

MEMO

To: Sarah Gibbons
From: Jenny Crakes
Date: October 15, 2014
Re: Young Authors' Conference Advertisement

Overview

The purpose of this memo is to describe the editing suggestions I have made for a mail-out advertisement for the MSU Young Authors' Conference (YAC). The two-page advertisement is intended for mailing to potential participants in the conference, young creative writers in grades 5-12. It gives the date for this year's conference, explains what the conference is, and details some of its exciting features. It also invites young students to register on the YAC website. Attached to this document is a marked copy of the advertisement. More detailed editing suggestions are made using queries, which are marked on the advertisement and explained fully in this memo under the section, "Author Queries."

Broad Changes

I edited the piece and made suggestions with three main goals in mind:

- Firstly, to ensure that it conformed to standard grammar rules and style guidelines. I wanted to enhance the professional feel of the document.
- Secondly, to ensure consistency of dates and other features. Consistency is important in order to ensure the reader's understanding and provide clarity.
- Thirdly, to enhance the advertisement's connection with its audience: young creative writers in grades 5-12. I worked to ensure the young audience would find the advertisement appealing and want to register for the conference.

Examples of Specific Revisions

Capitalization

Following standard rules of capitalization gives the document a more professional feel. I changed words that were not proper nouns, such as "Professors," from capitals back to lowercase, since only proper nouns must be capitalized. Similarly, I capitalized "Residence" because "Writers-in-Residence" is used as a proper noun here.

Consistency

I checked for consistency across features such as font, dates listed, punctuation of "Authors'" in the conference title, and the logo here as compared to the logo on the Young Authors' Conference website.

Spacing

Sometimes, spaces included were unnecessary, so I removed extra spacing from the dates (“July 10 – 11”), and grades (“5th – 12th grade”).

Layout

On the second page, all text in the box was centered, which meant individual lines were not flush with either margin or with one another. I thought the text box might look cleaner if all text were aligned with the left margin, so I added a “Flush left” mark beside each paragraph. I also suggested that bullets be used for clean formatting of the six features of the event.

Smooth Style

I made several changes to help the text read more smoothly. Firstly, I pointed out the use of different fonts in “Save the Date!” on page 1, so they could be matched. Secondly, I changed “5th-12th grade” to “grades 5-12,” because the second version is easier to say aloud. On the second page, I changed the phrasing of the opening sentence of the third paragraph to “The two-day conference...” so it would not be repetitive of the phrasing of the second paragraph, “This event...” Finally, I changed “presentations *from* real authors” to “presentations *by* real authors.”

Author Queries

The following is a list of queries I would make to the author upon submitting my suggestions for editing.

Q1: Logo.

The logo included here is not the same as the logo on the YAC website. Could you match this with the logo on the website in order to provide consistency?

Q2: Photo.

This is a good photo of the workshop setting, but young participants may connect more with a photo that better highlights faces. Here, faces are turned away or hidden by hair. Consider moving this photo, in a smaller size, to the second page, and choosing a photo where participants make eye contact with the camera for the first page.

Q3: Date.

The date you provide is listed for two different years: 2014 on page 1, and 2015 on page 2. Could you list the date for the 2015 conference, rather than 2014, in both places to provide consistency?

Q4: Grant.

Who provides the grant that sponsors the YAC? Could you finish the sentence to clarify this?

Q5: Kids.

Your audience of 5th-12th graders may prefer that you refer to them by a term such as “young writers” rather than “kids.” Could you change this wording so the participants don’t feel they’re being addressed as children?

Q6: Bullets.

This list might look more cleanly formatted if you use bullets for each point under the title, “This two-day event will include:” Each of the six features from “A Q&A session...” to “Information on publishing” could have its own bullet, and all lines could be aligned with the left margin.

Q7: Add Quote?

This might be a great place to pique young students’ interest with one or two short quotes from past participants explaining why they loved their experience at the conference.

Q8: Add Visual?

This second page appears very plain, and I think interest might be added by a small visual that would catch the eye, perhaps in one of the corners for a dynamic look. Since your audience is young students, a visual might especially help engage their attention. This visual could be another photo of the conference, or simply a repetition of the YAC logo from the first page, but smaller.

Conclusion

This advertisement provides a welcoming invitation to young creative writers to register for the MSU Young Authors’ Conference, as well as an interesting and useful overview of the conference itself. It contains appealing color contrast and two different kinds of visuals: a photograph and a unique logo. Necessary details, such as the date and how to register online, have been included. Although the original document contains some grammar errors and inconsistencies, it can be strengthened by a through edit. Extra consideration in regard to connecting with a young audience can help the document achieve its goal to recruit participants for the conference. Adding participant quotes, and an extra visual for the second page, might help pique the audience’s interest. Overall, the advertisement is an excellent draft that achieves its goals of informing young creative writers about the MSU Young Authors’ Conference, and encouraging them to register.