the school should be included. It is recommended that employees also include their work phone number. Other appropriate elements are the employee's work mailing address, fax number, and school or office web address.

Example of appropriate e-mail signature:

John Smith
Teacher
Montgomery County Middle School

Example of appropriate expanded e-mail signature:

John Smith
Teacher
Montgomery County Middle School
2000 Main Street
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Phone: 301-555-1212
Fax: 301-555-1212
www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/mcms

5. Get someone else to review a printed copy of your work before your principal or supervisor signs it. It is too easy to miss a word or make a typo when you review your own work. Even seasoned writers need to do this.