LWVMI Communication Guidelines

Introduction

One Voice

As members of the League of Women Voters of Michigan, we agree to **Speak with One Voice** when acting on behalf of the League. The League speaks with one voice through the president or designee in all forms of communication, LWVUS President or the Executive Director on national issues, LWVMI Co-Presidents or their designees concerning state issues and the local League President on local issues.

At the local League level, any posts to social media, publications or written statements should be approved by the local League President or designee. If ever in doubt about an item, local League Presidents should reach out to the LWVMI Co-Presidents for advice.

Although not the messaging authority, the LWVMI Communications Committee is available to assist with a variety of communications needs. We hope the contents of this manual provide guidance when crafting messages on behalf of the League.

One of LWV Michigan's goals is to maintain consistent and timely public messaging and visibility. It's important to us that our members feel confident as they reach out to voters on relevant issues.

A Word about the LWVMI Website

The LWVMI website is a great resource for lots of information. It is updated regularly.

- Advocacy
- Action Alerts
- Voter Services
- Member Resources
- Civic Resources
- Facebook/Instagram

Check it out at lwvmi.org

An LWV image of a diverse group of people with the statement "Informing Voters. Empowering People".

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

DEI considerations:

Whether you are communicating in person or online it is important to keep DEI principals in mind. When using photos, written materials, or when planning programs or actions, please use the DEI Lens.

https://www.lwv.org/league-management/diversity-equity-inclusion/dei-lens

Diversity in media content is essential when seeking to engage meaningful responses inclusive of people of color, people who identify as LGBT, people with disabilities, women, ETC.

Some additional information about accessibility of flyers, web content, and in person presentations will be noted throughout this document.

It Starts with Creating Accessible Documents

- document accessibility
  https://www.washington.edu/accesstech/documents/
- Create accessible PDF from word https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/create-accessible-pdfs-064625e0-56ea-4e16-ad71-3aa33bb4b7ed?ui=en-us&rs=en-us&ad=us
- Create Accessible PDFs and Remediation
  https://www.wichita.edu/services/mrc/Web_Services/pdf_remediation.php

Font: Rule of Thumb: 12-point font minimum when printing: Arial, Helvetica, Open Sans, and Verdana are best.

- **Alt text** is vital for someone who is blind or has low vision and uses assistive technology like a screen reader or text-to-speech program to access digital content because it's meant to accurately describe images to the user. This should be your main priority when writing alt text.

source: The Alt Text Issue - by Alexa Heinrich (substack.com)

Text boxes should be avoided. Even with alternative text they are inaccessible. Screen readers cannot navigate into text boxes, making the content in them invisible.

For more information:

National Center on Accessible Information Technology in Education (AccessIT)

AccessIT

Excellent resource page with quick access to specific questions and printable hand outs.

Guidance on Web Accessibility and the ADA - https://www.ada.gov/resources/web-guidance/#examples-of-website-accessibility-barriers

Communicating Effectively with People with Disabilities - https://www.ada.gov/topics/effective-communication/

Local League Website Management

Web accessibility is important. Recently there have been overlays used to accomplish accessibility but they fall short of the guidelines and can in some cases create more confusion.

 Wave Web evaluation Accessibility tool

https://wave.webaim.org/

WAVE® is a suite of evaluation tools that helps authors make their web content more accessible to individuals with disabilities.

A. General Web Design
1. Logo should be visible and clickable to take user back to home page.
2. The highest priority calls to action (CTA's) at a given time should be placed on the homepage "above the fold" so they are visible without scrolling. Examples include "Vote 411", Voter Registration, Events such as Candidate forums.
3. Include one set of clickable social media icons – only for the platforms used by the chapter.

4. Navigation bars should be easy to locate at the top or left of page and should be simple to use.
5. Sites should be fully responsive, so they work the same on desktop and mobile devices.
6. A "nice to have component" would be a page, portal, or link to Google Docs/Drive accessible only to members.

B. Content Considerations
1. No personal contact data should be published about members, including emails, phone numbers, etc.
2. The following categories of content are recommended for inclusion:
    i. Calls to action such as **Vote 411,** Voter Registration and Events such as Candidate Forums and Donate
    ii. Events and/or calendar
    iii. Newsletters and/or blogs, articles
    iv. League chapter contact information (excluding personal contact information), EG., chapter telephone, email and office address if applicable.
    v. Committees and contacts
    vi. Board members

C. Training
1. Workshop or tutorial so that all members are aware of the preferred protocols.
2. This training can include search engine optimization (SEO) basics, types of organic content to drive traffic to page, and blogging basics.

D. Ideas to drive traffic to website
1. Include a blog and/or include and format local newsletter or articles as blog posts (vs strictly a PDF or image link.)
2. Copy is written for the website, include words, terms and tags consistent with organic search engine optimization (SEO).

E. Other
1. Because events are the lifeblood of each chapter, it's recommended that LWVMI provide a consistent and workable calendar application as a plug-in. Ideally, there would be one calendar/event scheduling/registration app for the state and all chapters.

2. It might be beneficial to develop a survey of members about communication preferences and include a section on web sites. The survey could be implemented at the chapter level and customized.

League Approved Logos/Templates/Graphics

Please use the logos that have been approved by the LWVUS. The approved logos should not be altered in any way. However, it is okay to place another logo/graphic/text near the League logo, as long as it does not overlap the approved logo.

Example of approved logo.

Example of approved logo with added text.

Use the links below to access League-approved logos, templates, graphics. (If in doubt, please contact the Communications Committee.)

https://www.lwv.org/league-management/communications/logos-brand-standards

https://www.lwv.org/league-management/communications/templates-graphics

https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2022-08/LWVUS%20Canva%20Instructions_0822.pdf

- LWV images illustrating where to find information

Using Images

This section concerns images in any League print or online publication, websites, or social media.

Leagues should only use images, graphics, or videos that will not trigger a copyright violation. **Ignorance of a copyright is not a defense** and can cost a League significant fines if they are caught by the image's owner. Many owners use "web crawler", services that troll websites all over the world to find violators.

There are many websites where Leagues can find free images. See the list provided by LWVUS at their Image Use Guidance on LWVUS' website. Since some images on free websites still require attribution, **users are encouraged to be vigilant** about checking ownership of each image they use by doing a reverse image search using Google Images.

Besides the images found on websites that offer free Images, also free are:

- Images created by the federal government
- Images created by an owner that has been dead for 70 years or more
- Images found on LWVUS' Flickr site with many photos of LWV events
- Images or graphics furnished by LWVUS
- Images or graphics from LWV's democracy partners who furnish them for sharing purposes
- Photos or graphics created by a local League.
- Images in the Library of Congress' "Free Images"
- Images on the Smithsonian's Open Access site

Accessibility

Images should be described with "Alt text" which can be read by screen readers if the image doesn't show up or if the user is visually impaired.

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), creating and optimizing alt text is an essential part of accessible web design standards. (Right click on an image, then click View Alt Text. Write a short description.)

Social Media Best Practices

The main purpose of having an official presence on social media on behalf of the League of Women Voters is to build trust, elevate the League's messages, and promote events.

Social media can provide opportunities to reach a wider audience of all age groups and geographical locations. It provides a way for the LWV to educate voters on relevant issues and monitor consumers.

The LWV speaks with one voice.

Always keep this in mind in your communications on social media. When in doubt, always check with state (https://lwvmi.org/lwvmi-positions/) or national (https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/LWV_ImpactOnIssues2022-2024.pdf) policies and positions, or with your local League board and president."

For further reading: Social Media for Nonprofits

https://www.constantcontact.com/blog/social-media-for-nonprofits/

Visit the **LWVMI Website**: lwvmi.org for updated information.

- Image of a variety of social media logos.

Personal Social Media Use

Non-Partisanship: The LWV does not support nor oppose any political party or candidate for public office. The nonpartisan policy adds strength to the League's positions on issues and makes possible wide acceptance of League voter service and other educational activities.
At the same time, the League is a political organization and encourages members to participate in government or even a political party. However, posts or comments are made as an individual. Board members of a high public profile should refrain from comments that can be isolated as partisan.

For personal social media accounts: League members, particularly those in leadership positions, should keep in mind the following:

Visibility	What you post/like/tweet may reflect on the League. - Think before you post or engage with comments/replies to your posts/tweets - Do NOT engage with trolls - Consider if you need a caveat on your profile: "Views represented on this account do not reflect those of the League of Women Voters."	
Political not Partisan	**Okay to:** - Re-tweet politicians when their tweets align with our advocacy - Have your own political views/ take care if they differ from LWV's. - Tag and call on politicians to take action that aligns with our advocacy **NOT okay to**: - Respond to politicians directly - Call out a party as being good or bad - Advocate for how people should vote on candidates - Retweet or share a political party's post	
Election Season	**When elected officials become candidates:** Refrain from retweeting or sharing any candidate posts once someone has declared their candidacy for an office.	

For examples of non-partisan social media posts and more detailed

information: https://www.lwv.org/league-management/guides/nonpartisanship-social-media

Facebook

picture of Facebook logo

Facebook provides an easy and effective way to promote your content and communicate with both League members and **the public at large.**

- **Elevate** the good work your League is doing
- **Highlight** the impact your League and other Leagues are having across the country
- **Share** information on priority issues
- **Increase engagement** by sharing information and fostering dialogue

Social Media Platforms are **external tools** to reach beyond your membership; internal messages and communications should be shared on other channels and **not** on Facebook.

		Dimensions
Content	✓ News articles quoting or citing your League, other Leagues or on priority issues ✓ Blog posts by your League, other Leagues, and partner organizations ✓ Press releases or statements ✓ Photos/videos from your events, including voter registration drives, candidate forums, etc. ✓ Political cartoons or relevant graphics/memes (Be very careful!) ✓ New resources from your League, other Leagues, or partner organizations ✓ Action alerts or other calls to action on local, state, or national issues	
Tone	✓ Informal ✓ Conversational	
Tagging	✓ Collaborating organizations ✓ Media sources ✓ League photos	
Frequency	✓ Few times per week ✓ Daily ✓ Multiple times per day.	
Graphics	✓ Shared Image- The picture you are posting to your feed	1200 x 360
	✓ Cover Photo- A header to your profile page	828 x 315
	✓ Profile Image- On top left of your profile page & next to your account name on all posts	180 x 180

For more details: https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2018-06/Facebook%20Guidelines.pdf(See Appendix 1?)

LWVMI Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/lwvmichigan/

X (Formerly Twitter)

The LWVUS communications team is closely monitoring social media trends and is aware of the X rebrand (formerly Twitter).

The little blue bird is officially gone. On July 22, Twitter changed its name to X. As of writing this, the rebrand is just a name change, but we anticipate more changes in the coming months.

LWVUS will continue to remain on X for the time being. If state and local Leagues choose to deprioritize the platform in their communications, we recommend that they don't deactivate their accounts and instead focus on Meta platforms and TikTok. This will allow Leagues to safeguard their "names" and preserve old, valuable content.

Leagues can find additional resources and best practices for social media here. We will continue to monitor X and will let Leagues know ASAP if our strategy changes.

-LWVUS 8/2023

Instagram

OVERVIEW

Instagram is a photo-based mobile app where users share their life stories and events through images and videos. Content is posted to a feed where followers can reshare, comment, and like. Instagram can be used to promote work done by your League and engage with supporters and fellow League members all while expanding your audience.

Instagram is a great platform for sharing the mood of your organization and inspiring followers with your energy.

YOUR INSTAGRAM PROFILE

Your League's Instagram profile will feature your profile picture, a handle, and bio, as well as a collage of your posts.

- **Name**: Your Instagram name appears next to your handle when people come across your tweets in their feed. We recommend one of these formats for your Instagram name: League of Women Voters of Wichita or LWV of Wichita.
- **Profile Photo**: Your profile picture is the first image users visiting your page will see. It also appears next to your handle when you make a post and in Instagram Stories. You can utilize one of our alternative logos for your League profile picture.
- **Handle**: An Instagram handle is your username and unique to your account. Your handle is how other Instagram users can find, tag, or mention your account and is signified with the "@" symbol. All local League handles should denote the organization and your location (ex. League of Women Voters of Franklin County | @LWVFranklin).
- **Bio**: An Instagram bio is a short description of your account. Bios sit underneath your profile picture and can be up to 150 characters. For guidance on writing your bio, check out our organizational description templates.
- **Link**: See website/link guidance under the "Frequently Asked Questions" section.

We recommend that Leagues try to have the same handle and bio throughout all social media platforms. However, some handles may already be in use. For consistency, we encourage Leagues to try to make their handles and bios similar to one another across platforms.

The LWVUS Instagram is at
https://www.instagram.com/leagueofwomenvoters/

LWVMI Instagram: #lwvmich

TYPES OF CONTENT

- Photos/videos from your events, including voter registration drives, candidate forums, etc.
- Simple graphics that amplify your League's events, priorities, calls to actions, and resources.
- Relevant graphics/memes.

HASHTAGS

Hashtags are widely used on Instagram. Hashtags are words or phrases marked with the # symbol and are used to collect all content with that tag in one place. When you click on a hashtag, it will bring you to a page with other posts tagged with that same hashtag.

Tips for Using Hashtags:

- **Avoid using punctuation in hashtags**. However, hashtags can use numbers (ex. #100YearsLWV)
- **Use hashtags centered on the League's priority issues or specific to your community** (ex. #votingrights, #ElectionDayTX, #GOTV, #womensrights, #mapoli)
- **Be mindful of how many hashtags you use**. Some brands overuse hashtags with the goal of getting more likes and followers. This is not going to get the followers they want and will likely attract spammy comments. Hootsuite recommends that around 11 hashtags per post is a good starting place!

ENGAGEMENT

Comments

Most public interactions on Instagram are done through comments sections on posts. To respond to a comment, tap the speech bubble under the post or video and type your comment. You can mention other Instagram users in comments by placing the "@" symbol in front of their username. (Ex. "@lwvfranklin Check out this awesome resource!")

Tagging

13

When uploading a photo, you can engage with other users by tagging them! To tag someone, tap the "Tag People" button after uploading your photo. Instagram will ask you to enter a username. Their tag will show up in your photo as a black, translucent bubble. When you tag someone in a photo, it will show up on their profile page under "Photos of You".

Tagging is a great feature to use when collaborating with other organizations or sharing images with others featured. Users can tag your League in photos, so make sure to like and share on Stories!

INSTAGRAM STORIES & HIGHLIGHTS

Instagram Stories are short images or videos that disappear from your profile after 24 hours. Stories are a great way to interact with other users and reshare content. To reshare an Instagram post to your story, tap the send arrow icon below the post or video in your feed. Select the "Add post to your story" option and share it to "Your Story". Users sharing posts or videos to their story can also add text, stickers, or polls to encourage engagement. Users can view the Instagram Stories of their followers at the top of their home feed.

Users can also keep Instagram Stories pinned to their profile with highlights. Highlights remain on a user's profile indefinitely and can be edited, rearranged, or deleted. Learn more about Instagram highlights at https://www.lwv.org/league-management/templates-graphics/social-media-guide

We strongly recommend that Leagues avoid "Regrams" or using third-party apps to reshare content from Instagram.

INSTAGRAM REELS

Instagram Reels are very similar to TikTok videos (see the "TikTok" section below). Reels are a new way to create, engage, and discover new content on Instagram. Similar to TikToks, Reels are 1080 x 1920 pixels, short-form videos.

You can create your videos within the Instagram app by using effects, filters, stickers, and music. Reels are a great way to increase your reach on Instagram since the platform's algorithm currently favors video content. Your Reels are more accessible to non-followers through the discovery page.

14

We recommend repurposing your TikTok content for Instagram Reels. Learn more on how to create Reels by visiting https://www.lwv.org/league-management/templates-graphics/social-media-guide

PHOTO DIMENSIONS FOR INSTAGRAM

All photo dimensions are in pixels. Please note that photo dimensions are subject to change.

For up-to-date information, visit: https://www.lwv.org/league-management/templates-graphics/social-media-guide

TIK TOK & LINKEDIN

Note: The LWVMI does not currently have accounts with Tik Tok or LinkedIn. The information for these platforms is provided here for future use.

LWV US *does* have accounts on TikTok: https://www.tiktok.com/@lwvus and LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/league-of-women-voters/

TikTok

Overview

TikTok is a social media platform centered around short-form 15-20 second videos. Although TikTok is widely used across different age groups, it is exceptionally popular among younger folks, specifically Gen Z. This platform is great for reaching a younger audience through "edutainment" content – educational entertainment. Videos are also more likely to be viewed by a wider audience regardless of your account's following status due to TikTok's unique ["For You Page" (FYP)](#).

Learn how to create your League's TikTok with this [step-by-step guide](#).

TikTok Best Posting Practices

Ideally, your TikToks should be no longer than 45 seconds. Unlike other social media platforms, TikTok rewards watch time over engagement. Videos should be authentic, organic, and short. TikTok allows creators to film and edit within the app to make the process easier.

- "Selfie style" videos are ideal on the platform.
- Educate, story tell, and inform your audience through entertainment.
- Incorporate different content creators in your videos.
- Engage in trends – including trending audio, memes, and dances (if you're comfortable with that!).
- Engage and "respond" to other user's videos with TikTok duets and stitches.
- Make the most of TikTok's huge selection of filters and effects.
- Use impactful call to actions in your videos
- Use concise and engaging captions, along with 3-5 relevant hashtags (ex: #VotingRights, #LearnOnTikTok)
- Make your videos accessible to all with captions.

Creating videos should be fun! Here's a guide to help make your creative process easier.

Types of Content

We recommend repurposing content from past social posts into video format.

- Promoting upcoming election information.
- Sharing footage from your League's events.
- Calls to action on local, state, and national issues.
- How prospective members can get involved in empowering voters and defending democracy.
- Women's history spotlights.

Tone

The tone for these videos should be less formal and more authentic than on other social media platforms. Your TikTok should provide educational information, empower viewers, and encourage prospective members to get involved in their local League. These videos should be fun and lighthearted. Lead with a conversational tone rather than a scripted tone.

Video Dimensions for TikTok

16

All video dimensions are in pixels. Please note that video dimensions are subject to change.

For up-to-date information, visit:
https://www.lwv.org/league-management/templates-graphics/social-media-guide

LWVUS on TikTok: https://www.tiktok.com/@lwvus

Linkedin

Overview

LinkedIn is a social media platform where professionals and organizations can connect, network, and share resources. Like Facebook, LinkedIn posts are shared to a user's personalized feed, where they can reshare, like, or comment on a connection's content. LinkedIn can be used to promote your League's work and develop your membership by amplifying volunteer opportunities.

Creating a LinkedIn Page

A LinkedIn Page allows organizations and businesses to share content, promote career opportunities, and connect with users. Like Facebook, LinkedIn Pages can draft and share content. Users who like your page will receive updates in their feed. Additionally, pages on LinkedIn allow administrators to create and share professional opportunities available with their organization.

Learn how to create a LinkedIn page for your League here:

https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/a543852

Presentations

Local Leagues may need to develop a presentation on a specific topic related to their community. Using slides as visual aids may help get your message across to your audience. PowerPoint is a popular software used to create slides. Links to using PowerPoint follow.

Regardless of your audience, it is important to ask about accommodation for full participation in a presentation. The general guideline is to ask, "Do you need any accommodations to participate in this event?". This is a good thing to do even if you think you know your audience. Some disabilities are not visible but can affect reading, writing, or other communication needs. There may be different needs depending on whether the presentation is in person or on zoom and this will be detailed in the appendix.

It's easy to forget that the slides are not the presentation, the presenter is. The slides are visual aids. The presenter should be very familiar with the subject matter. This will allow them to speak with confidence and in a conversational manner, which will keep the audience interested. Think of it as telling a story.

One of the first steps in developing your message is to determine your audience. Knowing your audience is critical. But go one step further - be your audience. When building a presentation consider the demands on a viewer's time and their level of interest, put yourself in their shoes.

When deciding on what information is necessary, ask yourself this:
1. What is the goal of this presentation? (& what does the audience need to reach that goal?)
2. What is the take-away message? (What is the most important thing I want my audience to remember?)
3. What resources can I provide for further information? (How can I reinforce the message?)

Determine the Target Audience

As mentioned, the presentation design should reflect the intended audience. Typical audiences might be:

- League Members
- Issue Champions
- High School Students
- The Public

League Members:
1. Members seeking more information on a particular topic.
2. Training the trainer- Training session for LWV members on a particular issue. Messages/presentations to this group may need to be a little longer and more detailed.

Issue Champions:
1. League members or members of the public who are already on board with or leaning toward an issue. (Sort of like "preaching to the choir"). Messages/presentations to this group may be a little longer and more detailed.

-Image of a church choir

High School Students: Young, new voters.
Young government/civics learners.

-Image of high school student

-Image of people at work in an office

The Public: Can be divided into 4 types:
People in the community, who are:

1. ***Tuned-in and seeking more information***. They are up on the issues but want more information.
   (Again, "preaching to the choir"). But they are still an important audience since they may share information with friends/family. This group may be more open to detailed information and willing to spare the time to listen.

2. ***Busy but interested***. These are people who have little free time but still want/need information on a topic/issue. They might not be able to attend a Townhall meeting but could watch a short (10-15 minute) presentation on their phone during a lunch break.

3. ***Not tuned-in but not dug-in.*** These are people who do not usually seek out information on an issue but are open to listening. They can be reached but will not tolerate lengthy presentations. Very short, quick messages (2-3 minutes) may be in order. Think of it as "planting a seed".

4. ***Apathetic.*** These are people who say they are uninterested in political issues. Maybe. But, they still need to hear the message because many of them cast a ballot. "Plant a seed".

 Image of boy yawning while friend is talking.

Accessibility
For information on making Power Point presentations accessible to all, please visit:

https://www.perkins.org/resource/7-steps-creating-accessible-powerpoint-slideshow/

Focus
When designing a presentation for League members, issue champions, or the public, think about what information is critical. Even though they may be willing to give you their time, they will also appreciate concise, relevant information. League members are still human and can get easily distracted. Many experts agree that people in the audience start to drift after about 10 minutes!

Here are some tips for effective presentations. You may not use everything from the following two pages. Use what works for your situation.

1. **Show your Passion and Connect with your Audience**
It's hard to be relaxed and be yourself when you're nervous. But time and again, the great presenters say that the most important thing is to connect with your audience, and the best way to do that is to let your passion for the subject shine through.

Be honest with the audience about what is important to you and why it matters. Be enthusiastic and honest, and the audience will respond.

 2. **Focus on your Audience's Needs**
Your presentation needs to be built around what your audience is going to get out of the presentation.

As you prepare the presentation, you always need to bear in mind what the audience needs and wants to know, not what you can tell them.
While you're giving the presentation, you also need to remain focused on your audience's response and react to that. You need to make it easy for your audience to understand and respond.

3. **Keep it Simple: Concentrate on your Core Message**
When planning your presentation, you should always keep in mind the question:
What is the key message (or three key points) for my audience to take away?
You should be able to communicate that key message very briefly.

Some experts recommend a 30-second 'elevator summary', others that you can write it on the back of a business card or say it in no more than 15 words. Whichever rule you choose, the important thing is to keep your core message focused and brief. And if what you are planning to say doesn't contribute to that core message, don't say it.

4. **Smile and Make Eye Contact with your Audience**
This sounds very easy, but a surprisingly large number of presenters fail to do it.

If you smile and make eye contact, you are building rapport, which helps the audience to connect with you and your subject. It also helps you to feel less nervous, because you are talking to individuals, not to a great mass of unknown people. To help you with this, make sure that you don't turn down all the lights so that only the slide screen is visible. Your audience needs to see you as well as your slides.

5. **Start Strongly**
The beginning of your presentation is crucial. You need to grab your audience's attention and hold it.

They will give you a few minutes' grace in which to entertain them, before they start to switch off if you're dull. So don't waste that on explaining who you are. Start by entertaining them. Try a story (see tip 7 below), or an attention-grabbing (but useful) image on a slide.

6. **Remember the 10-20-30 Rule for Slideshows**
This is a tip from Guy Kawasaki of Apple. He suggests that slideshows should:
Contain no more than 10 slides;
Last no more than 20 minutes; and
Use a font size of no less than 30 point.
This last is particularly important as it stops you trying to put too much information on any one slide. This whole approach avoids the dreaded 'Death by PowerPoint'.
As a general rule, slides should be the sideshow to you, the presenter. A good set of slides should be no use without the presenter, and they should definitely contain less, rather than more, information, expressed simply.
If you need to provide more information, create a bespoke handout, and give it out after your presentation.

7. **Tell Stories**
Human beings are programmed to respond to stories.

Stories help us to pay attention, and also to remember things. If you can use stories in your presentation, your audience is more likely to engage and to remember your points afterwards. It is a good idea to start with a story, but there is a wider point too: you need your presentation to act like a story.

Think about what story you are trying to tell your audience and create your presentation to tell it.

Finding The Story Behind Your Presentation
To effectively tell a story, focus on using at least one of the two most basic storytelling mechanics in your presentation:

Focusing On Characters – People have stories; things, data, and objects do not. So ask yourself "who" is directly involved in your topic that you can use as the focal point of your story.

For example, instead of talking about cars (your company's products), you could focus on specific characters like:

The drivers the car is intended for – people looking for speed and adventure. The engineers who went out of their way to design the most cost-effective car imaginable.

A Changing Dynamic – A story needs something to change along the way. So, ask yourself "What is not as it should be?" and answer with what you are going to do about it (or what you did about it).

For example… Did hazardous road conditions inspire you to build a rugged, all-terrain jeep that any family could afford? Did a complicated and confusing food labelling system lead you to establish a color-coded nutritional index so that anybody could easily understand it?
(To see 15 more actionable storytelling tips, see Nuts & Bolts Speed Training's post on Storytelling Tips.)

8. **Use your Voice Effectively**
The spoken word is actually a pretty inefficient means of communication, because it uses only one of your audience's five senses. That's why presenters tend to use visual aids, too. But you can help to make the spoken word better by using your voice effectively.

Varying the speed at which you talk, and emphasizing changes in pitch and tone all help to make your voice more interesting and hold your audience's attention. (For more about this, see our page on Effective Speaking.)

9. **Use your Body Too**
It has been estimated that more than three quarters of communication is non-verbal. That means that as well as your tone of voice, your body language is crucial to getting your message across. Make sure that you are giving the right messages: body language to avoid includes crossed arms, hands held behind your back or in your pockets, and pacing the stage.

Make your gestures open and confident, and move naturally around the stage, and among the audience too, if possible.

10. **Relax, Breathe and Enjoy**
If you find presenting difficult, it can be hard to be calm and relaxed about doing it. One option is to start by concentrating on your breathing. Slow it down, and make sure that you're breathing fully. Make sure that you continue to pause for breath occasionally during your presentation.

Source: https://www.skillsyouneed.com/present/presentation-tips.html

Younger Audiences

To keep a young person's attention, it may be beneficial to make the presentation colorful, eye-catching, engaging and a little bit fun.

- Consider age, interest, and special challenges.
- Be consistent in use of color and format, adding enough interest to keep the students' attention.
- Headlines and supporting text should be uniform and consistent.
- Photos and attention-grabbing images are helpful for keeping an audience's attention.
  Engage your audience by asking questions, having them raise their hands or stand, or have them comment.

How to Use PowerPoint Software

Here are a couple of videos to help you learn how to use the available tools in PowerPoint.

Beginners Level 1- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7Tku3_RGPs

Beginners Level 2- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YcOq9LnBshY

Remember:

Keep it simple. Less text, larger text.

Avoid asking the viewer to read a bunch of statistics.

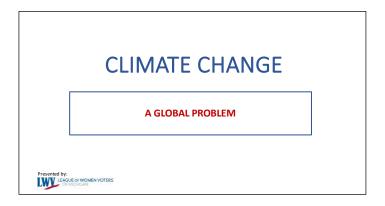*The audience wants to hear what YOU have to say.*

YOU can provide important information while staying on one slide.

*Please note: Materials for organized campaigns like Promote the Vote, National Popular Vote, or Voters not Politicians, may not be altered in any way. If in doubt, please check with LWVMI VP Advocacy or another member of the State Board.
   Contact the Board of Directors at https://lwvmi.org/board-of-directors/

Compare Slides

Let's say you want to do a presentation on climate change. Since it is such a huge topic and there are many factors, you may want to narrow the focus to a couple of simple things an individual can do to help mitigate the crisis. For example: how the food we raise and eat affects climate change.
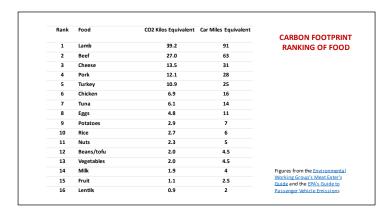

A plain slide with text "Climate Change".

While not bad, this slide doesn't inspire urgency.

- A slide of Planet Earth with text "Destroying our only Home".

This slide stresses urgency and relatability.

Rank	Food	CO2 Kilos Equivalent	Car Miles Equivalent
1	Lamb	39.2	91
2	Beef	27.0	63
3	Cheese	13.5	31
4	Pork	12.1	28
5	Turkey	10.9	25
6	Chicken	6.9	16
7	Tuna	6.1	14
8	Eggs	4.8	11
9	Potatoes	2.9	7
10	Rice	2.7	6
11	Nuts	2.3	5
12	Beans/tofu	2.0	4.5
13	Vegetables	2.0	4.5
14	Milk	1.9	4
15	Fruit	1.1	2.5
16	Lentils	0.9	2

CARBON FOOTPRINT RANKING OF FOOD

Figures from the Environmental Working Group's Meat Eater's Guide and the EPA's Guide to Passenger Vehicle Emissions

A slide listing a lot of numbers.

Great information but a lot to read. Your audience will not know whether to focus on the text or on you.

A slide showing a picture of livestock.

Instead, show them a picture and tell them the story

Video Presentations

-YouTube logo

Tips and Best Practices

Make your videos short and concise. Keep your video clips long enough to captivate your audience's attention, but short enough to incite curiosity. Your goal is to maintain the viewer's interest. Remember, the optimal length is no longer than 4-7 minutes.

Keep to the point. Make your goals and objectives known at the start of the presentation and don't stray from the message. Your text and visuals should relate to the subject matter and not detract from the goal of your video presentation.

Add engaging elements. Enrich your video presentation with useful and interesting content. For example, add music, colorful infographic, embed YouTube videos, or insert interactive quizzes to effectively engage learners.

End on a meaningful note. Leave your audience something they can take away from the presentation. An idea, a short story, a visual representation of your product, or even a link to your website works to provide the strong ending needed to create a lasting impression.

Source: https://www.ispringsolutions.com/blog/how-to-create-a-video-presentation-with-ispring-presenter#tips-and-best-practices-for-making-video-presentations

Accessibility

YouTube has options for captioning your presentation. Here's how:

Create subtitles & captions.

1. Sign into YouTube Studio.
2. From the left menu, select Subtitles.
3. Click the video that you'd like to edit.
4. Click ADD LANGUAGE and select your language.
5. Under subtitles, click ADD.

Narrators Bureau

Recording a presentation can be challenging, especially if you want it to be as polished as possible. League members with **experience and good voices** are available to narrate your presentation/video. Contact the LWVMI Communications Committee for information on how to use this service.

Filming/Photography Waivers/Release

- Sample of LWV Waiver/Release form

NOTICE OF FILMING AND PHOTOGRAPHY

When you enter a League of Women Voters (LWV) event or program, you enter an area where photography, audio, and video recording may occur.

By entering the event premises, you consent to interview(s), photography, audio recording, video recording and its/their release, publication, exhibition, or reproduction to be used for news, web casts, promotional purposes, telecasts, advertising, inclusion on websites, social media, or any other purpose by LWV and its affiliates and representatives.

Images, photos and/or videos may be used to promote similar LWV events in the future, highlight the event and exhibit the capabilities of LWV. You release LWV, its officers and employees, and each and all persons involved from any liability connected with the taking, recording, digitizing, or publication and use of interviews, photographs, computer images, video and/or or sound recordings.

By entering the event premises, you waive all rights you may have to any claims for payment or royalties in connection with any use, exhibition, streaming, web casting, televising, or other publication of these materials, regardless of the purpose or sponsoring of such use, exhibiting, broadcasting, web casting, or other publication irrespective of whether a fee for admission or sponsorship is charged. You also waive any right to inspect or approve any photo, video, or audio recording taken by LWV or the person or entity designated to do so by LWV.

You have been fully informed of your consent, waiver of liability, and release before entering the event.

LWV.ORG | 1233 20th STREET NW, SUITE 500 WASHINGTON, DC 20036 | 202-429-1965

- Sample of LWV Notice of Filming

https://www.lwv.org/league-management/templates-graphics/photovideo-release-template

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the editor and op-eds can be a great way to draw attention to your work and spread your message widely. Here are some tips to keep in mind when crafting and pitching LTEs and op-eds.

Letter to the editor

A letter to the editor (LTE) is a short response (usually 250 words or less) to an article or reaction to a news event. As such, it is necessary to make only one or two succinct points in your letter. Sometimes an LTE is a better choice than an op-ed because it is more likely to get published and/or it will get published faster.

Things to keep in mind when writing a letter to the editor:

- Look up your publication's word limit for LTEs, as well as any other submission guidelines.
- Sign the letter off from one or two individual representatives.
- Identify your specific League name in the body of your letter.
- Keep your angle local.

For a Letter to the Editor template:
https://www.lwv.org/league-management/voter-services/gotv-letter-editor-template

See next page for the template.

Example Letter to the Editor template:

DATE]

[NAME & TITLE OF EDITOR]

[ADDRESS]

To the editor:

November 8, 2022, is a very important Election Day! As president of the **[INSERT LEAGUE NAME]** League of Women Voters, I'd like to encourage your readers to make a voting plan. Voting is our way to make a difference and influence our communities, and developing your own personal voting plan will ensure that your voice is heard.

The League of Women Voters' election information website, VOTE411.org, is a one-stop shop for everything you need to develop your voting plan. At VOTE411.org, you can find your polling place, check voter ID laws **[ONLY INCLUDE IF RELEVANT IN YOUR STATE]**, and see early voting periods and locations **[ONLY INCLUDE IF RELEVANT IN YOUR STATE]**. You can also look up your ballot by entering your address — this will show you all the candidates and issues you can vote for this election, along with candidate responses to our nonpartisan questions and the ability to compare them side-by-side on where they stand on the issues.

[IF EARLY VOTING IS UNDERWAY IN YOUR STATE:] The League of Women Voters encourages all voters to vote early if possible — either in person or by mail — because it relieves polling places from extra-long lines on Election Day *and it's way easier for you!*

Putting together a plan will help you make sure you get to the polls with all the information you need. You can also encourage your friends and family to form their own election plans. Check out our checklist to make your plan.

Whichever way you choose to vote this year, know that by doing so you are making democracy work.

[YOUR NAME]

[YOUR LEAGUE NAME] President

30

Opinion Editorial (Op-Ed)

Different from a letter to the editor, an op-ed is a longer-form essay (500 to 800 words) on a specific topic aimed at making a case to the public for an explicit action.

It's important to find an angle for your topic that is specific and clear. When writing an op-ed, it can be tempting to use the opportunity to tell your audience everything you think they need to know, but that is always too much for one piece. Look for a unique, newsworthy angle. A successful op-ed lays out its specific thesis clearly and explains it in around 800 words.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

UNLESS DIRECTED BY THE STATE, LOCAL LEAGUES SHOULD ONLY WRITE THEM FOR LOCAL ISSUES AND ONLY IF THERE IS A LEAGUE POSITION.

IF THE ISSUE IS AT THE STATE LEVEL, LWVMI WILL EITHER PROVIDE A TEMPLATE OR WRITE AND SUBMIT THE OP-ED.

Things to consider when writing and pitching an op-ed:

- Pick a specific and clear topic – look for a unique angle or newsworthy hook
- Keep references based in your state/community
- Aim for 500 to 800 words
- Have one designated author; you can use first-person pronouns, and other members can help ghost-write
- Try to incorporate a call to action
- Identify the author's title and your specific League name
- Only pitch your op-ed to one publication at a time; this piece will be "an exclusive"
- Paste the entirety of your op-ed in the body of your email to the opinion editor, and precede it with a short paragraph (pitch) explaining why you think the piece is good for them to publish right now
- Make your pitch specific to the publication you're pitching to

See the next page for an example.

5/11/2022

This op-ed was originally published in the [News & Observer](#).

The members of the League of Women Voters of North Carolina celebrated Mother's Day with heavy hearts. But we are resolved to ensure that all people have equal access to reproductive rights.

We are experiencing an attack on the right of anyone with a uterus to make their own reproductive decisions. It intensified last week with news concerning a leaked draft of a Supreme Court opinion indicating a court majority is poised to overturn Roe v. Wade, the 1973 decision that legalized abortion.

Let's be clear: Abolishing the constitutional right to make choices about reproductive rights does not do away with abortions. It just eliminates safe and legal procedures. And the effects will not be felt equally.

According to an Associated Press analysis, minority women, who already have less access to healthcare, will be negatively impacted most. It said: "If you are Black or Hispanic in a conservative state that already limits access to abortions, you are far more likely than a white woman to have one. And if the U.S. Supreme Court allows states to further restrict or even ban abortions, minority women...will bear the brunt of it..."

Without the legal equality guaranteed by the 28th Amendment — the Equal Rights Amendment — hostile legislators will continue to overturn reproductive rights, and also gut other laws that have brought us the equality we have. Publication and enforcement of the Equal Rights Amendment is literally a matter of life and death for millions. This is no time for silence.

North Carolina voters must understand candidates' stances before they vote. They must write to elected officials. Tell them that reproductive rights are human rights. Everyone deserves bodily autonomy. No exceptions.

Press Releases Basics

Press releases are an essential element of any public relations strategy. These short, compelling documents detail product releases, event announcements and other newsworthy items a company produces. Considering that journalists are flooded with potential stories and pitches, making yours stand out from the pack is crucial. While the format for a press release is basic, the content of the release should be anything but.

1. **Grab attention with a good headline.**

The beginning of a press release -- just as with a magazine article, book or promotional pamphlet -- is the most important. Your headline should be as engaging as it is accurate.

2. **Get right to the point in the first paragraph.**

Get the message of your press release out quickly. Every important point should be addressed in the first few sentences. The subsequent paragraphs should be for supporting information.

3. **Include hard numbers.**

Pack your press release with hard numbers that support the significance of your product or announcement. If you're claiming a trend, you need proof to back it up. Quantify your argument and it will become much more compelling.

4. **Make it grammatically flawless.**

Proofread your press release -- and let a few other people proofread it as well -- before sending it out. Even a single mistake can dissuade a reporter from taking you seriously.

5. **Include quotes whenever possible.**

There is a source of natural color that cannot be replicated: quotes. Including a good quote from someone in the company or close to the product/event can give a human element to the press release.

6. **Include your contact information.**

A common oversight that can render a press release ineffectual is a lack of contact information for reporters to follow up with. Don't forget to include an email address and phone number on the release (preferably at the top of the page).

7. **One page is best -- and two is the maximum.**

As with most good writing, shorter is usually better. Limit yourself to one page, though two pages is acceptable.

-*Adapted from article by **Davis Shay,** Co-founder, President & General Manager – Media & Telecom, Kaltura*

#
End with boiler

Example Press Release:

- *For more examples, go to https://lwvmi.org/ and look under Media.*

Flyers/Posters

A well thought out, well-designed flyer should be:

- **Eye-catching** — enough to make people stop and take an interest in reading it.
- **Targeted** — the flyer needs to speak directly to the audience you're targeting.
- **Informative** — people should know what the flyer is advertising and where they can find out more.
- **Convincing** — the flyer should get people excited about your product, service, or event.

Example of flyer

Adapted from https://venngage.com/blog/flyer

Creating Accessible Flyers & Newsletters

1. Don't overload the flyer with too much information.
2. Use actual text rather than images or pictures of text.
3. Use font that is clear and easy to read.
4. Don't use a busy background. ...
5. Use high contrast colors & images.
6. Label images with alternative text.

Misinformation and Disinformation

Misinformation: incorrect information but not deliberately created to cause harm

Disinformation: incorrect information but deliberately created to cause harm

Mal-information: information based on reality but distorted to inflict harm. (Most dangerous)

HOW DOES IT SPREAD?

Cross-Channel Repetition:

When an entity posts the same post across several channels (FB, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) at the same time. People tend to believe something when they hear it repeatedly. Repetition tricks our brain to accepting something as truth.

Coordinated Sharing:

Established accounts (Daily Wire, Western Journal) coordinate information sharing to increase impact.

Topic Momentum: Long-term spikes of a particular message.

Local & in-network sharing: Most dangerous because it amplifies the message. When we respond to a negative post, people in our network will see both that and the original message, which they may not have otherwise seen.

Truth sandwich: (Reality, spin, reality) Use this technique rather than retweet/ repost bad information:

Do **NOT** share the original post/tweet with the mis-, dis-, or mal-information. INSTEAD:
- Lay out common ground
- Debunk the cited source
- End with the truth and proactive message.

Platforms: Some say they are monitoring dis-information, but because they benefit from it, they do only minimal repudiation.

Messaging Goal:

1. **REACH:** reaching real people (not just on-line users)
2. **IMPACT**: changing the off-line situation

Identifying Credible Information

1. **League of Women Voters: Your Guide to Mis- and Disinformation**.   Learn how to recognize these and stop their spread.

https://www.lwv.org/league-management/templates-graphics/mis-and-disinformation-graphics-guidance

2. **Seeing isn't believing**: the fact checker's guide to manipulated video
        A Washington Post piece giving examples of video manipulation

https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/politics/fact-checker/manipulated-video-guide/

3. **AllSides**: How to Spot 16 Types of Media Bias

AllSides aims to promote balanced news from diverse perspectives, providing media bias ratings from right to left, comparing sources, etc. Their mission: "Free people from filter bubbles so they can better understand the world—and each other."

https://www.allsides.com/media-bias/how-to-spot-types-of-media-bias

4. **Media Bias/Fact Check**

Founded in 2015, this independent website uses human evaluators and a specific methodology to determine bias of media sources, and its mission is to educate the public on media bias and deceptive

news practices. Media sources are rated on the site; they provide a weekly summary fact-check of news.

https://mediabiasfactcheck.com/methodology/

5. **Interactive Media Bias Chart**

Ad Fontes (Latin for "to the source) rates content on reliability and bias.

https://adfontesmedia.com/

6. **MediaWise**

Courses from the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, which also produces Politifact, known   for its Truthometer that rates headlines from "True" to "Pants on Fire."

https://www.poynter.org/mediawise/

7. **AP News FactCheck**

Fact-checking, accountability journalism, and misinformation coverage from AP journalists.

https://apnews.com/hub/ap-fact-check

###