

Active Life's Blog

Writing Style Guide

1. Who is our audience?

Our target audience is our students, but we also want to reach out to the general public interested in language learning, sports, cultural exchange, and Japanese life and culture, which are topics that we explore.

2. Voice and tone

Voice and tone in writing are vital to establishing a consistent way to approach the readers. Of course, every writer has their style and unique voice, which is very important, but to have a unified way to talk to our audience, we have the subsequent suggestions:

Think of the voice in writing as personality, which is the unique way of writing that varies from person to person. And the tone as an emotion that emerges depending on the types of words used, which can change and cause different reactions.

We want the voice of our blog to be friendly, supportive, and positive. While respecting your unique way of writing, you can choose an informative topic or an anecdote; either way, try to make your writing tone between standard and informal to create closeness with the readers as if they were listening to a friend.

We intend to inform, make suggestions, share our experiences, and help people improve their language learning process while feeling integrated into Japanese society. That is why we suggest you always keep in mind your audience.

Since we are an open organization that targets people of all ages, religions, political views,

and different ways of thinking, it is better to use a neutral style with clear ideas that are easy to follow and that everybody can understand. Refrain from the use of a too-academic or specialized style.

3. What to avoid within your writing

As we explained on our website, we are an intercultural organization that works to bring together international and local communities in Japan. With that said, please avoid the following:

- Judging, cursing, criticizing, or blaming Japanese society or foreign residents. -
Sexist language.
 - Any racist, homophobic, xenophobic, misogynic comment or nuance. -
Any religious statement.
 - Comments on political parties or ideologies that create controversy. -
- Plagiarism: we don't accept articles with proven copy-paste.

4. Word counting

We accept articles from volunteer writers as follows:

Reviews: up to 300 words.

Personal experiences: up to 700 words.

Short essay-like article: up to 1200 words.

We give these numbers for orientation purposes only, you can always ask if you need to write a longer text, but we don't publish articles surpassing 2000 words.

5. Topics:

You can choose among these topics:

- **Language learning:** specifically about English, Spanish, and Japanese.
- **Life in Japan:** anecdotes, tips, study cases, travel, cultural similarities or differences.
- **Japanese culture:** food, traditional arts, martial arts, history, music, literature.
- **Language learning material reviews:** textbooks, podcasts, movies, series, and YouTube content, among others.
- **Cultural exchanges:** life experience in exchanges, information about upcoming events, and reports of past events.

Notes: We accept new topic proposals.

Scientific articles are accepted but must be informative and aimed at a general audience.

6. Format:

- Microsoft Word document.
- Times New Roman font, 12pt.
- Space between lines 1.5.
- Title with capitalized letters.

7. Japanese words transliteration

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, **transliterate** means “to represent or spell in the characters of another alphabet.” (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/>). We use the Hepburn transliteration system to write Japanese in the Roman alphabet, which is most commonly used among Westerners. If you have any doubts about it, please use this free tool:

<https://www.translitteration.com/transliteration/en/japanese/hepburn/>

When is necessary, we pluralize the loanwords from the Japanese that are already part of the English language, and most of them can be found in English dictionaries like:

Anime, Bonsai, Daikon, Dojo, Edamame, Emoji, Futon, Geisha, Haiku, Hibachi, Honcho, Judo, Jujutsu (or *jiu jitsu*), Kamikase, Kanban, Karaoke, Karate, Katana, Kimono, Koi, Manga, Miso, Mochi, Napa cabbage (*hakusai*), Ninja, Origami, Panko, Ramen, Rickshaw (from *jinrikisha*), Sake, Samurai, Sayonara, Sensei, Shiatsu, Shiba Inu, Skosh (from *sukoshi*), Soy, Sudoku, Sumo, Sushi, Tempura, Teriyaki, Tofu, Tsunami, Tycoon, Umami, Wabi-sabi, Wasabi, Zen.

For further information, visit: <https://blog.busuu.com/japanese-words-in-english/>

For citations and general writing rules, we use the APA style format: Find more on the APA website <https://apastyle.apa.org/>, or **here**, a free tool to generate APA citation formats with detailed explanations:

<https://www.easybib.com/guides/citation-guides/apa-format/apa-citation/>

When writing about a more elaborated or scientific topic, always cite your references and, if necessary, share the links from where you retrieved the information. References must be reliable; we do fact-checking for this kind of article.

8. How to be featured:

Choose a topic from the list above (if you don't find it, don't hesitate to make a suggestion) and send an email with your idea to info@activelifejapan.org with the following information:

- A brief introduction of yourself, including a short explanation of why you want to

collaborate with us.

- Suggested title or titles.

- The topic you want to cover and a summary (one paragraph is ok.)

We will contact you within 3 to 5 days after you send the proposal. If approved, we expect the complete article in about 1 or 2 weeks, depending on the topic or your disposition.

We look forward to your collaboration, and thanks for your interest.

References:

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