Writing for The Commons

The Commons is a social change library. We collect, curate and distribute the key lessons and resources of progressive movements around Australia and across the globe.

We collect resources in the following Topic areas:

● Communications & Media ● Digital Campaigning ● Organising ● Campaign Strategy ● Working in Groups ● Nonviolent Direct Action ● Tactics ● Wellbeing	● Diversity & Inclusion ● Theories of Change ● First Nations Resources ● Arts & Creativity ● Coalition Building ● Management ● Lobbying & Advocacy ● Fundraising

Resources are categorised under 'Read', 'Listen' (podcasts and other audio files) and 'Watch' (videos) and include the following formats:

● Articles ● Tips ● Case Studies ● Speeches ● Training Materials	● Interviews ● Book Reviews ● Manuals ● Templates ● Reports ● Books and Excerpts

Please note we are open to contributions which fall outside our current Topics and Formats.

If you would like to discuss an article idea or have more questions, please email librarian@commonslibrary.org

The following three articles give an indication of The Commons style, although many other kinds of resources are in our collection:

1. What is this thing called Activist Legal Support?
2. Exploring roles in social change movements
3. Top 3 Messaging Tips from Anat Shenker-Osorio at Progress 2019

Commons Article Guidelines

The Commons includes a wide variety of materials, from formal academic reports to short and punchy practical 'how to' guides. We welcome many different kinds of contributions so contact us to see if your work is a good fit.

If you are writing something from scratch for inclusion in the Commons please consider the following.
- Write in a clear accessible way which makes the key information available to readers.
- Put the important information in the first paragraph: Instead of working from an introduction through discussion to a conclusion as you would when writing a formal report, when you are writing for The Commons your introductory paragraph needs to include all the key information. Include the what, where, when, why and how of your story in the first paragraph and then go on to share the details in the body of your article.
- Think about what you want the reader to do differently after reading your piece eg think deeply about X; use Y planning tool in the future; run Z tactic in a more skillful way, etc.
- Write with the audience in mind, and you may like to define the particular audience you're directing your piece towards. The Commons audience includes:
  - People working on diverse issues connected to social and ecological justice
  - People working in paid and unpaid roles
  - People with different roles and skillsets: campaigners, organisers, trainers, group convenors, volunteer coordinators, managers, policy, operations, fundraising, communication and more.
  - Novice changemakers who are new to social change who need clear information which doesn't presume a high level of existing knowledge.
  - Seasoned changemakers who are interested in innovation, the leading edge, new techniques and emerging trends.
- Keep track of where you are sourcing information from and clearly reference it where possible.
- Gain permission from others (for example artists, photographers, writers) for including their work in anything you submit to the Commons.
- Be clear what capacity you are submitting to the Commons in ie as an individual or wearing a 'work hat' or other organisational affiliation.
- Articles should be educational/informative rather than promotional in focus. For example, if you would like to promote an event or training you could write an article that takes into account the learning of an event such as "Four ways to build highly effective community organisers".
- If you have a lot of text please consider breaking it down into smaller chunks using bullet points and/or breaking down text into 2-3 paragraphs separated with subheadings.
- Visuals help make articles more engaging for the reader. r If you have photos, graphs or videos please include them.

The Commons Essentials

1. File name
Give your file a unique and clear name: name your document with your surname, a descriptive title for which you are submitting the file, eg: Anne Smith How to set up a group

2. Identify yourself
Include your name, position and place of employment (if you choose), and your email address at the end of your article.

3. Include captions
If you have also sent images or illustrations, include the details for these, including captions at the end of your article, along with the specific file name for each individual file. For more details about images see the Nitty Gritty below.

4. Licencing
Choose the type of licence you would like your article to have. E.g. creative commons or all rights reserved (more details below).

5. Submit your article
When your article is ready for submission, email it with accompanying images, if any, to librarian@commonslibrary.org

6. Final proofread
Your article will be edited prior to publication for style and length. Let us know if you would like to see the finished article before it is published.

The Nitty Gritty

Length
800 - 2500 words. Please note that longer contributions may be published with only a summary in the online article with the full pdf available for download. If you have a piece that is shorter or longer please have a chat with the librarian.

Images
- Photos, graphics, diagrams or illustrations can be submitted in jpg format.
- Each image or illustration should be provided as a separate file.
- If you are providing images, you will need to have permission from anyone identifiable in the picture and the photographer.
- For all other images or graphics, you will need permission for reproduction online (you don't need to provide permissions to us, but you do need to have them).
- If providing an image available through Creative Commons, please provide the correct CC licence image credit. https://creativecommons.org.au/learn/howto/
- If providing an image that is under your copyright please provide the details.
  E.g. © Fitzroy Legal Service 2019
- If you don't have any images to submit with your article we may track some down and can run them past you prior to publication.

Formatting
Articles should be submitted as Word documents with no formatting (eg no bolding, centring etc of text), and no images embedded in the document.

Article licence
Would you like your article to be shared (creative commons) or reserve all rights? Choose which licence you would like to cover your article.

Licence
✓ All Rights Reserved
Attribution
Attribution-ShareAlike
Attribution-NoDerivs
Attribution-NonCommercial
Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike
Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs
Public Domain

References
We don't use footnotes, references or bibliographies. Simply include the title, author and date of publication within the body of your article in sentence form (more details on that in the style hints below).

Full stops and spacing
Please insert one space only between a full stop and the first letter of the next sentence.

Spelling

Use Australian spelling for words such as realise, globalise, and so on.

Abbreviations

Any abbreviation used must be in full for the first use with the abbreviation shown in brackets, after that you can use the abbreviated form. For example, Council on the Ageing (COTA)

Names

Titles of books, journals, magazines and things such as television programs and artworks are italicised.

Numbers

Use the word form for numbers from one to nine and numerals for numbers from 10 onwards, with commas to separate large numbers (this assists readability). We also use an „en dash‟ with no spaces between numbers when writing a range of numbers. (An en dash is an elongated dash.) For example, There were seven participants It is estimated 11,000 readers will participate nationally During the period 2010 - 2012 Where possible, try not to start a sentence with a number. For percentages, use the % sign rather than the word form.

Dates

Our house style for dates is "day month year‟ where they are given in full. We don‟t use „st‟ or „th‟ at the end of dates. For example, on 24 October 2019, our group met to develop a plan for a new approach to community organising.‟

Hyphenation

Use a hyphen in compound words and an „en dash‟ between parts of a sentence. Always use a space either side of an en dash.

Referencing a publication in the text

To make reference to a publication, you only need to include the author, title and year of publication in a sentence. For example: In their 1996 report, Digital Futures, Mark Smith and Jane Jones wrote, "There is a whole new world out there and it is ours for the taking‟.

Direct quotations

From a publication or person should be placed between single quotation marks, for example: "The last thing we need is censorship,‟ said Mr Smith.