
The Economist
STYLE
THE BESTSELLING GUIDE TO ENGLISH USAGE
GUIDE
11TH EDITION
"The best guide of its kind. Indispensable." —Bill Bryson

The Economist

# Style Guide

11th Edition

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# Preface

Every newspaper has its own style book, a set of rules telling journalists whether to write e-mail or email, Gadaffi or Qaddafi, judgement or judgment. *The Economist*'s style book does this and a bit more. It also warns writers of some common mistakes and encourages them to write with clarity and simplicity.

All the prescriptive judgments in the style guide are directly derived from those used each week in writing and editing *The Economist*.

This eleventh edition of the "The Economist Style Guide" is in three parts. The first is based on the style book used by those who edit *The Economist*; it is largely the work of John Grimond, who over the years was editor of the Britain, United States and Foreign sections, before retiring in 2013. Johnny is a hard act to follow, and he left at a time when proper English usage seemed in full retreat in the face of texting, Tweeting and internet jargon generally. His work still stands as a bulwark against it, as well as a monument to his impish wit and his sense of euphony, rightness and correctness. If slight cracks have now appeared in the bulwark, it is because language is a living thing that continually changes; some changes are benign, and some (such as the pervasive "smartness" of the digital age) simply cannot be resisted.

The second part of the book, on American and British English, describes some of the main differences between the two great English-speaking areas in spelling, grammar and usage.

To make the style guide of greater general interest, Part 3 consists of handy reference material that might appeal to readers of *The Economist*.

Throughout the text, italic type is used for examples except where they are presented in lists, when the type is roman, as this

text is. Words in **bold** indicate a separate but relevant entry, that is, a cross-reference. Small capitals are used only in the way *The Economist* uses them, for which see the entry **abbreviations**.

Many people have been involved in this book as it has developed and changed over the years. Thanks are due to all of them, with special thanks to Penny Butler, Ingrid Esling, Graham Douglas and Penny Garrett, whose help has been invaluable and continues to be so.

Ann Wroe,
Obituaries Editor, *The Economist*
March 2015

# Introduction

On only two scores can *The Economist* hope to outdo its rivals consistently. One is the quality of its analysis; the other is the quality of its writing. The aim of this book is to give some general advice on writing, to point out some common errors and to set some arbitrary rules.

The first requirement of *The Economist* is that it should be readily understandable. Clarity of writing usually follows clarity of thought. So think what you want to say, then say it as simply as possible. Keep in mind George Orwell's six elementary rules:

1 Never use a **metaphor**, simile or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print (*see* **metaphors**).
2 Never use a long word where a short one will do (*see* **short words**).
3 If it is possible to cut out a word, always cut it out (*see* **unnecessary words**).
4 Never use the passive where you can use the active (*see* **grammar and syntax**).
5 Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.
6 Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.

Readers are primarily interested in what you have to say. By the way in which you say it, you may encourage them either to read on or to give up. If you want them to read on:

**Catch the attention of the reader** and then get straight into the article. Do not spend several sentences clearing your throat, setting the scene or sketching in the background. Introduce the facts as you tell the story and hold the reader by the way you

unfold the tale and by a fresh but unpretentious use of language.

In starting your article, let your model be the essays of Francis Bacon. He starts "Of Riches" with "I cannot call riches better than the baggage of virtue." "Of Cunning" opens with "We take cunning for a sinister or crooked wisdom." "Of Suspicion" is instantly on the wing with "Suspicions amongst thoughts are like bats amongst birds, they ever fly by twilight." Each of these beginnings carries implicitly within it an entire essay. Each seizes the reader by the lapels and at once draws him into the subject. No gimmickry is needed, no flowery language, no literary contrivance. Plain words on their own carry enough meaning to provoke an intriguing thought, stir the reader's curiosity and thus make him want to continue.

You must strive for a similar effect. Articles in *The Economist* should be like essays, in that they have a beginning, a middle and an end. They should not be mere bits of information stitched together. Each should be a coherent whole, a series of paragraphs that follow logically in order and, ideally, will suffer if even one sentence is cut out. If the article is a report, the facts must be selected and presented as a story. If it is a leader or more analytical article, it should also have a sense of sequence, so that the reader feels he is progressing from a beginning to a conclusion.

Either way, it is up to you to provide the ideas, analysis and argument that bind the elements of the article together. That is the hard part. Once you have them, though, you need only plain, straightforward words to express them. Do not imagine that you can disguise the absence of thought with long words, stale metaphors or the empty jargon of academics. In moderation, however, you can enliven your writing with a fresh metaphor, an occasional exuberance or an unusual word or phrase that nicely suits your purpose.

**Read through your writing several times.** Edit it ruthlessly, whether by cutting or polishing or sharpening, on each occasion. Avoid repetition. Cut out anything superfluous. And resist any temptation to achieve a literary effect by making elliptical remarks or allusions to unexplained people or events. Rather,

hold your reader's attention by keeping the story moving. If the tale begins to flag, or the arguments seem less than convincing, you can rescue it only by the sharpness of your mind. Nothing is to be gained by resorting to orotundities and grandiloquence, still less by calling on clichés and vogue expressions. Unadorned, unfancy prose is usually all you need.

**Do not be stuffy.** "To write a genuine, familiar or truly English style", said Hazlitt, "is to write as anyone would speak in common conversation who had a thorough command or choice of words or who could discourse with ease, force and perspicuity setting aside all pedantic and oratorical flourishes."

Use the language of everyday speech, not that of spokesmen, lawyers or bureaucrats (so prefer *let* to *permit*, *people* to *persons*, *buy* to *purchase*, *colleague* to *peer*, *way out* to *exit*, *present* to *gift*, *rich* to *wealthy*, *show* to *demonstrate*, *break* to *violate*). Pomposity and long-windedness tend to obscure meaning, or reveal the lack of it: strip them away in favour of plain words.

**Do not be hectoring or arrogant.** Those who disagree with you are not necessarily *stupid* or *insane*. Nobody needs to be described as silly: let your analysis show that he is. When you express opinions, do not simply make assertions. The aim is not just to tell readers what you think, but to persuade them; if you use arguments, reasoning and evidence, you may succeed. Go easy on the *oughts* and *shoulds*.

**Do not be too pleased with yourself.** Don't boast of your own cleverness by telling readers that you correctly predicted something or that you have a scoop. You are more likely to bore or irritate them than to impress them.

**Do not be too chatty.** *Surprise, surprise* is more irritating than informative. So is *Ho, ho* and, in the middle of a sentence, *wait for it*, etc.

**Do not be too didactic.** If too many sentences begin *Compare*, *Consider*, *Expect*, *Imagine*, *Look at*, *Note*, *Prepare for*, *Remember* or *Take*, readers will think they are reading a textbook (or, indeed, a

style book). This may not be the way to persuade them to renew their subscriptions.

**Do your best to be lucid.** ("I see but one rule: to be clear", Stendhal.) Simple sentences help. Keep complicated constructions and gimmicks to a minimum, if necessary by remembering the *New Yorker*'s comment: "Backward ran sentences until reeled the mind."

Mark Twain described how a good writer treats sentences: "At times he may indulge himself with a long one, but he will make sure there are no folds in it, no vaguenesses, no parenthetical interruptions of its view as a whole; when he has done with it, it won't be a sea-serpent with half of its arches under the water; it will be a torch-light procession."

Long paragraphs, like long sentences, can confuse the reader. "The paragraph", according to Fowler, "is essentially a unit of thought, not of length; it must be homogeneous in subject matter and sequential in treatment." One-sentence paragraphs should be used only occasionally.

Clear thinking is the key to clear writing. "A scrupulous writer", observed Orwell, "in every sentence that he writes will ask himself at least four questions, thus: What am I trying to say? What words will express it? What image or idiom will make it clearer? Is this image fresh enough to have an effect? And he will probably ask himself two more: Could I put it more shortly? Have I said anything that is avoidably ugly?"

Scrupulous writers will also notice that their copy is edited only lightly and is likely to be used. It may even be read.

part 1

# The essence of style

**a or the** *see* grammar and syntax.

**abbreviations**

Write words in their full form on first appearance:
*Trades Union Congress* (not TUC), *Troubled Asset Relief Programme* (not TARP)
unless an abbreviation or acronym is so familiar that it is used more often in full:
*AIDS BBC CIA EU FBI HIV IMF NATO NGO OECD UNESCO*
or unless the full form would provide little illumination – *AWACS, DNA*. If in doubt about its familiarity, explain what the organisation is or does. After the first mention, try not to repeat the abbreviation too often; so write *the agency* rather than the IAEA, *the party* rather than the KMT, to avoid spattering the page with capital letters. And prefer *chief executive, boss* or *manager* to CEO.

There is no need to give the initials of an organisation if it is not referred to again. This clutters both the page and the brain.

Do not use spatterings of abbreviations and acronyms simply in order to cram more words in; you will end up irritating readers rather than informing them. An article in a recent issue of *The Economist* contained the following:
*CIA DCI DNI DOD DVD FBI NCTC NSA*

Some of these are well known to most readers and can readily be held in the mind. But unfamiliar abbreviations may oblige the reader to constantly refer back to the first use.

**ampersands** should be used:

1 when they are part of the name of a company:
*Procter & Gamble Pratt & Whitney*
2 for such things as constituencies, where two names are linked to form one unit:
*The rest of Brighouse & Spenborough joins with the Batley part of Batley & Morley to form Batley & Spen.*
*The area thus became the Pakistani province of Kashmir and the Indian state of Jammu & Kashmir.*
3 in *R&D* and *S&I.*

**definite article** If an abbreviation can be pronounced – *COSATU, NATO, UNESCO* – it does not generally require the definite article. Other organisations, except companies, should usually be preceded by the:
*the BBC the KGB the NHS the NIESR the UNHCR*

**elements** do not take small caps when abbreviated:
carbon dioxide is $CO_2$
lead is Pb
methane is $CH_4$

However:
chlorofluorocarbons are CFCs
the oxides of nitrogen are generally NOX

Different isotopes of the same element are distinguished by raised (superscript) prefixes:
carbon-14 is $^{14}C$
helium-3 is $^{3}He$

Do not sprinkle chemical symbols unnecessarily: they may put readers off. But common abbreviations such as $CO_2$ may sometimes be used for variety.

**headings, cross-heads, captions, etc** In headings, rubrics, cross-heads, footnotes, captions, tables, charts (including sources), use ordinary caps, not small caps.

**initials in people's and companies' names** take points (with a

space between initials and name, but not between initials). In general, follow the practice preferred by people, companies and organisations in writing their own names, for example:
*I.M. Pei J.C. Penney J. Sainsbury A.N. Wilson*

**junior and senior** Spell out in full (and lower case) junior and senior after a name:
*George Bush junior George Bush senior*

**lower case** Abbreviate:
kilograms (*not* kilogrammes) to kg (or kilos)
kilometres per hour to kph
kilometres to km
miles per hour to mph

Use lower case for *kg*, *km*, *lb* (never *lbs*), *mph* and other measures, and for *ie*, *eg*; *ie* should be followed by a comma. When used with figures, these lower-case abbreviations should follow immediately, with no space:
*11am 4.30pm 15kg 35mm 100mph 78rpm*

Two abbreviations together, however, must be separated: *60m b/d*. Use *b/d* not *bpd* as an abbreviation for *barrels per day*.

**MPs** Except in British contexts, use MP only after first spelling out member of Parliament in full (in many places an MP is a military policeman).
Members of the *European Parliament* are *MEPs* (not Euro-MPs).
Members of the *Scottish Parliament* are *MSPs*.
Members of the *Welsh Assembly* are *AMs* (Assembly Members).

**organisations**
EFTA is the European Free Trade Association.
The FAO is the Food and Agriculture Organisation.
The FDA is the Food and Drug Administration.
The IDA is the International Development Association.
NAFTA is the North American Free-Trade Agreement.
The PLO is the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

**pronounceable abbreviations**
Abbreviations that can be pronounced and are composed of bits of words rather than just initials should be spelt out in upper and lower case:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Cocom | Mercosur | Unicef |
| Frelimo | Nepad | Unisom |
| Kfor | Renamo | Unprofor |
| Legco | Sfor | |

There is generally no need for more than one initial capital letter, unless the word is a name: *ConsGold, KwaZulu, McKay, MiG.*

**ranks and titles** Do not use *Prof, Sen, Col,* etc. *Lieut-Colonel* and *Lieut-Commander* are permissible. So is *Rev*, but it must be preceded by *the* and followed by a Christian name or initial: *the Rev Jesse Jackson* (thereafter *Mr Jackson*).

**scientific units named after individuals** Scientific units, except those of temperature, that are named after individuals are not capitalised when written out in full: *watt, joule*, etc. When abbreviated these units should be set in small capitals, though any attachments denoting multiples go in lower case:
watt is W
kilowatt, 1,000 watts, is kW
milliwatt, one-thousandth of a watt, is mW
megawatt, 1m watts, is MW
gigawatt, 1 billion ($10^9$) watts, is GW
terawatt, 1 trillion ($10^{12}$) watts, is TW
petawatt, 1 quadrillion ($10^{15}$) watts, is PW
megahertz is MHZ

**small caps usage**
In body text, use small capitals for abbreviations, acronyms and proper names spelt in capitals, whether they can be pronounced as words or not, with no points:
CIF EU FOB GDP IKEA NATO

Single letters, when attached by hyphens to words, should also generally be set in small caps:
*A-level B-grade T-shirt U-turn X-ray Y chromosome*

Abbreviations that include upper-case and lower-case letters must be set in a mixture of small capitals and lower case: *BPhil*, *BSkyB*, *PhD*. The same rule applies if an abbreviation is linked to a number: *AK-47*, *MiG-25*, *M1*, *SALT-2*.

Brackets, apostrophes and all other typographical furniture accompanying small capitals, including the plural and genitive *s*, are not set in small capitals: *IOUs*, *MPs' salaries*, *SDRs*, etc.

Do not use small caps for:
the elements of the periodic table, eg *H*, *Pb*, *Sn*, *NaCl*
degrees of temperature, eg *°C*, *°F*, *°R*
currencies, eg *NKr*, *SFr*
roman numerals, eg *C*, *D*, *I*, *L*, *M*, *V*, *X*. So *Richard III*, *Louis XIV*, *Pope John XXIII* and so on. But do not adorn popes, monarchs, etc, with numerical postscripts unless they are needed to differentiate, for example, Benedict XVI from Benedict XV, or Elizabeth II from her 16th-century namesake.
anything in captions, charts (including sources), footnotes, headings, rubrics or tables

**writing out upper-case abbreviations** Most upper-case abbreviations are shortenings of proper names with initial capital letters. The *LSO* is the *London Symphony Orchestra*. However, there are exceptions:
CAP *but* common agricultural policy
EMU *but* economic and monetary union
GDP *but* gross domestic product
PSBR *but* public-sector borrowing requirement
VLSI *but* very large-scale integration

**miscellaneous** Spell out:
*page pages hectares miles*

Remember, too, that the *V* of *HIV* stands for virus, so do not write *HIV virus*.

*See* **measures** in Part 3.

**absent** In Latin *absent* is a verb meaning *they are away*. In English it is either an adjective (*absent friends*) or a verb (*to absent yourself*).

It is not a preposition meaning *in the absence of*.

**accents** On words now accepted as English, use accents only when they make a crucial difference to pronunciation:
*café cliché communiqué éclat exposé façade soupçon*
But: *chateau decor elite feted naive*

The main accents and diacritical signs are:

| | |
|---|---|
| acute | république |
| grave | grand-mère |
| circumflex | bête noire |
| umlaut | Länder, Österreich (Austria) |
| cedilla | français |
| tilde | señor, São Paulo |

If you use one accent (except the tilde – strictly, a diacritical sign), use all:
*émigré mêlée protégé résumé*

Put the accents and diacritical signs on French, German, Spanish and Portuguese names and words only:

| | |
|---|---|
| José Manuel Barroso | cafèzinho |
| Federico Peña | coñac |
| Françoise de Panafieu | déjeuner |
| Wolfgang Schäuble | Frühstück |

Any foreign word in italics should, however, be given its proper accents. *See also* **italics**.

**acronym** A pronounceable word, formed from the initials of other words, like *radar, nimby* or NATO. It is not a set of initials, like the BBC or the IMF.

**actionable** means *giving ground for a lawsuit*. Do not use it to mean *susceptible of being put into practice*: prefer *practical* or *practicable*. Do not use *action* as a verb.

**adjectives and adverbs** *see* **grammar and syntax, punctuation**.

**adjectives of proper nouns** *see* **grammar and syntax, punctuation**.

**address** What did journalists and politicians do in the days, not so long ago, when *address* was used as a verb only before objects such as *audience, letter, ball, haggis* and, occasionally, *themselves*? Questions can be *answered*, issues *discussed*, problems *solved*, difficulties *dealt with*. *See* **clichés**.

**aetiology** is the *science of causation*, or *an inquiry into something's origins*. *Etiolate* is to *make* or *become pale for lack of light*.

**affect** (verb) means to have an influence on, as in *the novel affected his attitude to immigrants*. *See also* **effect**.

**affirmative action** is a euphemism, uglier even than *human-rights abuses* and more obscure even than *comfort station*, with little to be said for it. It is too late to suppress it altogether and perhaps too soon to consign it to the midden of civil-rights studies, but try to avoid it as much as possible. If you cannot escape it, put it in quotation marks on first mention and, unless the context makes its meaning clear, explain what it is. You may, however, find that *preferential treatment, job preferment* or even *discrimination* serve just as well as alternatives. *See* **euphemisms**.

**affordable** By whom? Avoid *affordable housing, affordable computers* and other unthinking uses of advertising lingo.

**Afghan names** *see* **names**.

**aggravate** means *make worse*, not *irritate* or *annoy*.

**aggression** is an unattractive quality, so do not call a *keen* salesman an *aggressive* one (unless his foot is in the door).

**agony column** Remember that when Sherlock Holmes perused this, it was a *personal column*. Only recently has it come to mean *letters to an agony aunt*.

**agree** Things are agreed *on, to* or *about*, not just agreed.

**aircraft** *see* **hyphens** and **italics**.

**alibi** An *alibi* is the fact of being elsewhere, not a false explanation.

**alternate, alternative** *Alternate* (as an adjective) means *every other*. As a noun, it has now come to mean a *stand-in* for a director or delegate. *Alternative* (as a noun), strictly, means one of two, not one of three, four, five or more (which may be *options*). As an adjective, *alternative* means *of two* (or, *loosely, more*) *things*, or *possible as an alternative*.

**Americanisms**

See Chapter 2, on British and American usage. To the points made there might be added the following preferred usages in British English (and in *The Economist*):
and *not* additionally
the army *not* the military (noun)
car *not* automobile
company *not* corporation
court *not* courtroom or courthouse
district *not* neighborhood
normality *not* normalcy
oblige *not* obligate
rocket *not* skyrocket

Back-formations are common in English, so *curate*, the verb meaning *organise* or *superintend* exhibitions of pictures, sculptures and so on formed from *curator*, is now acceptable in British English. But it is still too soon for *gallerist* (prefer *dealer* or, if appropriate, just *gallery*).

**adverbs** Put adverbs where you would put them in normal speech, which is usually after the verb (not before it, which usually is where Americans put them).

**avoiding nouning adjectives** Similarly, do not noun adjectives such as:
advisory – prefer warning
centennial – prefer centenary
inaugural – prefer inauguration
*meet* (noun) – *meeting* is better
*spend* (noun) – *spending* is preferable

**avoiding verbing and adjectiving nouns** Try not to verb nouns or to adjective them. So do not:
*access* files (except electronically)
*action* proposals
*author* books (still less *co-author* them)
*critique* style guides
*gun* someone down; use *shoot*
*haemorrhage* red ink (haemorrhage is a noun)
let one event *impact* another
*loan* money
*pressure* colleagues (*press* will do)
*progress* reports
*source* inputs
*trial* programmes

Avoid *parenting* (or using the word) and *parenting skills*. (*See also* **grammar and syntax**.)

And though it is sometimes necessary to use nouns as adjectives, there is no need to call:
an *attempted coup* a *coup attempt*
a *suspected terrorist* a *terrorist suspect*
the *Californian legislature* the *California legislature*

Vilest of all is the habit of throwing together several nouns into one ghastly adjectival reticule:
*Texas millionaire real-estate developer and failed thrift entrepreneur Hiram Turnipseed ...*

**coining words** Avoid coining verbs and adjectives unnecessarily. Instead of:
*dining experiences* and *writing experiences*: use *dining* and *writing*
*downplaying* criticism, you can *play* it *down* (or perhaps *minimise* it)
*upcoming* and *ongoing* are better put as *forthcoming* and *continuing*
Why *outfit* your children when you can *fit* them *out*?

*Hosting* has now entered the language (often to mean *acting as host at an event paid for by someone else*, otherwise *giving*

would be the right word), but *guesting* (*appearing as a guest* on a programme) should be kept at bay.

**overuse of American words** Do not feel obliged to follow American fashion in overusing such words as:
*constituency* – try *supporters*
*gubernatorial* – this means *relating to a governor*
*perception* – try *belief* or *view*
*rhetoric* (of which there is too little, not too much) – try *language* or *speeches* or *exaggeration* if that is what you mean

In Britain:
Cars are *hired*, not *rented*, and are left in *car parks*, not *parking lots*.
City centres are not central cities.
Companies: *call for* a record profit if you wish to exhort the workers, but not if you merely predict one. And do not *post* it if it has been achieved. If it has not, look for someone new to *head*, not *head up*, the company.
Countries, nations and states: London is the *country*'s capital, not the *nation*'s. If you wish to build a *nation*, you will *bind its peoples together*; if you wish to build a *state*, you will forge its *institutions*.
Deep: make a *deep* study or even a study *in depth*, but not an *in-depth* study.
Ex-servicemen are not necessarily *veterans*.
Football for most people is a *game* – you do not have to call it a *sport* – that Americans call *soccer*.
Do not *figure out* if you can *work out*.
*Fresh* should be used of vegetables, not teenagers.
*Grow* a beard or a tomato but not a company (or indeed a salesman: the *Financial Times* reported on August 8th 2003 that BMW was "to grow its own car salesmen").
*Hikes* are walks, not increases.
Do not use *likely* to mean *probably*.
Make a *rumpus* rather than a *ruckus*, and *snigger* rather than *snicker*.
*On-site* inspections are allowed, but not *on-train* teams or *in-ear* headphones.

*Outside* America, nowadays, you stay *outside* the door, not *outside of* it.
*Programme*: you may *program* a computer, but in all other contexts the word is *programme*.
Use *power cut* or *blackout* rather than *outage*.
*Keep* a promise, rather than *deliver on* it.
*Raise* cattle and pigs, but children are (or should be) *brought up*.
*Regular* is not a synonym for *ordinary* or *normal*: Mussolini brought in the *regular* train, All-Bran the *regular* man; it is quite *normal* to be without either.
A *religious group* sounds better than a *faith-based organisation*.
*Scenarios* are best kept for the theatre, *postures* for the gym, *parameters* for the parabola.
Do not *task* people, or *meet with* them.
Throw *stones*, not *rocks*.
Trains run from *railway stations*, not *train stations*. The people in them, and on buses, are *passengers*, not *riders*.
Use *senior* rather than *ranking*.
And only the speechless are *dumb* and the insane *mad*.

**tenses** Choose tenses according to British usage, too. In particular, do not fight shy – as Americans often do – of the perfect tense, especially where no date or time is given. Thus: *Mr Obama has woken up to the danger* is preferable to *Mr Obama woke up to the danger*, unless you can add *last week* or *when he heard the explosion*.
Do not write *Your salary just got smaller* or *I shrunk the kids*. In British English *Your salary has just got smaller* and *I've shrunk the kids*.

*See also* **adjectives of proper nouns**, **euphemisms**, **grammar and syntax**, and Part 2.

**among and between** Some sticklers insist that, where division is involved, *among* should be used where three or more are concerned, *between* where only two are concerned. So:
*The plum jobs were shared among the Socialists, the Liberals and the Christian Democrats, while the president and the vice-president divided the cash between themselves.*

This distinction is unnecessary. But take care with *between*. *To fall between two stools*, however painful, is grammatically acceptable; *to fall between the cracks* is to challenge the laws of physics.

Prefer *among* to *amongst*.

**an** should be used before a word beginning with a vowel sound (*an egg, an umbrella, an MP*) or an h if, and only if, the h is silent (*an honorary degree*). But *a European, a university, a U-turn, a hospital, a hotel. Historical* is an exception: it is preceded by *an*, the h remaining silent.

**anarchy** means the *complete absence of law or government*. It may be harmonious or chaotic.

**animals** For the spelling of the Latin names of animals, plants, etc, *see* **Latin names**.

**annus horribilis, annus mirabilis** *Annus horribilis* is often used, presumably in contrast to *annus mirabilis*, to describe an *awful year*, for example by Queen Elizabeth in 1992 (the year of her daughter's divorce, the separation of the Duke and Duchess of York and a fire at Windsor Castle). It serves its purpose well, but it should be noted that *annus mirabilis* originally meant much the same thing: 1666, of which it was first used, was the year of the great fire of London and the second year of the great plague in England. Physicists, however, have latterly used the term to describe 1932, the year in which the neutron was discovered, the positron identified and the atomic nucleus first broken up artificially. And Philip Larkin, more understandably, used it to describe 1963, the year in which sexual intercourse began.

**anon** means *soon*, though it once meant *straight away*. *Presently* also means *soon*, though it is increasingly misused to mean *now*. (*See also* **presently**.)

**anticipate** does not mean *expect*. It means to forestall or look forward to. Jack and Jill expected to marry; if they anticipated marriage, only Jill might find herself expectant.

**apostasy, heresy** If you abandon your religion, you commit *apostasy*. If that religion is the prevailing one in your community and your beliefs are contrary to its orthodoxy, you commit *heresy*.

**apostrophes** *see* **punctuation**.

**appeal** is intransitive nowadays (except in America), so appeal *against decisions*.

**appraise** means *set a price on*. *Apprise* means *inform*.

**Arabic** The Arabic alphabet has several consonants that have no exact equivalents in English: for example, a hard *t* as well as a normal soft one, a hard *s* as well as a soft one, two different (one vocalised, the other not) *th* sounds. Moreover, there are three sounds: a glottal stop like a hiccup, a glottal sound akin to strangulation and a uvular trill. Ultra-fastidious transliterators try to reproduce these subtleties with a profusion of apostrophes and *h*s which yield spellings like Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi. The risk of error and the sheer ugliness on the page are too great to justify the effort, so usually ignore the differences.

Vowels present a lesser problem. There are only three – *a*, *u*, *i* – but each can be lengthened. Do not bother to differentiate between the short and the long *a*. Occasionally, a spelling is established where the *u* has been lengthened by using *oo*, as in *Sultan Qaboos*. In such instances, follow that convention, but in general go for *ou*, as in *murabitoun* or *Ibn Khaldoun*. For a long *i* you should normally use *ee* (as in *mujahideen*).

*Muhammad* is the correct spelling unless it is part of the name of someone who spells it differently. (*See also* **names**.)

**as of** say, April 5th or April. Prefer *on* (or *after*, or *since*) April 5th, in April.

**assassinate** is, properly, the term used not just for any old killing, but for the murder of a prominent person, usually for a political purpose. (*See* **execute**.)

**as to** There is usually a more appropriate preposition, eg *about*. Or rewrite the sentence.

**autarchy, autarky** *Autarchy* means absolute sovereignty. *Autarky* means self-sufficiency.

**avert, avoid, evade** To *avert* something means to head it off. To *avoid* it means to keep away from it. To *evade* it means to elude it or escape it artfully. Tax *avoidance* is legal; tax *evasion* is not.

**avocation** An *avocation* is a distraction or *diversion from your ordinary employment*, not a synonym for *vocation*.

**bail, bale** In the hayfield, *bale*; otherwise *bail*, *bail out* and *bail-out* (noun).

**Bangladeshi names** *see* **names.**

**-based** A *Paris-based group* may be all right, if, say, that group operates abroad (otherwise just say a *group in Paris*). But avoid *community-based*, *faith-based*, *knowledge-based*, etc. A *community-based organisation* is perhaps a *community organisation*; a *faith-based organisation* is probably a *church*; a *knowledge-based industry* needs explanation: all industries depend on knowledge.

**beg the question** means neither *raise the question*, *invite the question* nor *evade the answer*. To *beg the question* is to adopt an argument whose conclusion depends upon assuming the truth of the very conclusion the argument is designed to produce.
*All governments should promote free trade because otherwise protectionism will increase. This begs the question.*

**Belarusian names** *see* **names.**

**bellwether** This is the leading sheep of a flock, on whose neck a bell is hung. It has nothing to do with climate, prevailing winds or the like, but the term is used in the stockmarket.

**between** *see* **among and between.**

**biannual, biennial** *Biannual* can mean twice a year or once every two years. Avoid. Since *biennial* also means once every

two years, that is best avoided too. So are *bimonthly* and *biweekly*, which also have two meanings. Luckily, *fortnightly* is unambiguous.

**bicentennial** Prefer bicentenary (as a noun).

**black** *In the black* means *in profit* in Britain, but *making losses* in some places. Use *in profit*.

**blond, blonde** *Blond* is an adjective and, unusually, in its adjectival use it retains its two genders (see **grammar and syntax**, masculine or feminine). Use *blonde* as a noun, referring to a woman with blond hair: *the blonde in the corner of the room*. Use *blond* for everything else, including the hair of a blonde.

**blooded, bloodied** *Blooded* means *pedigreed* (as in *blue-blooded*) or *initiated*. *Bloodied* means *wounded*.

**bon vivant** not *bon viveur*.

**born, borne** are both past participles of the verb *bear*. *Born* is used in the sense of giving birth: *She was born in April*. *Borne* is used for *supporting* or *putting up with* (*The victims had borne enough pain*) and for giving birth in active constructions (*She had already borne six children*).

**both ... and** A preposition placed after *both* should be repeated after *and*. Thus *both to right and to left*; but *to both right and left* is all right.

**brackets** *see* **punctuation**.

**British titles** *see* **titles**.

**brokerage** is what a stockbroking firm does, not what it is.

**cadre** Keep this word for the *framework of a military unit* or the *officers of such a unit*, not for a *communist functionary*.

**calibres** *see* **hyphens**.

**Cambodian names** *see* **names**.

**Canute's** exercise on the seashore was designed to persuade his courtiers of what he knew to be true but they doubted, ie, that he was not omnipotent. Don't imply he was surprised to get his feet wet.

**capitals** A balance has to be struck between so many capitals that the eyes dance and so few that the reader is diverted more by our style than by our substance. The general rule is to dignify with capital letters organisations and institutions, but not people; and full names, but not informal ones. More exact rules are laid out below. Even these, however, leave some decisions to individual judgment. If in doubt use lower case unless it looks absurd. And remember that "a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds" (Ralph Waldo Emerson).

**avoiding confusion** Use capitals to avoid confusion, especially with no (and therefore yes). *In Bergen no votes predominated* suggests a stalemate, whereas *In Bergen No votes predominated* suggests a triumph of noes over yeses. In most contexts, though, yes and no should be lower case: "*The answer is no.*"

**cities** *City* with a capital, even though *City* is not an integral part of their names:

Guatemala City
Ho Chi Minh City
Kuwait City
Mexico City
New York City
Panama City
Quebec City

*City* also takes a capital when it is part of the name:

Dodge City
Kansas City
Oklahoma City
Quezon City
Salt Lake City

**compass points** Lower case for:
*east west north south*
except when part of a name (*North Korea, South Africa, West End*) or part of a thinking group: *the South, the Midwest, the West* (but lower case for vaguer areas such as the American *north-east, north-west, south-east, south-west*). Lower-case too for the adjectives: *midwestern, western, southern.*

The regions of Africa are *southern, east, west* and *north Africa.* But *South Africa* is the name of the country.

**Europe** Europe's divisions are no longer neatly political, and are now geographically imprecise, so use lower case for central, eastern and western Europe.

Use *West Germany* (*West Berlin*) and *East Germany* (*East Berlin*) only in historical references. They are now *west* or *western Germany* (*Berlin*) and *east* or *eastern Germany* (*eastern Berlin*).

The *Basque country* (or *region*) is ill-defined and contentious, and may include parts of both France and Spain, so lower case for country (or region).

*See also* **Euro-**.

**finance** In finance there are particular exceptions to the general rule of initial capitals for full names, lower case for informal ones. There are also rules about what to do on second mention.

*Deutschmarks* are still known just as *D-marks*, even though all references are historical.

*Special drawing rights* are lower case but are abbreviated as *SDRs*, except when used with a figure as a currency (*SDR500m*).

The *Bank of England* and its foreign equivalents have initial caps when named formally and separately, but collectively they are central banks in lower case, except those like Brazil's, Ireland's and Venezuela's, which are actually named the *Central Bank*. The *Bank of England* becomes the *bank* on second mention.

The *IMF* may become the *fund* on second mention.

The *World Bank* and the *Fed* (after first spelling it out as the *Federal Reserve*) take initial upper case, although these are shortened, informal names. The *World Bank* becomes the *bank* on second mention.

*Treasury bonds* issued by America's Treasury should be upper case; *treasury bills* (or *bonds*) of a general kind should be lower case. Avoid *t-bonds* and *t-bills*.

**food and drink** Lower case should be used for most common or familiar wines, cheeses, grape varieties, for example:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| barolo | dim sum | piesporter |
| bordeaux | emmental | pinotage |
| brunello | gorgonzola | pont-l'évêque |
| burgundy | hock | primitivo |
| champagne | merlot | rioja |
| chardonnay | moselle | syrah |
| cheddar | parmesan | zinfandel |

But the proper names of particular wines take upper case:
Cheval Blanc Lafite Marqués de Riscal Pontet-Canet

as do some foods and drinks that would look odd lower case:
Bombay duck Nuits St George Parma ham

**historical terms**

| | |
|---|---|
| Allies (in the second world war) | the Depression (1930s) |
| Black Death | Enlightenment |
| Cultural Revolution | etc (*but* new year) |
| D-Day | Holocaust (second world war) |

Industrial Revolution
Middle Ages
New Deal
Prohibition
Reconstruction
Reformation
Renaissance
Restoration
Thirty Years War
Year of the Dog, Horse, Rat

Note that all other revolutions are lower case, but upper-case for the qualifier: Orange revolution, Green revolution, French revolution.

### organisations, institutions, acts, etc

1 Organisations, ministries, departments, institutions, treaties, acts, etc, generally take upper case when their full name (or something pretty close to it, eg, *State Department*) is used.
Amnesty International
Arab League
Bank of England (the bank)
Central Committee
Court of Appeal
the Crown (Britain)
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
Department of State (the department)
European Commission
Forestry Commission
Health and Safety at Work Act
High Court
House of Commons
House of Lords
House of Representatives
Household Cavalry
Metropolitan Police
Ministry of Defence
New York Stock Exchange
Oxford University
Politburo
Scottish Parliament (the parliament)
Senate
St Paul's Cathedral (the cathedral)

Supreme Court
Treasury
Treaty of Rome
Welsh Assembly (the assembly)
World Bank (the bank)

2 Organisations with unusual or misleading names, such as the *African National Congress* and *Civic Forum*, may become the *Congress* and the *Forum* on second and subsequent mentions.

3 But most other organisations – agencies, banks, commissions (including the *European Commission* and the *European Union*), etc – take lower case when referred to incompletely on second mention.

4 Informal names
Organisations, committees, commissions, special groups, etc, that are impermanent, ad hoc, local or relatively insignificant should be lower case:
international economic subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee;
Market Blandings rural district council;
Oxford University bowls club;
subcommittee on journalists' rights of the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party.

5 Rough descriptions or translations
Use lower case for rough descriptions (*the safety act*, the *American health department*, the *French parliament*, as distinct from its *National Assembly*). If you are not sure whether the English translation of a foreign name is exact or not, assume it is rough and use lower case.

6 Congress and Parliament
*Congress* and *Parliament* are upper case, unless parliament is used not to describe the institution but the period of time for which it sits:
*This bill will not be brought forward until the next parliament.*
But *congressional* and *parliamentary* are lower case, as is the *opposition*, even when used in the sense of *her majesty's loyal opposition.*

The *government*, the *administration* and the *cabinet* are always lower case.
After first mention, the *House of Commons* (or *Lords*, or *Representatives*) becomes the *House*.

7 Acts
In America acts given the names of their sponsors (eg, *Glass-Steagall, Helms-Burton*) are always rough descriptions (*see above*) and so take a lower-case *act*.

## people

1 Ranks and titles
Use upper case when written in conjunction with a name, but lower case when on their own:
Colonel Qaddafi, *but* the colonel
Pope Benedict, *but* the pope
President Obama, *but* the president
Queen Elizabeth, *but* the queen
Vice-President Ansari, *but* the vice-president

Do not write Prime Minister Brown or Defence Secretary Cannon; they are the prime minister, Mr Brown, and the defence secretary, Mr Cannon. You might, however, write Chancellor Merkel.

2 Office-holders
When referred to merely by their office, not by their name, office-holders are lower case:
the chairman of Marks & Spencer
the chancellor of the exchequer
the foreign secretary
the president of the United States
the prime minister
the treasury secretary

The only exceptions are a few titles that would look unduly peculiar without capitals:
Black Rod
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

Lord Chancellor
Lord Privy Seal
Master of the Rolls
Speaker (in a parliament)
First Lady

and a few exalted people, such as:
the Dalai Lama, the Aga Khan. Also God and the Prophet.

3 Some titles serve as names, and therefore have initial capitals, though they also serve as descriptions: *the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Emir of Kuwait.* If you want to describe the office rather than the individual, use lower case: *The next archbishop of Canterbury will be a woman. Since the demise of the ninth duke, there has never been another duke of Portland.*

**places** Use upper case for definite geographical places, regions, areas and countries (*The Hague, Transylvania, Germany*), and for vague but recognised political or geographical areas (but see **Europe** above):
Central, South and South-East Asia
East Asia (which is to be preferred to the Far East)
the Gulf
Highlands (of Scotland)
Middle East
Midlands (of England)
North Atlantic
North, Central and South America
South Atlantic
the West (as in the decline of the West), Western
West Country

Use capitals for particular buildings even if the name is not strictly accurate, eg, the *Foreign Office.*

And if in doubt use lower case (*the sunbelt*).

The *third world* (an unsatisfactory term now that the communist second world has disappeared) is lower case.

Avoid the *western hemisphere.* Unlike the *southern hemisphere*

and the *northern hemisphere*, it is not clear where the *western hemisphere* begins or ends. The *Americas* will usually serve instead.

### political terms

1 The full name of political parties is upper case, including the word party:
Communist (if a particular party)
Labour Party
Peasants' Party
Republican Party
Tea Party (though not strictly a party, it looks too odd in lower case)

2 But note that some parties do not have party as part of their names, so this should therefore be lower case:
Greece's New Democracy *party*
India's Congress *party*
Indonesia's Golkar *party*
Turkey's Justice and Development *party*

3 Note that usually only people are:

| | |
|---|---|
| Democrats | Liberal Democrats |
| Christian Democrats | Social Democrats |

Their parties, policies, candidates, committees, etc, are:

| | |
|---|---|
| Democratic | Liberal Democratic |
| Christian Democratic | Social Democratic |

But a committee may be Democrat-controlled.

The exceptions are Britain's *Liberal Democrat Party* and Thailand's *Democrat Party*.

4 When referring to a specific party, write *Labour*, the *Republican nominee*, a prominent *Liberal*, etc, but use lower case in looser references to *liberals*, *conservatism*, *communists*, etc. *Tories*, however, are upper case, as is *New Labour*.

**proper names** When forming nouns, adjectives and verbs from proper names, retain the initial capital:

| | |
|---|---|
| Buddhism | Christian |

| | |
|---|---|
| Finlandisation | Luddite |
| Gaullism | Maronite |
| Hindu | Marxist |
| Hobbesian | Napoleonic |
| Islamic | Paisleyite |
| Jacobite | Russify |
| Leninist | Thatcherism |

Exceptions are: *platonic, pyrrhic, draconian.*

Indian castes are upper case and roman. Eg Brahmin, Dalit. Gypsy should also be upper case.

**province, county, river, state** are lower case when not strictly part of the name:

| | |
|---|---|
| Cabanas province | New York state |
| Limpopo river | Washington state |

Exceptions are: Mississippi River, River Thames, Red River (USA), Yellow River (China).

**trade names** Use capitals:
*BlackBerry Google Hoover Teflon Valium Jeep*

**miscellaneous (lower case)**

19th amendment (but Article 19)
aborigines
amazon (female warrior)
angst
blacks (and whites)
cabinet
civil servant
civil service
civil war (even America's)
cold war
common market
communist (generally)
constitution (even America's)
cruise missile
first world war
french windows
general synod
gentile
government
Gulf war
Internet
junior (as in George Bush junior)
Kyoto protocol
the left
mafia (any old group of criminals)
miscellaneous (upper case)

mecca (when used loosely, as a mecca for tourists)
new year (but New Year's Day)
Olympic games (and Asian, Commonwealth, European)
opposition
philistine
the pope
the press
the queen
quisling
realpolitik
republican
revolution (everyone's)
the right
second world war
senior (as in George Bush senior)
six-day war
state-of-the-union message
titanic (not the ship)
white paper
wild west
world wide web
young turk

**miscellaneous (upper case)**

Anglophone (*but* prefer (English-speaking)
Antichrist
anti-Semitism
Atlanticist
the Bar
the Bible
Catholics
CD-ROM
Christ
Christmas Day
Christmas Eve
Coloureds (in South Africa)
the Cup Final
the Davis Cup
Earth (when, and only when, it is being discussed as a planet like Mars or Venus)
Empire (everyone's)
Founding Fathers
Francophone
General Assembly (UN)
Hispanics
Koran
Labour Day
Mafia (the genuine article)
May Day
Mecca (in Saudi Arabia, California and Liberia)
Memorial Day
Moon (when it is Earth's)
New Year's Eve
Pershing missile (because it is named after somebody)
Protestants
the Queen's Speech
Semitic (-ism)
Social Security (in American contexts only, where it is used to mean pensions; what is usually understood by social security elsewhere is welfare in the United States)
Stealth fighter, bomber
Teamster

Ten Commandments
Test Match
Tube (London Underground)
Utopia (-n)

*See also* **abbreviations.**

**captions** *see* **headings and captions.**

**cartel** A *cartel* is a group that restricts supply in order to drive up prices. Do not use it to describe any old syndicate or association of producers – especially of drugs.

**case** "There is perhaps no single word so freely resorted to as a trouble-saver," says Gowers, "and consequently responsible for so much flabby writing." Often you can do without it. *There are many cases of it being unnecessary* is better as *It is often unnecessary. If it is the case that* simply means *If. It is not the case* means *It is not so.*

**Cassandra** Do not use *Cassandra* just as a synonym for a prophet of doom. The most notable characteristic about her was that her predictions were always correct but never believed.

**catalyst** A *catalyst* is something that speeds up a chemical reaction while itself remaining unchanged. Do not confuse it with one of the agents.

**Central Asian names** *see* **names.**

**centred on** not *around* or *in.*

**challenge** Although duels and gauntlets have largely disappeared into history, modern life seems to consist of little else but *challenges.* At every turn, every president, every minister, every government, every business, everyone everywhere is faced with *challenges.* No one nowadays has to face a *change, difficulty, task* or *job.* Rather these are *challenges* – fiscal challenges, organisational challenges, structural challenges, regional challenges, demographic challenges, etc. Next time you grab the word *challenge,* drop it at once and think again.

**charge** If you *charge* intransitively, do so as a bull, cavalry officer or some such, not as an *accuser* (so avoid *The standard of writing was abysmal, he charged*).

**charts and tables** should, ideally, be understandable without reading the accompanying text. The main point of the heading should therefore be to assist understanding, though if it does so amusingly, so much the better. If the subject of the chart (or table) is unambiguous (because, say, it is in the middle of a story about Germany), the title need not reflect the subject. In that case, however, the subtitle should clearly state: *Number of occasions on which the word Angst appears in German company reports, 2005–10.*

**cherry-pick** If you must use this cliché, note that *to cherry-pick* means *to engage in careful rather than indiscriminate selection*, whereas *a cherry-picker* is *a machine for raising pickers (and cleaners and so on) off the ground.*

**Chinese** is a language. It may be either *Mandarin* or *Cantonese.*

**Chinese names** *see* **names.**

**circumstances** stand around a thing, so it is *in*, not *under*, them.

**civil society** pops up a lot these days, often in the company of *citizenship skills, community leaders, good governance,* the *international community, social capital* and the like ("Development of civil society is social-reality specific" is a typical example). That should serve as a warning. It can, however, be a useful, albeit ill-defined term to describe collectively all non-commercial organisations in between the family and the state. But do not use it as a euphemism for NGOs (non-governmental organisations), which is how it is usually employed.

**clerical titles** *see* **titles.**

**clichés** weren't always clichéd. The first person to use *window of opportunity* or *level playing-field* or *accident waiting to happen* was justly pleased with himself. Each is a strong, vivid expression – or was. The trouble is that such expressions have been copied so often that they have lost their vividness. Mass printing made constant repetition easy, which explains how the word cliché came into being: it is the French term for a *stereotype printing plate*. Careful writers since Flaubert, who was so obsessive in his search for freshness that he insisted on anything approaching a cliché being printed in italics, have tried to avoid hackneyed phrases.

In "A Dictionary of Clichés" (1940), Eric Partridge wrote: "Clichés range from fly-blown phrases (*much of a muchness*; *to all intents and purposes*), metaphors that are now pointless (*lock, stock and barrel*), formulas that have become mere counters (*far be it from me to ...*) – through sobriquets that have lost all their freshness and most of their significance (*the Iron Duke*) – to quotations that are nauseating (*cups that cheer but not inebriate*), and foreign phrases that are tags (*longo intervallo*, *bête noire*)."

In truth, many of yesterday's clichés have become so much a part of the language that they pass unnoticed; they are like Orwell's dead metaphors. The ones most to be avoided are the latest, the trendiest. Since they usually appeal to people who do not have the energy to pick their own words, they are often found in the wooden prose of bureaucrats, academics and businessmen, though journalese is far from immune.

Clichés numb, rather than stimulate, the reader's brain. Many of the clichés in *The Economist* are phrases like *bite the bullet*, *confirmed bachelor*, *eye-watering sums*, *grinding to a halt*, *high-profile*, *honeymoon period*, *incurable optimist*, *road maps*, *tax packages*, *too close to call*, *toxic debt*, *whopping bills*. They serve merely to bore. Far worse are some of those placed in its pages by its managers, which probably induce terminal despair. The following appeared in an advertisement in May 2009: *world-class analysis*, *key industries*, *proven track record*, *strategic, transformative thinking*, *decisive goal-driven leader*, *consummate collaborator within a team framework*, *impactful programmes*, *strategic and consultative approach*, *professional in all internal*

*and external interactions, results-driven, relationship-building and communication skills.*

Many of these expressions are meaningless. All are ugly. All are borrowed unthinkingly from the language of other advertisers, and since they appear so often they fail to make an impact. Bureaucrats are inveterate offenders. They delight in posts like *service improvement managers for lifelong disabilities service, heads of offending services* and *human-resources officers.* Their work is always *challenging, exciting, key, strategic* and often *multi-disciplinary.* They are inevitably *committed, creative, dynamic, innovative* and *proactive.* Here is part of a letter from a large London think-tank, explaining that it might be slow in updating members' details because it was improving its computer system. This simple message was conveyed in 125 words, of which these are some:

> The organisation is upgrading its IT infrastructure by introducing a new database which will enable us to store and share information more effectively internally. We embarked upon this major project when it became clear that the current system no longer adequately supported our requirements. When the new system is fully implemented in the autumn it will enable us to more effectively manage our relationship with members and other stakeholders ... We kindly ask for your patience while we resolve any issues over the next two weeks.

Language such as this is so common that its authors have stopped asking themselves whether it means anything, whether the message might make more impact if it were expressed in 20 words rather than 125 or whether anyone will even bother to read it.

Do not add to such tosh. Be especially careful not to borrow the empty phrases of politicians who constantly invoke *paradigm shifts, wake-up calls, supply-side solutions, blue-sky thinking* and *social inclusion,* while asserting their desire to *go the extra mile, push the envelope* and *kick-start the economy. Making a difference* is one of the most fatuous favourites. Thus a former

director of communications for the Labour Party could assert that the prime minister, Gordon Brown, was being criticised only because he wanted *to make a difference*, as though the same plea could not have been made for A. Hitler or J. Stalin.

Not all clichés, however, are used unthinkingly. Politicians often resort to hackneyed language to give the impression that they are saying something when they are doing their best to avoid it.

Treat all such stuff as a caution. ("Political language is designed to ... give an appearance of solidity to pure wind." George Orwell)

Nothing betrays the lazy writer faster than fly-blown phrases used in the belief that they are snappy, trendy or cool. Some of these clichés are deliberately chosen, usually from a film or television, or perhaps a politician. Others come into use less wittingly, often from social scientists. If you find yourself using any of the following vogue words, you should stop and ask yourself whether it is the best word for the job, would you have used it in the same context five or ten years ago, and if not why not:

*address* meaning *answer, deal with, attend to, look at*

*Brits*

*care for* and all caring expressions – how about *look after*?

*commit to* meaning *commit yourself to*

*famously*: usually redundant, nearly always irritating

*focus*: all the world's a stage, not a lens

*historic*: let historians, not contemporary commentators, be the judge

*individual*: fine as an adjective and occasionally as a noun, but increasingly favoured by the wooden-tongued as a longer synonym for *man, woman* or *person*

*inform*, when used as a pretentious alternative to *influence*

*metrosexual*

*overseas* – inexplicably, and often wrongly, used to mean *abroad* or *foreign*

*participate in* – use *take part in*, with more words but fewer syllables

*process* – a word properly applied to *attempts to bring about*

*peace*, because they are meant to be evolutionary, but now often used in place of *talks*
*relationship* – *relations* can nearly always do the job
*resources*, especially *human resources*, which may be *personnel*, *staff* or just *people*
*supportive* – *helpful*?
*target* – if you are tempted to *target your efforts*, try to *direct* them instead
*transparency* – *openness*?
*wannabes*

Such words should not be banned, but if you find yourself using them only because you hear others using them, not because they are the most appropriate ones in the context, you should avoid them. Overused words and off-the-shelf expressions make for stale prose.

*See also* **euphemisms, horrible words, journalese and slang.**

**co-** This prefix is sometimes useful but now overdone. In the sentences *He co-founded the company with Sir Alan* or *He co-wrote "The Left Nation" with Adrian Windback*, the *co-* is unnecessary. *Co-author* and *co-sleep* are worse than that. "We want parents ... not to co-sleep with their baby," said Professor Peter Fleming. This was because "the majority of the co-sleeping deaths occurred in a hazardous sleeping environment." (*The Times*, October 14th 2009.)

**coiffed** not *coiffured*.

**collapse** (verb) is not transitive. You may *collapse*, but you may not *collapse something*.

**colons** *see* **punctuation**.

**come up with** Try *suggest*, *originate* or *produce*.

**commas** *see* **punctuation**.

**commit** Do not *commit to*, but by all means *commit yourself to* something.

**community** is a useful word in the context of religious or ethnic groups. But in many others it jars. Not only is it often unnecessary, it also purports to convey a sense of togetherness that may well not exist:
The *black community* means *blacks* (or *African-Americans*, etc).
The *business community* means *businessmen* (who are supposed to be competing, not colluding).
The *homosexual community* means *homosexuals* or *gays*.
The *intelligence community* means *spies*.
The *online community* means *geeks and nerds*.
The *migration and development communities* means *NGOs*.
The *international community*, if it means anything, means *other countries, aid agencies* or, just occasionally, *the family of nations*.
What the *global community* (*Financial Times*, July 12th 2005) means is a mystery.

**company names** Call companies by the names they call themselves. Here is a selection of names that are sometimes spelt incorrectly. *Economist* usage is now to ignore all rogue exclamation marks, backward letters, etc in company names.

ABN AMRO
Accenture
ACNeilsen
Allied Domecq
Amazon (not Amazon.com)
Anheuser-Busch
AOL
Arthur Andersen
AstraZeneca
AT&T (American Telephone and Telegraph)
AXA (French Insurance company)
BAE Systems
Benetton
Berkshire Hathaway
Bertelsmann
BHP Billiton (Australian mining group)
BlackBerry
Bloomingdale's
BNP Paribas
BP (which no longer refers to itself as British Petroleum)
BSkyB
BT (British Telecom)
Cadbury Schweppes
Citigroup (Citibank in some countries)
Coca-Cola
ConocoPhillips
Crédit Agricole
Credit Suisse
DaimlerChrysler

Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu
DuPont
E.On (German utility company)
easyJet (but EasyJet at start of sentence)
eBay
Eli Lilly
Ericcson (Swedish telecoms company)
Exxon Mobil
GlaxoSmithKline
HarperCollins
Hewlett-Packard (HP)
JPMorgan (investment banking arm of JP Morgan Chase)
J. Sainsbury (Sainsbury's is the name above the shop)
Lonrho
L'Oreal
Marks & Spencer
Merrill Lynch
Moody's, rating agency
NASDAQ
News Corporation (News Corp)
Nielsen/NetRatings
PeopleSoft
PepsiCo
Pfizer
Philip Morris
Philips (Dutch electronics multinational)
Pillsbury
PricewaterhouseCoopers (abbreviate to pwc)
Procter & Gamble
QinetiQ
Rolls-Royce
Saatchi & Saatchi
Sears, Roebuck
Standard & Poor's
ThyssenKrupp
Toys "R" Us
Vivendi Universal
Vodafone Group
Wal-Mart
WH Smith
Xstrata
Yahoo
ZenithOptimedia

**comparatives** Take care. One thing may be *many times more expensive* than another. It cannot be *many times cheaper*. Indeed, it can be cheaper only by a proportion that is less than one. A different but similar mistake is to say that *people grew twice as poor during a given period.* Instead, say *people's incomes fell by half during that period* (if that is what you mean, which, since it confuses income with wealth, it may not be).

**compare** A is compared *with* B when you draw attention to the difference. A is compared *to* B only when you want to stress their similarity.
*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?*

**compound** (verb) does not mean *make worse*. It may mean *combine* or, intransitively, it may mean to *agree* or *come to terms*. To *compound a felony* means to *agree for a consideration not to prosecute*. (It is also used, with different senses, as a noun and adjective.)

**comprise** means *is composed of*. *NATO's force in Afghanistan comprises troops from 42 countries. America's troops make up (not comprise) nearly half the force.* Alternatively, *Nearly half NATO's force in Afghanistan is composed of American troops.*

**contemporary** *see* **current**.

**continuous** describes something uninterrupted. *Continual* admits of a break. If your neighbours play loud music every night, it is a *continual* nuisance; it is not a *continuous* one unless the music is never turned off.

**contract** *see* **subcontract**.

**contrast, by** or **in** Use *by contrast* only when you are comparing one thing with another: *Somalia is a poor country. By contrast, Egypt is rich.* This means Egypt is rich by comparison with Somalia, though by other standards it is poor. If you are simply noting a difference, say *in contrast*: *The Joneses spend their holidays in the south of France. In contrast, the Smiths go to south Wales.*

**convince** should be followed by a noun or, in the passive, *that* or *of*. Do not *convince* people to do something. If you want to write *to*, the verb you need is *persuade*. *The prime minister was persuaded to call a June election; he was convinced of the wisdom of doing so only after he had won.*

**coruscate** means *sparkle* or *throw off flashes of light*, not *wither*, *devastate* or *reduce to wrinkles* (that's *corrugate*).

**could** is sometimes useful as a variant of *may* or *might*: *His coalition could* (or *might*) *collapse*. But take care. Does *He could call an*

*election in June* mean *He might call an election in June* or *He would be allowed to call an election in June?*

**council, counsel** A *council* is a *body of people*, elected or appointed, that advises, administers, organises, legislates, etc. *Counsel* (noun) means *advice* or *consultation*, or *lawyers who give legal advice and fight cases in court.*

**crescendo** Not an acme, apogee, peak, summit or zenith but a *passage of increasing loudness.* You cannot therefore *build to a crescendo.*

**crisis** A *decisive event* or *turning-point.* Many of the economic and political troubles wrongly described as *crises* are really *persistent difficulties, sagas* or *affairs.*

**critique** is a noun. If you want a verb, try *criticise.*

**currencies** Use $ as the standard currency and, on first mention of sums in all other currencies, give a dollar conversion in brackets.

Apart from those currencies that are written out in full (*see below*), write the abbreviation followed by the number. Currencies are not set in small capitals unless they occur as words in text without figures attached: "*Out went the D-mark, in came the euro.*"

Britain
pound, abbreviated as £
pence, abbreviated as p
1p, 2p, 3p, etc to 99p (*not* £0.99)
£6 (*not* £6.00), £6.47
£5,000–6,000 (*not* £5,000–£6,000)
£5m–6m (*not* £5m–£6m)
£5 billion–6 billion (*not* £5–6 billion), £5.2 billion–6.2 billion

America
dollar, abbreviated as $, will do generally; *US$* if there is a mixture of dollar currencies (*see below*)
cents, spell out, unless part of a larger number: $4.99

**other dollar currencies**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| A$ | Australian dollars | NT$ | Taiwanese dollars |
| C$ | Canadian dollars | NZ$ | New Zealand dollars |
| HK$ | Hong Kong dollars | S$ | Singaporean dollars |
| M$ | Malaysian dollars | Z$ | Zimbabwean dollars |

**Europe**

euro, plural euros, abbreviated as €, for those countries that have adopted it.
cents, spell out, unless part of a larger number.
€10 (*not* 10 euros), €10.75
DM, BFr, drachmas, FFr, Italian lire, IR£ (punts), markkas, Asch, Ptas and other currencies of the euro area have all been replaced by €, but may turn up in historical references.
DKr Danish krone (plural kroner)
IKr Icelandic krona (plural kronur)
NKr Norwegian krone (plural kroner)
SFr Swiss franc, SFr1m (*not* 1m Swiss francs)
SKr Swedish krona (plural kronor)

**sums in all other currencies** are written in full, with the number first.
Brazil, real, 100m reais
China, yuan, 100m yuan (*not* renminbi) (*see below*)
India, rupee, 100m rupees
Nigeria, naira, 100m naira
peso currencies, 100m pesos
South Africa, rand, 100m rand (*not* rands)
Turkey, Turkish lira, 100m liras
But Japan, yen ¥, ¥1,000 (*not* 1,000 yen)

**China** Properly, Chinese sums are expressed as, eg, 1 yuan rmb, meaning 1 yuan renminbi. *Yuan*, which means *money*, is the Chinese unit of currency. *Renminbi*, which means the *people's currency*, is the description of the yuan, as sterling is the description of the pound. Use *yuan*.

*See also* **figures**; and **currencies and measures** in Part 3.

**current, contemporary** *Current* and *contemporary* mean *at that time*, not necessarily *at this time*. So a series of current prices from 1960 to 1970 will not be in *today's prices*, just as *contemporary art* in 1800 was not *modern art*. *Contemporary history* is a contradiction in terms.

**cusp** is a *pointed end* or a *horn* of, for example, the Moon, or *the point at which two branches of a curve meet*. So it is odd to write, say, "Japan is on the cusp of a recovery" unless you think that recovery is about to end.

**cyber-expressions** Most cyber-terms are hyphenated: *cyber-attack*, *cyber-soccer*, etc, but *cybercrime*, *cybernetics*, *cyberspace* and *cyberwars*.

**dashes** *see* **punctuation**.

**data** It cannot be emphasised enough that this is a plural (singular, *datum*), despite its almost universal use as a singular noun. Do not be cowed by the majority.

**dates** month, day, year, in that order, with no commas:

| | |
|---|---|
| July 5th | 1996–99 |
| Monday July 5th | 2005–10 |
| July 5th 2009 | 1998–2009 |
| July 27th–August 3rd 2010 | 1990s |
| July 2002 | |

Do not write *on June 10th–14th*; prefer between *June 10th and 14th*. If, say, ministers are to meet over two days, write *on December 14th and 15th*.

Do not burden the reader with dates of no significance, but give a date rather than just *last week*, which can cause confusion. *This week* and *next week* are permissible.

Dates are often crucial to an account of events, but sentences (and, even more, articles) that begin with a date can be clumsy and off-putting. *This week Congress is due to consider the matter* is often better put as *Congress is due to consider the matter this week*. The effect is even more numbing if a comma is inserted: *This week, Congress is due to consider the matter*, though this construction is sometimes merited when emphasis is needed on the date.

Dates that require AD or BC should be set as one unhyphenated

word (*76AD, 55BC*), with the letters in small capitals after the number. The same applies to CE (common era) and BCE (before common era), though neither must be used in *The Economist.*

**deal (verb)** Transitively, *deal* means distribute: "He was dealt two aces, two kings and a six." Intransitively, *deal* means *engage in business.* Do not *deal* drugs, horses, weapons, etc; *deal in* them.

**decimate** means to destroy a proportion (originally a tenth) of a group of people or things, not to destroy them all or nearly all.

**demographics** used not to be a word at all, but has become a useful term for *facts about births and deaths,* and *the size and distribution of population,* and it would be foolish to ban it.

**deprecate, depreciate** To *deprecate* is to *argue* or *plead against* (by prayer or otherwise). To *depreciate* is to *lower in value.*

**different from** not to or *than.*

**dilemma** Not just any old awkwardness but one with horns, being, properly, a form of argument (the horned syllogism) in which you find yourself committed to accept one of two propositions each of which contradicts your original contention. Thus a *dilemma* offers the choice between two alternatives, each with equally nasty consequences.

**discreet, discrete** *Discreet* means *circumspect* or *prudent. Discrete* means *separate* or *distinct.* Remember that "Questions are never indiscreet. Answers sometimes are." (Oscar Wilde)

**disinterested** means *impartial*; *uninterested* means *bored.* "Disinterested curiosity is the lifeblood of civilisation." (G.M. Trevelyan)

**Dominicans** Take care. Do they come from Dominica? Or the Dominican Republic? Or are they friars?

**douse, dowse** *Douse* means to *throw water over something* or

*extinguish a light or a fire. Dowse* means to *search for underground water with a divining rod.*

**down to** *down to earth* yes, but "Occasional court victories are not down to human rights." (*The Economist*) No: *down to* does not mean *attributable to, the responsibility of* or even *up to* (*It's up to you*). Use *caused by* or *the result of.*

**due process** is a technical term, or piece of jargon, which was first used in England in 1355. It comes in two forms, *substantive due process*, which relates to the duties of governments to act rationally and proportionally when doing anything that affects citizens' rights, and *procedural due process*, which relates to the need for fair procedures. If you use the expression, make sure it is clear what you mean by it.

**due to** when used to mean *caused by* must follow a noun, as in *The cancellation, due to rain, of ...* Do not write *It was cancelled due to rain.* If you mean *because of* and for some reason are reluctant to say it, you probably want *owing to. It was cancelled owing to rain* is all right.

**Dutch names** *see* **names.**

**earnings** Do not write *earnings* when you mean *profits* (try to say if they are *operating*, *gross*, *pre-tax* or *net*).

**-ee** *employees*, *evacuees*, *detainees*, *divorcee*, *referees*, *refugees* but, please, no *attendees* (those attending), *draftees* (conscripts), *enrollees* (participants), *escapees* (escapers), *indictees* (the indicted), *retirees* (the retired), or *standees*. A *divorcee* may be male or female.

**e-expressions** Except at the start of a sentence, the *e-* is lower case and hyphenated:

e-book e-commerce
e-business e-mail

Computer terms are also usually lower case:
dotcom
home-page
laptop
online
the net (and internet)
the web, website and world wide web

but Wi-Fi

When giving *websites*, do not include *http://*. Just *www* is enough: *www.economist.com*. But it should be included for websites that do not use *www*, eg *http://twitter.com*.

*See also* **cyber-expressions**.

**effect** the verb, means to *accomplish*, so *The novel effected a change in his attitude*. *See also* **affect**.

**-effective, -efficient** *Cost-effective* sounds authoritative, but does it mean *good value for money, gives a big bang for the buck* or just plain *cheap*? If *cheap*, say *cheap*. *Energy-efficient* is also dubious. Does it mean *thrifty, economical* or something else? *Efficiency* is the *ratio of energy put out to energy put in.*

**effectively, in effect** *Effectively* means *with effect*; if you mean *in effect*, say it. *The matter was effectively dealt with on Friday* means it was *done well* on Friday. *The matter was, in effect, dealt with on Friday* means it was *more or less attended* to on Friday.

**either ... or** *see* **none.**

**elections** *see* **grammar and syntax.**

**elite, elitist** Once a neutral word meaning a *chosen group* or *the pick of the bunch*, *elite* is now almost always used pejoratively. *Elitist* and *elitism* are even more reprehensible. No matter that the words have their roots in the French verb *élire*, to elect, and the Latin *eligere*, to pick out; if you believe in government by a chosen group, or are a member of such a group, you are a reprobate. Only *elite forces* seem to escape censure. Though scornful of elites in education and politics, most people, when taken hostage, are happy to be rescued by elite troops. Use these words with care.

**enclave, exclave** An *enclave* is a piece of territory or territorial water entirely surrounded by foreign territory (Andorra, Ceuta, Kaliningrad, Melilla, Nagorno-Karabakh, Nakhichevan, San Marino). An *exclave* is the same thing, viewed differently, if, and only if, it belongs to another country.

**endemic, epidemic** *Endemic* means *prevalent* or *generally found in a place or population. Epidemic* means *prevalent among a population at a particular time.*

**enormity** means a *crime, sin* or *monstrous wickedness.* It does not mean *immensity.*

**environment** is often unavoidable, but it's not a pretty word. Avoid *the business environment, the school environment, the work environment*, etc. Try to rephrase the sentence – *conditions for business, at school, at work*, etc. *Surroundings* can sometimes do the job. In a *writing environment* you may want to make use of your correction fluid, rubber (or American eraser) or delete key.

**epicentre** means *that point on the surface* (usually the Earth's) *above the centre of something below* (usually an earthquake). So Mr Putin was not at the *epicentre* of the dispute, he was at its *centre.*

The *hypocentre*, in contrast, is *the place on the surface* (usually of the earth) *below something above* (usually an explosion). It is the same as *ground zero*. At Hiroshima in 1945, it was 580 metres above the ground.

**eponymous** is the adjective of *eponym*, which is *the person or thing after which something is named.* So George Canning was the *eponymous hero* of the Canning Club, Hellen was the *eponymous ancestor* of the Hellenes (Greeks), Ninus was the *eponymous founder* of Nineveh. Do not say *John Sainsbury, the founder of the eponymous supermarket.* Rather he was the *eponymous founder of J. Sainsbury's.* The word is ugly, though, and usually unnecessary.

**ethnic groups** Your first concern should be to avoid giving offence. But also avoid mealy-mouthed **euphemisms** and terms that have not generally caught on despite promotion by pressure-groups. *Ethnic* meaning *concerning nations or races*, or even something ill-defined in between, is a useful word. But do not be shy of *race* and *racial.* After several years in which *race* was seen as a purely social concept, not a scientific one, the term is coming back among scientists as a shorthand way of speaking about genetic rather than cultural or political differences. *See also* **political correctness**.

**Africans** may be descended from Asians, Europeans or black Africans. If you specifically mean the last, write *black Africans*, not simply *Africans.*

**Anglo-Saxon** is not a synonym for *English-speaking*. Neither the United States nor Australia is an Anglo-Saxon country; nor is Britain. Anglo-Saxon capitalism does not exist.

**Asians** In Britain, but nowhere else, *Asians* is often used to mean *immigrants and their descendants from the Indian subcontinent.* Many such people are coming to dislike the term, and many foreigners must assume it means people from all over Asia, so take care. Note that, even in the usage peculiar to Britain, *Asian* is not synonymous with *Muslim.*

**blacks** In many countries, including the United States, many black people are happy to be called *blacks*, although some prefer to be *African-Americans. Black* is shorter and more straightforward, but use either. Use *Native American* for indigenous Americans, to avoid confusion with the growing number of Indian-Americans.

**mixed race** Do not call people who are neither pure white nor pure black *browns*. People of mixed race in South Africa are *Coloureds*. Note the capital.

**other groups** The inhabitants of *Azerbaijan* are *Azerbaijanis*, some of whom, but not all, are *Azeris*. Those *Azeris* who live in other places, such as Iran, are not *Azerbaijanis*. Similarly, many Croats are not Croatian, many Serbs not Serbian, many Uzbeks not Uzbekistanis, etc.

**Spanish-speakers in the United States** When writing about Spanish-speaking people in the United States, use either *Latino* or *Hispanic* as a general term, but try to be specific (eg, Mexican-American). Many Latin Americans (eg, those from Brazil) are not Hispanic.

**euphemisms** Avoid, where possible, euphemisms and circumlocutions, especially those promoted by interest-groups keen to please their clients or organisations anxious to avoid embarrassment. This does not mean that good writers should be insensitive to giving offence: on the contrary, if you are to

be persuasive, you would do well to be courteous. But a good writer owes something to plain speech, the English language and the truth, as well as to manners. **Political correctness** can be carried too far.

So, in most contexts, *offending* behaviour is probably *criminal* behaviour. *Female teenagers* are *girls*, not *women*. *Living with mobility impairment* probably means *wheelchair-bound*. *Developing* countries are often *stagnating* or even *regressing* (try *poor*) countries. The *underprivileged* may be *disadvantaged*, but are more likely just *poor* (the very concept of *underprivilege* is absurd, since it implies that some people receive less than their fair share of something that is by definition an advantage or prerogative).

Remember that euphemisms are the stock-in-trade of people trying to obscure the truth. Thus Enron's *document-management policy* simply meant *shredding*. France's proposed *solidarity contribution* on airline tickets was a *tax*. Bankers' *guaranteed bonuses* are *salaries* (or fractions thereof).

Take particular care if you borrow the language of politicians, especially when they are trying to justify a war. "They make a wilderness and call it peace," wrote Tacitus nearly 2,000 years ago, quoting Calgalus, a British chief whose people had suffered at the hands of the Romans. Orwell was equally acute in pointing out decades ago how terms like *transfer of population* and *rectification of frontiers* put names on things without calling up mental pictures of them. *Friendly fire*, *body count*, *prisoner abuse*, *smart bombs*, *surgical strike*, *collateral damage* have been coined more recently with the same ends in mind. The Reagan administration spoke of its airborne invasion of Grenada in 1983 as a *vertical insertion*. The butchers of the Balkans produced *ethnic cleansing*, and the jihadists of al-Qaeda have offered *sacred explosions* in place of Islamically incorrect *suicide bombs*. The Bush administration, with its all-justifying *war on terror* (prosecuted with the help of the *Patriot Act*), provided more than its fair share of bland misnomers. Its practice of *enhanced interrogation* was *torture*, just as its practice of *extraordinary rendition* was probably *torture contracted out to foreigners* and its *self-injurious behaviour incidents* at Guantánamo Bay were

*attempted suicides.* The president's ensuing *reputational problem* just meant he was *mistrusted.*

Orwell would surely have put *human-rights abuses* in the same category of nerve-deadening understatement as *pacification* and *elimination of unreliable elements.* The term may occasionally be useful, but try to avoid it by rephrasing the sentence more pithily and accurately. *The army is accused of committing numerous human-rights abuses* probably means *The army is accused of torture and murder. Decommissioning weapons* means *disarming.* A *high-net-worth individual* is a *rich man* or *rich woman. Zero-percent financing* means an *interest-free loan. Quantitative easing* means *increasing the money supply. Non-observable inputs* are *assumptions used in self-serving guesswork. Intimate apparel* is *underwear.*

*See also* **affirmative action.**

**Euro-** is the prefix for anything relating to the European Union; *euro-* is the prefix for anything relating to the currency. The usual rules apply for the full, proper names (with informal equivalents on the right below). Thus:

| | |
|---|---|
| European Commission | the commission |
| European Parliament | the parliament |
| European Union | the Union |
| Treaty of Rome | the Rome treaty |
| Treaty on European Union | the Maastricht treaty |
| Treaty of Lisbon | the Lisbon treaty |

The EU grouping may be called EU-15, EU-27.

When making *Euro-* or *euro-words,* always introduce a hyphen. Exceptions are:
*Europhile Europhobe Eurosceptic Eurobond Euroyen bond*

Prefer *euro zone* or *euro area* (two words, no hyphen) to *euro-land.*
CAP is the *common agricultural policy.*
EMU stands for *economic and* (not European) *monetary union.*
ERM is the *exchange-rate mechanism.*
IGC is an *inter-governmental conference.*

**ex- (and former)** Be careful. A *Labour Party ex-member* has lost his seat; an *ex-Labour member* has lost his party.

**execute** means *put to death by law*. Do not use it as a synonym for *murder*. An *extra-judicial execution* is a contradiction in terms. (*See* **assassinate**.)

**existential** Often used, seldom understood, even it seems by those who use it, *existential* means *of* or *pertaining to existence*. In logic it may mean *predicating existence*, and in other philosophical contexts, *relating to existentialism*. It is sometimes used in such phrases as *existential threat* or *existential crisis*, where the author wants it to mean a threat to the existence (of Israel, say) or a crisis that calls into the question the existence of something (eg, NATO). But in most instances, including most in *The Economist*, it seems to serve no purpose other than to make the writer believe he is impressing his readers.

**fact** *The fact that* can often be reduced to *that*, but not always. Check whether it confuses the start of a sentence, as it sometimes does.

**factoid** A *factoid* is something that sounds like a fact, is thought by many to be a fact (perhaps because it is repeated so often), but is not in fact a fact.

**fed up** *with*, not *of*. Similarly, *bored with*, not *of*.

**federalist** in Britain, someone who believes in centralising the powers of associated states; in the United States and Europe, someone who believes in decentralising them.

**fellow** Often unnecessary, especially before *countrymen* ("*Friends, Romans, fellow-countrymen*"?).

**feral** can mean *brutish* or *uncultivated*, but is best used of plants, animals, children, etc, that were once tamed or domesticated but have *run wild*.

**ferment, foment** When you *ferment*, what you are doing is to cause something to effervesce, like yeast. But you *foment* trouble, sedition, revolution.

**fewer than, less than** *Fewer* (not *less*) *than seven speeches, fewer than seven samurai*. Use *fewer*, not *less*, with numbers of individual items or people. *Less than £200, less than 700 tonnes of oil, less than a third*, because these are measured quantities or proportions, not individual items.

**fief** not *fiefdom*.

**figures** Never start a sentence with a figure; write the number in words instead.

Use words for simple numerals from one to ten inclusive, except: in references to pages; in percentages (eg, 4%); and in sets of numerals, some of which are higher than ten.
*Deaths from this cause in the past three years were 14, 9 and 6.*

Always use numbers with units of measurement, even for those less than ten:
*4 metres, 9 miles,* but *four cows*
3D is in small caps.

It is occasionally permissible to use words rather than numbers when referring to a rough or rhetorical figure (such as *a thousand curses, a hundred years of solitude*).

In all other cases, though, use figures for numerals from 11 upwards.

| | |
|---|---|
| first to tenth centuries, the 11th century | a 29-year-old man |
| 20th century, 21st century | a man in his 20s |
| 20th-century ideas | 20th anniversary |
| in 100 years' time | 40-fold (but fourfold) |
| two and a half years later | 30-something |

The *Thirty Years War* is an exception.

**decimal point** Use figures for all numerals that include a decimal point (eg, 4.25).

**fractions** Figures may be appropriate for fractions, if the context is either technical or precise, or both:
*Though the poll's figures were supposed to be accurate to within 1%, his lead of 4¼ points turned out on election day to be minus 3½.*

Where precision is less important but it is nonetheless impossible to shoot off the fraction, words may look better:
*Though the beast was sold as a two-year-old, it turned out to be two and a half times that.*

Fractions should be hyphenated (one-half, three-quarters, etc)

and, unless they are attached to whole numbers (8½, 29¾), spelled out in words, even when the figures are higher than ten:
*He gave a tenth of his salary to the church, a twentieth to his mistress and a thirtieth to his wife.*

**fractions and decimals** Do not compare a fraction with a decimal. So avoid:
*The rate fell from 3¼% to 3.1%.*

Fractions are more precise than decimals (3.33 neglects an infinity of figures that are embraced by 1/3), but your readers probably do not think so. You should therefore use fractions for rough figures:
*Kenya's population is growing at 3½% a year. A hectare is 2½ acres.*
and decimals for more exact ones:
*The retail price index is rising at an annual rate of 10.6%.*

But treat all numbers with respect. That usually means resisting the precision of more than one decimal place, and generally favouring rounding off. Beware of phoney over-precision.

**hyphens and figures** Do not use a hyphen in place of *to* except with figures:
*He received a sentence of 15–20 years in jail* but *He promised to escape within three to four weeks.*

**Latin usage** It is outdated to use Latin words. So, with figures, do not write *per caput*, *per capita* or *per annum*. Use:
*a head* or *per head*
*a person* or *per person*
*a year* or *per year*
*2 litres of water per person*
*prices rose by 10% a year*

*See also* ***per caput***.

**measurements** In most non-American contexts prefer:
hectares to acres
kilometres (or *km*) to miles
metres to yards
litres to gallons

kilos (*kg*) to lb
tonnes to tons

### Celsius to Fahrenheit, etc

1 In American contexts, you may use the measurements more familiar to Americans (though remember that American pints, quarts, gallons, etc, are smaller than imperial ones).

Regardless of which you choose, you should give an equivalent, on first use, in the other units:
*It was hoped that after improvements to the engine the car would give 20km to the litre (47 miles per American gallon), compared with its present average of 15km per litre.*

2 Remember that in only a few countries do you now buy petrol in imperial gallons. In America it is sold in American gallons; in most other places it is sold in litres.

3 Note that a four-by-four vehicle can be a 4×4.

**million, billion, trillion, quadrillion** Use *m* for million. Spell out billion and trillion (though their conventional abbreviations are *bn* and *trn*).
8m 8 billion
£8m €8 billion

A *billion* is a thousand million, a *trillion* a thousand billion, a *quadrillion* a thousand trillion.

**per cent, percentage points** Use the sign % instead of *per cent*. But write *percentage*, never *%age* (though in most contexts *proportion* or *share* is preferable).

A fall from 4% to 2% is a drop of two percentage points, or of 50%, but not of 2%. (*See also* **per cent.**)

**ranges** Write:
5,000–6,000
5–6%
5m–6m (*not* 5–6m)
5 billion–6 billion

But:
*Sales rose from 5m to 6m* (not *5m–6m*); *estimates ranged between 5m and 6m* (not *5m–6m*).

**ratios** Where *to* is being used as part of a ratio, it is usually best to spell it out.
*They decided, by nine votes to two, to put the matter to the general assembly, which voted, 27 to 19, to insist that the ratio of vodka to tomato juice in a bloody mary should be at least one to three, though the odds of this being so in most bars were put at no better than 11 to 4.*

Where a ratio is being used adjectivally, figures and hyphens may be used, but only if one of the figures is greater than ten:
a 50–20 vote
a 19–9 vote

Otherwise, spell out the figures and use *to*:
a two-to-one vote
a ten-to-one probability

**finally** Do not use *finally* when you mean *at last*. *Richard Burton finally marries Liz Taylor* would have been all right second time round but not first.

**firm** Accountants', consultants', lawyers' and other partnerships are *firms*, not *companies*. Huge enterprises, like GE, GM, Ford, Microsoft and so on, should, by contrast, normally be called *companies*, although such outfits can sometimes be called *firms* for variety.

**flaunt, flout** *Flaunt* means display; *flout* means disdain. If you *flout* this distinction, you will *flaunt* your ignorance.

**focus** can be a useful word. It is shorter than *concentrate* and sharper than *look at*. But it is overused.

**footnotes, sources, references** *see* **footnotes, sources, references** in Part 3.

**foreign languages and translation** Occasionally, a foreign language may provide the *mot juste*. But try not to use foreign words and phrases unless there is no English alternative, which is unusual.

**names of foreign companies, institutions, groups, parties, etc** should usually be translated. So:
the Dutch People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (*not* the Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie
the German Christian Democratic Union (*not* the Christlich Demokratische Union)
the Shining Path (*not* Sendero Luminoso)
the National Assembly (*not* the Assemblée Nationale)

But if an abbreviation is also given, that may be the initials of the foreign name:
UMP for France's Union for a Presidential Majority
SPD for the Social Democratic Party of Germany
PAN for Mexico's National Action Party

Break this rule when the name is better known untranslated:
Forza Italia
Médecins Sans Frontières
Parti Québécois (Canada)
*yakuza* (*not* 8-9-3)

**placenames** Some placenames are better translated if they are well known in English:
St Mark's Square in Venice (*not* Piazza San Marco)
the Elysée Palace (*not* the Palais de l'Elysée)

**titles of foreign books, films, etc** The titles of foreign books, films, plays, operas and TV programmes present difficulties. Some are so well known that they are unlikely to need translation:
"Das Kapital" "Mein Kampf" "Le Petit Prince" "Die Fledermaus"

And sometimes the meaning of the title may be unimportant in the context, so a translation is not necessary:
"Hiroshima, Mon Amour"

But often the title will be significant, and you will want to

translate it. One solution, easy with classics, is simply to give the English translation:
"One Hundred Years of Solitude" "The Leopard" "War and Peace" "The Tin Drum"

This is usually the best practice to follow with pamphlets, articles and non-fiction, too.

But sometimes, especially with books and films that are little known among English-speakers or unobtainable in English (perhaps you are reviewing one), you may want to give both the original title and a translation, thus:
"11 Septembre 2001: l'Effroyable Imposture" ("September 11th 2001: The Appalling Deception")
"La Règle du Jeu" ("The Rules of the Game")
"La Traviata" ("The Sinner")

Foreign titles do not need to be set in italics. Treat them as if they were in English.

Note that book publishers follow different rules here. (*See* **italics**.)

**translating words and phrases** If you want to translate a foreign word or phrase, even if it is the name of a group or newspaper or party, just put it in brackets without inverted commas, so:
*Arbeit macht frei* (work makes free)
*jihad* (struggle)
*Pravda* (Truth)
*zapatero* (shoemaker)

**forensic** means *pertaining to courts of law* (held by the Romans in the forum) or, more loosely, *the application of science to legal issues. Forensic medicine* is *medical jurisprudence. Forensic* does not mean *very careful* or *very detailed.*

**forgo, forego** *Forgo* means do without; it forgoes the *e. Forego* means go before. A *foregone conclusion* is one that is predetermined; a *forgone conclusion* is non-existent.

**former** *see* **ex-**.

**former and latter** Avoid the use of *the former* and *the latter* whenever possible. It usually causes confusion.

**Frankenstein** was not the monster, but its creator.

**free** is an adjective or an adverb (and also a transitive verb), so you cannot have or do anything *for free*. Either you have it *free* or you have it *for nothing*.

**French names** *see* **names**.

**fresh** is not a synonym for *new* or *more*. "A few hundred fresh bodies are being recovered every day," reported *The Economist* improbably, two months after a tsunami had struck. Use with care.

**full stops** *see* **punctuation**.

**fulsome** is an old word that Americans generally use only to mean *cloying, insincere* or *excessively flattering*. In British English it can also mean *copious, abundant* or *lavish*.

**fund** (verb) is a technical term, meaning to convert floating debt into more or less permanent debt at fixed interest. Try to avoid it if you mean to *finance* or to *pay for*.

**garner** means *store*, not *gather*.

**gearing** is an ugly word which, if used, needs to be explained. It may be either the *ratio of debt to equity* or the *ratio of debt to total capital employed*. (*See also* **leverage**.)

**gender** is nowadays used in several ways. One is common in feminist writing, where the term has a technical meaning. "One is not born a woman, one becomes one," argued Simone de Beauvoir: in other words, one chooses one's gender. In such a context it would be absurd to use the word *sex*; the term must be *gender*. But, in using it thus, try to explain what you mean by it. Even feminists do not agree on a definition.

The primary use of *gender*, though, is in grammar, where it is applied to words, not people. If someone is female, that is her *sex*, not her *gender*. (The gender of *Mädchen*, the German word for girl, is neuter, as is *Weib*, a wife or woman.) So do not use *gender* as a synonym for *sex*. *Gender studies* probably means *feminism*.

**gentlemen's agreement** not *gentleman's*.

**German names** *see* **names**.

**get** is an adaptable verb, but it has its limits. A man does not *get* sacked or promoted, he *is* sacked or promoted. Nor does a prize-winner *get* to shake hands with the president, or spend the money all at once; he *gets the chance to*, is *able to*, or *allowed to*.

**global** Globalisation can go to the head. It is not necessary to describe, eg, the head of Baker & Mackenzie as the *global head* of that firm. And what is a *global vacancy* (as advertised by The Economist Group)? And avoid saying "now that we're all part of a global world", unless you have hitherto believed the Earth to be flat.

**good in parts** is what the curate said about an egg that was wholly bad. He was trying to be polite.

**gourmet, gourmand** *Gourmet* means *epicure*; *gourmand* means *greedy-guts*.

**governance** *Corporate governance* has now entered the language as a useful, albeit ugly and ill-defined, term to describe the rules relating to the conduct of business. The popularity of *governance* in other contexts is more difficult to understand. An old word, it had largely fallen into suitable disuse until Harold Wilson chose it in 1976 for the title of his memoirs ("The Governance of Britain"), presumably to dignify an undistinguished prime ministership. It means simply *government*, a word that serves the same purpose without any of the pretensions or pomposity of *governance*.

**grammar and syntax** Take care in the construction of your sentences and paragraphs. A single issue of *The Economist* contained the following:

*When closed at night, the fear is that this would shut off rather than open up part of the city centre.*

*Unlike Canary Wharf, the public will be able to go to the top to look out over the city.*

*Only a couple of months ago, after an unbroken string of successes in state and local elections, pollsters said ...*

Some hints are provided here on avoiding pitfalls, infelicities and mistakes; this is not a comprehensive guide to English grammar and syntax.

**a or the** Strictly, *Barclays* is a *British bank*, not *the British bank*,

just as *Toyota* is *a car company*, not *the car company*, and *Angela Gheorghiu* is *an opera singer*, not *the opera singer*. If it seems absurd to describe someone or something thus – that is, with the indefinite article – you can probably dispense with the description altogether or insert an extra word or two that may be useful to the reader: *Toyota, the world's biggest car company in 2009*; *Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones*.

**active or passive?** Be direct. Use the active tense. *A hit B* describes the event more concisely than *B was hit by A*.

**adjectives and adverbs** Adjectives qualify nouns, adverbs modify verbs. If you have a sentence that contains the words *firstly*, *secondly*, *more importantly*, etc, they almost certainly ought to be *first*, *second*, *more important*.

**adjectives of proper nouns** If proper nouns have adjectives, use them.
Crimean war (*not* the Crimea war)
Dutch East India Company (*not* the Holland East India Company)
Lebanese (*not* Lebanon) civil war
Mexican (*not* Mexico) problem
Pakistani (*not* Pakistan) government

It is permissible to use the noun as an adjective if to do otherwise would cause confusion.

An *African initiative* suggests the proposal came *from Africa*, whereas an *Africa initiative* suggests it was *about Africa*.

> **Californian, Texan** Do not feel you have to follow American convention in using words like *Californian* and *Texan* only as nouns. In British English, it is quite acceptable to write a *Californian* (not *California*) *judge*, *Texan* (not *Texas*) *scandal*, etc. "Mr Gedge ... was not fond of St Rocque, and this morning it would have seemed less attractive to him than ever, for three of his letters bore Californian postmarks and their contents had aggravated the fever of his home-sickness." (P.G. Wodehouse, "Hot Water")

**collective nouns – singular or plural?** There is no firm rule about the number of a verb governed by a singular collective noun. It is best to go by the sense – that is, whether the collective noun stands for a single entity:
The council was elected in March.
The me generation has run its course.
The staff is loyal.

or for its constituents:
The council are at sixes and sevens.
The preceding generation are all dead.
The staff are at each other's throats.
Do not, in any event, slavishly give all singular collective nouns singular verbs: *The couple are now living apart* is preferable to *The couple is now living apart.*

**majority** When it is used in an abstract sense, it takes the singular; when it is used to denote the elements making up the majority, it should be plural.
*A two-thirds majority is needed to amend the constitution*
but *A majority of the Senate were opposed.*
*A majority of* can often be replaced by *most.*

**number** Rule: *The number is ...; A number are ...*

**pair and couple** Treat both a *pair* and a *couple* as plural.

**comparisons** Take care, too, when making comparisons, to compare like with like:
*The Belgian economy is bigger than Russia* should be *Belgium's economy is bigger than Russia's.*

An advertisement for *The Economist* declared,
*Our style and our whole philosophy are different from other publications.* Only changing *publications* to *publications'* could turn this into sense.

**contractions** Don't overdo the use of *don't, isn't, can't, won't,* etc.

**false possessive** An *'s* at the end of a word, in the possessive or genitive case, does the job of *of.* An increasingly common

practice, especially among broadcasters and sometimes in *The Economist*, is to use it to do the job of *in*. Thus places or buildings are described as, eg, *New York's Chrysler Building, Edinburgh's Usher Hall* or *Belfast's Shankill Road*. Do not commit this sin. The Chrysler Building is *in* New York, not *of* it, just as Shankill Road is *in* Belfast and the Usher Hall is *in* Edinburgh.

**genitive** Take care with the genitive. It is fine to say a *friend of Bill's*, just as you would say *a friend of mine*, so you can also say *a friend of Bill's and Carol's*. But it is also fine to say a *friend of Bill*, or *a friend of Bill and Carol*. What you must not say is *Bill and Carol's friend*. If you wish to use that construction, you must say *Bill's and Carol's friend*, which is cumbersome.

**gerunds** Respect the gerund. Gerunds look like participles – *running, jumping, standing* – but are more noun-like, and should never therefore be preceded by a personal pronoun. So the following are wrong: *I was awoken by him snoring, He could not prevent them drowning, Please forgive me coming late.*

Those sentences should have ended:
*his snoring, their drowning, my coming late.*

In other words, use the possessive adjective rather than the personal pronoun.

**indirect speech** If you use indirect speech in the past tense, you must change the tense of the speaker's words appropriately: *Before he died, he said, "I abhor the laziness that is commonplace nowadays"* becomes *Before he died, he said he abhorred the laziness that was commonplace nowadays.*

**masculine and feminine** Several English nouns have both a masculine and a feminine form, for example:

| | |
|---|---|
| alumnus, alumna | man, woman |
| compère, commère | prince, princess |
| Filipino, Filipina | testator, testatrix |
| Latino, Latina | widow, widower |

**nouns acting as verbs** Do not force nouns or other parts of

speech to act as verbs: *A woman who was severely brain-damaged in 2000* would be better put as *A woman whose brain was severely damaged in 2000* (unless, remarkably, she was no longer brain-damaged at some later date).

**participle** Do not use a participle unless you make it clear what it applies to. Here are some examples of confused construction:
*Proceeding along this line of thought, the cause of the train crash becomes clear.*
*Looking out from the city's tallest building, the houses stretch for miles and miles.*

### plural nouns

1 The -ics words on page 69 (abstract nouns) are plural when preceded by *the*, or *the* plus an adjective, or with a possessive. For example:
*The dynamics of the dynasty were dysfunctional.*
*The complicated politics of Afghanistan have a logic all their own.*
*The athletics take place in London.*

2 These are plural:

| | |
|---|---|
| antics | histrionics |
| atmospherics | hysterics |
| basics | statistics |
| graphics | tactics |

*Specifics* are discouraged (try *details*).

3 *Data*, *elite* (as a group) and *media* are plural. So are *whereabouts* and *headquarters*.

4 *Elections* are not always plural. If, as in the United States, several votes (for the presidency, the Senate, the House of Representatives, etc) are held on the same day, it is correct to talk about *elections*. But in, say, Britain parliamentary polls are usually held on their own, in a single *general election*. The *opposition demanded an election* is often preferable to *The opposition demanded fresh elections*. And to write *The next presidential elections are due in 2015* suggests there will be more than one presidential poll in that year.

5 The *Taliban* are plural. The singular is *Talib*.
Make sure that plural nouns have plural verbs. Too often, in the pages of *The Economist*, they do not.
*Kogalym today is one of the few Siberian oil towns which are* [not is] *almost habitable.*

*What better evidence that snobbery and elitism still hold* [not *holds*] *back ordinary British people?* – and this in a leader on education.

**quoting** If you wish to quote someone, either give a date or use the present tense:
"*He leaves a legacy of wisdom,*" *said John Smith the next day* or ... *says Mr John Smith.*

### singular nouns

1 A *government*, a *party*, a *company* (whether Tesco or Marks & Spencer) and a *partnership* (Skidmore, Owings & Merrill) are all it and take a singular verb.

2 *Brokers* are singular.
*Legg Mason Wood Walk is preparing a statement.*
So avoid:
*stockbrokers Morgan Stanley Smith Barney, bankers JPMorgan Chase* or *accountants Ernst & Young.*

3 *Chemical, drug, pension*: prefer the singular when referring to:
chemical (*not* chemicals) companies
drug- (*not* drugs) traffickers
pension (*not* pensions) systems

4 Countries are singular, even if their names look plural.
*The Philippines has a congressional system, as does the United States; the Netherlands does not.*
The *United Nations* is also singular.

5 Abstract nouns that look plural when being used generally, without the definite article, an adjective or a possessive, are singular. For example:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| acoustics | ballistics | economics |
| athletics | dynamics | kinetics |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| mathematics | physics | propaganda |
| mechanics | politics | statics |

when being used generally, without the definite article, are singular. For example:
"Economics is the dismal science" (Carlyle).
"Politics is the art of the possible" (Bismarck).
Statics is a branch of physics.

6 Some games are singular:

| | |
|---|---|
| billiards | darts |
| bowls | fives |

But teams that take the name of a town, country or university are plural, even when they look singular: *England were bowled out for 56.*

7 *Law and order* defies the rules of grammar and is singular.

**split infinitives** Happy the man who has never been told that it is wrong to split an infinitive: the ban is pointless. Unfortunately, to see the rule broken is so annoying to so many people that you should try to observe it, unless it makes the sentence impossibly arch. Changing the sentence construction may help.

**subjunctive** Use the subjunctive properly. If you are posing a hypothesis contrary to fact, you must use the subjunctive. *If I were you ...* or *If Hitler were alive today, he could tell us whether he kept a diary.*

If the hypothesis may or may not be true, you do not use the subjunctive. *If this diary is not Hitler's, we shall be glad we did not publish it.*

If you have *would* in the main clause, you must use the subjunctive in the *if* clause. *If you were to disregard this rule, you would make a fool of yourself.*

It is common nowadays to use the subjunctive in such constructions as:
*He demanded that the Russians withdraw.*
*They insisted that the Americans also move back.*
*The referee suggested both sides cool it.*
*In soccer it is necessary that everyone remain civil.*

This construction is correct, and has always been used in America, whence it has recrossed the Atlantic. In Britain, though, it fell into disuse some time ago except in more formal contexts:
*I command the prisoner be summoned.*
*I beg that the motion be put to the house.*

In British English, but not in American, a better course is to insert the word *should*:
*He demanded that the Russians should withdraw.*
*The Americans should also move back.*
*Both sides should cool it.*
*Everyone should remain civil.*

Alternatively (and best of all), some of the sentences could be rephrased:
*He asked the Russians to withdraw.*
*It is necessary for everyone to remain civil.*

*See also* **may and might**.

**tenses** Any account of events that have taken place must use a past tense. Yet newspaper articles may have greater immediacy if they use the present or future tenses where appropriate.

The perfect and pluperfect tenses also serve a purpose, often making accounts more pointed, and so more interesting. Here are a few rough rules:

1 If you use the past simple (aorist) tense, put a time or date to the event: *He died on April 11th.*
2 If you cannot, or do not want to, pin down the occasion in this way, use the perfect tense: *He has died*, or the present, *He is dead.* These imply continuance.
3 The pluperfect should be used for events that punctuate past continuance: *He grew up in post-war Germany, where he had seen the benefits of hard work.*

So does the imperfect tense: *He was a long time dying.*

*See also* **may and might**.

**ground rules** Just as *house rules* are the rules of the particular house, so *ground rules* are *the rules of the particular ground* (or *grounds*). They are not *basic* or *general rules*.

**halve** is a transitive verb, so deficits can double but not *halve*. They must *be halved* or *fall by half*.

**haver** means to *talk nonsense*, not *dither*, *swither* or *waver*.

**headings and captions** set the tone: they are more read than anything else, especially in a newspaper. Use them, therefore, to draw readers in, not to repel them. That means wit (where appropriate), not bad puns; sharpness (ditto), not familiarity (call people by last names, not first names); originality, not clichés.

Writers and editors, having laboured over an article, are too often ready to yank a well-known catchphrase, or the title of a film, from the front of their mind without giving the matter any more thought. They do so, presumably, in the belief that the heading is less important than the words beneath it. If you find yourself reaching for any of the following, think again:

back to the future
bridges (or anything else) too far
China syndromes
could do better (a favourite with education stories)
deal or no deal
empires striking back
flavours of the month
French connections
F-words
generation X
hearts and minds
kinder, gentler
mind the gap
new kids on the block
perfect storms
shaken, not stirred
$64,000 questions
southern discomfort
taxing times (tax stories)
thirty-somethings
where's the beef?
windows of opportunity

On October 18th 2004, for instance, an *Economist* reader wrote as follows:

> SIR – Your newspaper this week contains headlines derived from the following film titles: "As Good As It Gets", "Face-Off", "From Russia With Love", "The Man Who Planted Trees", "Up Close and Personal" and "The Way of the Warrior". Also employed are "the Iceman Cometh", "Measure for Measure", "The Tyger" and "War and Peace" – to say nothing of the old stalwart, "Howard's Way".
>
> Is this a competition, or do your sub-editors need to get out more?
>
> Tom Braithwaite,
> London

*See also* **clichés, journalese and slang.**

**health care** The American system of *health care* (adjective, *health-care*) for the poor is *Medicaid*, and for the elderly is *Medicare*. Canada's national health-care system is also called *Medicare*.

**healthy** If you think something is *desirable* or *good*, say so. Do not call it *healthy*.

**heresy** *see* **apostasy.**

**heteronym** *see* **homograph, homophone.**

**hoards, hordes** Few secreted treasures or stashes of things like food and money being kept to guard against privation (*hoards*) are multitudes on the move (*hordes*).

**Hobson's choice** is not *the lesser of two evils*; it is *no choice at all*.

**holistic** properly refers to a theory developed by Jan Smuts, who argued that, through creative evolution, nature tended to form wholes greater than the sum of the parts. If this is not what you mean by *holistic*, you would probably be wise to avoid it.

**homeland** Although it is now used as a synonym for the United States' domestic territory, your homeland is your *native land*, your *motherland* or even your *fatherland*.

**homogeneous, homogenous** *Homogeneous* means of the same kind or nature. *Homogenous* means similar because of common descent.

**homograph, homophone** *Homographs* are words with the same spelling but different meanings and sometimes different pronunciations. If they are spelt and pronounced the same they are also *homonyms*: *bear* (animal), *bear* (carry); *like* (similar), *like* (be fond of); *stalk* (part of a plant), *stalk* (to follow someone or something). If they are spelt the same but pronounced differently they are also *heteronyms*: *content* (happy), *content* (subject matter); *entrance* (way in), *entrance* (charm); *rebel* (to resist or fight against authority), *rebel* (someone who rebels).

*Homophones* are words that are pronounced the same regardless of how they are spelt and their meaning: *baited* (food put on a hook or trap), *bated* (diminished, restrained); *birth* (the process of bearing children); *berth* (somewhere to sleep in a ship, train etc); *heroin* (a Class A drug), *heroine* (a courageous woman).

**homonym** *see above.*

**homosexual** Since this word comes from the Greek word *homos* (same), not the Latin word *homo* (man), it applies as much to women as to men. It is therefore as daft to write *homosexuals and lesbians* as to write *people and women.*

**hopefully** Some authorities say it is pedantic and outmoded to object to the use of *hopefully* to mean *it is hoped that.* The practice originated in America, where English has been much influenced by German immigrants, who found the language of their new country had only one adverb to serve for both *hoffnungsvoll*, meaning full of hope, and *hoffentlich*, which can mean let's hope so. In *The Economist*, however, by all means begin an article hopefully, but do not write: *Hopefully, it will be finished by Wednesday.* Try *with luck, if all goes well, it is hoped that...*

**horrible words** Words that are horrible to one writer may not be horrible to another, but if you are a writer for whom no words are horrible, you would do well to take up some other activity. No words or phrases should be banned outright from appearing in print, but if you use any of the following you should be aware that they may have an emetic effect on some of your readers.

carer – and most caring expressions
chattering classes
facilitate
famously
governance
grow the business
guesstimate
informed (as in *his love of language informed his memos*)
kids
likely (meaning *probably*, rather than *probable*)
looking to (meaning *intending to*)
materiel
ongoing
poster child
prestigious
proactive
rack up (profits, etc)
savvy
segue
showcase
source (meaning *obtain*)

*See also* **clichés**.

**hyphens** There is no firm rule to help you decide which words are run together, hyphenated or left separate. If in doubt, consult a dictionary. Do not overdo the literary device of hyphenating words that are not usually linked: the stringing-together-of-lots-and-lots-of-words-and-ideas tendency can be tiresome.

1 Words with common or short prefixes
In general, try to avoid putting hyphens into words formed of one word and a short prefix.

3D
asexual
biplane
declassify
disfranchise
geopolitical
neoclassicism
neoconservative but neo-cons
neoliberal
Neolithic
neologism
neonatal
overcapacity
overdone
overeducated
overemployment
precondition

predate
preoccupied
preordained
prepay
realign
rearm
rearrange
reborn
redirect
reopen
reorder
repurchase
subcommittee
subcontinent
subcontract
subhuman
submachinegun
suboptimal
subprime
tetravalent
underdog
underdone
underinvest
underpaid
upended

2 Words beginning with re-
Some words that begin with *re* are hyphenated to avoid confusion:
re-cast
re-create (meaning create again)
re-present (meaning present again)
re-sort (meaning sort again)

3 Unfamiliar combinations
Words making unfamiliar combinations, especially if they would involve running consonants or vowels together, may benefit from a hyphen, so:
cross-reference (a cross reference would be unpleasant)
demi-paradise
over-governed
sub-investment grade
under-age
under-secretary

*Antidisestablishmentarianism* would, however, lose its point if it were hyphenated.

*See also 5 below.*

4 Fractions
Whether nouns or adjectives, these take hyphens:
one-half one-sixth

four-fifths two-thirds

But note that it is *a half, a fifth, a sixth.*

5 Words that begin with

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| agri | infra | post |
| anti | inter | pre |
| counter | mid | semi |
| extra | multi | ultra |
| half | non | |

The rules vary:

agri-business, agriculture

anti-aircraft, anti-fascist, anti-submarine (*but* antibiotic, anticlimax, antidote, antiseptic, antitrust)

counter-attack, counter-clockwise, counter-espionage, counter-intuitive (*but* counteract, countermand, counterpane)

extraordinary, extraterrestrial, extraterritorial (*but* extra-judicial)

half-baked, half-hearted, half-serious (*but* halfway)

infra-red

inter-agency, inter-country, inter-faith, inter-governmental, inter-regional (*but* intermediate, international, interpose)

mid-August, mid-week

multibillion, multilingual, multiracial (*but* multi-occupancy, multi-storey, multi-user)

non-combatant, non-existent, non-payment, non-violent (*but* nonaligned, nonconformist, nonplussed, nonstop)

postdate, post-war, pre-war

semi-automatic, semi-conscious, semi-detached

ultra-violet

6 The word *worth*

A sum followed by the word *worth* needs a hyphen: *$25m-worth of goods.*

7 Some titles

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| attorney-general | lieutenant-colonel | under-secretary |
| director-general | major-general | vice-president |
| field-marshal | secretary-general | |

But:

| | |
|---|---|
| deputy director | district attorney |
| deputy secretary | general secretary |

8 Avoiding ambiguities

fine-tooth comb (most people do not comb their teeth)

| | |
|---|---|
| a little-used car | a little used-car |
| third-world war | third world war |
| cross complaint | cross-complaint |
| high-school results | high school results |

9 Aircraft

| | |
|---|---|
| DC-10 | MiG-23 |
| Mirage F-1E | Lockheed P-3 Orion |

(If in doubt, consult Jane's "All the World's Aircraft".)

Note that Airbus A340, BAe RJ70 do not have hyphens.

10 Calibres

The style for calibres is 50mm or 105mm with no hyphen, but 5.5-inch and 25-pounder.

11 Adjectives formed from two or more words

70-year-old judge
balance-of-payments difficulties
private-sector wages
public-sector borrowing requirement
right-wing groups (*but* the right wing of the party)
state-of-the-union message
value-added tax (VAT)

12 Adverbs

Adverbs do not need to be linked to participles or adjectives by hyphens in simple constructions:
*The regiment was ill equipped for its task.*
*The principle is well established.*
*Though expensively educated, the journalist knew no grammar.*

But if the adverb is one of two words together being used adjectivally, a hyphen may be needed:
*The ill-equipped regiment was soon repulsed.*
*All well-established principles should be periodically challenged.*

The hyphen is especially likely to be needed if the adverb is short and common, such as *ill, little, much* and *well*. Less common adverbs, including all those that end -ly, are less likely to need hyphens:
*Never employ an expensively educated journalist.*

13 Separating identical letters

| | |
|---|---|
| book-keeping | re-emerge |
| coat-tails | re-entry |
| co-operate | side-effect |
| pre-eminent | trans-ship |
| pre-empt | unco-operative |

Exceptions include:

| | |
|---|---|
| overrate | overrun |
| overreach | skiing |
| override | underrate |
| overrule | withhold |

14 Some nouns formed from prepositional verbs

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| bail-out | pay-off | shake-out |
| build-up | pull-out | shake-up |
| buy-out | rip-off | stand-off |
| call-up | round-up | start-up |
| get-together | run-up | trade-off |
| lay-off | set-up | |

But:

| | |
|---|---|
| fallout | lockout |
| handout | payout |
| knockout | turnout |

15 The quarters of the compass

| | |
|---|---|
| mid-west(ern) | south-east(ern) |
| north-east(ern) | south-west(ern) |
| north-west(ern) | |

16 Hybrid ethnics
*Greek-Cypriot, Irish-American*, etc, whether noun or adjective.

17 Makers and making
A general, though not iron, rule for *makers* and *making*: if the

prefix is of one or two syllables, attach it without a hyphen to form a single word, but if the prefix is of three or more syllables, introduce a hyphen.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| antimacassar-maker | clockmaker | steelmaker |
| bookmaker | holiday-maker | tiramisu-maker |
| candlestick-maker | lawmaker | troublemaker |
| carmaker | marketmaker | |
| chipmaker | peacemaker | |

*Policymaker* and *profitmaking* are one word and an exception. But: note *foreign-policy maker (-ing).*

18 Other words ending *-er (-ing)* that are similar to *maker* and *making*

The general rule should be to insert a hyphen:

| | |
|---|---|
| arms-trader | gun-runner |
| copper-miner | home-owner |
| drug-dealer | hostage-taker |
| drug-trafficker | mill-owner |
| field-worker | truck-driver |
| front-runner | vegetable-grower |

But some prefixes, especially those of one syllable, can be used to form single words.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| coalminer | metalworker | shipowner |
| farmworker | muckraker | steelworker |
| foxhunter | nitpicker (-ing) | steeplechaser |
| gatekeeper | peacekeeper | taxpayer |
| householder | shipbroker | |
| landowner | shipbuilder | |

Less common combinations are better written as two words:

| | |
|---|---|
| crossword compiler | gun owner |
| currency trader | insurance broker |
| dog owner | tuba player |

19 Quotes

Words gathered together in quotation marks as adjectives do not usually need hyphens as well: *the "Live Free or Die" state.*

20 One word

airfield
airspace
airtime
bedfellow
bestseller (-ing)
bilingual
blackboard
blackout
blueprint
bookseller
businessman
bypass
cashflow (*but* cash flow in accountancy)
catchphrase
ceasefire
checklist
coastguard
codebreaker
comeback
commonsense (adj)
crossfire
cyberspace
dotcom
downturn (noun)
faultline
figleaf
fivefold
foothold
forever (adv, when preceding verb)
foxhunter (-ing)
frontline (adj, *but* noun front line)
girlfriend
goodwill
grassroots (adj and noun)
groundsman
halfhearted
halfway
handpicked
handwriting
hardline
headache
hijack
hobnob
kowtow
lacklustre
landmine
laptop
logjam
loophole
lopsided
lukewarm
machinegun
marketplace
minefield
nationwide
nevertheless
nonetheless
offline
offshore
oilfield
oilrig
online
onshore
peacetime
petrochemical
pickup truck
placename
rainforest
ringtone
roadblock
rustbelt
salesforce
seabed
shorthand
shortlist
shutdown
sidestep
soyabean
spillover
startup
statewide
stockmarket
streetwalker
strongman
sunbelt
takeover
threefold
threshold
timetable
trademark
transatlantic
transpacific
twofold
videocassette
videodisc
wartime
watchdog
website
whistleblower
windfall
workforce
worldwide
worthwhile

21 Two words

ad hoc
air base
air force
air strike
all right
any more
any time
arm's length
ballot box
birth rate
call centre
child care (noun)
cluster bombs
common sense (noun)
dare say
errand boy
for ever (when used after a verb)
health care (noun)
hedge fund
home page
joint venture
Land Rover
no one
photo opportunity
plea bargain
some day
some time
under way
vice versa
wild flowers (*but* adj. wildflower)

22 Two hyphenated words

aid-worker
aircraft-carrier
asylum-seekers
baby-boomer
balance-sheet
bell-ringer
break-even
climb-down
come-uppance
court-martial (noun and verb)
cross-border
cross-dresser
cross-sell
death-squads
derring-do
down-payment
drawing-board
end-game
end-year
faint-hearted
fund-raiser (-ing)
grown-up
hand-held
health-care (adj)
heir-apparent
home-made
hot-head
ice-cream
in-fighting
interest-group
kerb-crawler
know-how
laughing-stock
like-minded
long-standing
machine-tool
money-laundering
nation-building
nation-state
nest-egg
news-stand
number-plate
pot-hole
pressure-group
question-mark
rain-check
safety-valve
short-lived
starting-point
sticking-point

stumbling-block
subject-matter
suicide-bomb (-er, -ing)
talking-shop
task-force
tear-gas
think-tank
time-bomb
turning-point
voice-over
vote-winner
war-chest
well-being
Wi-Fi
Wi-Max
window-dressing
wish-list
witch-hunt
working-party
write-down (noun)

23 Three words

ad hoc agreement (meeting, etc)
armoured personnel carrier
consumer price index
chief(s) of staff
half a dozen
in as much
in so far
multiple rocket launcher
nuclear power station
sovereign wealth fund
third world war (if things get bad)

24 Three hyphenated words

A-turned-B (unless this leads to something unwieldy, so jobbing churchwarden turned captain of industry)

brother-in-law
chock-a-block
commander-in-chief
no-man's-land
prisoners-of-war
second-in-command
stock-in-trade

25 Numbers

Avoid *from 1947–50* (say *in 1947–50* or *from 1947 to 1950*) and *between 1961–65* (say *in 1961–65*, *between 1961 and 1965* or *from 1961 to 1965*). *See also* **figures**.

"If you take hyphens seriously, you will surely go mad." (Oxford University Press style manual)

**hypothermia** is what kills old folk in winter. If you say it is *hyperthermia*, that means they have been carried off by heat stroke.

**Icelandic names** *see* **names**.

**identical** *with*, not *to*.

**ilk** means *same*, so *of that ilk* means *of the place of the same name as the family*, not *of that kind*. Best avoided.

**immolate** means to *sacrifice*, not to *burn*.

**important** If something is *important*, say why and to whom. Use sparingly, and avoid such unexplained claims as *this important house, the most important painter of the 20th century*. See also **interesting**.

**impractical, impracticable** If something is *impractical*, it is *not worth trying to do* it. If it's *impracticable*, it *cannot be done*. See also **practical, practicable**.

**inchoate** means *not fully developed* or *at an early stage*, not *incoherent* or *chaotic*.

**including** When *including* is used as a preposition, as it often is, it must be followed by a noun, pronoun or noun clause, not by a preposition. So *Iran needs more investment, including for its tired oil industry* is ungrammatical. The sentence should be rephrased, perhaps, as *Iran, including its tired oil industry, needs more investment*; or, *Iran needs more investment, especially for its tired oil industry*.

**individual** (noun) used occasionally, can be a useful colloquial

term for *chap* or *bloke* or *guy* ("*In a corner, Parker, a grave, lean individual, bent over the chafing-dish, in which he was preparing for his employer and his guest their simple lunch.*" P.G. Wodehouse). Used indiscriminately as a term for person or, in the plural, *people*, it becomes bureaucratic ("*Individuals desiring to function as operators using instruments listed under paragraph (A)(3) of rule 3701-53-02 of the Administrative Code shall apply to the director of health for permits on forms prescribed and provided by the director of health.*" Ohio Department of Health).

**Indonesian names** *see* **names.**

**initially** Prefer *first, at first.*

**interesting** Like **important** and *funny, interesting* makes assumptions about the word or words it describes that may not be shared by the reader. Facts and stories introduced as interesting often turn out to be something else. "Interestingly, my father-in-law was born in East Kilbride," for instance. If something really is interesting, you probably do not need to say so.

**inverted commas (quotation marks)** *see* **punctuation.**

**investigations of** not *into.*

**Iranian names** *see* **names.**

**Islamic, Islamist** *Islamic* means relating to Islam; it is a synonym of the adjective *Muslim*, but it is not used for a follower of Islam, who is always *Muslim*. But *Islamic art and architecture* is conventional usage.

*Islamist* refers to those who see Islam as a political and social ideology as well as a religious one.

**issues** *The Economist* has issues - 51 a year - but if you think you have issues with *The Economist*, you probably mean you have *complaints, irritations* or *delivery problems*. If you disagree with *The Economist*, you may take issue with it. Do not use *issue* as a synonym for *problem*. Be precise.

**Italian names** *see* **names**.

## italics

**foreign words and phrases** should be set in italics:

*cabinet* (French type)
*de rigueur*
*fatwa*
*glasnost*
*Hindutva*
*in camera*
*intifada*
*jihad* (and *jihadi*, but jihadist)
*loya jirga*
*Mitbestimmung*
*pace*
*papabile*
*perestroika*
*persona non grata*
*sarariman*
*Schadenfreude*
*ujamaa*

If they are so familiar that they have become anglicised, they should be in roman. For example:

a priori
à propos
ad hoc
apartheid
avant-garde
bête noire
bona fide
bourgeois
café
chargé d'affaires
coup d'état (but *coup de foudre, coup de grâce*)
de facto, de jure
dirigisme
en masse, en route
grand prix
in absentia
in situ
machismo
nom de guerre
nouveau riche
parvenu
pogrom
post mortem
putsch
raison d'être
Realpolitik
status quo
tsunami
vice versa
vis-à-vis

Remember to put appropriate accents and diacritical signs on French, German, Spanish and Portuguese words in italics (and give initial capital letters to German nouns when in italics, but not if not). Make sure that the meaning of any foreign word you use is clear. *See also* **accents**.

For the Latin names of animals, plants, etc, *see* **spelling** and Part 3.

**newspapers and periodicals** Only *The Economist* has *The* italicised. Thus the *Daily Telegraph*, the *New York Times*, the *Financial Times*, the *Spectator* (but *Le Monde*, *Die Welt*, *Die Zeit*). The *Yomiuri Shimbun* should be italicised, but you can also say the *Yomiuri*, or the *Yomiuri* newspaper, as *shimbun* simply means newspaper in Japanese.

**books, pamphlets, films, plays, operas, ballets, radio and television programmes** Titles are roman, not italic, with capital letters for each main word, in quotation marks. Thus: "Pride and Prejudice", "Much Ado about Nothing", "Any Questions", "Crossfire", etc. But the Bible and its books (Genesis, Ecclesiastes, John, etc), as well as the Koran, are written without inverted commas. These rules apply to footnotes as well as bodymatter.

Web magazines and blogs are in italics, as for newspapers, with a lower-case "The" if appropriate.

**headings, captions, cross-heads, rubrics** Do not use italics.

**lawsuits**
*Brown* v *Board of Education*
*Coatsworth* v *Johnson*
*Jarndyce* v *Jarndyce*

If abbreviated, *versus* should always be shortened to v, with no point after it. The v should not be italic if it is not a lawsuit.

**names of ships, aircraft, spacecraft**
*HMS Illustrious*
*Spirit of St Louis*
*Challenger*
*Air Force 1*

**algebraic formulae** Thus: $e = mc^2$

**Japanese names** *see* **names.**

**jib, gibe, gybe**

| | |
|---|---|
| jib (noun) | sail or boom of a crane |
| jib (verb) | to balk or shy |
| gibe (verb) | to scoff or flout |
| gibe (noun) | taunt |
| gybe (verb) | to alter course |

Don't *jibe.*

***jihad*** is the Arabic word for *struggle.* For modern Muslims, it may mean *military war* to propagate Islamism, that is, to spread Islam as a religious, political and social ideology (*jihad* of the sword). Or it may mean *spiritual striving* for personal purification and moral betterment (*jihad* against oneself). Or it may merely mean *doing right, improving society* and *being virtuous* (*jihad* of the tongue or of the hand). A religious obligation for all Muslims, *jihad* is for most a non-violent duty, though for some a violent one. Do not therefore use it simply to mean *holy war*, which it never did in classical Arabic. Rather, make clear what sort of *jihad* is under discussion in the context.

Someone engaged in *jihad* is a *mujahid* (plural, *mujahideen*) or a *jihadist* (*jihadi*). Logically, *mujahideen* and jihadists might be considered to be engaged in a struggle that could be either violent or non-violent. In practice, the terms nowadays are always used of Muslims engaged in an armed struggle, though *mujahideen* may simply be Muslim militants fighting for a cause, whereas jihadists are always fighting to spread Islamism by force.

**journalese and slang** Do not be too free with slang like *He really hit the big time in 2001.* Slang, like metaphors, should be used only occasionally if it is to have effect. Avoid expressions used only by journalists, such as giving people *the thumbs up, the thumbs down* or *the green light.* Stay clear of *gravy trains* and *salami tactics.* Do not use *the likes of*, or *Big Pharma* (*big drug firms*).

Try not to be predictable, especially predictably jocular. Spare your readers any mention of *mandarins* when writing about the civil service, of *their lordships* when discussing the House of Lords, and of *comrades* when analysing communist parties. Must all stories about Central Asia include a reference to the *Great Game*? Must all lawns be *manicured*? Must all small towns in the old confederacy be called the *buckle on the Bible belt*? Are drug-traffickers inevitably *barons*? Must starlets and models always be *scantily clad*? Is there any other kind of *wonk* than a *policy wonk*?

Resist saying *This will be no panacea.* When you find something that is indeed a *panacea* (or a *magic* or *silver bullet*), that will indeed be news. Similarly, hold back from offering the reassurance *There is no need to panic.* Instead, ask yourself exactly when there is a need to panic.

In general, try to make your writing fresh. It will seem stale if it reads like journalese. Prose such as this is often freighted with codewords (writers apply *respected* to someone they approve of, *militant* to someone they disapprove of, *prestigious* to something you won't have heard of). The story usually starts with *First the good news*, inevitably to be followed in due course by *Now the bad news.* An alternative is *Another week, another bomb* (giving rise to thoughts of *Another story, another hackneyed opening*). Or, *It was the best of times, it was the worst of times* – and certainly the feeblest of introductions (except when Dickens first thought of it). A quote will then be inserted, attributed to *one* (never *an*) *industry analyst*, and often the words *If, and it's a big if* ... Towards the end, after an admission that the author has no idea what is going on, there is always room for *One thing is certain*, before rounding off the article with *As one wag put it* ...

*See also* **clichés**, **headings and captions**, **metaphors**.

**key** A *key* may be *major* or *minor*, but not *low*. Few of the decisions, people, industries described as *key* are truly *indispensable*, and fewer still *open locks*.

This overused word is a noun and, like many nouns, may be used adjectivally (as in the *key ministries*). Do not, however, use it as a free-standing adjective, as in *The choice of running-mate is key.*

Do not use *key* to make the subject of your sentence more important than he, she or it really is. The words *key players* are a sure sign of a puffed-up story and a lazy mind.

**Korean names** *see* **names.**

**Kyrgyzstan, Kirgiz** *see* **placenames.**

**lag** If you *lag* transitively, you *lag a pipe* or *a loft*. Anything failing to keep up with a front-runner, rate of growth, fourth-quarter profit or whatever is *lagging behind* it.

**last** The *last* issue of *The Economist* implies its extinction; prefer *last week's* or the *latest* issue. *Last year*, in 2010, means 2009; if you mean the 12 months up to the time of writing, write the *past year*. The same goes for the *past* month, *past* week, *past* (not *last*) ten years. *Last week* is best avoided; anyone reading it several days after publication may be confused. *This week* is permissible.

**Latin names** When it is necessary to use a Latin name for animals, plants, etc, follow the standard practice. Thus for all creatures higher than viruses, write the binomial name in italics, giving an initial capital to the first word (the genus): *Turdus turdus*, the songthrush; *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, the dawn redwood; *Culicoides clintoni*, a species of midge. This rule also applies to *Homo sapiens* and to such uses as *Homo economicus*. On second mention, the genus may be abbreviated (*T. turdus*). In some species, such as dinosaurs, the genus alone is used in lieu of a common name: *Diplodocus*, *Tyrannosaurus*. Also *Drosophila*, a fruitfly favoured by geneticists. But *Escherichia coli*, a bacterium also favoured by geneticists, is known universally as *E. coli*, even on first mention.

**leverage** If you really cannot find a way of avoiding the word *leverage*, you must explain what it means (unless it is simply *the use of a lever to gain a mechanical advantage*). In its technical sense, as a noun, it may mean *the ratio of long-term debt to total*

*capital employed.* But note that *operating leverage* and *financial leverage* are different. The verb is even viler than the noun (try *lever*). *See also* **gearing**.

**liberal** in Europe, someone who believes above all in the freedom of the individual; in the United States, someone who believes in the progressive tradition of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

**lifestyle** Prefer *way of life.*

**like, unlike** govern nouns and pronouns, not verbs and clauses. So *as in America* not *like in America, as I was saying,* not *like I was saying, as Grandma used to make them,* not *like Grandma used to make them.* English has no word for the opposite of *as* that would be the equivalent of *unlike,* so you must rephrase the sentence if you are tempted to write *unlike in this context, unlike at Christmas,* or *unlike when I was a child.*

If you find yourself writing *She looked like she had had enough* or *It seemed like he was running out of puff,* you should replace *like* with *as if* or *as though,* and you probably need the subjunctive: *She looked as if she had had enough, It seemed as if he were running out of puff* (or, even better, *He seemed to be running out of puff*).

Ogden Nash reminds us that this infelicity, sadly, is nothing new:

> Like the hart panteth for the water brooks I pant for a
> revival of Shakespeare's "Like You Like It".
> I can see tense draftees relax and purr
> When the sergeant barks, "Like you were."
> - And don't try to tell me that our well has been defiled
> by immigration;
> Like goes Madison Avenue, like so goes the nation.

But *authorities like Fowler and Gowers* is a perfectly acceptable alternative to *authorities such as Fowler and Gowers.*

**likely** Avoid such American constructions as *He will likely announce the date on Monday* and *The price will likely fall when results are posted Friday.* Prefer *He is likely to announce ...* or *It is likely that the price will ...* Or just use *probably.*

**locate** (in all its forms) can usually be replaced by something less ugly. *The missing scientist was located* means he was *found. The diplomats will meet at a secret location* means either that they will meet *in a secret place* or that they will meet *secretly. A company located in Texas* is simply *a company in Texas.*

**lower case** *see* **capitals.**

**luxurious, luxuriant** *Luxurious* means *indulgently pleasurable*; *luxuriant* means *exuberant* or *profuse.* A tramp may have a *luxuriant beard* but not a *luxurious life.*

**masterful, masterly** *Masterful* means *imperious*; *masterly* means *skilled.*

**may and might** are not always interchangeable, and you may want *may* more often than you think. If in doubt, try *may* first. *I might be wrong, but I think it will rain later* should be *I may be wrong, but I think it will rain later.*

Much of the trouble arises from the fact that *may* becomes *might* in both the subjunctive and in some constructions using past tenses. *Mr Blair admits that weapons of mass destruction may never be found* becomes, in the past, *Mr Blair admitted that weapons of mass destruction might never be found.*

Conditional sentences using the subjunctive also need *might.* Thus *If Sarah Palin were to write a novel, it might be called a thriller from Wasilla.* This could be rephrased by *If Sarah Palin writes a novel, it may be called a thriller from Wasilla.* Conditional sentences stating something contrary to fact, however, need might: *If pigs had wings, birds might raise their eyebrows.*

The facts are crucial. *New research shows Tutankhamun may have died of a broken leg* is fine, if indeed that is what the research shows. *New research shows Tutankhamun might have died of a broken leg* is not fine, unless it is followed by something like *if his mummy hadn't dressed the wound before it became infected.* This, though, is saying something quite different. In the first example, it is clear both that Tutankhamun died and that a broken leg may have been responsible. In the second, it is clear only that his wound was dressed; as a result, Tutankhamun seems to have survived.

Sometimes it is all right to use *might* if part of the sentence is understood though not explicitly stated: *Silvio Berlusconi would never tell a fib, but Jeffrey Archer might (if circumstances demanded or if he had forgotten the truth). That might be actionable (if a judge said it was).*

Facts remain crucial: *I might have called him a liar (but I didn't have the guts). I may have called him a liar (I can't now remember).*

Do not write *He might call himself an ardent free-market banker, but he did not reject a government rescue.* It should be *He may call himself an ardent free-market banker, but he did not reject a government rescue.* Only if you are putting forward a hypothesis that may or may not be true are may and might interchangeable. Thus *If he is honest with himself, he may (or might) call himself something else in future.*

*Could* is sometimes useful as an alternative to *may* and *might*: *His coalition could (or may) collapse.* But take care. Does *He could call an election in May* mean *He may call an election in May* or *He would be allowed to call an election in May?*

Do not use *may* or *might* when the appropriate verb is *to be*. *His colleagues wonder how far the prime minister may go. The danger for them is that they may all lose their seats* should be *His colleagues wonder how far the prime minister will go. The danger for them is that they will all lose their seats.*

*See also* **grammar and syntax.**

**measures** *see* Part 3.

**media** Prefer *press and television* or, if the context allows it, just *press*. If you have to use the *media*, remember they are plural.

**meta-** is a prefix derived from the Greek word for *with, beyond* or *after*, has long been used before the name of a science to designate what the Oxford English Dictionary calls a higher science of the same nature but dealing with ulterior problems, such as metachemistry, metaphysiology. This, says the OED, is done in supposed analogy to metaphysics, which is misapprehended as meaning the science of that which transcends the physical. Philosophers have extended the usage

to, for example, metalanguage, language about language, which is used to express metatheorems, and computer geeks have fallen on it with delight, coining meta-elements, metadata, metatags. The practice of meta-naming is now adopted by those who wish to add scientific gravitas to almost any subject, especially any that is intrinsically jejune.

**metaphors** "A newly invented metaphor assists thought by evoking a visual image," said Orwell, "while on the other hand a metaphor which is technically 'dead' (eg, iron resolution) has in effect reverted to being an ordinary word and can generally be used without loss of vividness. But in between these two classes there is a huge dump of worn-out metaphors which are merely used because they save people the trouble of inventing phrases for themselves."

Every issue of *The Economist* contains scores of metaphors: gay soldiers booted back on to Civvy Street, asset-price bubbles pricked, house prices getting monetary medicine, gauntlets thrown down, ideas floated, tides turned, accounts embraced, barrages of criticism unleashed, retailing behemoths arriving with a splash, foundering chains, both floods and flocks of job-seekers, limelight hogged, inflation ignited, the ratio of chiefs to Indians, landmark patent challenges, drug giants taking steps towards the dark side, cash-strapped carmakers, football clubs teetering on the brink, prices inching up (or peaking, spiking or even going north), a leaden overhang of shares, giddying rises, rosy scenarios being painted, a fat lady not singing.

Some of these are tired, and will therefore tire the reader. Most are so exhausted that they may be considered dead. Dead or alive, take great care not to mix them.

An issue of *The Economist* chosen at random had: a package cutting the budget deficit, the administration loath to sign on to higher targets, the lure of eastern Germany as a springboard to the struggling markets of eastern Europe, west Europeanness helping to dilute an image, someone finding a pretext to stall the process before looking for a few integrationist crumbs, a spring clean that became in the next sentence a stalking-horse for greater spending, and Michelin axing jobs in painful surgery.

> Within four consecutive sentences in another issue lay: a chance to lance the Israel-Palestine boil, Americans and Europeans sitting on their hands while waiting for Israel to freeze settlement building, or for Palestinians to corral militants, the need to stop the two sides playing the "after you" game, a confidence-building and money-begging conference followed by a shot in the arm for the Americans.

**mete** You may *mete out* punishment, but if it is to fit the crime it is *meet.*

**metrics** are the *theory of measurement.* Do not use the term as a pretentious word for *figures, dimensions* or *measurements* themselves, as in "*I can't take the metrics I'm privileged to and work my way to a number in [that] range*" (General George Metz, talking about the number of insurgents killed in Iraq).

**migrate** is intransitive. Do not *migrate people* or *things.*

**millionaire** The time has long gone when young women would think that the term *millionaire* adequately described the man who broke the bank at Monte Carlo. If you wish to use it, make it plain that *millionaire* refers to income (in dollars or pounds), not to capital. Otherwise try *plutocrat* or *rich man.*

**mitigate, militate** *Mitigate* mollifies or makes better; *militate* tells against.

**monopoly, monopsony** A *monopolist* is the sole seller. A sole buyer is a *monopsonist. See* **oligopoly.**

**moot** in British English means *arguable, doubtful* or *open to debate.* Americans often use it to mean *hypothetical* or *academic,* ie, *of no practical significance.* Prefer the British usage.

**mortar** If not a *vessel* in which herbs, etc, are pounded with a pestle, a *mortar* is a *piece of artillery* for throwing a shell, bomb or lifeline. Do not write *He was hit by a mortar* unless you mean he was struck by the artillery piece itself, which is improbable.

**move** Do not use *move* (noun) if you mean *decision, bid, deal* or something more precise. But *move* (verb) rather than *relocate.*

**mujahid, mujahideen** *see jihad.*

**musical notes** should be set in ordinary caps, thus: *Bach's "Air on a G-string".*

**named** *after*, not *for*.

**names**

For guidance on spelling people's names, see the list below. As with all names, spell them the way the person concerned has requested, if a preference has been expressed. Here are some names that cause spelling difficulties:

Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani
Alain Lamassoure
Alexander Solzhenitsyn
Alyaksandr Lukashenka
Andrei Sakharov
Andrej Olechowski
Arnold Schwarzenegger
Atal Behari Vajpayee
Aung San Suu Kyi (Miss Suu Kyi)
Banharn Silpa-archa
Bashar Assad
Binyamin Netanyahu
Bob Kerrey (Nebraska)
Burhanuddin Rabbani
Carlo De Benedetti
Carlo Ripa di Meana
Ciriaco De Mita
Condoleezza Rice
Costas Karamanlis
Cuauhtémoc Cardenas
Cyril Ramaphosa
Daniel arap Moi
Deniz Baykal
Eduard Shevardnadze
Emile Lahoud
Felipe González
François Mitterrand
Franz Müntefering
Fyodor Dostoyevsky
Gaafar Numeiri
Gandhi
Gennady Zyuganov
Gerhard Schröder
Gianni De Michelis
Goodwill Zwelithini
Grigory Yavlinsky
Habsburg
Hans van den Broek (Mr Van den Broek)
Haris Silajdic
Issaias Afwerki (Mr Issaias)

Javier Solana
Jean Tiberi
Jean-Pierre Chevènement
Joaquín Almunia
John Kerry (Massachusetts)
José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (Mr Zapatero)
José Manuel Barroso (no need to include his third name, Durão)
José María Aznar
José Sócrates
Josep Lluis Carod-Rivera
Juan José Ibarretxe
Kim Dae-jung
Kim Jong Il
King Mohammed of Morocco
Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo
Luiz Inácio (Lula) da Silva
Mahathir Mohamad (Dr)
Mangosuthu Buthelezi
Mikhail Gorbachev
Mikheil Saakashvili
Milan Martic
Milan Mrsic
Mohammed Zahir Shah
Muammar Qaddafi
Muhammad (unless it is part of the name of someone who spells it differently)
Mullah Mohammed Omar
Nicolae Ceausescu
Nicolas Sarkozy
Nikita Khrushchev
Nursultan Nazarbayev
Otto Schily
Prince Ranariddh
Radovan Karadzic
Ratko Mladic
Recep Tayyip Erdogan
Reichmann brothers
Ritt Bjerregaard
Robert Schumann (composer)
Rodrigo de Rato (Mr de Rato)
Sergei Kozalev
Slobodan Milosevic
Tabaré Vázquez (Dr)
Traian Basescu
Valéry Giscard d'Estaing
Velupillai Prabhakaran
Viktor Pynzenyk
Viktor Tymoshenko
Viktor Yushchenko
Vladimir Zhirinovsky
Vojislav Kostunica
Wlodzimierz Cimoszewicz
Wolfgang Schäuble
Yasser Arafat
Yitzhak Rabin
Yitzhak Shamir
Yulia Tymoshenko
Yves-Thibault de Silguy

*See also specific listings below.*

**Afghan**

Gulbuddin Hikmatyar
Ahmad Shah Masoud
Mullah Mohammed Omar
Burhanuddin Rabbani
Mazar-i-Sharif

## Arabic names and words

**Al, al-** Try to leave out the *Al*, *Al-*, *al* or *al-*. This is common practice with well-known figures like Bashar Assad (not al-Assad) and Muammar Qaddafi (not al-Qaddafi). Many names, however, would look peculiar without *al-*, so with less well-known people it should be included (lower case, usually followed by a hyphen). On subsequent mentions, it can be dropped. *Bin* (son of) must be repeated: *Osama bin Laden*, thereafter *Mr bin Laden*. But it is often ignored in alphabetisation.

The *Al-*, *Al-*, *al* or *al-* (or *Ad-*, *Ar-*, *As-*, etc) before most Arab towns can be dropped (so *Baquba* not *al-Baquba*, *Ramadi* not *ar-Ramadi*). But *al-Quds* because it is the Arab name for Jerusalem and will be important in any context in which it appears.

Some common Arabic names are:

Abdel Aziz (founder of Kingdom of Saudi)
Abdel Halim Khaddam
Abdullah, King
Abu Alaa (aka Ahmed Queri)
Abu Mazen (aka Abbas)
Abu Musab al-Zarpawi
Adel abd al-Mahdi
Ahmad Jibril
Ahmed Chalabi
Ahmed Queri
Al Saud (*not* al-Saud, since the Al in this instance means house of)
Ali Abdullah Saleh
Ali al-Sistani (Grand Ayatollah)
al-Qaeda
Amin Gemayel
Anwar Sadat
Bahrain
Barham Saleh
Bashar Assad
Boutros Boutros-Ghali
Chouf (the)
Farouq Qaddoumi
Gaza Strip (and City)
Hafez Assad
Hassan, Crown Prince
Hizbullah
Hosni Mubarak
Hussein, King
Ibn Khaldoun
Ibrahim al-Jaafari (Dr)
Islamic Jihad
Iyad Allawi
Jaafar Numeiri
Jalal Talabani
*jamaat islamiya*
Jeddah
King Fahd
Maronite
Marwan Barghouti
Masjid Sulayman

Masoud Barzani
Mohamed ElBaradei
Mohammed al-Maktoum
Mosul
Muammar Qaddafi
Muhammad Dahlan
Muhammad the Prophet
Mukhabarat
Muqtada al-Sadr
Mustafa Barghouti
Nuri al-Maliki
Omar Al-Bashir
Qaboos, Sultan
Rafik Hariri
Ras Tanura
Riyadh
Sabah al-Ahmad, Sheikh
Saddam Hussein
Sadiq el-Mahdi
Salam Fayyad
Samarra
Sana'a
Saud al-Faisal, Prince
Saud ibn Abdel Aziz (king of Saudi Arabia who followed Abdel Aziz)
Sharjah
Sharm el Sheikh
Shatt al-Arab
Strait of Hormuz
Suleiman Franjieh
Tal Afar
Tawheed
Umm al Aish
Wahhabi
Walid Jumblatt
Yasser Arafat
Zayed, Sheikh
Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali

And some common Arabic words are:

*burqa*
*Fatah*
*Hadith*
*hajj*
*hijab*
*Hizbullah*
*hudna*
*intifada*
*niqab*

*See also* **Arabic**.

**Bangladeshi** If the name includes the Islamic definite article, it should be lower case and without any hyphens: *Mujib ur Rahman.*

**Belarusian** If *Belarusians* (not *Belarussians*) wish to be known by the Belarusian form of their names (*Ihor, Vital*), so be it. But use the familiar, Russian, placenames (*Minsk*, not *Miensk*), and *Alexander Lukashenko.*

**Cambodian** On second reference, repeat both names, adding *Mr*: *Mr Hun Sen, Mr Sam Rainsy.*

**Central Asian** For those with Russified names, *see* **Russian.**

| | |
|---|---|
| Askar Akayev | Nursultan Nazarbayev |
| Heidar Aliyev | Saparmurat Niyazov |

**Chinese** In general, follow the pinyin spelling of Chinese names, which has replaced the old Wade-Giles system, except for people from the past, and people and places outside mainland China. *Peking* is therefore *Beijing* and *Mao* is *Zedong*, not *Tse-tung*.

There are no hyphens in pinyin spelling. So:

| | |
|---|---|
| Deng Xiaoping | Qingdao (Tsingtao) |
| Guangdong (Kwangtung) | Tianjin (Tientsin) |
| Guangzhou (Canton) | Xi Jinping |
| Jiang Qing (Mrs Mao) | Xinjiang (Sinkiang) |
| Mao Zedong (Tse-tung) | Zhao Ziyang |

But:

| | |
|---|---|
| Chiang Kai-shek | Li Ka-shing |
| Hong Kong | Lee Teng-hui |

The family name comes first, so *Xi Jinping* becomes *Mr Xi* on a later mention.

Note that *Peking University* and *Tsinghua University* have kept their pre-pinyin romanised names.

**Dutch** If using first name and surname together, *van*s and *den*s are lower case: *Dries van Agt* and *Joop den Uyl*. But without their first names they become *Mr Van Agt* and *Mr Den Uyl*; *Hans van den Broek* becomes *Mr Van den Broek*. These rules do not always apply to Dutch names in Belgium and South Africa: *Herman Van Rompuy* (thereafter *Mr Van Rompuy*); *Karel Van Miert* (*Mr Van Miert*).

Note that *Flemings* speak *Dutch*.

**French** Any *de* is likely to be lower case, unless it starts a sentence. *De Gaulle* goes up; *Charles de Gaulle* and plain *de Gaulle* go down. So does *Yves-Thibault de Silguy*.

**German** Any *von* is likely to be upper case only at the start of a sentence.

**Icelandic** Most Icelanders do not have family names. They take their last name from the first name of their father, so *Leifur Eiriksson*, say, is the son of *Eirikur*, and *Freyja Haraldsdottir* is the daughter of *Harald*. If she marries Leifur Eiriksson, she continues to be known as Freyja Haraldsdottir, their son has Leifsson as his last name (patronym) and their daughter Leifsdottir. Both names (or more, if someone has two first names) should be used on first and all subsequent references (when they should be preceded by Mr, Mrs or the appropriate title). A few Icelanders, such as the late *President Kristjan Eldjarn*, do have family names. These are the only people who can be referred to by one name only.

**Indonesian** Generally straightforward, but:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Abu Bakar Basyir | Muhammadiyah | Syafii Maarif |
| Jemaah Islamiah | Nahdlatul Ulama | |

Some Indonesians have only one name. On first mention give it to them unadorned: *Budiono*. Thereafter add the appropriate title: *Mr Budiono*. For those who have several names, be sure to get rid of the correct ones on second and subsequent mentions:

Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, for example, becomes President (or Mr) Yudhoyono.

President Joko Widodo is so popularly known as Jokowi that he should be referred to as Jokowi after the first mention.

**Iranian** *Farsi*, an Arabised version of *Parsi* (meaning *of Persia*), is the term Iranians use for their language. In English, the language is properly called *Persian*.

The language spoken in Iran (and Tajikistan) is *Persian*, not *Farsi*.

Here is a list of some words and proper names.

| | |
|---|---|
| Abadan | *baseej* |
| Abu Musa | Bushehr |
| Mahmoud Ahmadinejad | Hojjatieh |
| Ahwaz | Kermanshah |
| Ali Akbar Velayati | Keyhan |
| Bahai | Ali Khamenei, Ayatollah |
| Bandar Abbas | Kharg island |

Muhammad Khatami
Bandar Khomeini
Khorramshahr
Khuzestan
Lavan island
Mahdavi-Kani, Ayatollah
*maqnaeh*
Hossein-Ali Montazeri, Ayatollah
Hossein Moussavi
Queshm
Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani
Massoud Rajavi
Rezaiyeh
Hassan Rohani
Yusef Saanei, Ayatollah
Abdolkarim Soroush
Strait of Hormuz
Jalaluddin Taheri, Ayatollah
Taqi Banki
Tehran
Tudeh
Tumbs
*velayet-e faqih*
Yahyaoui

**Italian** Any *De* is likely to be upper case, but there are exceptions (especially among aristocrats such as *Carlo Ripa di Meana*), so check.

**Japanese** Although the Japanese put the family name first in their own language (*Koizumi Junichiro*), they generally reverse the order in western contexts. So: Junichiro Koizumi, Heizo Takenaka, Shintaro Ishihara, etc.

**Korean** South Koreans have changed their convention from *Kim Dae Jung* to *Kim Dae-jung*. But North Koreans, at least pending unification, have stuck to *Kim Jong Il*. Kim is the family name.

The South Korean party formed in 2003 is the Uri Party.

**Pakistani** If the name includes the Islamic definite article *ul*, it should be lower case and without any hyphens: *Zia ul Haq*, *Mahbub ul Haq* (but *Sadruddin*, *Mohieddin* and *Saladin* are single words).

The genitive *e* is hyphenated: *Jamaat-e-Islami*, *Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal*.

**Russian** Each approach to transliterating Russian has drawbacks. The following rules aim for phonetic accuracy, except when that conflicts with widely accepted usage.

No *y* before *e* after consonants: *Belarus, perestroika, Oleg, Lev, Medvedev*. (The actual pronunciation is somewhere between *e* and *ye*.)

1 Where pronunciation dictates, put a *y* before the *a* or *e* at the start of a word or after a vowel:

| | |
|---|---|
| Aliyev *not* Aliev | Dostoyevsky |
| Baluyevsky | Yavlinsky |
| Dudayev | Yevgeny *not* Evgeny |

2 Words spelled with *e* in Russian but pronounced *yo* should be spelled *yo*. Thus:
Fyodorov *not* Fedorov
Pyotr *not* Petr
Seleznyov *not* Seleznev

But stick to *Gorbachev, Khrushchev* and other famous ones that would otherwise look odd.

3 With words that could end *-i, -ii, -y* or *-iy*, use *-y* after consonants and *-i* after vowels. This respects both phonetics and common usage.

| | |
|---|---|
| Georgy | Yury |
| Gennady | Zhirinovsky |
| Nizhny | |

But:

| | |
|---|---|
| Bolshoi | Rutskoi |
| Nikolai | Sergei |

Exception (because conventional): *Tolstoy*.

4 Replace *dzh* with *j*.
*Jokhar, Jugashvili* (for Stalin; bowing to convention, give his first name as *Josef*, not Iosif).

5 Prefer *Aleksandr, Viktor, Eduard, Piotr* to Alexander, Victor, Edward, Peter, unless the person involved has clearly chosen an anglicised version. But keep the familiar spelling for historical figures such as *Alexander Nevsky, Alexander Solzhenitsyn* and *Peter the Great*.

**Singaporean** names have no hyphens and the family name comes first: *Lee Kuan Yew* (thereafter *Mr Lee*).

**Spanish** Spaniards sometimes have several names, including two surnames. On first mention, spell out in full all the names of such people, if they use both surnames. Thereafter the normal practice is to write the first surname only, so *Joaquín Almunia Amann* becomes *Mr Almunia* on second and subsequent mentions.

Often, though, the second surname is used only by people whose first surname is common, such as *Fernández*, *López* or *Rodríguez*. To avert confusion with others, they may choose to keep both their surnames when they are referred to as Mr This or Mr That, so *Miguel Ángel Fernández Ordóñez*, for instance, becomes *Mr Fernández Ordóñez*, just as *Andrés Manuel López Obrador* becomes *Mr López Obrador* and *Juan Fernando López Aguilar* becomes *Mr López Aguilar*. A few people, notably *José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero*, choose to have their names shortened to just the second of their surnames, so he becomes *Mr Zapatero*.

Although on marriage Spanish women sometimes informally add their husband's name (after a *de*) to their own, they do not usually change their legal name, merely adopting *Señora* in place of *Señorita*. Unless the woman you are writing about prefers some other title, you should likewise simply change from *Miss* to *Mrs*.

**Swiss** personal names follow the rules for the two languages mostly spoken in Switzerland: French and German.

**Turk, Turkic, Turkmen, Turkoman, etc** *see* **placenames**.

**Ukrainian** After an orgy of retransliteration from their Russian versions, a convention has emerged. Its main rules are these.

1 Since Ukrainian has no g, use *h*: *Hryhory*, *Heorhy*, *Ihor* (not *Grigory*, *Georgy*, *Igor*). Exception: *Georgy Gongadze*.
2 Render the Ukrainian i as an *i*, and the *И* as a *y*. So *Vitali*, *Kharkiv*, *Chernivtsi*; but *Volodymyr*, *Yanukovych*, *Tymoshenko*,

*Borys, Zhytomyr*. Change words ending *-iy* to *-y* (*Hryhory*).

However, respect the wishes of those Ukrainians who wish to be known by their Russian names, or by an anglicised transliteration of them: *Alexander Morozov*.

*Kiev* remains *Kiev*, not *Kyiv*.

**Vietnamese** names have no hyphens and the family name comes first:
Ho Chi Minh
Tran Duc Luong (thereafter Mr Tran)

*See also* **placenames**.

**neither ... nor** *see* **none**.

**new words and new uses for old words** Part of the strength and vitality of English is its readiness to welcome new words and expressions, and to accept new meanings for old words. Yet such meanings and uses often depart as quickly as they arrived, and early adopters risk looking like super-trendies if they bring them into service too soon. Moreover, to anyone of sensibility some new words are more welcome than others, even if no two people of sensibility would agree on which words should be ushered in and which kept firmly on the doorstep.

Before grabbing the latest usage, ask yourself a few questions. Is it likely to pass the test of time? If not, are you using it to show just how cool you are? Has it already become a cliché? Does it do a job no other word or expression does just as well? Does it rob the language of a useful or well-liked meaning? Is it being adopted to make the writer's prose sharper, crisper, more euphonious, easier to understand – in other words, better? Or to make it seem more with it (yes, that was cool once, just as cool is cool now), more pompous, more bureaucratic or more politically correct – in other words, worse?

*See also* **clichés**, **horrible words**, **jargon**, **journalese and slang**.

**none** usually takes a singular verb. So does *neither* (or *either*) *A nor* (*or*) *B*, unless B is plural, as in *Neither the Dutchman nor the Danes*

*have done it*, where the verb agrees with the element closest to it. Similarly,

> Come live with me and be my love,
> And we will all the pleasures prove
> That hills and valleys, dales and fields,
> Or woods or steepy mountain yields.
> (Christopher Marlowe)

**nor** means *and not*, so should not be preceded by *and*.

**offensive** In Britain, *offensive* (as an adjective) means *rude*; in America, it often means *attacking*. Similarly, to the British an *offence* is usually a *crime* or *transgression*; to Americans it is often an *offensive*, or the counterpart to a *defence*.

**oligopoly** Limited competition between a small number of producers or sellers. *See also* **monopoly**, **monopsony**.

**one** Try to avoid *one* as a personal pronoun. *You* will often do instead.

**only** Put *only* as close as you can to the words it qualifies. Thus *These animals mate only in June*. To say *They only mate in June* implies that in June they do nothing else.

**onto** *On* and *to* should be run together when they are closely linked, as in *He pranced onto the stage*. If, however, the sense of the sentence makes the *on* closer to the preceding word, or the *to* closer to the succeeding word, than they are to each other, keep them separate: *He pranced on to the next town* or *He pranced on to wild applause*.

**overwhelm** means *submerge utterly, crush, bring to sudden ruin*. Majority votes, for example, seldom do any of these things. As for the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, although 90% of the population, they turned out to be an *overwhelmed majority*, not an *overwhelming one*, until NATO stepped in.

**oxymoron** An *oxymoron* is not an unintentional contradiction in

terms but *a figure of speech in which contradictory terms are deliberately combined,* as in: *bitter-sweet, cruel kindness, friendly fire, jolie laide, open secret, sweet sorrow,* etc.

**Pakistani names** *see* **names**.

**palate, pallet, palette** Your *palate*, the roof of your mouth (or your capacity to appreciate food and drink), is best not confused with a *pallet*, a mattress on which you may sleep or a wooden frame for use with fork-lift trucks, still less with a *palette*, on which you may mix paints.

**panacea** Universal remedy. Beware of cliché usage. *See also* **journalese and slang**.

**parliaments** Do not confuse one part of a parliament with the whole thing. The Dail is only the lower house of Ireland's parliament, as the Duma is of Russia's and the Lok Sabha is of India's.

**partner** is useful for those who value gender-neutrality above all else, but others may prefer *boyfriend* or *girlfriend* or even *lover*. And remember that, if you take a *partner for the Gay Gordons*, you may not end up in bed together – just as lawyers and accountants and others *in partnerships* are not necessarily fornicating, even if they are *sleeping partners*.

**passive** *see* **grammar and syntax** (active, not passive).

**peer** (noun) is one of those words beloved of sociologists and eagerly co-opted by journalists who want to make their prose seem more authoritative. A *peer* is not a *contemporary, colleague* or *counterpart* but an *equal*.

***per capita*** is the Latin for by heads; it is a term used by lawyers when distributing an inheritance among individuals, rather than among families (*per stirpes*). Unless the context demands this technical expression, never use either *per capita* or *per caput* but *per head* or *per person*. *See also* figures.

**per cent** is not the same as a *percentage point*. Nothing can fall, or be devalued, by more than 100%. If something trebles, it increases by 200%. If a growth rate increases from 4% to 6%, the rate is two percentage points or 50% faster, not 2%. *See also* **figures**.

**percolate** means to pass *through*, not *up* or *down*.

**placenames** In most contexts favour simplicity over precision and use Britain rather than Great Britain or the United Kingdom, and America rather than the United States. ("In all pointed sentences, some degree of accuracy must be sacrificed to conciseness." Dr Johnson)

Sometimes, however, it may be important to be precise. Remember therefore that *Great Britain* consists of *England*, *Scotland* and *Wales*, which together with *Northern Ireland* (which we generally call *Ulster*, though Ulster strictly includes three counties in *Ireland*) make up the *United Kingdom*.

*Americans*: Remember too that, although it is usually all right to talk about the inhabitants of the United States as *Americans*, the term also applies to everyone from Canada to Cape Horn. In a context where other North, Central or South American countries are mentioned, you should write *United States* rather than *America* or *American*, and it may even be necessary to write *United States citizens*.

EU is now well enough known (like the UN) to need no spelling out on first mention as the *European Union*. *Europe* and *Europeans* may sometimes be used as shorthand for citizens of countries of the European Union, but be careful: there are plenty of other Europeans too.

*Europe*: Note that although the place is *western* (or *eastern*) *Europe*, euphony dictates that the people are *west* (or *east*) *Europeans*.

*Holland*, though a nice, short, familiar name, is strictly only two of the 12 provinces that make up *the Netherlands*, and the *Dutch* do not like the misuse of the shorter name. So use *the Netherlands*.

*Belgian* placenames should be *Dutch* or *French* according to which part they are in.

*Ireland* is simply *Ireland*. Although it is a republic, it is not the Republic of Ireland. Neither is it, in English, Eire.

*Madagascar*: *Malagasy* is its adjective and the name of the inhabitants.

*Scandinavia* is primarily Norway and Sweden, but the term is often used to include Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, which, with Finland, make up the *Nordic countries*.

*USA* and *US* are not to be used (if they were they would spatter the paper), except in charts, as part of an official name (eg, *US Steel*), and sparingly in the Americas section to differentiate official bodies (the *US Border Patrol*).

Do not use the names of capital cities as synonyms for their governments. *Britain will send a gunboat* is fine, but *London will send a gunboat* suggests that this will be the action of the people of London alone. To write *Washington and Moscow now differ only in their approach to Havana* is absurd.

*Washington, DC* may shed the *DC* wherever there is no risk of confusion with Washington state, which is most of the time.

Note that a country is *it*, not *she*.

**changes of name** Where countries have made it clear that they wish to be called by a new (or an old) name, respect their requests. Thus:

Burkina Faso
Myanmar
Sri Lanka
Thailand
Zimbabwe

*Zaire* has now reverted to *Congo*. In contexts where there can be no confusion with the ex-French country of the same name, plain *Congo* will do. But if there is a risk of misunderstanding, call it the *Democratic Republic of Congo* (never DRC). The other Congo can be *Congo-Brazzaville* if necessary. The river is now also the *Congo*. The people of either country are also *Congolese*.

Former Soviet republics that are now independent countries include:
Belarus (*not* Belorus or Belorussia), Belarusian (adjective)
Kazakhstan
Moldova (*not* Moldavia)
Tajikistan
Turkmenistan (*see* Turk, Turkic, Turkmen, Turkoman, page 118)

*Kyrgyzstan* is the name of the country. Its adjective is *Kyrgyzstani*, which is also the name of one of its inhabitants. But *Kirgiz* is the noun and adjective of the language, and the adjective of Kirgiz people outside Kyrgyzstan.

Follow local practice when a country changes the names of rivers, towns, etc, within it. Thus:
Almaty *not* Alma Ata
Chemnitz *not* Karl-Marx-Stadt
Chennai *not* Madras
Chernigov *not* Chernihiv
Chur *not* Coire
Kolkata *not* Calcutta
Lvov *not* Lviv
Mumbai *not* Bombay
Nizhny Novgorod *not* Gorky
Papua *not* Irian Jaya
Polokwane *not* Pietersburg
St Petersburg *not* Leningrad
Tshwane is the new name for the area around Pretoria but not yet for the city itself.
Yangon *not* Rangoon

However, the previous form should be preserved in historical contexts (the *Black Hole of Calcutta*). If the names are very dissimilar, add *(now xx)*.

**definite article** Do not use the definite article before:

| | |
|---|---|
| Krajina | Sudan |
| Lebanon | Transkei |
| Piedmont | Ukraine |
| Punjab | |

But:

| | |
|---|---|
| Los Angeles | Le Havre |
| the Caucasus | the Maghreb |
| the Gambia | the Netherlands |
| The Hague | La Paz |

English forms are preferred when they are in common use:

| | |
|---|---|
| Andalusia | Ivory Coast |
| Archangel (*not* Archangelsk or Arkhangelsk) | Kiev |
| Cassel (*not* Kassel) | Leghorn |
| Castile | Majorca |
| Catalonia (catalan) | Milan |
| Cologne | Minorca |
| Cordoba | Minsk |
| Corinth | Munich |
| Corunna | Naples |
| Cracow | Nuremberg |
| Dagestan | Odessa |
| Dnieper | Pomerania |
| Dniester (*but* Transdniestria) | Salonika (*not* Thessaloniki) |
| Dusseldorf (*not* Düsseldorf) | Saragossa |
| East Timor | Saxony (*and* Lower Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt) |
| Florence | Sebastopol |
| Geneva | Seville |
| Genoa | Turin |
| Hanover | Zurich (*not* Zürich) |

Use British English rather than American – *Rockefeller Centre, Pew Centre for Research* – unless the placename is part of a company's name, such as *Rockefeller Center Properties Inc.*

The final *s* sometimes added by English-speakers to *Lyon, Marseille* and *Tangier* now seems precious, so use the *s*-less form.

**some spellings**

Abkhazia
Ajaria (*not* Adjaria)
Argentina (adj and people Argentine, *not* Argentinian)
Ashgabat
Azerbaijan
Baden-Württemberg
Baghdad
Bahamas (Bahamian)
Bahrain
Basel
Belarus
Bengalooru
Beqaa
Bermuda, Bermudian
Bern
Bophuthatswana
Bosporus (not Bosphorus)
British Columbia
Brittany, Breton (*but* Britannia, Britannic)
Cameroon
Cape Town
Caribbean
Catalan
Chechnya
Cincinnati
Colombia (South America)
Columbia (university, District of British)
the Comoros
Czech Republic; Czech Lands
Dar es Salaam
Derry/Londonderry (use in this full dual form at least on first mention; afterwards, plain Derry will do)
Dhaka
Djibouti
Dominica (Caribbean island)
Dominican Republic (part of another island)
El Salvador, Salvadorean
Falkland Islands (*not* Malvinas)
Falluja
Gaza Strip (*but* Gaza City)
Gettysburg
Gothenburg
Grozny
Guantánamo
Gujarat, Gujarati
Guyana (*but* French Guiana)
Gweru (*not* Gwelo)
Hanover
Hercegovina
Hong Kong (unless part of the name of a company which spells it as one word)
Ingushetia
Issyk-Kul
Ivory Coast, Ivorian
Jeddah
KaNgwane
Kathmandu
Kinmen (*not* Quemoy)
Kolkata
Kuwait City
KwaNdebele
KwaZulu-Natal
Kwekwe (*not* Que Que)
Laos, Lao (*not* Laotian)

Ljubljana
Londonderry (Derry also permissible)
Luhansk
Luxembourg
Lyon
Macau
Mafikeng
Mauritania
Middlesbrough
Mpumalanga (formerly Eastern Transvaal)
Mumbai (*not* Bombay)
Nagorno-Karabakh
Nepal, Nepali (*not* Nepalese)
New York City
north Caucasus
North Rhine-Westphalia
Ouagadougou
Philippines (the people are Filipinos and Filipinas)
Phnom Penh
Pittsburgh
Port-au-Prince
Putumayo
Pyrenees, Pyrenean
Quebec, Quebecker (*but* Parti Québécois)
Reykjavik
Rheims
Romania
Rwanda, Rwandan (*not* Rwandese)
St Petersburg
Salonika (*not* Thessaloniki)
Sana'a
Sea of Japan (East Sea) (give both names thus)
Salzburg
São Paulo
Sindh
Srebrenica
Strasbourg
Suriname
Taipei
Tehran
Teesside
Tigray, Tigrayan
Timbuktu
Transdniestra
Uffizi
Uzbekistan
Valletta
Yangzi
Zepa
Zepce
Zurich

*See also* **capitals** (places).

**Turk, Turkic, Turkmen, Turkoman, etc**

*Turk, Turkish:* noun and adjective of Turkey.

*Turkoman, Turkomans*: member, members, of a branch of the Turkish race mostly living in the region east of the Caspian sea once known as Turkestan and parts of Iran and Afghanistan; *Turkoman* may also be the language of the Turkmen and an adjective.

*Turkic*: adjective applied to one of the branches of the Ural-Altaic family of languages – Uighur, Kazan Tatar, Kirgiz.

*Turkmen*: Turkoman or Turkomans living in Turkmenistan; adjective pertaining to them.

*Turkmenistani*: adjective of Turkmenistan; also a native of that country.

**plants** For the spelling of the Latin names of animals, plants, etc, *see* **Latin names**.

**plurals** *see* **spelling**. For plural nouns, *see* **grammar and syntax**.

**political correctness** Avoid, if you can, giving gratuitous offence (*see* **euphemisms**): you risk losing your readers, or at least their goodwill, and therefore your arguments. But pandering to every plea for politically correct terminology may make your prose unreadable, and therefore also unread.

So strike a balance. If you judge that a group wishes to be known by a particular term, that the term is widely understood and that using any other would seem odd, old-fashioned or offensive, then use it. Context may be important: *Coloured* is a common term in South Africa for people of mixed race; it is not considered derogatory. Elsewhere it may be. Remember that both times and terms change: expressions that were in common use a few decades ago are now odious. Nothing is to be gained by casually insulting your readers.

But do not labour to avoid imaginary insults, especially if the effort does violence to the language. So avoid terms like *the non-disabled person* used (on BBC Radio 3) to mean *normal person*. Some people, such as the members of the Task-force on Bias-Free Language of the Association of American University Presses, believe that *ghetto-blaster* is "offensive as a stereotype of African-American culture", that it is invidious to speak of a *normal* child, that *massacre* should not be used "to refer to a successful American Indian raid or battle victory against white colonisers and invaders", and that the use of the term *cretin* is distressing. They want, they say, to avoid "victimisation" and to get "the person before the disability". The intent may be

admirable, but they are unduly sensitive, often inventing slights where none exists. The term *cretin* came into use as a way of acknowledging the essential humanity of a physically deformed or intellectually subnormal person. It is now used for a definable medical condition. The aversion to *cretin* may arise from its slight similarity to *cripple*, a plain word now almost universally discarded in favour of the euphemistic *physically handicapped* or *disabled*.

Thomas Bowdler provides a cautionary example. His version of Shakespeare, produced in 1818 using "judicious" paraphrase and expurgation, was designed to be read by men to their families so that no one would be offended or embarrassed. In doing so, he gave his name to an insidious form of censorship (bowdlerism).

Some people believe the possibility of giving offence, causing embarrassment, lowering self-esteem, reinforcing stereotypes, perpetuating prejudice, victimising, marginalising or discriminating to be more important than stating the truth, never mind the chance of doing so with any verve or panache. They are wrong. Do not self-bowdlerise your prose. You may be neither Galileo nor Salman Rushdie, but you too may sometimes be right to cause offence. Your first duty is to the truth.

**he, she, they** You also have a duty to grammar. The struggle to be gender-neutral rests on a misconception about gender, a grammatical convention to make words masculine, feminine or neuter. Since English is unusual in assigning few genders to nouns other than those relating to people (ships are exceptions), feminists have come to argue that language should be gender-neutral.

This would be a forlorn undertaking in most tongues, and even in English it presents difficulties. It may be no tragedy that *policemen* are now almost always *police officers* and *firemen* *firefighters*, but to call *chairmen* *chairs* serves chiefly to remind everyone that the world of committees and those who make it go round are largely devoid of humour. Avoid also *chairpersons* (*chairwoman* is permissible but unnecessary), *humankind* and the *person in the street* – ugly expressions all.

It is no more demeaning to women to use the words *actress*, *ballerina* or *seamstress* than *goddess*, *princess* or *queen*. (Similarly, you should feel as free to separate *Siamese twins* or *welsh* on debts – at your own risk – as you would to go on a *Dutch treat*, pass through *french windows*, or play *Russian roulette*. Note, though, that you risk being *dogged* by *catty* language police.)

If you believe it is "exclusionary" or insulting to women to use *he* in a general sense, you can rephrase some sentences in the plural. Thus *Instruct the reader without lecturing him* may be put as *Instruct readers without lecturing them*. But some sentences resist this treatment: *Find a good teacher and take his advice* is not easily rendered gender-neutral. So do not be ashamed of sometimes using *man* to include *women*, or making *he* do for *she*.

And, so long as you are not insensitive in other ways, few women will be offended if you restrain yourself from putting *or she* after every *he*.

> He or she which hath no stomach to this fight,
> Let him or her depart; his or her passport shall be made,
> And crowns for convoy put into his or her purse:
> We would not die in that person's company
> That fears his or her fellowship to die with us.
> (Shakespeare, "Henry V")

In some contexts, though, *she* can be a substitute for *he*:

> That ever was thrall, now is he free;
> That ever was small, now great is she;
> Now shall God deem both thee and me
> Unto His bliss if we do well.
> (15th-century carol)

The Oxford English Dictionary now accepts the use of "their" in examples like the following, but note that they still involve a nasty scrambling of syntax.

*We can't afford to squander anyone's talents, whatever colour their skin is.*

*When someone takes their own life, they leave their loved ones with an agonising legacy of guilt.*

*There's a child somewhere in Birmingham and all across the*

*country and needs somebody to put their arm around them and to say: "I love you; you're a part of America."* (George Bush)

*See also* **ethnic groups, gender, tribe**.

**populace** is a term for the *common people*, not a synonym for the *population*.

**positive** means *definitely laid down, beyond possibility of doubt, absolute, fully convinced* or *greater than zero*. It does not mean *good*. *It was a positive meeting* probably means *It was a good*, or *fruitful, meeting*.

**practical, practicable** *Practical* means *useful*; *practicable* means *feasible*.

**pre-** is often unnecessary as a prefix, as in *pre-announced, precondition, pre-prepared, pre-cooked*. If it seems to be serving a function, try making use of a word such as already or earlier: *Here's one I cooked earlier*.

*Pre-owned* is *second-hand*.

**premier** (as a noun) should be confined to the first ministers of Canadian provinces, German *Länder* and other subnational states. Do not use it as a synonym for the prime minister of a country.

**presently** means *soon*, not *at present*. ("Presently Kep opened the door of the shed, and let out Jemima Puddle-Duck." Beatrix Potter)

**press, pressure, pressurise** *Pressurise* is what you want in an aircraft, but not in an argument or encounter where persuasion is being employed – the verb you want there is *press*. Use *pressure* only as a noun.

**prevaricate, procrastinate** *Prevaricate* means evade the truth; *procrastinate* means delay. ("Procrastination" – or punctuality, if you are Oscar Wilde – "is the thief of time.")

**pristine** means *original* or *former*; it does not mean *clean*.

**proactive** Not a pretty word: try *active* or *energetic*.

**process** Some writers see their prose in industrial terms: *education* becomes an *education process*, *elections* an *electoral process*, *development* a *development process*, *writing* a *writing process*. If you follow this fashion, do not be surprised if readers switch off.

**prodigal** If you are *prodigal*, that does not mean you are *welcomed home* or *taken back without recrimination*. It means you have *squandered your patrimony*.

**proofreading** *see* Part 3.

**propaganda** (which is singular) means a *systematic effort to spread doctrine or opinions*. It is not a synonym for *lies*.

**protagonist** means the *chief actor* or *combatant*. If you are referring to several people, they cannot all be protagonists.

**protest** By all means *protest your innocence*, or *your intention to write good English*, if you are making a declaration. But if you are making a complaint or objection, you must *protest at* or *against* it.

**pry** Unless you mean *peer* or *peep*, the word you probably should be using is *prise*.

**public schools** in Britain, the places where fee-paying parents send their children; in the United States, the places where they don't.

**punctuation** Some guidelines on common problems.

apostrophes

1 With singular words and names that end in s use the normal possessive ending 's:
boss's
caucus's

Delors's
Jones's
St James's
Shanks's

2 After plurals that do not end in s also use 's: *children's, Frenchmen's, media's.*

3 Use the ending s' on plurals that end in s: *Danes', bosses', Joneses'.*

And on plural names that take a singular verb:
Barclays'
Cisco Systems'
Reuters'

4 Some plural nouns, although singular in other respects, such as the United States, the United Nations, the Philippines, have a plural possessive apostrophe:
*Who will be the United States' next president?*

In general, however, try to avoid United States', Congress's, and all such formations which are horrible to read silently, and even worse aloud.

5 *Lloyd's* (the insurance market): try to avoid using as a possessive; like Christie's and Sotheby's it poses an insoluble problem.

6 *Achilles heel*: the vulnerable part of the hero of the Trojan war.

7 Decades do not have apostrophes: *the 1990s.*

8 Phrases like *two weeks' time, four days' march, six months' leave* need apostrophes. So do those involving *worth*, when it follows a quantity or other measurement: *three months' worth of imports, a manifesto's worth of insincerity* (*see also* **hyphens**, page 75).

9 People:
people's = of (the) people
peoples' = of peoples
*See also* **grammar and syntax** (false possessive).

**brackets** If a whole sentence is within brackets, put the full stop inside. Square brackets should be used for interpolations in direct quotations: "*Let them [the poor] eat cake.*" To use ordinary brackets implies that the words inside them were part of the original text from which you are quoting.

**colons** Use a colon "to deliver the goods that have been invoiced in the preceding words" (Fowler).
*They brought presents: gold, frankincense and oil at $100 a barrel.*

Use a colon before a whole quoted sentence, but not before a quotation that begins in mid-sentence.
*She said: "It will never work." He retorted that it had "always worked before".*

**commas** Use commas as an aid to understanding. Too many in one sentence can be confusing.

1 It is not always necessary to put a comma after a short phrase at the start of a sentence if no natural pause exists:
*That night she took a tumble.*

2 But a breath, and so a comma, is needed after longer passages:
*When day broke and she was able at last to see what had happened, she realised she had fallen through the roof and into the Big Brother house.*

3 Use two commas, or none at all, when inserting a clause in the middle of a sentence. Thus, do not write:
*Use two commas, or none at all when inserting ...* or
*Use two commas or none at all, when inserting ...*

Similarly, two commas or none at all are needed with constructions like:
*And, though he denies it, he couldn't tell a corncrake from a cornflake ...*
*But, when Bush came to Shuv, he found it wasn't a town, just a Hebrew word for Return.*

4 American states: commas are usual after the names of American states when these are written as though they

were part of an address: *Kansas City, Kansas, proves that even Kansas City needn't always be Missourible* (Ogden Nash). But do not do so where it offends against grammar, as before "and", or where it produces too many commas for the sentence to stand. Apply your discretion.

5 For sense: commas can alter the sense of a sentence. To write *Mozart's 40th symphony, in G minor*, with commas indicates that this symphony was written in G minor. Without commas, *Mozart's 40th symphony in G minor* suggests he wrote 39 other symphonies in G minor.

6 Lists: do not put a comma before *and* at the end of a sequence of items unless one of the items includes another *and*. Thus:
*The doctor suggested an aspirin, half a grapefruit and a cup of broth. But he ordered scrambled eggs, whisky and soda, and a selection from the trolley.*

7 Question-marks: do not put commas after question-marks, even when they would be separated by inverted commas: *"May I have a second helping?" he asked.*

8 Quotations: within a sentence a quotation needs to be preceded by a comma, or a colon, or a word such as *that* (or *if*, *because*, *whether* etc), if it is an entire sentence. The first quoted word should also have an initial capital. Thus *The doctor responded, "You'll probably be better in the morning, or dead," before sampling a crème caramel.* If the words quoted are not an entire sentence, neither comma nor capital is needed: *The doctor responded that he would "probably be better in the morning, or dead," before sampling a crème caramel.* In this example, it is known that the final quoted word was followed by a punctuation mark - a full stop, converted in the quotation into a comma - so the final comma is placed within the inverted commas. If, however, it is not known whether the quoted words constituted a full sentence, assume that the quotation is unpunctuated and put the appropriate punctuation mark outside the inverted commas: *Having impaled himself with a handle-bar in the*

*back of the cab, he was heard to say he "now realised what was meant by fatal attraction".*

If you want to quote a full sentence and precede it with the word *that* (etc), no comma is needed before the inverted commas, but the first quoted word still needs an initial capital: *On learning that he was only scratched, her comment was that "Next time I hope Cupid's dart will be tipped with curare."*

*See also* **inverted commas** *below.*

**dashes** You can use dashes in pairs for parenthesis, but not more than one pair per sentence, ideally not more than one pair per paragraph.

"Use a dash to introduce an explanation, amplification, paraphrase, particularisation or correction of what immediately precedes it. Use it to gather up the subject of a long sentence. Use it to introduce a paradoxical or whimsical ending to a sentence. Do not use it as a punctuation maid-of-all-work." (Gowers)

Do not use a parenthetical dash as a catch-all punctuation device when a comma, colon, etc could be used. The much-reviled semi-colon is often worth an airing, too.

**full stops** Use plenty. They keep sentences short. This helps the reader. Do not use full stops in abbreviations or at the end of headings and subheadings.

**inverted commas (quotation marks)** Use single ones only for quotations within quotations. Thus:
"*When I say 'immediately', I mean some time before April,*" *said the builder.*

For the relative placing of quotation marks and punctuation, follow Oxford rules. Thus, if an extract ends with a full stop or question-mark, put the punctuation before the closing inverted commas.
*His maxim was that "love follows laughter." In this spirit came his opening gambit: "What's the difference between a buffalo and a bison?"*

If a complete sentence in quotes comes at the end of a larger sentence, the final stop should be inside the inverted commas. Thus:
*The answer was, "You can't wash your hands in a buffalo." She replied, "Your jokes are execrable."*

If the quotation does not include any punctuation, the closing inverted commas should precede any punctuation marks that the sentence requires. Thus:
*She had already noticed that the "young man" looked about as young as the New Testament is new. Although he had been described as "fawnlike in his energy and playfulness", "a stripling with all the vigour and freshness of youth", and even as "every woman's dream toyboy", he struck his companion-to-be as the kind of old man warned of by her mother as "not safe in taxis". Where, now that she needed him, was "Mr Right"?*

When a quotation is broken off and resumed after such words as *he said*, ask yourself whether it would naturally have had any punctuation at the point where it is broken off. If the answer is yes, a comma is placed within the quotation marks to represent this. Thus:
*"If you'll let me see you home," he said, "I think I know where we can find a cab."*

The comma after home belongs to the quotation and so comes within the inverted commas, as does the final full stop.

But if the words to be quoted are continuous, without punctuation at the point where they are broken, the comma should be outside the inverted commas. Thus:
*"My bicycle", she assured him, "awaits me."*

Do not use quotation marks unnecessarily:
*Her admirer described his face as a "finely chiselled work of art"; she wrote in her diary that it looked more like a "collapsed lung".*

Note that the Bible contains no quotation marks, with no consequent confusions.

**question-marks** Except in sentences that include a question in inverted commas, question-marks always come at the end of the sentence. Thus:

*Where could he get a drink, he wondered?*
*Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?*

**semi-colons** Use them to mark a pause longer than a comma and shorter than a full stop. Don't overdo them.

Use them to distinguish phrases listed after a colon only if commas will not do the job clearly. Thus:
*They agreed on only three points: the ceasefire should be immediate; it should be internationally supervised, preferably by the AU; and a peace conference should be held, either in Geneva or in Ouagadougou.*

**question-marks** *see* **punctuation**.

**quite** In America, *quite* is usually an intensifying adverb similar to *altogether*, *entirely* or *very*; in Britain, depending on the emphasis, the tone of voice and the adjective that follows, it usually means *fairly*, *moderately* or *reasonably*, and often damns with faint praise.

**quotes** Be sparing with quotes. Direct quotes should be used when either the speaker or what was said is surprising, or when the words used are particularly pithy or graphic. Otherwise you can probably paraphrase more concisely. The most pointless quote is the inconsequential remark attributed to a nameless source: *"Everyone wants to be in on the act," says one high-ranking civil servant.*

For *quotation marks* (inverted commas), *see* **punctuation**.

**real** Is it really necessary? When used to mean *after taking inflation into account*, it is legitimate. In other contexts (*Investors are showing real interest in the country, but Colombians wonder if real prosperity will ever arrive*) it is often better left out.

**rebut, refute** *Rebut* means *repel* or *meet in argument*. *Refute*, which is stronger, means *disprove*. Neither should be used as a synonym for *deny*. "Shakespeare never has six lines together without a fault. Perhaps you may find seven: but this does not refute my general assertion." (Samuel Johnson)

**red and blue** In Britain, colours that are associated with socialism and conservatism respectively; in the United States, colours that are associated with Republicans and Democrats respectively. They are very confusing to the large number of readers who associate red with the political left, and should therefore be avoided, especially in the American context.

**redact** in Latin means *bring back*. It is now also used to mean *obscure, blot out, obliterate*, as when testimony thought harmful to national security is officially blacked out in documents. Use it only in that narrowly technical sense.

**redolent** means *smelling of, fragrant*. Do not therefore write *redolent of the smell of linseed oil and turpentine*.

**reduce, diminish, lessen, shrink** are not interchangeable. *Reduce* is transitive, so must be followed by a noun. *Diminish* and *shrink* can be transitive or intransitive. So can *lessen*, though it is usually used before a noun.

**redux** A word often dropped into headlines by pretentious people anxious to impress. It is seldom clear what they mean. Avoid.

**references** *see* **footnotes, sources, references** in Part 3.

**regrettably** means *to be regretted.* Do not confuse with *regretfully*, used of someone showing regret.

**relationship** is a long word often better replaced by *relations. The two countries hope for a better relationship* means *The two countries hope for better relations.* But *relationship* is an appropriate word for two people in a close friendship.

**report on** not *into.*

**Republican** A long word, but not so long that it needs replacing with *red* (see above), or *GOP* (*for* Grand Old Party), which is as meaningless as *red* to non-American readers.

**reshuffle, resupply** *Shuffle* and *supply* will do, except for British Cabinets, which are *reshuffled* from time to time.

**resources, resourceful** *Resourceful* is a useful word; the term *natural resources*, less satisfactory, also has its merits. Most other uses of *resource* tend to be vile. The word is entirely at home in the following sentence, taken from an advertisement placed by Skill for Business (2005): "Sector Skills Councils ... assess what resource is already out there, and then create comprehensive deals with supply-side partners to fill skills gaps and shortages." Beware.

**revert** means *return to* or *go back to*, as in *The garden has reverted to wilderness.* It does not mean *come back to* or *get back to*, as in *I'll give you an answer as soon as I can.*

**Richter scale** Beloved of journalists, the Richter scale is unknown to seismologists. The strength of an earthquake is its *magnitude*, so say *an earthquake of magnitude 8.9. See* **earthquakes** in Part 3.

**ring, wring** (verbs) bells are rung; hands are wrung. Both may be seen at weddings.

**Roma** is the name of the people. Their language is *Romany*. Remember that *Sinti* are also Gypsies.

**run** In countries with a presidential system you may *run* for office. In those with a parliamentary one, you *stand*.

**Russian names** *see* **names**.

**same** is often superfluous. If your sentence contains *on the same day that*, try *on the day that*.

**scotch** To *scotch* means to *disable*, not to *destroy*. ("*We have scotched the snake, not killed it.*" "Macbeth") The people may also be *Scotch*, *Scots* or *Scottish*; choose as you like. *Scot-free* means completely free from payment of a fine (or punishment), not *free from Scotsmen*.

**second-biggest (third-oldest, fourth-wisest, fifth-commonest, etc)** Think before you write.

*Apart from New York, a Bramley is the second-biggest apple in the world. Other than home-making and parenting, prostitution is the third-oldest profession. After Tom, Dick and Harriet, Henry I was the fourth-wisest fool in Christendom. Besides justice, prudence, temperance and fortitude, the fifth-commonest virtue of the Goths was punctuality.*

None of these sentences should contain the ordinal (second- , third- , fourth- , fifth- , etc).

**sector** Try *industry* instead or, for example, *banks* instead of *banking sector*.

**semi-colons** *see* **punctuation**.

**sensual, sensuous** *Sensual* means *carnal* or *voluptuous*. *Sensuous* means *pertaining to aesthetic appreciation*, without any implication of lasciviousness.

**sequestered, sequestrated** *Sequestered* means *secluded. Sequestrated* means *confiscated* or *made bankrupt.*

**short words** Use them. They are often Anglo-Saxon rather than Latin in origin. They are easy to spell and easy to understand. Thus prefer:

| | |
|---|---|
| about to approximately | plant to facility |
| after to following | set up to establish |
| before to prior to | show to demonstrate |
| but to however | spending to expenditure |
| enough to sufficient | take part to participate |
| let to permit | use to utilise |
| make to manufacture | |

*Underdeveloped* countries are often better described as *poor. Substantive* often means *real* or *big.* "Short words are best and the old words when short are best of all." (Winston Churchill)

**shrug** This means to draw up the shoulders, so do not write *She shrugged her shoulders.*

**simplistic** Prefer *simple-minded, naive.*

**Singaporean names** *see* **names.**

**singular or plural?** *see* **grammar and syntax.**

**skills** are turning up all over the place – in learning skills, thinking skills, teaching skills – instead of *the ability to. He has the skills* probably means *He can.*

**skyrocketed** *Rocketed,* not *skyrocketed.*

**slither, sliver** As a noun, *slither* is *scree.* As a verb, it means *slide.* If you mean a *slice,* the word you want is *sliver.*

**sloppy writing** Use words with care.

If *This door is alarmed,* does its hair stand on end? If this envelope says *Urgent: dated material,* is it really too old-fashioned to be worth reading? Is a *handicapped toilet* really *faultily*

*designed* or *carrying extra weight*? Is *offensive marketing* just rude salesmanship?

More serious difficulties may arise with *indicted war criminals*. As their lawyers could one day remind you, these may turn out to be *innocent people accused of war crimes*.

Some familiar words may cause trouble. When Gordon Brown wrote in the *Guardian*, "No one can *underestimate* the scale of the challenge climate change represents," he presumably meant just the opposite. A *heart condition* is usually a *bad heart*. A *near miss* is probably a *near hit*. *Positive thoughts* (held by long-suffering creditors, according to *The Economist*) presumably means *optimism*, just as a *negative* report is probably a *critical* report. *Industrial action* is usually *industrial inaction*, *industrial disruption* or a *strike*. A *courtesy call* is generally a *sales offer* or an *uninvited visit*. A *substantially finished* bridge is an *unfinished* bridge. Someone with *high name-recognition* is *well known*. Something with *reliability problems* probably *does not work*. If yours is a *live audience*, what would a dead one be like?

And what is an *ethics violation*? An error of judgment? A crime? A moral lapse?

*See also* **unnecessary words**.

**small capitals** *see* **abbreviations** (small caps usage).

**smart** used to mean only *well dressed*, but *smart cards*, *smart sanctions* and *smart weapons*, etc are now universally with us, to the point where you may have to find another word (*elegant*, *chic*, *natty*) for *well-dressed*. *Smartly* still seems to work as an adverb suggesting prompt efficiency.

**social security** in America, *Social Security* means *pensions* and should be capitalised. Elsewhere it usually means *state benefits* more generally, which are called *welfare* in the United States.

**soft** is an adverb as well as an adjective and a noun. *Softly* is also an adverb. You can speak softly and carry a big stick, but if you have a quiet voice you are *soft* – not *softly* – *spoken*.

**soi-disant** means *self-styled*, not *so-called*.

**sources** *see* **footnotes, sources, references** in Part 3.

**Spanish names** *see* **names**.

**specific** A *specific* is a *medicine*, not a *detail*.

**spelling** Use British English rather than American English or any other kind. Sometimes, however, this injunction will clash with the rule that people and companies should be called what they want to be called, short of festooning themselves with titles. If it does, adopt American (or Canadian or other local) spelling when it is used in the name of an American (etc) company or private organisation (*Alcan Aluminum, Carter Center, Pulverizing Services Inc, Travelers Insurance*), but not when it is used for a government institution or a think-tank (*Department of Defence, Department of Labour, Pew Centre for Research*). The principle behind this ruling is that placenames are habitually changed from foreign languages into English: *Deutschland* becomes *Germany*, *München Munich*, *Torino Turin*, etc. And to respect the local spelling of government institutions would present difficulties: a sentence containing both the *Department of Labor* and the *secretary of labour*, or the *Defense Department* and the *need for a strong defence*, would look unduly odd. That oddity will arise nonetheless if you have to explain that *Rockefeller Center Properties is in charge of Rockefeller Centre*, but with luck that will not happen too often. *See* **placenames**.

The Australian *Labor Party* should be spelt without a *u* not only because it is not a government institution but also because the Australians spell it that way, even though they spell *labour* as the British do.

**s spelling** Use *-ise, -isation* (*realise, organisation*) throughout. But please do not *hospitalise*.

**common problems**

| | |
|---|---|
| abattoir | accommodate |
| abut, abutted, abutting | acknowledgment |

acquittal, acquitted, acquitting
adrenalin
adviser, advisory
aeon
aeroplane
aesthetic
aficionado
Afrikaans (the language), Afrikaner (the person)
ageing (*but* caging, paging, raging, waging)
agri-business (*not* agro-business)
aircraft, airliner
algorithm
al-Qaeda
amiable
amid (*not* amidst)
amok (*not* amuck)
among (*not* amongst)
annex (verb), annexe (noun)
antecedent
appal, appals, appalling, appalled
aqueduct
aquifer
arbitrager
artefact
asinine
balk (*not* baulk)
balloted, balloting
bandanna
bandwagon
battalion
bellwether
benefiting, benefited
biased
bicentenary (noun, *not* bicentennial)
billeting, billeted
blanketing, blanketed
block (*never* bloc)
blowzy (*not* blousy)
bogey (bogie is on a locomotive)
borsch
braggadocio
brethren
bumf
bused, busing (keep bussing for kissing)
by-election, bylaw, bypass, by-product, byword
bye (in sport)
caddie (golf), caddy (tea)
caesium
cannon (gun), canon (standard, criterion, clergyman)
cappuccino
carcass
caviar
chancy
channelling, channelled
checking account (spell it thus when explaining to Americans a current account, which is to be preferred)
choosy
cipher
clubable (coined, and spelled thus, by Dr Johnson)
colour, colouring, colourist

combating, combated
commemorate
connection
consensus
cooled, cooler, coolly
coral (stuff found in sea), corral (cattle pen)
coruscate
cosseted, cosseting
defendant
dependant (person), dependent (adj)
depository (unless referring to American depositary receipts)
desiccate, desiccation
detente (*not* détente)
dexterous (*not* dextrous)
dignitary
dilapidate
disk (in a computer context), otherwise disc (including compact disc)
dispatch (*not* despatch)
dispel, dispelling
distil, distiller
divergences
doppelganger(s)
doveish
dryer, dryly
dullness
dwelt
dyeing (colour)
dyke
ecstasy
embarrass (*but* harass)
encyclopedia
enroll, enrolment
ensure (make certain), insure (against risks)
enthrall
extrovert
farther (distance), further (additional)
favour, favourable
ferreted
fetus (*not* foetus, misformed from the Latin fetus)
field-marshal (soldier)
Filipino, Filipina (person), Philippine (adj of the Philippines)
filleting, filleted
flotation
flyer, frequent flyer, high-flyer
focused, focusing
forbear (abstain), forebear (ancestor)
forbid, forbade
foreboding
foreclose
forefather
forestall
forewarn
forgather
forgo (do without), forego (precede)
forsake
forswear, forsworn
fuelled
-ful, not -full (thus armful, bathful, handful, etc)
fulfil, fulfilling
fullness
fulsome

funnelling, funnelled
furore
gallivant
gelatine
glamour, glamorise, glamorous
graffito, graffiti
gram (*not* gramme)
grey
guerrilla
gulag
Gurkha
gypsy
*haj*
hallo (*not* hello)
harass (*but* embarrass)
hiccup (*not* hiccough)
high-tech
Hizbullah
honour, honourable
hotch-potch
humour, humorist, humorous
hurrah (*not* hooray)
idiosyncrasy
impostor
impresario
inadvertent
incur, incurring
innocuous
inoculate
inquire, inquiry (*not* enquire, enquiry)
install, instalment, installation
instil, instilling
intransigent
jail (not gaol)
*Janjaweed*
jewellery (*not* jewelry)
judgment
kilogram or kilo (*not* kilogramme)
labelling, labelled
laissez-faire
lama (priest), llama (beast)
lambast (*not* lambaste)
launderette
leukaemia
levelled
libelling, libelled
licence (noun), license (verb), licensee (person with a licence)
limited
linchpin, lynch law
liquefy
literal
littoral (shore)
logarithm
loth (reluctant), loathe (hate), loathsome
low-tech
madrassa
manilla envelope, *but* Manila, capital of the Philippines
manoeuvre, manoeuvring
marshal (noun and verb), marshalled
mayonnaise
medieval
mêlée
meter (a measuring tool), metre (metric measure, meter in American)
mileage
millennium, but millenarian

minuscule
moccasin
modelling, modelled
mould
Muslim (*not* Moslem)
naivety
'Ndrangheta
nonplussed
nought (for numerals), otherwise naught
obbligato
occur, occurring
oesophagus
oestrus (oestrogen, etc)
optics (optician, etc) ophthalmic (ophthalmology, etc)
paediatric, paediatrician
palaeontology, palaeontologist
panel, panelled
paraffin
parallel, paralleled
pastime
pavilion
phoney (*not* phony)
piggyback (*not* pickaback)
plummeted, plummeting
poky
practice (noun), practise (verb)
praesidium (*not* presidium)
predilection
preferred (preferring, *but* proffered)
preventive (*not* preventative)
pricey
primeval
principal (head, loan; or adj), principle (abstract noun)
proffered (proffering, *but* preferred)
profited
program (only in a computer context), otherwise programme
prophecy (noun), prophesy (verb)
protester
Pushtu (language), Pushtun (people)
pygmy
pzazz
queuing
rack, racked, racking (as in racked with pain, nerve-racking)
racket
rankle
rarefy
razzmatazz
recur, recurrent, recurring
regretted, regretting
restaurateur
resuscitate
rhythm
rivet (riveted, riveter, riveting)
rococo
ropy
rottweiler
rumoured
sacrilegious
sanatorium
savannah
seize

shaky
*sharia*
shenanigans
sheriff
Shia (noun and adj), Shias, Shiism
shibboleth
Sibylline
siege
sieve
siphon (*not* syphon)
skulduggery
smelt
smidgen (*not* smidgeon)
smoky
smooth (both noun and verb)
snigger (*not* snicker)
sobriquet
somersault
soothe
souped up
soyabean
specialty (only in context of medicine, steel and chemicals), otherwise speciality
sphinx
spoilt
squirrelled
stanch (verb)
staunch (adj)
storey (floor)
straitjacket and strait-laced *but* straight-faced
stratagem
strategy
Sunni, Sunnis
supersede
swap (not swop)
swathe
synonym
Taliban (plural)
*taoiseach* (*but* prefer prime minister, or leader)
tariff
Tatar (*not* Tartar)
threshold
titbits
titillate
*tonton-macoutes*
tormentor
trade union, trade unions (*but* Trades Union Congress)
transatlantic, transpacific
transferred, transferring
travelled
tricolor
trouper (as in old trouper)
tsar
tyre
unnecessary
unparalleled
untrammelled
vaccinate
vacillate
vermilion
wacky
wagon (*not* waggon)
weasel, weaselly
while *not* whilst
wiggle (*not* wriggle) room
wilful
wisteria
withhold
*yarmulke* (prefer to *kippah*)
yogurt

**-able**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| debatable | indictable | tradable |
| dispensable | indispensable | unmissable |
| disputable | indistinguishable | unmistakable |
| forgivable | lovable | unshakable |
| imaginable | movable | unusable |
| implacable | ratable | usable |
| indescribable | salable (but prefer sellable) | |

**-eable**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| bridgeable | manageable | unenforceable |
| changeable | noticeable | unpronounceable |
| knowledgeable | serviceable | sizeable |
| likeable | traceable | |

**-ible**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| accessible | feasible | irresistible |
| convertible | inadmissible | permissible |
| digestible | indestructible | submersible |
| dismissible | investible | |

**plurals** No rules here. The spelling of the following plurals may have been decided by either practice or derivation.

-a

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| consortia | memoranda | sanatoria |
| corrigenda | millennia | spectra |
| data | phenomena | strata |
| media | quanta | |

**-ae**

| | |
|---|---|
| alumnae (female) | antennae |
| amoebae | formulae |

**-eaus**

| | |
|---|---|
| bureaus | plateaus |

**-eaux**

| | |
|---|---|
| chateaux | tableaux |

**-fs, -efs**

dwarfs
oafs
roofs
still-lifes

**-i**

alumni
bacilli
nuclei
stimuli
termini

**-oes**

archipelagoes
buffaloes
cargoes
desperadoes
dominoes
echoes
embargoes
frescoes
haloes
heroes
innuendoes
mangoes
mementoes
mosquitoes
mottoes
noes
potatoes
salvoes
tomatoes
tornadoes
torpedoes
vetoes
volcanoes

**-os**

albinos
armadillos
calicos
casinos
commandos
demos
dynamos
egos
embryos
Eskimos
falsettos
fandangos
fiascos
flamingos
folios
ghettos
impresarios
librettos
manifestos
memos
mulattos
neutrinos
oratorios
peccadillos
pianos
placebos
provisos
quangos
radios
silos
solos
sopranos
stilettos
studios
virtuosos
weirdos
zeros

**-s**

agendas

**-ums**

conundrums
crematoriums
curriculums
forums
moratoriums
nostrums
premiums
quorums
referendums
stadiums
symposiums
ultimatums

**-uses**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| buses | fetuses | prospectuses |
| caucuses | focuses | syllabuses |
| circuses | geniuses | |

**-ves**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| calves | loaves | wharves |
| halves | scarves | |
| hooves | turves | |

Note: *indexes* (of books), but *indices* (indicators, index numbers); *appendices* (supplements), but *appendixes* (anatomical organs).

**split infinitives** see **grammar and syntax**.

**stanch, staunch** *Stanch* the flow, though the man be *staunch* (*loyal, stout-hearted*). The distinction is useful, if bogus (since both words derive from the same old-French *estancher*).

**stationary, stationery** *Stationary* is still; *stationery* is writing paper, envelopes, etc.

**stentorian, stertorous** *Stentorian* means *loud* (like the voice of Stentor, a warrior in the Trojan war). *Stertorous* means *characterised by a snoring sound* (from *sterto*, snore).

**straight, strait** *Straight* means *direct* or *uncurved*; *strait* means *narrow* or *tight*. The *strait-laced* tend to be *straight-faced*. *Straits* are narrow bodies of water between bits of land.

**strategy, strategic** *Strategy* may sometimes have some merit, especially in military contexts, as a contrast to *tactics*. But *strategic* is usually meaningless except to tell you that the writer is pompous and is trying to invest something with a seriousness it does not deserve.

**-style** Avoid *German-style supervisory boards*, *an* EU*-style rotating presidency*, etc. Explain what you mean.

**subcontract** If you engage someone to do something, you are

*contracting* the job to that person (or company); only if that person (or company) then asks someone else to do it is the job *subcontracted*.

**surreal** Surrealism was a revolutionary movement of philosophers, writers and artists who in the 1920s wanted to change the world by drawing on the subconscious, escaping the control of reason and bringing about "the state where the distinction between the subjective and the objective loses its necessity and value" (André Breton). Occasionally *surreal* is used in reference to this movement. More often it is used freely to describe anything bizarre or peculiar, as in the paintings of Salvador Dali or René Magritte. Avoid casually debasing the word.

**swear words** Avoid them, unless they convey something genuinely helpful or interesting to the reader (eg, you are quoting someone). Usually, they will annoy rather than shock. But if you do use them, spell them out in full, without asterisks.

**Swiss names** *see* **names**.

**syntax** *see* **grammar and syntax**.

**systemic, systematic** *Systemic* means *relating to a system or body as a whole*. *Systematic* means *according to system, methodical* or *intentional*.

**table** Avoid *table* as a transitive verb. In Britain to *table* means to bring something forward for action, and should be kept to committees. In America it sometimes means exactly the opposite.

**target** Not so long ago *target* was almost unknown as a verb, except when used to mean *provide with a shield.* Now it turns up everywhere, even though *aim* or *direct* would often serve as well.

**terrorist** Use with care, preferably only to mean *someone who uses terror as an organised system of intimidation.* Prefer suspected terrorists to terrorist suspects.

**testament, testimony** A *testament* is a will; *testimony* is evidence. It is *testimony to the poor teaching of English that journalists habitually write testament instead.*

**the** Occasionally, the use of the definite article may be optional: *Maximilien Robespierre, the leader of the Committee of Public Safety,* is preferable to *Maximilien Robespierre, leader of the Committee of Public Safety,* but in this context the *the* after *Robespierre* is not essential. However, *Given that leaders of mainstream left and right parties* means something different from *Given that the leaders of both mainstream left and right parties.* Likewise, *If polls are right* means something different from *If the polls are right. They include freedom to set low flat taxes* is similarly, if subtly, different from *They include the freedom to set low flat taxes.* In each of these examples the crucial *the* was left out. *See also* **grammar and syntax**.

**there is, there are** Often unnecessary. *There are three problems facing the prime minister* is better as *Three problems face the prime minister.*

**throe, throw** *Throe* is a *spasm* or *pang* (and is usually in the plural). *Throw* is to *cast* or *hurl through the air. Last throws* may be all right on the cricket pitch, but *last throes* are more likely on the battlefield.

**ticket, platform, manifesto** The *ticket* lists the names of the candidates for a particular party (so if you *split your ticket* you vote for, eg, a Republican for president and a Democrat for Congress). The *platform* is the statement of basic principles (*planks*) put forward by an American party, usually at its pre-election convention. It is thus akin to a British party's *manifesto*, which sets out the party's policies.

**time** If you have to give an exact time, you should write *6.25am*, *11.15pm*, etc. But it is permissible to write *two o'clock*, *11 o'clock*, *half past ten*, a *quarter past four*, if you wish to be less precise.

**times** Take care. *Three times more than X* is *four times as much as X.*

**titles** The overriding principle is to treat people with respect. That usually means giving them the title they themselves adopt. But some titles are ugly (Ms), some misleading (all Italian graduates are Dr) and some tiresomely long (Mr Dr Dr Federal Sanitary-Inspector Schmidt). Do not therefore indulge people's self-importance unless it would seem insulting not to.

Do not use Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms or Dr on first mention. Plain *Barack Obama*, *David Beckham* or other appropriate combination of first name and surname will do. But thereafter the names of all living people should be preceded by Mr, Mrs, Miss or some other title. Serving soldiers, sailors, airmen, etc should be given their title on first and subsequent mentions. Those (such as Colin Powell, but not Pervez Musharraf) who cast aside their uniforms for civvy street become plain Mr (or whatever). Governor X, President Y, the Rev John Z may be Mr, Mrs or Miss on second mention.

On first mention use forename and surname; then drop the forename (unless there are two people with the same surname mentioned):
*Nicolas Sarkozy*, then *Mr Sarkozy*

1 Avoid nicknames and diminutives unless the person is always known (or prefers to be known) by one:
Joe Biden Tony Blair Bill Emmott Maggie Smith Tiger Woods

2 Avoid the habit of joining office and name: *Prime Minister Brown, Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn.* But *Chancellor Merkel* is permissible.

3 Knights, dames, princes, kings, etc should have their titles on first and subsequent mentions. Many peers are, however, better known by their former names and can be given those on first mention. After that, they should be called by their titles. Life peeresses may be called *Lady*, not *Baroness*, just as barons are called *Lord*. Note that some people choose not to use their titles. So *Sir Donald Tsang*, for instance, prefers to be just *Mr Tsang*. (*See* British titles *below*.)

4 If you use a title, get it right. *Rear-Admiral* Jones should not, at least on first mention, be called *Admiral* Jones.

5 Titles are not necessary in headings or captions, although surnames are: no *Baracks, Davids, Gordons, Hillarys*, etc. Sometimes they can also be dispensed with for athletes and pop stars, if titles would make them seem more ridiculous than dignified.

6 The dead: no titles (including *Mr*, etc), except those whom you are writing about because they have just died. *Dr Johnson* and *Mr Gladstone* are also permissible. There is no need to use first names for well-known people such as *Einstein* or *Keats*, though you might choose to do so for people whose second names are more common, like *Inigo Jones*.

7 *Ms* is permissible, though avoid it if you can. To call a woman *Miss* is not to imply that she is unmarried, merely

that she goes by her maiden name. Married women who are known by their maiden names – eg, Aung San Suu Kyi, Jane Fonda – are therefore Miss, unless they have made it clear that they want to be called something else.

8 Foreign titles: take extra care.

9 Dr: use *Dr* only for qualified medical people, unless the correct alternative is not known or it would seem perverse to use *Mr*. And try to keep *Professor* for those who hold chairs, not just a university job or an inflated ego.

10 Middle initials: omit except in cases where confusion would be caused otherwise. George W. Bush is allowed; but nobody will imagine that the *Lyndon Johnson* you are writing about is *Lyndon A. Johnson* or *Lyndon C. Johnson*.

11 Some titles serve as names, and therefore have initial capitals, though are also descriptions: *the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Emir of Kuwait*. If you want to describe the office rather than the individual, use lower case: *The next archbishop of Canterbury will be a woman*. Use lower case in references simply to the *archbishop, the emir*: *The Duchess of Scunthorpe was in her finery, but the duke wore jeans*.

**British titles** Long incomprehensible to all foreigners and most Britons, British titles and forms of address now seem just as confusing to those who hold them. Snobbery, embarrassment and obscurity make it difficult to know whether to write Mrs Thatcher, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, Lady Thatcher, Baroness Thatcher, Lady Margaret Thatcher or Baroness Margaret Thatcher. Properly, she was Margaret, Baroness Thatcher, but on first mention the following are preferable: *Margaret Thatcher* or *Lady Thatcher*. On subsequent mentions, *Lady Thatcher* is fine. If the context is historical, *Margaret Thatcher* and thereafter *Mrs (now Lady) Thatcher*.

On first mention all *viscounts, earls, marquesses, dukes* should be given their titles (shorn of all Right Honourables, etc). Thereafter they can be plain *Lord* (except for dukes). *Barons*, a category that includes all *life peers*, can always be called *Lord*. The full names

of *knights* should be spelled out on first mention. Thereafter they become *Sir Firstnameonly*.

**clerical titles** Ordained clerics should be given their proper titles on first and subsequent mentions, though not their full honorifics (no need for His Holiness, His Eminence, the Right Reverend, etc). But:
the Rev Michael Wall (thereafter Mr Wall)
Father Ted (Father Ted)
Bishop Cuthbert Auckland (Bishop Auckland)
Archbishop Desmond Tutu (Archbishop Tutu)

Imams, muftis, ayatollahs, rabbis, gurus, etc should be given an appropriate title if they use one, and it should be repeated on second and subsequent mentions, so:
Ayatollah Hossein-Ali Montazeri (Ayatollah Montazeri)
Rabbi Lionel Bloom (Rabbi Bloom)
Sri Sri Ravi Shankar (Sri Sri Ravi Shankar)

**to or and?** *To try and end the killing* does not mean the same as *to try to end the killing*.

**tortuous, torturous** *Tortuous* means *winding* or *twisting*. *Torturous* means *causing torture*.

**total** is all right as a noun, but as a verb prefer *amount to* or *add up to*.

**transitive and intransitive verbs** The distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs is often now disregarded, to the distress of those brought up to respect it. Transitive verbs require a direct object; intransitive do not. Many verbs are both transitive and intransitive, and some ditransitive, meaning they appear to govern two objects, one direct and one indirect (as in *She gave her husband a piece of her mind*).

But not all. Commit is transitive. By *committing yourself to the wrong person*, you would be committing a mistake, but at least it would be grammatical. Deplete, too, is transitive: stocks do not deplete, they are depleted. Deliver also requires an object, which

is implicit in commands like "*Stand and deliver!*" and questions like "*Do you deliver?*" Reduce is also transitive. If you want to use it intransitively, try diminish. Halve is another verb that needs an object: do not write *The growth rate has halved* (rather it has fallen by half). And do not obsess.

Many intransitive verbs need to be followed by a preposition, either explicitly or implicitly. Agree is one such. If some*thing* is involved, you must agree to, on or about it. If some*body* is involved, you may agree with him, or perhaps agree to do something. Similarly, you may appeal against this injunction, but you may not appeal it. Nor may you cascade it to your colleagues, collapse it, though it may collapse of its own accord, still less migrate it or pause it. Do not progress it, either, if by that you mean advance it. Progress is also intransitive. And if you live in a pleasant city, do not call it liveable. Life may be liveable there, and life is for living; but cities are lived in, not lived.

Embark and disembark are both transitive and intransitive. But take care if you use them transitively: you may disembark people or goods from a ship or aircraft, but you may not disembark the ship or aircraft on which they have travelled.

In the past the intransitive use of present was seldom used except in obstetrics. Now symptoms present intransitively in every surgery, and other things elsewhere too. All such manifestations are unpleasant.

Even in the age of presentations, keep present transitive.

*See* **warn**.

**transpire** means *exhale*, not *happen, occur* or *turn out*.

**transportation** in America, a means of getting from A to B; in Britain, a means of getting rid of convicts.

**tribe** Regarded as politically incorrect in some circles, *tribe* is widely used in Africa and other places. It should not be regarded as derogatory and is often preferable to *ethnic group*. *See also* **ethnic groups, political correctness**.

**trillion** A thousand billion (*see* **figures**).

**trooper, trouper** An old trooper is an old *cavalry soldier* (supposedly good at swearing), old *private soldier* in a tank regiment, or old *mounted policeman*. An old trouper is an old *member of a theatrical company*, or perhaps a *good sort*.

**Turk, Turkic, Turkmen, Turkoman**, etc *see* **placenames**.

**twinkle, twinkling** *In the twinkling of an eye* means *in a very short time*. *Before he was even a twinkle in his father's eye* means *Before* (perhaps *just before*) *he was conceived*. So, more loosely, *Before the Model T was even a twinkle in Henry Ford's eye* could mean *Before Henry Ford was even thinking about a mass-produced car*. *Before the internet was even a twinkle in Al Gore's eyes*, however, suggests *Al Gore invented the internet*.

**Ukrainian names** *see* **names**.

**underprivileged** Since a privilege is a special favour or advantage, it is by definition not something to which everyone is entitled. So *underprivileged*, by implying the right to privileges for all, is not just ugly jargon but also nonsense.

**unique** do not use it unless it is true. Unique means, literally, of which there is only one.

**unlike** should not be followed by *in*. Like *like*, *unlike* governs nouns and pronouns, not verbs and clauses.

**unnecessary words** Some words add nothing but length to your prose. Use adjectives to make your meaning more precise and be cautious of those you find yourself using to make it more emphatic. The word *very* is a case in point. If it occurs in a sentence you have written, try leaving it out and see whether the meaning is changed. *The omens were good* may have more force than *The omens were very good.*

Avoid:
cutbacks (cuts will do)
large-scale (big)
the policymaking process (policymaking)
sale events (sales)
strike action (strike)
track record (record)
weather conditions (weather)
wilderness area (usually either a wilderness or a wild area)

*This time around* means *This time*, just as *any time soon* means *soon*. *On a daily/weekly/monthly basis* means *daily/weekly/monthly*. And *at this moment in time* means *now* or *at present*. *Currently*, *actually* and *really* often serve no purpose.

Shoot off, or rather shoot, as many prepositions after verbs as possible. Thus:
Companies can be *bought* and *sold* rather than *bought up* and *sold off*.
Budgets may be *cut* rather than *cut back*.
Plots can be *hatched* but not *hatched up*.
Markets should be *freed*, rather than *freed up*.
Organisations should be *headed by* rather than *headed up by* chairmen.
People can *meet* rather than *meet with* each other.
Children can be *sent* to bed rather than *sent off* to bed – though if they are to *sit up* they must first *sit down*.
*Pre-prepared* just means *prepared*.
This advice you are given *free*, or *for nothing*, but not *for free*.

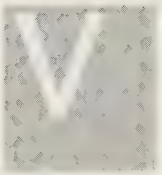
Certain words are often redundant:
The leader of the *so-called* Front for a Free Freedonia is the leader of the Front for a Free Freedonia.
*A top politician* or *top priority* is usually just a *politician* and certainly only a *priority*.
A *major speech* is usually just a *speech*, an *executive summary* a *summary* and a *role model* a *model*.
A *safe haven* is a *haven*, a *free gift* a *gift* and a *whole raft* a *raft* (who has ever had *half a raft*?).
*Most probably* and *most especially* are *probably* and *especially*.
*the fact that* can often be shortened to *that* (*That I did not do so was a self-indulgence*).
Loans to the *industrial and agricultural sectors* are just *loans to industry and farming*.
*Member states* or *member countries* of the EU may simply be referred to as *members*.

In general, be concise. Try to be economical in your account or argument ("*The best way to be boring is to leave nothing out*" – Voltaire). Similarly, try to be economical with words – but not

with the truth. "*As a general rule, run your pen through every other word you have written; you have no idea what vigour it will give to your style*" (Sydney Smith). Raymond Mortimer put it even more crisply when commenting about Susan Sontag: "*Her journalism, like a diamond, will sparkle more if it is cut.*"

*See also* **community**, **jargon**, **sloppy writing**.

**use and abuse** are much used and abused. You *take* drugs, not *use* them (Does he use sugar?). And *drug abuse* is just *drug taking*, as is *substance abuse*, unless it is *glue sniffing* or *bun throwing*.



**venerable** means *worthy of reverence.* It is not a synonym for *old.*

**venues** Avoid them. Try *places.*

**verbal** Every agreement, except the nod-and-wink variety, is *verbal.* If you mean one that was not written down, describe it as *oral.*

**viable** means *capable of living.* Do not apply it to things like railway lines. *Economically viable* means *profitable.*

**Vietnamese names** *see* **names.**

**wars** Prefer lower case for the names of wars:
American civil war
cold war
Gulf war
war of the Spanish succession
the war of Jenkins' ear

But these are exceptions:
the Thirty Years War
the War of Independence
the Wars of the Roses

Write:
*the first world war* or the *1914–18 war*, not *world war one*, *I* or *1*
*the second world war* or the *1939–45 war*, not *world war two*, *II* or *2*

*Post-war* and *pre-war* are hyphenated.

**which and that** *Which* informs, *that* defines. *This is the house that Jack built.* But *This house, which Jack built, is now falling down.* Americans tend to be fussy about making a distinction between *which* and *that*. Good writers of British English are less fastidious. ("*We have left undone those things which we ought to have done.*")

**while** is best used temporally. Do not use it in place of *although* or *whereas*.

**who, whom** *Who* is one of the few words in English that differ in the accusative (objective) case, when it becomes *whom*, often throwing native English-speakers into a fizzle.

In the sentence *This is the man who can win the support of most Tory MPs*, the word you want is *who*, since *who* is the subject of the relative clause. It remains the subject, and therefore also *who*, in the sentence *This is the man who she believes* (or *says* or *insists*, etc) *can win the support of most Tory MPs*. That becomes clearer if the sentence is punctuated thus: *This is the man who, she believes* (or *says* or *insists*, etc), *can win the support of most Tory MPs*.

However, in the sentence *This is the man whom most Tory MPs can support*, the word in question is *whom* because the subject of the relative clause has become *most Tory MPs*. *Whom* is also necessary in the sentence *This is the man whom she believes to be able to win the support of most Tory MPs*. This is because the verb *believe* is here being used as a transitive verb, when it must be followed by an infinitive. If, however, the word *insists* were used instead of *believes*, the sentence could not be similarly changed, because the verb *insist* cannot be used transitively.

**wrack** is an old word meaning *vengeance*, *punishment* or *wreckage* (as in *wrack and ruin*). It can also be *seaweed*. And as a verb it can mean to *wreck*, *devastate* or *ruin*. It has nothing to do with *wreak*, and it is not an instrument of torture or a receptacle for toast: that is *rack*. Hence *racked with pain*, *by war*, *drought*, etc. *Rack* your brains – unless they be *wracked*.

part 2

# American and British English

The differences between English as written and spoken in America and English as used in Britain are considerable, as is the potential for misunderstanding, even offence, when using words or phrases that are unfamiliar or that mean something else on the other side of the Atlantic. This section highlights the important differences between American and British English syntax and punctuation, spelling and usage. (There are also differences between American and Canadian English, but these are not covered here.)

A number of subjects call for detailed, specialised guidance beyond the scope of this book, though some of the vocabulary is dealt with here. These include food and cookery (different names for ingredients and equipment, different systems of measurement); medicine and health care (different professional titles, drug names, therapies); human anatomy; and gardening (different seasons and plants). Many crafts and hobbies also use different terms for equipment, materials and techniques. *See also* **Americanisms** in Part 1.

## Grammar and syntax

Written American English tends to be more declarative than its British counterpart, and adverbs and some modifying phrases are frequently positioned differently. British English also tends to use more modifying phrases, while American English prefers to go with simpler sentence structure.

In British English, doctors and lawyers are to be found *in* Harley Street or Wall Street, not *on* it. And they rest from their labours *at* weekends, not *on* them. During the week their children are *at* school, not *in* it.

Words may also be inserted or omitted in some standard phrases. British English goes *to hospital*, American English *to the hospital*. British English chooses *one or other thing*; American English chooses *one thing or the other*.

## Punctuation

**commas in lists** The use of a comma before the final *and* in a list is called the serial or Oxford comma: *eggs, bacon, potatoes, and cheese*. Most American writers and publishers use the serial comma; most British writers and publishers use the serial comma only when necessary to avoid ambiguity: *eggs, bacon, potatoes and cheese* but *The musicals were by Rodgers and Hammerstein, Sondheim, and Lerner and Loewe*.

**full stops (periods)** The American convention is to use full stops (periods) at the end of almost all abbreviations and contractions; specifically, full stops with abbreviations in lower case, *a.m.*, *p.m.*, and no full stops with abbreviations in capitals or small capitals, *US*, *UN*, *CEO*. The British convention is to use full stops after abbreviations – eg, *abbr.*, *adj.*, *co.* – but not after contractions – eg, *Dr*, *Mr*, *Mrs*, *St*.

**hyphens** American English is far readier than British English to accept compound words. In particular, many nouns made of two separate nouns are spelt as one word in American English, while in British English they either remain separate or are joined by a hyphen: eg, *applesauce*, *newborn*, *commonsense* (hyphenated or two words in British English).

British English also tends, more than American English, to use hyphens as pronunciation aids, to separate repeated vowels in words such as *pre-empt* and *re-examine*, and to join some prefixes to nouns – eg, *pseudo-science*. Americans tend to get rid of hyphens more rapidly than the British, as new editions of dictionaries reflect.

In British English, hyphens are more frequently used in compound adjectives or adjectival phrases than in American English. *See also* **hyphens** in Part 1.

**quotation marks** In American publications and those of some Commonwealth countries, and also international publications like *The Economist*, the convention is to use double quotation marks, reserving single quotation marks for quotes within quotes. In many British publications (excluding *The Economist*), the convention is the reverse: single quotation marks are used first, then double.

With other punctuation the relative position of quotation marks and other punctuation also differs. The British convention is to place such punctuation according to sense. The American convention is simpler but less logical: all commas and full stops precede the final quotation mark (or, if there is a quote within a quote, the first final quotation mark). Other punctuation – colons, semi-colons, question and exclamation marks – is placed according to sense. The following examples illustrate these differences.

British

The words on the magazine's cover, '*The link between coffee and cholesterol*', caught his eye.
'*You're eating too much*,' she told him. '*You'll soon look like your father.*'
'*Have you seen this article, "The link between coffee and cholesterol"?*' he asked.
'*It was as if*', he explained, '*I had swallowed a toad, and it kept croaking "ribbut, ribbut", from deep in my belly.*'
She particularly enjoyed the article '*Looking for the "New Man"*'.

American

The words on the magazine's cover, "*The link between coffee and cholesterol,*" caught his eye.
"*You're eating too much,*" she told him. "*You'll soon look like your father.*"
"*Have you seen this article, 'The link between coffee and cholesterol'?*" he asked.
"*It was as if,*" he explained, "*I had swallowed a toad, and it kept croaking 'Ribbut, ribbut,' from deep in my stomach.*"
She particularly enjoyed the article "*Looking for the 'New Man.'*"

## Spelling

Some words are spelt differently in American English and British English. Often the American spelling is a survival of 18th-century British usage. The spellings are sufficiently similar to identify the word, but the unfamiliar form may still disturb the reader. If you are writing for an international audience, the American form is now much more likely to be recognised.

American English is more obviously phonetic than British English. The word *cosy* becomes *cozy*, *aesthetic* becomes *esthetic*, *sizeable* becomes *sizable*, *arbour* becomes *arbor*, *theatre* becomes *theater*.

### Main spelling differences

**-ae/-oe** Although it is now common in British English to write *medieval* rather than *mediaeval*, other words – often scientific terms such as *aeon*, *diarrhoea*, *anaesthetic*, *gynaecology*, *homoeopathy* – retain their classical composite vowel. In American English, the composite vowel is replaced by a single *e*; thus, *eon*, *diarrhea*, *anesthetic*, *gynecology*, *homeopathy*. There are exceptions to this in scientific publications. *Fetus* is the preferred spelling on both sides of the Atlantic (not *foetus*), and *oestrogen* generally becomes *estrogen*, if only to ensure that the hormone appears in the same place in alphabetical lists in both countries.

**-ce/-se** In British English, the verb that relates to a noun ending in *-ce* is sometimes given the ending *-se*; thus, *advice* (noun), *advise* (verb), *device/devise*, *licence/license*, *practice/practise*. In the first two instances, the spelling change is accompanied by a slight change in the sound of the word; but in the other two instances, noun and verb are pronounced the same way, and American English spelling reflects this, by using the same spelling for both noun and verb: thus, *license/license* and *practise/practise*. It also extends the use of *-se* to other nouns that in British English are spelt *-ce*: thus, *defense*, *offense*, *pretense*.

**-e/-ue** The final silent *e* or *ue* of several words is omitted in American English but retained in British English: thus, *analog/analogue*, *ax/axe*, *catalog/catalogue*.

**-eable/-able** The silent *e*, created when forming some adjectives with this suffix, is more often omitted in American English; thus, *likeable* is spelt *likable*, *unshakeable* is spelt *unshakable*. But the *e* is sometimes retained in American English where it affects the sound of the preceding consonant; thus, *traceable* and *manageable*.

**-ize/-ise** The American convention is to spell with z many words that some British people and publishers (including *The Economist*) spell with s. The z spelling is, of course, also a correct British form. Remember, though, that some words must end in -ise, whichever spelling convention is being followed. These include:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| advertise | despise | incise |
| advise | devise | merchandise |
| apprise | disguise | premise |
| arise | emprise | prise |
| chastise | enfranchise | revise |
| circumcise | excise | supervise |
| comprise | exercise | surmise |
| compromise | franchise | surprise |
| demise | improvise | televise |

Words with the ending -*lyse* in British English, such as *analyse* and *paralyse*, are spelt -*lyze* in American English.

**-ll/-l** In British English, when words ending in the consonant *l* are given a suffix beginning with a vowel (eg, the suffixes -*able*, -*ed*, -*ing*, -*ous*, -*y*), the *l* is doubled; thus, *annul/annulled*, *model/modelling*, *quarrel/quarrelling*, *rebel/rebellious*, *wool/woolly*. This is inconsistent with the general rule in British English that the final consonant is doubled before the suffix only when the preceding vowel carries the main stress: thus, the word *regret* becomes *regretted*, or *regrettable*; but the word *billet* becomes *billeted*. American English mostly does not have this inconsistency. So if the stress does not fall on the preceding vowel, the *l* is not doubled: thus, *model/modeling*, *travel/traveler*; but *annul/annulled*.

Several words that end in a single *l* in British English – eg, *appal*, *fulfil* – take a double *ll* in American English. In British

English the *l* stays single when the word takes a suffix beginning with a consonant (eg, the suffixes *-ful*, *-fully*, *-ment*): thus, *fulfil/fulfilment*. Words ending in *-ll* usually lose one *l* when taking one of these suffixes: thus, *skill/skilful*, *will/wilfully*. In American English, words ending in *-ll* usually remain intact, whatever the suffix: thus, *skill/skillful*, *will/willfully*.

**-m/-mme** American English tends to use the shorter form of ending, thus *gram* and *program*, and British English tends to use the longer: *gramme* and *programme* (but *program* when referring to a computer program).

**-our/-or** Most British English words ending in *-our* – *ardour*, *behaviour*, *candour*, *demeanour*, *favour*, *valour* and the like – lose the *u* in American English: thus, *ardor*, *candor*, etc. The major exception, though even this is broken, is *glamour*, which retains its u (but loses it in both types of English for the adjective *glamorous*). Note, however, that *squalor* is spelt the same on both sides of the Atlantic.

**-re/-er** Most British English words ending in *-re* – such as *centre*, *fibre*, *metre*, *theatre* – end in *-er* in American English: thus, *center*, *fiber*, etc. Exceptions include: *acre*, *cadre*, *lucre*, *massacre*, *mediocre*, *ogre*.

**-t/-ed** Although this seems to be a mere difference in spelling the past tense of some verbs, it is really a different form; *see* 'Verbs: past tenses' below.

### Other common spelling differences

| *British* | *American* |
|---|---|
| aluminium | aluminum |
| apophthegm | apothegm |
| behove | behoove |
| chequered | checkered (pattern) |
| cosy | cozy |
| draught | draft |
| dyke | dike |
| furore | furor |
| grey | gray |

| | |
|---|---|
| kerb/kerbside | curb/curbside |
| liquorice | licorice |
| manoeuvre/manoeuvrable | maneuver/maneuverable |
| mould/moulder/moult | mold/molder/molt |
| moustache | mustache |
| plough | plow |
| podgy | pudgy |
| rumbustious | rambunctious |
| specialist shop | specialty store |
| speciality (but specialty for medicine, steel and chemicals) | specialty |
| sulphur(ous) (but sulfur(ous) in scientific publications) | sulfur(ous) |
| titbit | tidbit |
| towards | toward |
| tyre | tire |
| vice (tool) | vise |

## Usage

**dates** Americans are at odds with the rest of the world in the way they express dates in numerical form. In Britain and elsewhere, the order is always: day, month, year – eg, 7/9/2008 for September 7th 2008. In the United States, it is: month, day, year – eg, 9/7/2008. This can lead to misunderstanding – not least with the common term "9/11" to refer to the destruction of the World Trade Center on September 11th 2001, which the rest of the world will automatically translate as November 9th.

**exclusivity** What is familiar in one culture may be entirely alien in another. British English exploits terms and phrases borrowed from the game of cricket; American English uses baseball terms. Those writing for readers in both markets use either set of terms at their peril. Do not make references or assumptions that are geographically exclusive, for example by specifying months or seasons when referring to seasonal patterns, by using north or

south to imply a type of climate, or by making geographical references that give a state's name followed by USA, as in *Wyoming, USA*. You can help to avoid confusion: *Cambridge, England; Cambridge, MA*.

**race and sex** The difficulties that arise in Europe as a result of references to race and sex (*see* ethnic groups, political correctness) are even greater in America. When referring to Americans whose ancestors came from Africa, most people use the adjective *African-American* rather than *black*. Other groups are referred to by their specific ethnicity; for instance, Hispanics, who are also *Latinos/Latinas*.

*American Indians* are usually called *native Americans*, not least to distinguish them from the ever-growing numbers of Indian-Americans. It is unacceptable to refer to them as *red*. It can also cause offence to describe the original inhabitants of the lands stretching from Greenland to Alaska as *Eskimos*; this was a corruption of a Cree word meaning *raw-flesh eater*. The people themselves are distributed among at least three major tribal groupings. Alaskan natives are usually called *native Americans* in Alaska. *Inuit* should be used only to refer to people of that tribe.

**units of measurement** In British publications measurements are now largely expressed in SI units (the modern form of metric units), although imperial measures are still used in certain contexts. In American publications measurements may be expressed in SI units, but imperial units are still more common.

Although the British imperial and American standard measures are usually identical, there are some important exceptions, eg, the number of fluid ounces in a pint: 16 in the American system and 20 in the British. This difference has a knock-on effect in the volumes of gallons, which are smaller in America than in Britain. Americans also use the measure *quart* (one-quarter of a gallon), which is now considered archaic in Britain.

Some measures are peculiar to one or other national system, particularly units of mass relating to agriculture. *See also* **measures** in Part 3.

**verbs: past tenses *-t/-ed*** Both forms of ending are acceptable in British English, but the *-t* form is dominant – *burnt, learnt, spelt* – whereas American English uses *-ed*: *burned, learned, spelled.* Contrarily, British English uses *-ed* for the past tense and past participle of certain verbs – *quitted, sweated* – while American English uses the infinitive spelling – *quit, sweat.* Some verbs have a different form of past tense and past participle, eg, the past tense of *dive* is *dived* in British English but *dove* in American English, and the past tense of *fit* is always *fit* in American English, not *fitted*, as in British English. Although *loaned* is still sometimes used as the past tense of *lend* in American English, it is not standard.

## Vocabulary

Sometimes the same word has gradually taken on different meanings on the two sides of the Atlantic, creating an opportunity for misunderstanding. The word *homely*, for example, means *simple* or *informal* in British English, but *plain* or *unattractive* in American English.

This also applies to figures of speech. *It went like a bomb* in British English means it was a great success; *it bombed* in American English means it was a disaster. *To table* something in British English means to bring it forward for action; but in American English it means the opposite, ie, *to shelve.*

One writer's slang is another's lively use of words; formal language to one is pomposity to another. This is the trickiest area to negotiate when writing for both British and American readers. At its best, distinctively American English is more direct and vivid than its British English equivalent. Many American words and expressions have passed into British English because they are shorter or more to the point: eg, *lay off* is preferable to *make redundant*, and *fire* is preferable to *dismiss.* But American English also has a contrary tendency to lengthen words, creating a (to British readers) pompous tone: for instance, *transportation* (in British English, *transport*).

British English is slower than American English to accept new words and suspicious of short cuts, and sometimes it resists the use of nouns as verbs (*see* **grammar and syntax** in Part 1).

The following lists draw attention to commonly used words and idioms that are spelt differently or have different meanings in American English and British English. When you do not want to produce a single version, follow one or other convention and, if this means using a word that will mystify or mislead one group of readers, provide a translation. The lists do not cover slang or colloquialisms.

### accounting, banking and finance

| *British* | *American* |
|---|---|
| acquisition accounting | purchase accounting |
| articles of association | bylaws |
| banknote | bill |
| bonus or scrip issue | stock dividend or stock split |
| building society | savings and loan association |
| Chartered Accountant (CA) | Certified Public Accountant (CPA) |
| cheque (bank) | check |
| clerk (bank) | teller |
| closing rate method | current rate method |
| current account | checking account |
| deferred tax | deferred income tax |
| depreciation | amortisation |
| exceptional items | unusual items |
| finance leases | capital leases |
| HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)/Inland Revenue | Internal Revenue |
| property | real estate |
| nominal value | par value |
| non-pension post-employment benefits | OPEBS (other post-employment benefits) |
| old-age pension, state pension | Social Security |
| ordinary shares | common stock |
| pay rise | raise |
| preference shares | preferred stock |
| price rise | price hike |
| profit for the financial year | net income |
| provisions | allowances |
| share premium | additional paid-in capital |

| | |
|---|---|
| shareholders' funds | stockholders' equity |
| stock | inventory |
| Treasury share | Treasury stock |
| turnover | revenues |
| undistributable reserves | restricted surplus or deficiency |
| unit trust | mutual fund |
| value-added tax (VAT) | sales tax |

**baby items**

| *British* | *American* |
|---|---|
| baby's dummy | pacifier |
| cot | crib |
| nappy | diaper |
| pram, push-chair | baby carriage, stroller |

**clothes**

| *British* | *American* |
|---|---|
| braces | suspenders |
| clothes cupboard/wardrobe | closet |
| dressing gown | bathrobe/housecoat/robe |
| hairgrips | bobby pins |
| handbag, wallet | purse, pocketbook |
| ladder (in stocking) | run |
| pants | underpants |
| press studs | snaps |
| purse | wallet |
| sports jacket | sport jacket |
| tartan | plaid |
| tights | pantyhose, (opaque) tights |
| trousers | pants, slacks, trousers |
| vest | undershirt |
| waistcoat | vest |
| zip (noun) | zipper |

**food, cooking and eating**

| *British* | *American* |
|---|---|
| aubergine | eggplant |
| bill (restaurant) | check |

| | |
|---|---|
| biscuit (sweet) | cookie |
| biscuit (savoury) | cracker |
| black treacle | molasses |
| chips | French fries |
| cling film | plastic wrap |
| cooker | stove |
| coriander | cilantro |
| cornflour | cornstarch |
| courgette | zucchini |
| crayfish | crawfish |
| crisps | potato chips |
| crystallised | candied |
| double cream | heavy cream |
| essence (eg, vanilla) | extract or flavoring |
| flour, plain | flour, all-purpose |
| flour, self-raising | flour, self-rising |
| flour, wholemeal | flour, whole-wheat |
| golden syrup | corn syrup |
| greengrocer's | fruit and vegetable store |
| grill (verb and noun) | broil (verb), broiler (noun) |
| icing sugar | powdered or confectioners' sugar |
| main course | entrée |
| maize/sweetcorn | corn |
| mince | hamburger meat |
| minced meat | ground meat |
| pastry case | pie crust |
| pepper (red, green, etc) | sweet pepper, bell pepper, capsicum |
| pips | seeds (in fruit) |
| rocket (salad) | arugula |
| shortcrust pastry | short pastry/basic pie dough |
| single cream | light cream |
| soya | soy |
| spring onion | scallion, green onion |
| starter | appetizer |
| stoned (cherries, etc) | pitted |
| sultana | golden raisin |
| sweet shop | candy store |
| water biscuit | cracker |

### homes and other buildings

| *British* | *American* |
|---|---|
| camp bed | cot |
| cinema | movie theater |
| council estate | public housing or project |
| flat | apartment |
| ground floor | first floor |
| home from home | home away from home |
| homely | homey |
| housing estate | housing development |
| lavatory, toilet | bathroom, restroom, washroom |
| lift | elevator |
| power point | electrical outlet, socket |
| property (land) | real estate |
| storey | story, floor |
| terraced house | row house |

### people, professions and politics

| *British* | *American* |
|---|---|
| adopt a candidate | nominate a candidate |
| barrister | trial lawyer |
| doctor | physician |
| estate agent | realtor/real estate agent |
| ex-serviceman | veteran |
| headmistress/headmaster | principal |
| jeweller/jewellery | jeweler/jewelry |
| lawyer | attorney |
| manifesto (political) | platform |
| old-age pensioner, OAP | senior citizen, senior |
| sceptic | skeptic |
| senior (politician) | ranking |
| solicitor | attorney, lawyer |
| stand for office | run for office |

### travel, transport and pedestrians

| *British* | *American* |
|---|---|
| accelerator | gas pedal |
| bonnet, car | hood |

| | |
|---|---|
| boot, car | trunk |
| bumper | fender |
| car park | parking lot |
| caravan | trailer, motorhome, RV |
| coach | bus |
| crossroads/junction | intersection |
| cul-de-sac | dead end |
| demister | defogger |
| driving licence | driver's license |
| dual carriageway | divided highway |
| estate car | station wagon |
| exhaust, car | muffler |
| flyover | overpass |
| gearbox | transmission |
| give way | yield |
| high street | main street |
| hire (a car) | rent or hire |
| indicator | turn signal |
| jump leads | jumper cables |
| lorry | truck |
| motor-racing | auto-racing |
| motorway | highway, freeway, expressway, thruway |
| number plate | license plate |
| passenger | rider |
| pavement | sidewalk |
| pedestrian crossing | crosswalk |
| petrol | gasoline, gas |
| petrol station | gas/service station |
| puncture | flat tire |
| railway station | train station |
| rambler | hiker |
| return ticket | round-trip ticket |
| riding (horses) | horseback riding |
| ring road | beltway |
| road surface | pavement |
| rowing boat | rowboat |
| sailing boat | sailboat |

| | |
|---|---|
| single ticket | one-way ticket |
| slip road | ramp |
| subway | pedestrian underpass |
| transport | transportation |
| turning (road) | turnoff |
| underground (or tube train) | subway |
| walk | hike (only if more energetic than a walk) |
| windscreen | windshield |

**other words and phrases**

| *British* | *American* |
|---|---|
| aerial (TV) | antenna |
| ageing | aging |
| anti-clockwise | counterclockwise |
| at weekends | on weekends |
| autumn | fall |
| bank holiday | public holiday |
| British Summer Time (BST) | Daylight Saving Time (DST) |
| chemist | drugstore, pharmacy |
| clever | smart (though since everything digital is smart, this usage is becoming almost universal in British English) |
| diary (appointments) | calendar |
| diary (record) | journal |
| dustbin | garbage can |
| earthed (wire) | ground |
| film | movie |
| flannel | washcloth |
| fortnight | two weeks |
| from ... to ... | through (with the understanding that the period terminates at the end of the day, month or year) |
| got (past participle) | gotten |
| holiday | vacation |
| lease of life | lease on life |
| mean (parsimonious) | stingy, tight (mean is nasty, cruel) |

| | |
|---|---|
| mobile phone | cell phone |
| oblige | obligate |
| ordinary | regular, normal |
| outside | outside of |
| over (as in too much) | overly |
| paddling pool | wading pool |
| plait | braid |
| post, post box | mail, mailbox |
| post code | zip code |
| postponement | rain-check |
| public school | private school |
| queue (noun and verb) | line (noun), line up |
| quite | somewhat (quite means very) |
| reverse charges | call collect |
| phone | call, phone |
| spanner | wrench |
| state school | public school |
| stupid | dumb |
| torch | flashlight |
| upmarket | upscale |
| work out (problem) | figure out |
| Zimmer frame | walker |
| zed (the letter z) | zee |

Below is a list of words that are acceptable in both American and British English, for use when you want to produce a single version of written material for both categories of reader.

ambience *not* ambiance
among *not* amongst
annex *not* annexe
artifact *not* artefact
backward *not* backwards
baptistry *not* baptistery
Bible, *not* bible (for *Scriptures*)
burned *not* burnt
bus *not* coach
canvases *not* canvasses
car rental *not* car hire

cater to *not* cater for (for needs)
custom-made *not* bespoke
development *not* estate (for housing)
diesel fuel *not* DERV
disc *not* disk (except in computing)
dispatch *not* despatch
encyclopedia *not* encyclopaedia
except for *not* save
farther *not* further (for distance)
first name *not* Christian name
flip *not* toss (for coins, etc)
focusing, focused, etc
forward *not* forwards
fuel *not* petrol (UK) or gasoline (US)
(eye)glasses *not* spectacles
gypsy *not* gipsy
hairdryer *not* hairdrier
horse-racing *not just* racing
insurance coverage *not* insurance cover
intermission *not* interval
jail *not* gaol
learned *not* learnt
line *not* queue
location *not* situation
maid *not* chambermaid
mathematics *not* maths (UK) or math (US)
motorcycle *not* motorbike
neat *not* spruce or tidy
news-stand *not* kiosk
nightgown *not* nightdress
orangeade/lemonade *not* orange/lemon squash
package *not* parcel
parking spaces/garage *not* car park (UK) or parking lot (US)
phoney *not* phony
refrigerator *not* fridge
railway *not* railroad
raincoat *not* mac, mackintosh
rent *not* hire (except for people)

reservation, reserve (seats, etc) *not* booking, book
retired person *not* old-age pensioner (UK) *or* retiree (US)
slowdown *not* go-slow (in production)
soccer *not* football (except for American football)
spelled *not* spelt
spoiled *not* spoilt
street musician *not* busker
swap *not* swop
swimming *not* bathing
team *not* side (in sport)
tearoom *not* teashop
thread *not* cotton
toilet *not* lavatory
toll-free *not* free of charge (for telephone numbers)
tuna *not* tunny
underwear *not* pants or knickers (or use lingerie for women's underwear)
unmistakable *not* unmistakeable
unspoiled *not* unspoilt
while *not* whilst
yogurt *not* yoghourt *or* yoghurt
zero *not* nought

part 3

# Useful reference

## Abbreviations

Here is a list of some common business abbreviations.

*See also* **abbreviations** in Part 1, **technology**, pages 259–62.

| | |
|---|---|
| **ABC** | activity-based costing |
| **ACH** | automated clearing house |
| **ADR** | American depositary receipt |
| **AG** | Aktiengesellschaft (Austrian, German or Swiss public limited company) |
| **AGM** | annual general meeting |
| **AIBD** | Association of International Bond Dealers |
| **AIM** | Alternative Investment Market (UK) |
| **AMEX** | American Stock Exchange |
| **APR** | annualised percentage rate (of interest) |
| **APT** | arbitrage pricing theory |
| **ARPU** | average revenue per user/unit |
| **ARR** | accounting rate of return |
| **ASB** | Accounting Standards Board (UK) |
| **B2B** | business-to-business |
| **B2C** | business-to-consumer |
| **BACS** | bankers' automated clearing services |
| **BPO** | business process outsourcing |
| **BPR** | business process re-engineering |
| **CAGR** | compound average growth rate |
| **CAPM** | capital asset pricing model |
| **CCA** | current cost accounting |
| **CD** | certificate of deposit |

| | |
|---|---|
| **CDO** | collateralised debt obligation |
| **CDS** | credit-default swap |
| **CEO** | chief executive officer |
| **CFO** | chief financial officer |
| **CHAPS** | Clearing House Automated Payments System |
| **CIF** | cost, insurance, freight |
| **CIO** | chief information officer |
| **COB** | Commission des Opérations de Bourse (Stock Exchange Commission, France) |
| **Consob** | Commissione Nazionale per le Società e la Borsa (Italian Securities and Exchange Commission) |
| **COO** | chief operating officer |
| **COLA** | cost of living adjustment |
| **COSA** | cost of sales adjustment |
| **CPA** | certified public accountant (US); critical path analysis |
| **CPP** | current purchasing power (accounting) |
| **CRC** | current replacement cost (or replacement cost) |
| **CRM** | customer relationship management |
| **CSR** | corporate social responsibility |
| **CTO** | chief technology officer; configure to order |
| **CVP** | cost-volume-profit analysis |
| **DCF** | discounted cash flow |
| **EBIT** | earnings before interest and tax |
| **EBITDA** | earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation |
| **ECN** | electronic communication network |
| **EDI** | electronic data interchange |
| **EDLP** | every day low price |
| **EDP** | electronic data processing |
| **EFT** | electronic funds transfer |
| **EFTPOS** | electronic funds transfer at point of sale |
| **EOQ** | economic order quantity |
| **EPS** | earnings per share |
| **ERM** | enterprise resource management |
| **ESOP** | employee stock (or share) ownership plan |
| **ETF** | exchange-traded fund |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Euribor** | Euro Interbank Offered Rate |
| **EV** | enterprise value |
| **EVA** | economic value added |
| **FAS** | financial accounting standards (US) |
| **FASB** | Financial Accounting Standards Board (US) |
| **FCA** | Financial Conduct Authority (UK) |
| **FDI** | foreign direct investment |
| **FDIC** | Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (US) |
| **FIFO** | first in, first out (used for valuing stock/inventory) |
| **FMCG** | fast-moving consumer goods |
| **FMS** | flexible management system |
| **fob** | free on board |
| **FRN** | floating-rate note |
| **FTE** | full-time equivalent |
| **FY** | fiscal year |
| **GAAP** | generally accepted accounting principles (US) |
| **GAAS** | generally accepted audited standards |
| **GDP** | gross domestic product |
| **GmbH** | Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung (Austrian, German or Swiss private limited company) |
| **GNI** | gross national income |
| **GNP** | gross national product |
| **GPS** | global positioning system |
| **IAASB** | International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board |
| **IAS** | international accounting standards |
| **IASB** | International Accounting Standards Board |
| **IBF** | international banking facility |
| **ICGN** | International Corporate Governance Network |
| **ICMA** | International Capital Market Association |
| **IFA** | independent financial adviser |
| **IFRS** | International Financial Reporting Standards |
| **ILO** | International Labour Organisation |
| **IOSCO** | International Organisation of Securities Commissions |
| **IPO** | initial public offering |
| **IRR** | internal rate of return |
| **IRS** | Internal Revenue Service (US) |

| | |
|---|---|
| **ISA** | individual savings account; International Standards on Auditing |
| **ISO** | International Organisation for Standardisation |
| **JIT** | just-in-time |
| **KPI** | key performance indicator |
| **LBO** | leveraged buy-out |
| **Libor** | London Interbank Offered Rate |
| **LIFO** | last in, first out (used for valuing stock/inventory value, popular in US) |
| **LLP** | limited liability partnership |
| **LNG** | liquefied natural gas |
| **LPG** | liquefied petroleum gas |
| **LSE** | London Stock Exchange |
| **M&A** | mergers and acquisitions |
| **MBI** | management buy-in |
| **MBO** | management buy-out |
| **MLR** | minimum lending rate (base rate) |
| **MOU** | memorandum of understanding |
| **MSRP** | manufacturer's suggested retail price |
| **NASDAQ** | National Association of Securities Dealers Automatic Quotation System (US) |
| **NAV** | net asset value |
| **NBV** | net book value |
| **NGO** | non-governmental organisation |
| **NPV** | net present value; no par value |
| **NRV** | net realisable value |
| **NYMEX** | New York Mercantile Exchange |
| **NYSE** | New York Stock Exchange |
| **OBU** | offshore banking unit |
| **OCR** | optical character recognition |
| **OEIC** | open-ended investment company |
| **OEM** | original equipment manufacturer |
| **OFR** | operating and financial review |
| **OTC** | over the counter |
| **P/B** | price to book value |
| **PCAOB** | Public Company Accounting Oversight Board |

| | |
|---|---|
| **P/E** | price/earnings ratio |
| **PLC** | public limited company (UK) |
| **PPP** | purchasing-power parity; public–private partnership |
| **PSBR** | public-sector borrowing requirement |
| **QE** | quantitative easing |
| **R&D** | research and development |
| **REIT** | real-estate investment trust |
| **RFID** | radio-frequency identification |
| **RNOA** | return on net operating assets |
| **ROA** | return on assets |
| **ROCE** | return on capital employed |
| **ROE** | return on equity |
| **ROI** | return on investment |
| **RONA** | return on net assets |
| **ROTA** | return on total assets |
| **RPI** | retail price index |
| **RPIX** | retail price index excluding mortgage interest payments |
| **RTM** | route to market |
| **S&L** | Savings and Loan Association (US) |
| **SA** | société anonyme (French, Belgian, Luxembourg or Swiss public limited company) |
| **Sarl** | société à responsabilité limitée (French, etc private limited company) |
| **SBU** | strategic business unit |
| **SCM** | supply-chain management |
| **SDR** | special drawing right (at the IMF) |
| **SE** | Societas Europaea |
| **SEAQ** | Stock Exchange Automated Quotations (UK) |
| **SEC** | Securities and Exchange Commission (US) |
| **SET** | secure electronic transaction |
| **SFO** | Serious Fraud Office (UK) |
| **SITC** | standard international trade classification |
| **SMART** | specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time bound |
| **SME** | small- and medium-sized enterprises |
| **SOE** | state-owned enterprise |
| **SOHO** | small office/home office |

| | |
|---|---|
| **SOX** | Sarbanes-Oxley Act (US) |
| **SPA** | società per azioni (Italian public company) |
| **SPV** | special purpose vehicle |
| **SRO** | self-regulatory organisation |
| **SPV/SPE** | special-purpose vehicle/entity |
| **SSAP** | Statement of Standard Accounting Practice (UK) |
| **STRGL** | statement of total recognised gains and losses |
| **SWF** | sovereign-wealth fund |
| **SWIFT** | Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication |
| **SWOT** | strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats |
| **T-bill** | Treasury bill |
| **TSR** | total shareholder return |
| **UCITS** | Undertakings for Collective Investments in Transferable Securities |
| **USP** | unique selling proposition/point |
| **VAT** | value-added tax |
| **VCT** | venture capital trust |
| **VIX** | stockmarket volatility index |
| **WACC** | weighted average cost of capital |
| **WDV** | written-down value |
| **WFH** | work from home |
| **WIP** | work in progress |
| **XBRL** | extensible business reporting language |
| **YTD** | year to date |
| **YTM** | yield to maturity |
| **ZBB** | zero-base budgeting |

For international bodies and their abbreviations, *see* **organisations**, pages 232–47.

## Beaufort Scale

For devotees of the shipping forecast, here is the World Meteorological Organisation's classification of wind forces and effects.

| *Conditions (abbreviated)* | | | | *Equivalent speed at 10m height* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Force* | *Description* | *On land* | *At sea* | *knots* | *miles per hour* | *metres per second* |
| 0 | Calm | Smoke rises vertically | Sea like a mirror | less than 1 | less than 1 | 0.0–0.2 |
| 1 | Light air | Smoke drifts | Ripples | 1–3 | 1–3 | 0.3–1.5 |
| 2 | Light breeze | Leaves rustle | Small wavelets | 4–6 | 4–7 | 1.6–3.3 |
| 3 | Gentle breeze | Wind extends light flag | Large wavelets, crests break | 7–10 | 8–12 | 3.4–5.4 |
| 4 | Moderate breeze | Raises paper and dust | Small waves, fairly frequent white horses | 11–16 | 13–18 | 5.5–7.9 |
| 5 | Fresh breeze | Small trees in leaf sway | Moderate waves, many white horses | 17–21 | 19–24 | 8.0–10.7 |
| 6 | Strong breeze | Large branches in motion | Large waves form, some spray | 22–27 | 25–31 | 10.8–13.8 |
| 7 | Near gale | Whole trees in motion | Sea heaps up, white foam streaks | 28–33 | 32–38 | 13.9–17.1 |
| 8 | Gale | Breaks twigs off trees | Moderately high waves, well-marked foam streaks | 34–40 | 39–46 | 17.2–20.7 |

| Force | Description | Conditions (abbreviated) On land | At sea | Equivalent speed at 10m height knots | miles per hour | metres per second |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | Strong gale | Slight structural damage | High waves, crests start to tumble over | 41–47 | 47–54 | 20.8–24.4 |
| 10 | Storm | Trees uprooted, considerable structural damage | Very high waves, white sea tumbles | 48–55 | 55–63 | 24.5–28.4 |
| 11 | Violent storm | Very rarely experienced, widespread damage | Exceptionally high waves, edges of wave crests blown to froth | 56–63 | 64–72 | 28.5–32.6 |
| 12–17 | Hurricane | Devastation with driving spray | Sea completely white | 64–over | 72–over | 32.7–over |

## Business ratios

These are ratios commonly used in corporate financial analysis.

### Working capital

**Working capital ratio** = current assets/current liabilities, where current assets = inventory + receivables + cash at bank and in hand + quoted investments, etc, and current liabilities = payables + short-term bank borrowing + taxes payable + dividends, etc. The ratio varies according to type of trade and conditions; a ratio from 1 to 3 is usual with a ratio above 2 taken to be safe.

**Liquidity ratio** = liquid ("quick") assets/current liabilities, where liquid assets = receivables + cash at bank and in hand + quoted investments (that is, assets that can be realised within a month or so, which may not apply to all investments); current liabilities are those that may need to be repaid within the same short period, which may not necessarily include a bank overdraft where it is likely to be renewed. The liquidity ratio is sometimes referred to as the "acid test"; a ratio under 1 suggests a possibly difficult situation, and too high a ratio may mean that assets are not being usefully employed.

**Turnover of working capital** = sales/average working capital. The ratio varies according to type of trade; generally a low ratio can mean poor use of resources, and too high a ratio can mean overtrading. Average working capital or average inventory is found by taking the opening and closing working capital or inventory and dividing by 2.

**Turnover of inventory** = sales/average inventory, or (where cost of sales is known) cost of sales/average inventory. The cost of sales turnover figure is to be preferred, as both figures are then on the same valuation basis. This ratio can be expressed as number of times per year, or time taken for inventory to be turned over once = (52/number of times) weeks. A low inventory turnover can be a sign of inventory items that are difficult to move, and usually indicates adverse conditions.

**Turnover of receivables** = sales/average receivables. This indicates efficiency in collecting accounts. An average credit period of about one month is usual, but this varies according to credit stringency conditions in the economy.

**Turnover of payables** = purchases/average payables. Average payment period is best maintained in line with turnover of receivables.

### Sales

**Export ratio** = exports as a percentage of sales.

**Sales per employee** = sales/average number of employees.

### Assets

Ratios of assets can vary according to the measure of assets used:

**Total assets** = current assets + non-current assets + other assets, where non-current assets = property + plant and equipment + motor vehicles, etc, and other assets = long-term investment + goodwill, etc.

**Net assets** ("net worth") = total assets minus total liabilities = share capital + reserves = equity.

**Turnover of net assets** = sales/average net assets. As for turnover of working capital, a low ratio can mean poor use of resources.

**Assets per employee** = assets/average number of employees. This indicates the amount of investment backing for employees.

### Profits

**Profit margin** = (profit/sales) × 100 = profits as a percentage of sales; usually profits before tax.

**Profitability** = (profit/total assets) × 100 = profits as a percentage of total assets = return on total assets (ROTA).

**Return on capital** = (profit/net assets) × 100 = profits as a percentage of net assets ("net worth", "equity" or "capital employed") = return on net assets (RONA), return on equity (ROE) or return on capital employed (ROCE).

**Profit per employee** = profit/average number of employees.

**Earnings per share** (EPS) = after-tax profit minus minorities/average number of shares in issue.

## Central bankers since 1900

### Governors of the Bank of England

| *Date* | *Governor* |
|---|---|
| 1899–1901 | Samuel Gladstone |
| 1901–03 | Augustus Prevost |
| 1903–05 | Samuel Morley |
| 1905–07 | Alexander Wallace |
| 1907–09 | William Campbell |
| 1909–11 | Reginald Johnston |
| 1911–13 | Alfred Cole |
| 1913–18 | Walter Cunliffe |
| 1918–20 | Brien Cokayne |
| 1920–44 | Montagu Norman |
| 1944–49 | Thomas Catto |
| 1949–61 | Cameron Cobbold |
| 1961–66 | Rowland Baring (3rd Earl of Cromer) |
| 1966–73 | Leslie O'Brien |
| 1973–83 | Gordon Richardson |
| 1983–93 | Robert Leigh-Pemberton |
| 1993–2003 | Edward George |
| 2003–2013 | Mervyn King |
| 2013– | Mark Carney |

**Chairs of the United States Federal Reserve (since the creation of the Federal Reserve System in 1913)**

| *Date* | *Chair* |
|---|---|
| 1914–16 | Charles Hamlin |
| 1916–22 | William P.G. Harding |
| 1923–27 | Daniel R. Crissinger |
| 1927–30 | Roy A. Young |
| 1930–33 | Eugene Meyer |
| 1933–34 | Eugene Black |
| 1934–48 | Marriner Eccles |
| 1948–51 | Thomas B. McCabe |
| 1951–70 | William McChesney |
| 1970–78 | Arthur Burns |
| 1978–79 | William Miller |
| 1979–87 | Paul Volcker |
| 1987–2006 | Alan Greenspan |
| 2006–14 | Ben Bernanke |
| 2014– | Janet Yellen |

**Managing Directors of the International Monetary Fund (since its creation in 1945)**

| *Date* | *Managing Director* |
|---|---|
| 1946–51 | Camille Gutt |
| 1951–56 | Ivar Rooth |
| 1956–63 | Per Jacobsson |
| 1963–73 | Pierre-Paul Schweitzer |
| 1973–87 | Johan Witteveen |
| 1987–2000 | Michel Camdessus |
| 2000–2004 | Horst Köhler |
| 2004–07 | Rodrigo Rato |
| 2007–11 | Dominique Strauss-Kahn |
| 2011– | Christine Lagarde |

### Presidents of the European Central Bank since its creation in 1998

| *Date* | *President* |
|---|---|
| 1998–2003 | Wim Duisenberg |
| 2003–11 | Jean-Claude Trichet |
| 2011– | Mario Draghi |

### Presidents of the World Bank since its creation in 1945

| *Date* | *President* |
|---|---|
| 1945–46 | Eugene Meyer |
| 1947–49 | John J. McCloy |
| 1949–63 | Eugene R. Black, Sr. |
| 1963–68 | George Woods |
| 1968–81 | Robert McNamara |
| 1981–86 | Alden W. Clausen |
| 1986–91 | Barber Conable |
| 1991–95 | Lewis T. Preston |
| 1995–2005 | James D. Wolfensohn |
| 2005–07 | Paul Wolfowitz |
| 2007–12 | Zoellick, Robert |
| 2012– | Jim Yong Kim |

## Currencies

*See also* **currencies** in Part 1 for *The Economist* newspaper usage.

| *Country* | *Currency* | *Symbol* |
|---|---|---|
| Afghanistan | afghani | Af |
| Albania | lek | Lk |
| Algeria | Algerian dinar | AD |
| Angola | kwanza | Kz |
| Argentina | Argentine peso | Ps |
| Armenia | dram | Dram |
| Aruba | Aruban florin | Afl |
| Australia | Australian dollar | A$ |

| *Country* | *Currency* | *Symbol* |
|---|---|---|
| Austria | euro | € |
| Azerbaijan | manat | Manat |
| Bahamas | Bahamian dollar | B$ |
| Bahrain | Bahraini dinar | BD |
| Bangladesh | taka | Tk |
| Barbados | Barbados dollar | Bd$ |
| Belarus | ruble | BRb |
| Belgium | euro | € |
| Belize | Belize dollar | Bz$ |
| Benin | CFA franc | CFAfr[a] |
| Bermuda | Bermuda dollar | Bda$ |
| Bhutan | ngultrum | Nu |
| Bolivia | boliviano | Bs |
| Bosnia & Herzegovina | convertible marka | KM |
| Botswana | pula | P |
| Brazil | Brazilian real | R |
| Brunei | Brunei dollar/ringgit | Br$ |
| Bulgaria | lev | Lv |
| Burkina Faso | CFA franc | CFAfr[a] |
| Burundi | Burundi franc | Bufr |
| Cambodia | riel | CR |
| Cameroon | CFA franc | CFAfr[a] |
| Canada | Canadian dollar | C$ |
| Cape Verde | Cape Verdean escudo | CVEsc |
| Central African Republic | CFA franc | CFAfr[a] |
| Chad | CFA franc | CFAfr[a] |
| Chile | Chilean peso | Ps |
| China | renminbi or yuan | Rmb |
| Colombia | Colombian peso | Ps |
| Comoros | Comorian franc | Cfr |

| *Country* | *Currency* | *Symbol* |
|---|---|---|
| Congo (Brazzaville) | CFA franc | CFAfr[a] |
| Congo (Dem. Rep. of) | Congolese franc | FC |
| Costa Rica | Costa Rican colón | C |
| Croatia | kuna | HRK |
| Cuba | Cuban peso | CUPs |
| Cyprus | euro | € |
| Czech Republic | koruna | Kc |
| Denmark | Danish krone | DKr |
| Djibouti | Djibouti franc | Dfr |
| Dominican Republic | Dominican Republic peso | Ps |
| East Timor | US dollar | US$ |
| Ecuador | US dollar | US$ |
| Egypt | Egyptian pound | E£ |
| El Salvador | US dollar | US$ |
| Equatorial Guinea | CFA franc | CFAfr[a] |
| Eritrea | nakfa | Nfa |
| Estonia | euro | € |
| Ethiopia | birr | Birr |
| Fiji | Fiji dollar | F$ |
| Finland | euro | € |
| France | euro | € |
| Gabon | CFA franc | CFAfr[a] |
| The Gambia | dalasi | D |
| Georgia | lari | Lari |
| Germany | euro | € |
| Ghana | cedi | GH¢ |
| Greece | euro | € |
| Grenada | East Caribbean dollar | EC$ |
| Guatemala | quetzal | Q |
| Guinea | Guinean franc | Gnf |
| Guinea-Bissau | CFA franc | CFAfr[a] |

| *Country* | *Currency* | *Symbol* |
|---|---|---|
| Guyana | Guyana dollar | G$ |
| Haiti | gourde | G |
| Honduras | lempira | La |
| Hong Kong | Hong Kong dollar | HK$ |
| Hungary | forint | Ft |
| Iceland | krona | IKr |
| India | Indian rupee | Rs |
| Indonesia | rupiah | Rp |
| Iran | Iranian rial | IR |
| Iraq | New Iraqi dinar | ID |
| Ireland | euro | € |
| Israel | Israeli shekel | NIS |
| Italy | euro | € |
| Ivory Coast | CFA franc | CFAfr[a] |
| Jamaica | Jamaican dollar | J$ |
| Japan | yen | ¥ |
| Jordan | Jordanian dinar | JD |
| Kazakhstan | tenge | Tenge |
| Kenya | Kenyan shilling | KSh |
| Kyrgyzstan | som | Som |
| North Korea | won or N Korean won | Won |
| South Korea | won or S Korean won | W |
| Kuwait | Kuwaiti dinar | KD |
| Laos | kip | K |
| Latvia | euro | € |
| Lebanon | Lebanese pound | L£ |
| Lesotho | loti (pl. maloti) | M |
| Liberia | Liberian dollar | L$ |
| Libya | Libyan dinar | LD |
| Lithuania | euro | € |
| Luxembourg | euro | € |

| *Country* | *Currency* | *Symbol* |
|---|---|---|
| Macau | pataca | MPtc |
| Macedonia | denar | Den |
| Madagascar | Malagasy ariary | AR |
| Malawi | kwacha | MK |
| Malaysia | Malaysian dollar/ringgit | M$ |
| Mali | CFA franc | CFAfr[a] |
| Malta | euro | € |
| Mauritania | ouguiya | UM |
| Mauritius | Mauritius rupee | MRs |
| Mexico | Mexican peso | Ps |
| Moldova | Moldavian leu (pl. lei) | Lei |
| Mongolia | togrog | Tg |
| Montenegro | euro | € |
| Morocco | dirham | Dh |
| Mozambique | metical | MT |
| Myanmar | kyat | Kt |
| Namibia | Namibian dollar | N$ |
| Nepal | Nepali rupee | NRs |
| Netherlands | euro | € |
| Netherlands Antilles | Netherlands Antillean guilder | NAf |
| New Caledonia | French Pacific franc | CFPfr |
| New Zealand | New Zealand dollar | NZ$ |
| Nicaragua | córdoba | C |
| Niger | CFA franc | CFAfr[a] |
| Nigeria | naira | N |
| Norway | Norwegian krone | NKr |
| Oman | Omani riyal | OR |
| Pakistan | Pakistan rupee | PRs |
| Palestinian Territories | Jordanian dinar, New Israeli shekel | JD, NIS |
| Panama | balboa | B |

| *Country* | *Currency* | *Symbol* |
|---|---|---|
| Papua New Guinea | kina | Kina |
| Paraguay | guaraní | G |
| Peru | nuevo sol | Ns |
| Philippines | Philippine peso | P |
| Poland | zloty (pl. zlotys) | Zl |
| Portugal | euro | € |
| Puerto Rico | US dollar | US$ |
| Qatar | Qatari riyal | QR |
| Romania | leu (pl. lei) | Lei |
| Russia | rouble | Rb |
| Rwanda | Rwandan franc | Rwfr |
| Samoa | tala or Samoan dollar | Tala |
| São Tomé & Príncipe | dobra | Db |
| Saudi Arabia | Saudi riyal | SR |
| Senegal | CFA franc | CFAfr[a] |
| Serbia | Serbian dinar | RSD |
| Seychelles | Seychelles rupee | SRs |
| Sierra Leone | leone | Le |
| Singapore | Singapore dollar | S$ |
| Slovakia | euro | € |
| Slovenia | euro | € |
| Solomon Islands | Solomon Islands dollar | SI$ |
| Somalia | Somali shilling | SoSh |
| South Africa | rand | R |
| South Sudan | South Sudanese pound | SSP |
| Spain | euro | € |
| Sri Lanka | Sri Lankan rupee | SLRs |
| Sudan | Sudanese pound | SP |
| Suriname | Surinamese dollar | Sr$ |
| Swaziland | lilangeni (pl. emalangeni) | E |
| Sweden | Swedish krona | SKr |

| *Country* | *Currency* | *Symbol* |
|---|---|---|
| Switzerland | Swiss franc | SFr |
| Syria | Syrian pound | S£ |
| Taiwan | New Taiwan dollar | NT$ |
| Tajikistan | somoni | S |
| Tanzania | Tanzanian shilling | TSh |
| Thailand | baht | Bt |
| Togo | CFA franc | CFAfr[a] |
| Tonga | pa'anga or Tonga dollar | T$ |
| Trinidad & Tobago | Trinidad & Tobago dollar | TT$ |
| Tunisia | Tunisian dinar | TD |
| Turkey | Turkish lira | TL |
| Turkmenistan | manat | Manat |
| Turks & Caicos Islands | US dollar | US$ |
| Uganda | Ugandan shilling | USh |
| Ukraine | hryvnia | HRN |
| United Arab Emirates | UAE dirham | Dh |
| United Kingdom | pound/pound sterling | £ |
| United States | dollar | US$ |
| Uruguay | Uruguayan peso | Ps |
| Uzbekistan | som | Som |
| Vanuatu | vatu | Vt |
| Venezuela | bolívar | BsF |
| Vietnam | dong | D |
| Western Samoa | tala | Tala |
| Windward & Leeward Islands[b] | East Caribbean dollar | EC$ |
| Yemen | Yemeni riyal | YR |
| Zambia | kwacha | ZK |
| Zimbabwe | Zimbabwean dollar | Z$ |

a CFA = Communauté financière africaine in West African area and Coopération financière en Afrique centrale in Central African area. Used in monetary areas of West and Central Africa. The CFA franc is pegged to the euro at a rate of

CFAfr655.96:€1. Countries with this currency are members of the Comité monétaire de la Zone Franc, or Franc Zone.

b Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St Kitts-Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent & Grenadines, the British Virgin islands.

## Earthquakes

An earthquake is measured in terms of its magnitude.

| *Magnitude* | *Joules* | *Explosion equivalent TNT terms* | *Nuclear terms* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0[a] | $7.9 \times 10^{2}$ | 175mg | |
| 1 | $6.0 \times 10^{4}$ | 13g | |
| 2 | $4.0 \times 10^{6}$ | 0.89kg | |
| 3 | $2.4 \times 10^{8}$ | 53kg | |
| 4 | $1.3 \times 10^{10}$ | 3 tons | |
| 5[b] | $6.3 \times 10^{11}$ | 140 tons | |
| 6[c] | $2.7 \times 10^{13}$ | 6 kilotons | $^{1}/_{3}$ atomic bomb |
| 7 | $1.1 \times 10^{15}$ | 240 kilotons | 12 atomic bombs |
| 8 | $3.7 \times 10^{16}$ | 8.25 megatons | $^{1}/_{3}$ hydrogen bomb |
| 9 | $1.1 \times 10^{18}$ | 250 megatons | 13 hydrogen bombs |
| 10 | $3.2 \times 10^{19}$ | 7,000 megatons | 350 hydrogen bombs |

a About equal to the shock caused by an average man jumping from a table.

b Potentially damaging to structures.

c Potentially capable of general destruction; widespread damage is usually caused above magnitude 6.5.

Here are some examples.

| | *Magnitude* |
|---|---|
| Samoa Islands, 2009 | 8.0 |
| Solomon Islands, 2007 | 8.1 |
| Banda Sea, Indonesia, 1938 | 8.5 |
| Chile, 1906 | 8.5 |
| Kamchatka, 1923 | 8.5 |

| | *Magnitude* |
|---|---|
| Kuril Islands, 1963 | 8.5 |
| Ningxia-Gansu, China, 1920 | 8.6 |
| Sanriku, Japan, 1933 | 8.6 |
| India/Assam/Tibet, 1950 | 8.7 |
| Rat Islands, Alaska | 8.7 |

| | Magnitude |
|---|---|
| Northern Sumatra, 2005 | 8.7 |
| Ecuador, 1906 | 8.8 |
| Chile, 2010 | 8.8 |
| Kamchatka, 1952 | 9.0 |
| Northern Sumatra, 2004 (called the Indian Ocean tsunami) | 9.0 |
| Honshu, Japan, 2011 | 9.0 |
| Andreanof Islands, Alaska, 1957 | 9.1 |
| Prince William Sound, Alaska, 1964 | 9.2 |
| Chile, 1960 | 9.5 |
| Krakatoa, 1883 (estimate) | 9.9 |

## Elements

These are the natural and artificially created chemical elements.

| *Name* | *Symbol* | *Atomic number* |
|---|---|---|
| Actinium | Ac | 89 |
| Aluminium | Al | 13 |
| Americium | Am | 95 |
| Antimony (Stibium) | Sb | 51 |
| Argon | Ar | 18 |
| Arsenic | As | 33 |
| Astatine | At | 85 |
| Barium | Ba | 56 |
| Berkelium | Bk | 97 |
| Beryllium | Be | 4 |
| Bismuth | Bi | 83 |
| Bohrium | Bh | 107 |
| Boron | B | 5 |
| Bromine | Br | 35 |
| Cadmium | Cd | 48 |
| Caesium | Cs | 55 |
| Calcium | Ca | 20 |
| Californium | Cf | 98 |
| Carbon | C | 6 |
| Cerium | Ce | 58 |
| Chlorine | Cl | 17 |
| Chromium | Cr | 24 |
| Cobalt | Co | 27 |
| Copper (Cuprum) | Cu | 29 |
| Curium | Cm | 96 |
| Darmstadtium | Ds | 110 |
| Dubnium | Db | 105 |
| Dysprosium | Dy | 66 |
| Einsteinium | Es | 99 |
| Erbium | Er | 68 |
| Europium | Eu | 63 |
| Fermium | Fm | 100 |
| Fluorine | F | 9 |
| Francium | Fr | 87 |
| Gadolinium | Gd | 64 |
| Gallium | Ga | 31 |
| Germanium | Ge | 32 |
| Gold (Aurum) | Au | 79 |

| *Name* | *Symbol* | *Atomic number* |
|---|---|---|
| Hafnium | Hf | 72 |
| Hassium | Hs | 108 |
| Helium | He | 2 |
| Holmium | Ho | 67 |
| Hydrogen | H | 1 |
| Indium | In | 49 |
| Iodine | I | 53 |
| Iridium | Ir | 77 |
| Iron (Ferrum) | Fe | 26 |
| Krypton | Kr | 36 |
| Lanthanum | La | 57 |
| Lawrencium | Lr | 103 |
| Lead (Plumbum) | Pb | 82 |
| Lithium | Li | 3 |
| Lutetium | Lu | 71 |
| Magnesium | Mg | 12 |
| Manganese | Mn | 25 |
| Meitnerium | Mt | 109 |
| Mendelevium | Md | 101 |
| Mercury (Hydrargyrum) | Hg | 80 |
| Molybdenum | Mo | 42 |
| Neodymium | Nd | 60 |
| Neon | Ne | 10 |
| Neptunium | Np | 93 |
| Nickel | Ni | 28 |
| Niobium (Columbium) | Nb | 41 |
| Nitrogen | N | 7 |
| Nobelium | No | 102 |
| Osmium | Os | 76 |
| Oxygen | O | 8 |
| Palladium | Pd | 46 |
| Phosphorus | P | 15 |
| Platinum | Pt | 78 |
| Plutonium | Pu | 94 |
| Polonium | Po | 84 |
| Potassium (Kalium) | K | 19 |
| Praseodymium | Pr | 59 |
| Promethium | Pm | 61 |
| Protactinium | Pa | 91 |
| Radium | Ra | 88 |
| Radon | Rn | 86 |
| Rhenium | Re | 75 |
| Rhodium | Rh | 45 |
| Rubidium | Rb | 37 |
| Ruthenium | Ru | 44 |
| Rutherfordium | Rf | 104 |
| Samarium | Sm | 62 |
| Scandium | Sc | 21 |
| Seaborgium | Sg | 106 |
| Selenium | Se | 34 |
| Silicon | Si | 14 |
| Silver (Argentum) | Ag | 47 |
| Sodium (Natrium) | Na | 11 |

| *Name* | *Symbol* | *Atomic number* | *Name* | *Symbol* | *Atomic number* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strontium | Sr | 38 | Ununoctium | Uuo | 118 |
| Sulphur | S | 16 | Ununpentium | Uup | 115 |
| | | | Ununquadium | Uuq | 114 |
| Tantalum | Ta | 73 | Ununseptium | Uus | 117 |
| Technetium | Tc | 43 | Ununtrium | Uut | 113 |
| Tellurium | Te | 52 | Unununium | Uuu | 111 |
| Terbium | Tb | 65 | Uranium | U | 92 |
| Thallium | Tl | 81 | | | |
| Thorium | Th | 90 | Vanadium | V | 23 |
| Thulium | Tm | 69 | | | |
| Tin (Stannum) | Sn | 50 | Xenon | Xe | 54 |
| Titanium | Ti | 22 | | | |
| Tungsten (Wolfram) | W | 74 | Ytterbium | Yb | 70 |
| | | | Yttrium | Y | 39 |
| Ununbium | Uub | 112 | Zinc | Zn | 30 |
| Ununhexium | UUh | 116 | Zirconium | Zr | 40 |

## Footnotes, sources, references

Footnotes appear at the foot of the page (or column) on which they occur; endnotes are listed at the end of a chapter or in one batch at the end of the work. The method depends on the publisher's conventions, the type of work and the readership. The author may have little say in the matter. Footnotes may also contain additional snippets of material or comment that the author feels is not appropriate to the main text.

1 Charts, tables and figures: place source underneath.
2 Page numbers: "page" is usually abbreviated to p., plural pp., except, for example, in *The Economist*, where these are written in full.
3 Footnote numbers, which are conventionally superscript, go after the punctuation in English works, before in American. If there are not many footnotes, some publishers prefer to use asterisks, daggers, etc.

The main methods (other than *The Economist*'s) of referring to sources are: the author-date (Harvard) system; the number-only (Vancouver) system; and the author-title system.

***The Economist*** Books should be in quotation marks, periodicals, blogs and online magazines in italics, authors, publishers, addresses (optional) and prices in roman. Commas should follow the title and the publisher (if an address is given). The other elements should each be followed by a full stop.
"A Child's Guide to the Dismal Science", by Rupert Penandwig. Haphazard House, 1234 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10019. $28.

In charts and tables, no final stop is necessary.

**Harvard system** The most commonly used system in physical- and social-science publications. The author's name and year of publication appear in parentheses in the text with the full details at the end of the publication in a list of references. For example:
The variety of wildlife in our gardens (Murphy 2015) is amazing ...

In his research, Murphy (2015) finds that ...

If you wish to include the page numbers, write Murphy 2015: 165 or Murphy 2015, p. 165 or pp. 165–6.

The reference section contains the full details:
Murphy, P.L. (2015), *Birds, Bees and Butterflies* (Garden Press, London).

**Vancouver system** Most commonly used in scientific journals. Each publication is numbered and the text reference is a superscript number. For example:
The variety of wildlife in our gardens[15] is amazing ...

The reference section contains the full details:
15. Murphy, P.L., *Birds, Bees and Butterflies* (London: Garden Press, 2015).

Note that any addition or subtraction from the list means that all subsequent items and the references will have to be renumbered.

**author–title system** Also known as the short-title system. A full reference is given only on the first mention in the chapter (or book if there is a bibliography).

This is mostly for academic works. The whole title is cited in the first footnote, for example P.H. Clarke, *Visions of Utopia*, at which point you put, "hereafter Clarke, *Utopia*". Then on subsequent references you simply write "Clarke, *Utopia*", with page numbers if you wish.

**mixed system** Another system is common in academic publications. A superscript number is inserted in the text that corresponds

with the number of a footnote (at the bottom of the page) or endnote (at the end of the chapter or the book). Footnotes and endnotes may be numbered by chapter or by book. The footnote or endnote consists of the bibliographical reference in full if there is no reference section or bibliography, or an abbreviated reference if there is. Sometimes the bibliographical reference appears in full on the first occurrence and is abbreviated subsequently, even if there is a reference section or bibliography.

### Notes

- ibid. (abbreviation of *ibidem*, in the same place), not italic, is used to mean that the quote comes from the same source.
- op. cit. (abbreviation of *opere citato*, in the work quoted), not italic, is used to mean that the source has already been given.

## Fractions

Do not mix fractions with decimals. If you need to convert one to the other, use this table. *See also* **figures** in Part 1.

| *Fraction* | *Decimal equivalent* | *Fraction* | *Decimal equivalent* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1/2 | 0.5 | 1/12 | 0.083 |
| 1/3 | 0.333 | 1/13 | 0.077 |
| 1/4 | 0.25 | 1/14 | 0.071 |
| 1/5 | 0.2 | 1/15 | 0.067 |
| 1/6 | 0.167 | 1/16 | 0.063 |
| 1/7 | 0.143 | 1/17 | 0.059 |
| 1/8 | 0.125 | 1/18 | 0.056 |
| 1/9 | 0.111 | 1/19 | 0.053 |
| 1/10 | 0.1 | 1/20 | 0.05 |
| 1/11 | 0.091 | | |

## Geological eras

Astronomers and geologists give this broad outline of the ages of the universe and the earth.

| *Era, period and epoch* | *Years ago (m)* | *Characteristics* |
|---|---|---|
| Origin of the universe (estimates vary markedly) | 20,000–10,000 | |
| Origin of the sun | 5,000 | |
| Origin of the earth | 4,600 | |
| *Pre-Cambrian* | | |
| Archean | 4,000 | First signs of fossilised microbes |
| Proterozoic | 2,500 | |
| *Palaeozoic* | | |
| Cambrian | 570 | First appearance of abundant fossils |
| Ordovician (obsolete) | 500 | Vertebrates emerge |
| Silurian | 440 | Fishes emerge |
| Devonian | 400 | Primitive plants emerge; age of fishes |
| Carboniferous | 350 | Amphibians emerge; first winged insects |
| Permian | 270 | Reptiles emerge |
| *Mesozoic* | | |
| Triassic | 250 | Seed plants emerge |
| Jurassic | 210 | Age of dinosaurs |
| Cretaceous | 145 | Flowering plants emerge; dinosaurs extinct at end of this period |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Cenozoic* | | | |
| Palaeocene | | 65 | |
| Tertiary: | Eocene | 55 | Mammals emerge |
| | Oligocene | 40 | |
| | Miocene | 25 | |
| | Pliocene | 5 | |
| Quaternary: | Pleistocene | 2 | Ice ages; Stone Age man emerges |
| | Holocene or Recent | c. 11,000[a] | Modern man emerges |

a 10,000 years, not 10,000m years.

## Greek alphabet

These are the letters of the Greek alphabet and their names. The first column gives the upper-case symbol and the second column the lower-case symbol in each case.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Α | α | alpha | Ν | ν | nu |
| Β | β | beta | Ξ | ξ | xi |
| Γ | γ | gamma | Ο | ο | omicron |
| Δ | δ | delta | Π | π | pi |
| Ε | ε | epsilon | Ρ | ρ | rho |
| Ζ | ζ | zeta | Σ | ς or σ | sigma |
| Η | η | eta | Τ | τ | tau |
| Θ | θ | theta | Υ | υ | upsilon |
| Ι | ι | iota | Φ | φ | phi |
| Κ | κ | kappa | Χ | χ | chi |
| Λ | λ | lambda | Ψ | ψ | psi |
| Μ | μ | mu | Ω | ω | omega |

## Latin

Here are some common Latin words and phrases, together with their translations.

| | |
|---|---|
| ***ab initio*** | from the beginning |
| ***ad hoc*** | for this object or purpose (implied and "this one only"); therefore, without a system, spontaneously |
| ***ad hominem*** | to the man; used of an argument addressed to the presumed character or personal failings of the person on the other side |
| ***ad infinitum*** | to infinity, that is, endlessly |
| ***ad lib., ad libitum*** | at pleasure. Used adverbially to mean generously to the point of profligacy; as a verb, to invent or extemporise |
| ***ad nauseam*** | to a sickening extent |
| ***ad valorem*** | according to value (as opposed to volume) |
| ***a fortiori*** | with stronger reason |
| ***annus mirabilis*** | wonderful year, used to describe a year in which more than one memorable thing has happened; for instance 1666, the year of the Great Fire of London and the English defeats of the Dutch |
| ***a priori*** | from cause to effect, that is, deductively or from a pre-existing principle |
| ***bona fide*** | in good faith |
| ***carpe diem*** | literally pluck the day, but seize the day is more common; enjoy the moment; make the most of life |
| ***casus belli*** | the cause of (more often, pretext for) war |

| | |
|---|---|
| ***cave!*** | "Watch out!" (imperative); once used at boys' private schools in Britain |
| ***caveat emptor*** | let the buyer beware |
| ***ceteris paribus*** | other things being equal |
| ***cf*** | short for confer, meaning compare (imperative) |
| ***circa*** | around or about: used for dates and large quantities; can be abbreviated to c or c. |
| ***de facto*** | in point of fact, in effect |
| ***de jure*** | from the law; by right |
| ***de minimis*** | abbreviation of *de minimis non curat lex*, meaning the law is not concerned with trivial matters; too small to be taken seriously |
| ***de profundis*** | out of the depths |
| ***deus ex machina*** | God from a machine; first used of a Greek theatrical convention, where a god would swing on to the stage, high up in a machine, solving problems humans could not untangle and thus resolving the action of a play. Now used to describe a person or thing appearing from nowhere to put matters right |
| ***eg, exempli gratia*** | for example |
| ***et al., et alii*** | and others, used as an abbreviation in bibliographies when citing multiple editorship or authorship to save the writer the bother of writing out all the names. Thus, A. Bloggs *et al.*, *The Occurrence of Endangered Species in the Genus Orthodoptera* |
| ***ex ante*** | before the event |
| ***ex cathedra*** | from the chair of office, authoritatively |
| ***ex gratia*** | as a favour, not under any compulsion |
| ***ex officio*** | by virtue of one's office, not unofficially |
| ***ex parte*** | from or for one side only |
| ***ex post facto, ex post*** | after the fact, retrospectively |
| ***ex tempore*** | off the cuff, without preparation (extempore) |
| ***habeas corpus*** | you must have the body; a writ to bring a person before a court, in most cases to ensure that the person's imprisonment is not illegal |

| | |
|---|---|
| ***horror vacui*** | literally, "fear of empty space"; the compulsion to make marks in every space. *Horror vacui* is indicated by a crowded design |
| **ibid., ibidem** | in the same place; used in footnotes in academic works to mean that the quote comes from the same source |
| **idem** | the same, as mentioned before; like ibidem |
| ***ie, id est*** | that is, explains the material immediately in front of it |
| ***in absentia*** | in the absence of, used as "absent" |
| ***in camera*** | in a (private) room, that is, not in public |
| ***in flagrante delicto*** | in the act of committing a crime; caught red-handed; an expression that has developed a sexual connotation |
| ***in loco*** | in the place of; eg, in loco parentis, in the place of a parent |
| ***in re*** | in the matter of |
| ***in situ*** | in (its) original place |
| ***inter alia/inter alios*** | among other things or people |
| ***intra vires*** | within the permitted powers (contrast with ultra vires) |
| ***ipso facto*** | by that very fact, in the fact itself |
| ***lingua franca*** | a common tongue |
| ***loc. cit., loco citato*** | in the place cited; used in footnotes to mean that the source of the reference or quote has already been given |
| ***mea culpa*** | my fault (commonly used as a noun while retaining the *mea*; eg, this *mea culpa* somewhat mollified them) |
| ***memento mori*** | remember you have to die; a reminder of death, such as a skull |
| ***mirabile dictu*** | literally, wonderful to relate |
| ***mutatis mutandis*** | things change and we must change with them; used to indicate making necessary changes over time |
| ***nem. con., nemine contradicente*** | no one against; unanimously |

| | |
|---|---|
| ***non sequitur*** | it does not follow; an inference or conclusion that does not follow from its premises |
| ***op. cit., opere citato*** | in the work quoted; similar to loc. cit. (see above) |
| ***pace*** | with due respect to |
| ***pari passu*** | on the same terms, at an equal pace or rate of progress |
| ***passim*** | adverb, here and there or scattered. Used in indexes to indicate that the item is scattered throughout the work and there are too many instances to enumerate them all |
| ***per se*** | by itself, for its own sake |
| ***persona non grata*** | person not in favour/barred |
| ***per stirpes*** | among families; a lawyer's term used when distributing an inheritance |
| ***petitio elenchis*** | the sin of assuming a conclusion |
| ***post eventum*** | after the event |
| ***post hoc, ergo propter hoc*** | after this, therefore because of this. Used fallaciously in argument to show that because one thing comes after another it can be inferred that the first thing caused the second thing |
| ***post mortem*** | after death, used as an adjective and also as a noun, a clinical examination of a dead body |
| ***prima facie*** | from a first impression, apparently at first sight, on the face of it – no connection with love |
| ***primus inter pares*** | first among equals |
| ***pro rata*** | for the rate; divided in proportion |
| ***pro tem., pro tempore*** | for the moment |
| ***PS, post scriptum*** | written afterwards |
| ***quid pro quo*** | something for something (or one thing for another), something in return, an equivalent |
| ***q.v., quod vide*** | which see; means that the reader should look for the word just mentioned (eg, in glossary) |
| ***re*** | with regard to, in the matter of |
| ***sic*** | thus; used in square brackets in quotes to show writer has made a mistake. "Mrs Thacher [sic] resigned today." |

| | |
|---|---|
| ***sine die*** | without (setting) a date |
| ***sine qua non*** | without which, not. Anything indispensable, and without which another cannot exist |
| ***status quo ante*** | the same state as before; usually shortened to status quo. A common usage is "maintaining the status quo" |
| ***stet*** | let it stand or do not delete; cancels an alteration in proofreading; dots are placed under what is to remain |
| ***sub judice*** | under judgment or consideration; not yet decided |
| ***sub rosa*** | under the rose, privately or furtively; not the same as under the gooseberry bush |
| ***ultra vires*** | beyond (one's) legal power |
| ***vade mecum*** | a little book or object carried about on the person; literally "Go with me" |
| ***vae victis*** | Woe to the conquered! |
| ***versus, v or v.*** | against; used in legal cases and games |
| ***viz, videlicet*** | that is to say; to wit; namely |

## Laws

Scientific, economic, facetious and fatalistic laws in common use are listed here.

**Benford's law** In lists of numbers from many sources of data the leading digit 1 occurs much more often than the others (about 30% of the time). The law was discovered by Simon Newcomb, an American astronomer, in 1881. He noted that the first pages of books of logarithms were much more thumbed than others. Furthermore, the higher the digit, the less likely it is to occur. This applies to mathematical constants as much as utility bills, addresses, share prices, birth and death statistics, the height of mountains, and so on.

**Boyle's law** The pressure of a gas varies inversely with its volume at constant temperature.

**Brooks's law** "Adding manpower to a late software project makes it later," said Fred Brooks, in his book *The Mythical Man-Month.*

**Engel's law** In general people spend a smaller share of their budget on food as their income increases.

**Goodhart's law** "Any observed statistical regularity will tend to collapse once pressure is placed upon it for control purposes" was the law stated by Charles Goodhart, a chief adviser to the Bank of England during the 1980s. It has been recast more succinctly as "When a measure becomes a target, it ceases to be a good measure."

**Gresham's law** When money of a high intrinsic value is in circulation with money of lesser value, it is the inferior currency which tends to remain in circulation, while the other is either hoarded or exported. In other words: "Bad money drives out good."

**Heisenberg's uncertainty principle** Energy and time or position and momentum cannot both be accurately measured simultaneously. The product of their uncertainties is h (Planck's constant).

**Hooke's law** The stress imposed on a solid is directly proportional to the strain produced within the elastic limit.

**Laws of thermodynamics**

1 The change in the internal energy of a system equals the sum of the heat added to the system and the work done on it.
2 Heat cannot be transferred from a colder to a hotter body within a system without net changes occurring in other bodies in the system.
3 It is impossible to reduce the temperature of a system to absolute zero in a finite number of steps.

**Mendel's principles** The law of segregation is that every somatic cell of an individual carries a pair of hereditary units for each character; the pairs separate during meiosis so that each gamete carries one unit only of each pair.

The law of independent assortment is that the separation of units of each pair is not influenced by that of any other pair.

**Moore's law** "The number of transistors on a chip doubles every 18–24 months." An observation by Gordon Moore, a founder of Intel, regarding the pace of semiconductor technology development in 1961.

**Murphy's law** Anything that can go wrong will go wrong. Also known as sod's law.

**Ohm's law** Electric current is directly proportional to electromotive force and inversely proportional to resistance.

**Okun's law** The relationship between unemployment and GDP growth. GDP growth of 3% will leave the jobless rate unchanged. Faster growth will cut the unemployment rate by half the amount by which growth exceeds 3%. A growth rate of less than 3% will increase unemployment by the same ratio.

**Pareto principle** Also known as the 80/20 rule, named after Vilfredo Pareto (1848–1923), an Italian economist, who determined that 80% of activity comes from 20% of the people. The principle was extended (or simply misunderstood) by Joseph Juran, an American management guru, who suggested that for many phenomena 80% of consequences stem from 20% of the causes. That is, in many instances a large number of results stem from a small number of causes, eg, 80% of problems come from 20% of the equipment or workforce.

**Parkinson's law** "Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion." Formulated by C. Northcote Parkinson and first published in *The Economist*, November 19th 1955.

**Parkinson's law of data** Data expand to fill the space available for storage, so acquiring more memory will encourage the adoption of techniques that require more memory.

**The Peter principle** All members of a hierarchy rise to their own level of incompetence, according to Laurence Peter and Raymond Hull in their book of the same name published in 1969.

**Reilly's law** This law of retail gravitation suggests that people are generally attracted to the largest shopping centre in the area. William Reilly, an American academic, proposed the law in a book published in 1931.

**Say's law of markets** Aggregate supply creates its own aggregate demand. Attributed to Jean-Baptiste Say (1767–1832), a French economist. If output increases in a free-market economy, the sales would give the producers of the goods the same amount of income which would re-enter the economy and create demand for those goods. Keynes's law, attributed to John Maynard Keynes (1883–1946), a British economist, says that the opposite is true and that "demand creates its own supply" as businesses produce more to satisfy demand up to the limit of full employment.

**sod's law** See **Murphy's law.**

**Utz's laws of computer programming** Any given program, when running, is obsolete. If a program is useful, it will have to be changed. Any given program will expand to fill all available memory.

**Wolfe's law of journalism**
You cannot hope
to bribe or twist,
thank God! the
British journalist.

But seeing what
the man will do
unbribed, there's
no occasion to.

## Mathematical symbols

| | |
|---|---|
| + | plus or positive |
| − | minus or negative |
| ± | plus or minus, positive or negative |
| × | multiplied by |
| ÷ or / | divided by |
| = | equal to |
| ≡ | identically equal to |
| ≠ | not equal to |
| ≢ | not identically equal to |
| ≈ or ≅ | approximately equal to, |
| ~ | of the order of or similar to |
| > | greater than |
| < | less than |
| ≯ | not greater than |
| ≮ | not less than |
| ≥ | equal to or greater than |
| ≤ | equal to or less than |
| ≫ | much greater than |
| ≪ | much less than |
| ∝ | is proportional to or varies with |
| √ | square root |
| $\sqrt[r]{}$ | rth root |
| $r^n$ | r to the power of n |
| *r!* or ⌊r | factorial *r* |
| ∞ | infinity |
| % | per cent |
| ‰ | per mile (thousand) |
| Σ | sum of |
| Π | product of |
| Λ | difference |
| ∴ | therefore |

## Measures

### UK imperial units

The following imperial units are still used in the United Kingdom despite general conversion to the metric system: mile, yard, foot, inch for road traffic signs, distance and speed measurement; pint for draught beer and cider and for milk in returnable containers;

acre for land registration; troy ounce for transactions in precious metals; pounds and ounces in all small-scale (especially market) transactions involving weight.

## Conversions

### Acceleration

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Standard gravity | = | 10 metres (m) per second squared |
| | = | 32 feet (ft) per second squared |

### Volume and capacity

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 5 millilitres | = | 1 teaspoonful |
| 26 UK fluid oz | = | 25 US liquid oz |
| 1¾ UK pints | = | 1 litre (l) |
| 5 UK pints | = | 6 US liquid pints |
| 9 US liquid pints | = | 9l |
| 5 UK gallons | = | 6 US gallons |
| 1 US gallon | = | 3¾l |
| 3 cubic (cu.) ft | = | 85 cu. decimetres |
| | = | 85l |
| 27½ UK bushels | = | 1 cu. m |
| 28⅓ US bushels | = | 1 cu. m |
| 11 UK bushels | = | 4 hectolitres |
| 14 US bushels | = | 5 hectolitres |
| 1 US bushel (heaped) | = | 1¼ US bushels (struck) |
| 1 US dry barrel | = | 3¼ US bushels |
| 1 US cranberry barrel | = | 2¾ bushels |
| 1 barrel (petroleum) | = | 42 US gallons |
| | = | 35 UK gallons |
| 1 barrel per day | = | 50 tonnes per year |

### Weight

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 grain | = | 65 milligrams |
| 15 grains | = | 1 gram (g) |
| 11 ounces (oz) | = | 10 oz troy |
| 1 ounce | = | 28g |
| 1 oz troy | = | 31g |
| 1 pound (lb) | = | 454g |
| 35 oz | = | 1 kilogram (kg) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| $2\frac{1}{4}$lb | = | 1kg |
| 11 US tons | = | 10 tonnes |
| 62 UK tons | = | 63 tonnes |
| 100 UK (long) tons | = | 112 US (short) tons |

### Gold

The purity of gold is expressed as parts of 1,000, so that a fineness of 800 is 80% gold. Pure gold is defined as 24 carats (1,000 fine). Dental gold is usually 16 or 20 carat; gold in jewellery 9–22 carat. A golden sovereign is 22 carat.

1 metric carat = 200 milligrams.

Gold and silver are usually measured in troy weights: 1 troy ounce = 155.52 metric carats.

A standard international bar of gold is 400 troy ounces; bars of 250 troy ounces are also used.

### Metric units

Metric units not generally recommended as SI units or for use with SI are marked with an asterisk (eg, Calorie*).

#### Length

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 10 angstroms | = | 1 nanometre |
| 1,000 nanometres | = | 1 micrometre |
| 1,000 micrometres | = | 1 millimetre (mm) |
| 10mm | = | 1 centimetre (cm) |
| 10cm | = | 1 decimetre |
| 1,000mm | = | 1 metre (m) |
| 100cm | = | 1m |
| 10 decimetres | = | 1m |
| 100m | = | 1 hectometre |
| 10 hectometres | = | 1 kilometre (km) |
| 1,000km | = | 1 megametre |
| nautical: 1,852m | = | 1 int. nautical mile |

### Area

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 100 sq. mm | = | 1 sq. cm |
| 100 sq. cm | = | 1 sq. decimetre |
| 100 sq. decimetres | = | 1 sq. m |
| 100 sq. m | = | 1 are |
| 10,000 sq. m | = | 1 hectare (ha) |
| 100 ares | = | 1 ha |
| 100 ha | = | 1 sq. kilometre |

### Weight (mass)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1,000 milligrams (mg) | = | 1 gram (g) |
| 1,000g | = | 1 kilogram (kg) |
| 100kg | = | 1 quintal |
| 1,000kg | = | 1 tonne |

### Volume

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1,000 cu. mm | = | 1 cu. cm |
| 1,000 cu. cm | = | 1 cu. decimetre |
| 1,000 cu. decimetres | = | 1 cu. m |

### Capacity

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 10 millilitres (ml) | = | 1 centilitre (cl) |
| 10cl | = | 1 decilitre (dl) |
| 10dl | = | 1 litre (l) |
| 1 litre | = | 1 cu. decimetre |
| 100 litres | = | 1hl |
| 1,000l | = | 1 kilolitre |
| 10 hectolitres | = | 1 kilolitre |
| 1 kilolitre | = | 1 cu. metre |

### Metric system prefixes

| *Prefix* | *Symbol* | *Factor by which unit is multiplied* | | | *Description* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| atto | a | $10^{-18}$ | = | 0.000 000 000 000 000 001 | |
| femto | f | $10^{-15}$ | = | 0.000 000 000 000 001 | |
| pico | p | $10^{-12}$ | = | 0.000 000 000 001 | million millionth; trillionth |
| nano | n | $10^{-9}$ | = | 0.000 000 001 | thousand millionth; billionth |
| micro | μ | $10^{-6}$ | = | 0.000 001 | millionth |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| milli | m | $10^{-3}$ | = | 0.001 | thousandth |
| centi | c | $10^{-2}$ | = | 0.01 | hundredth |
| deci | d | $10^{-1}$ | = | 0.1 | tenth |
| deca (or deka) | da[a] | $10^{1}$ | = | 10 | ten |
| hecto | h | $10^{2}$ | = | 100 | hundred |
| kilo | k | $10^{3}$ | = | 1,000 | thousand |
| myria | my | $10^{4}$ | = | 10,000 | ten thousand |
| mega | M | $10^{6}$ | = | 1,000,000 | million |
| giga | G | $10^{9}$ | = | 1,000,000,000 | thousand million; billion |
| tera | T | $10^{12}$ | = | 1,000,000,000,000 | million million; trillion |
| peta | P | $10^{15}$ | = | 1,000,000,000,000,000 | |
| exa | E | $10^{18}$ | = | 1,000,000,000,000,000,000 | |

a Sometimes dk is used (eg, in Germany).

## Miscellaneous units and ratios

### Beer

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| small | = | half pint |
| large | = | 1 pint |
| flagon | = | 1 quart |
| anker | = | 10 gallons |

### Champagne

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2 bottles | = | 1 magnum |
| 4 bottles | = | 1 jeroboam |
| 20 bottles | = | 1 nebuchadnezzar |

### Wines and spirits

| | *Proof (Sikes) (°)* | *Volume of alcohol (%)* |
|---|---|---|
| Table wines | 14-26 | 8-15 |
| Port, sherry | 26-38.5 | 15-22 |
| Whisky, gin | 65.5-70 | 37.5-40 |

tot (whisky, gin, rum or vodka) = 25ml or 35ml (before end-1994, one-sixth to one-quarter gill; the larger size is mainly used in Scotland)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| wine glass | = | 125ml or 175ml |
| wine bottle or carafe (metric sizes) | = | 25cl, 50cl, 75cl or 1l |

**Precious metals**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 metric carat | = | 200mg |
| 1 troy oz | = | 155.52 metric carats |

**Water**

1 litre weighs 1kg.
1 cubic m weighs 1 tonne.
1 UK gallon weighs 10.022lb.
1 US gallon weighs 8.345lb.

**Energy**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 therm | = | 29.3071 kilowatt hours (kW h) |
| 1 terawatt hour (TW h) | = | 1 thousand million kilowatt hours |
| 1 watt second | = | 1 joule |
| 1 kilowatt hour | = | 36 megajoules (MJ) |
| 1 calorie (dieticians') | = | 4.1855 kilojoules |

**Radioactivity**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 becquerel (Bq) | = | 1 disintegration per sec. |
| 1 rutherford | = | 1m Bq |

**Dose of radiation**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 rad | = | 10 millijoules per kg |
| 1 gray | = | 100 rad = 1 joule per kg |
| 1 rem | = | 1 rad, weighted by radiation effect |
| 1 sievert (Sv) | = | 100 rems |
| Background dose (UK) | = | 25 millisievert (mSv) per year |

Energy is measured in kilowatt hours and power is measured in kilowatts. Energy is power multiplied by time, thus the kilowatt-hour is one unit of energy.

**Crude oil**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 barrel | = | 42 US gallons |
| | = | 34.97 UK (imperial) gallons |
| | = | 0.159 cubic m (159l) |
| | = | 0.136 tonne (approx.) |
| 1 barrel per day (b/d) | = | 50 tonnes per year (approx.) |

## Clothing sizes (rough equivalents)

*Men's suits*

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| UK/US | 32 | 34 | 36 | 38 | 40 | 42 | 44 |
| Europe | 42 | 44 | 46 | 48 | 50 | 52 | 54 |
| Metric | 81 | 86 | 91 | 97 | 102 | 107 | 112 |

*Women's suits, dresses, skirts*

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| UK | 10 | 12 | 14 | 16 | 18 | 20 | 22 |
| US | 8 | 10 | 12 | 14 | 16 | 18 | 20 |
| Europe | 38 | 40 | 42 | 44 | 47 | 50 | 52 |

*Men's shirts (collar sizes)*

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| UK/US (in) | 15 | 15.5 | 16 | 16.5 | 17 | 17.5 |
| Europe (cm) | 38 | 39.5 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 |

*Shoes*

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| UK | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| US men's | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| US women's | 6.5 | 7.5 | 8.5 | 9.5 | 10.5 | 11.5 |
| Europe | 38 | 39 | 40.5 | 42 | 43 | 44.5 |

## Paper sizes

*"A" Series (metric sizes)*

A0 = 841mm × 1,189mm (33.11 in × 46.81 in)
A3 = 297mm × 420mm (11.69 in × 16.54 in)
A4 = 210mm × 297mm (8.27 in × 11.69 in)
A5 = 148mm × 210mm (5.83 in × 8.27 in)
A6 = 105mm × 148mm (4.13 in × 5.83 in)
A7 = 74mm × 105mm (2.91 in × 4.13 in)

## Conversion factors[a]

| *Multiply number of* | *by* | *to obtain equivalent number of* |
|---|---|---|
| *Length* | | |
| inches (in) | 25.4 | millimetres (mm) |
| inches | 2.54 | centimetres (cm) |
| feet (ft) | 30.48 | centimetres |
| feet | 0.3048 | metres (m) |
| yards (yd) | 0.9144 | metres |
| miles (land 5,280 ft) | 1.609344 | kilometres (km) |
| miles (UK sea) | 1.853184 | kilometres |
| miles, international nautical | 1.852 | kilometres |
| *Area* | | |
| sq. inches ($in^2$) | 645.16 | sq. millimetres ($mm^2$) |
| sq. inches | 6.4516 | sq. centimetres ($cm^2$) |
| sq. ft ($ft^2$) | 929.0304 | sq. centimetres |
| sq. ft | 0.092903 | sq. metres ($m^2$) |
| sq. yards ($yd^2$) | 0.836127 | sq. metres |
| acres | 4046.86 | sq. metres |
| acres | 0.404686 | hectares (ha) |
| acres | 0.004047 | sq. kilometres ($km^2$) |
| sq. miles | 2.58999 | sq. kilometres |
| *Volume and capacity* | | |
| cu. inches ($in^3$) | 16.387064 | cu. centimetres ($cm^3$) |
| UK pints | 34.6774 | cu. inches |
| UK pints | 0.5683 | litres (l) |
| UK gallons | 4.54609 | litres |
| US gallons | 3.785 | litres |
| cu. feet ($ft^3$) | 28.317 | litres |
| cu. feet | 0.028317 | cu. metres ($cm^3$) |
| UK gallons | 1.20095 | US gallons |

| *Multiply number of* | *by* | *to obtain equivalent number of* |
|---|---|---|
| *Length* | | |
| millimetres | 0.03937 | inches |
| centimetres | 0.3937 | inches |
| centimetres | 0.03281 | feet |
| metres | 39.3701 | inches |
| metres | 3.2808 | feet |
| metres | 1.0936 | yards |
| metres | 0.54681 | fathoms |
| kilometres | 0.62137 | miles (land) |
| kilometres | 0.53961 | miles (UK sea) |
| kilometres | 0.53996 | miles, international nautical |
| *Area* | | |
| sq. millimetres | 0.00155 | sq. inches |
| sq. centimetres | 0.1550 | sq. inches |
| sq. metres | 10.7639 | sq. feet |
| sq. metres | 1.19599 | sq. yards |
| hectares | 2.47105 | acres |
| sq. kilometres | 247.105 | acres |
| sq. kilometres | 0.3861 | sq. miles |
| *Volume and capacity* | | |
| cu. centimetres | 0.06102 | cu. inches |
| litres | 61.024 | cu. inches |
| litres | 2.1134 | US pints |
| litres | 1.7598 | UK pints |
| litres | 0.2642 | US gallons |
| litres | 0.21997 | UK gallons |
| hectolitres | 26.417 | US gallons |
| hectolitres | 21.997 | UK gallons |

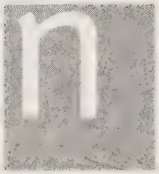
| *Multiply number of* | *by* | *to obtain equivalent number of* |
|---|---|---|
| US gallons | 0.832674 | UK gallons |
| *Weight (mass)* | | |
| ounces, avoirdupois (oz) | 28.3495 | grams (g) |
| ounces, troy (oz tr) | 31.1035 | grams |
| ounces, avoirdupois | 0.9115 | ounces, troy |
| pounds, avoirdupois (lb) | 453.59237 | grams |
| pounds, avoirdupois (lb) | 0.45359 | kilograms (kg) |
| short tons (2,000 lb) | 0.892857 | long tons |
| short tons (2,000 lb) | 0.907185 | tonnes (t) |
| long tons (2,240 lb) | 1.12 | short tons |
| long tons (2,240 lb) | 1.01605 | tonnes |
| *Velocity and fuel consumption* | | |
| miles/hour | 1.609344 | kilometres/hour |
| miles/hour | 0.868976 | international knots |
| miles/UK gallon | 0.35401 | kilometres/litre |
| miles/US gallon | 0.42514 | kilometres/litre |
| UK gallons/mile[b] | 282.481 | litres/100 kilometres |
| US gallons/mile[b] | 235.215 | litres/100 kilometres |
| *Temperature* | | |
| degrees Fahrenheit | 5/9 after subtracting 32 | degrees Celsius (centigrade) |
| −40°F | equals | −40°C |
| 32°F | equals | 0°C |
| 59°F | equals | 15°C |

a Between the UK and US systems, and the International System of Units (SI). As an example of the use of the table, 10 long tons (of 2,240lb each), multiplied by 1.12, is equal to 11.2 short tons (of 2,000lb each).

| *Multiply number of* | *by* | *to obtain equivalent number of* |
|---|---|---|
| hectolitres | 2.838 | US bushels |
| hectolitres | 2.750 | UK bushels |
| cu. metres | 35.3147 | cu. feet |
| cu. metres | 1.30795 | cu. yards |
| cu. metres | 264.172 | US gallons |
| *Weight (mass)* | | |
| grams | 0.03527 | ounces, avoirdupois |
| grams | 0.03215 | ounces, troy |
| kilograms | 2.20462 | pounds, avoirdupois |
| metric quintals (q) | 220.462 | pounds, avoirdupois |
| tonnes | 2,204.62 | pounds, avoirdupois |
| tonnes | 1.10231 | short tons |
| tonnes | 0.984207 | long tons |
| *Velocity and fuel consumption* | | |
| kilometres/hour | 0.62137 | miles/hour |
| kilometres/hour | 0.53996 | international knots |
| kilometres/litre | 2.82481 | miles/UK gallon |
| litres/100 kilometres[c] | 0.00354 | UK gallons/mile |
| litres/100 kilometres[c] | 0.00425 | US gallons/mile |
| *Temperature* | | |
| degrees Celsius | 9/5 and add 32 | degrees Fahrenheit |
| 37°C | equals | 98.6°F |
| 50°C | equals | 122°F |
| 100°C | equals | 212°F |

b Miles per UK gallon, divided into 282.481, gives litres per 100 kilometres; miles per US gallon, divided into 235.215, gives litres per 100 kilometres.

c Litres per 100 kilometres, divided into 282.481, gives miles per UK gallon; litres per 100 kilometres, divided into 235.215, gives miles per US gallon.



## National accounts

These are the definitions adopted by the United Nations in 1968.

See http://unstats.un.org/unsd/nationalaccount/ for more details.

**Final expenditure**

= private final consumption expenditure ("consumers' expenditure")
+ government final consumption expenditure
+ increase in stocks
+ gross fixed capital formation
+ exports of goods and services

**Gross domestic product (GDP) at market prices**

= final expenditure
– imports of goods and services

**Gross national income or product (GNI/GNP) at market prices**

= gross domestic product at market prices
+ net income from other countries

**Gross domestic product at factor cost**

= gross domestic product at market prices
– indirect taxes
+ subsidies

## North America administrative divisions

Here are the main administrative subdivisions of the United States

and Canada. *See also* **countries and their inhabitants, placenames** in Part 1.

## United States

### States

Alabama (AL)
Alaska (AK)
Arizona (AZ)
Arkansas (AR)
California (CA)
Colorado (CO)
Connecticut (CT)
Delaware (DE)
District of Columbia (DC)[a]
Florida (FL)
Georgia (GA)
Hawaii (HI)
Idaho (ID)
Illinois (IL)
Indiana (IN)
Iowa (IA)
Kansas (KS)
Kentucky (KY)
Louisiana (LA)
Maine (ME)
Maryland (MD)
Massachusetts (MA)
Michigan (MI)
Minnesota (MN)
Mississippi (MS)
Missouri (MO)
Montana (MT)
Nebraska (NE)
Nevada (NV)
New Hampshire (NH)
New Jersey (NJ)
New Mexico (NM)
New York (NY)
North Carolina (NC)
North Dakota (ND)
Ohio (OH)
Oklahoma (OK)
Oregon (OR)
Pennsylvania (PA)
Puerto Rico (PR)
Rhode Island (RI)
South Carolina (SC)
South Dakota (SD)
Tennessee (TN)
Texas (TX)
Utah (UT)
Vermont (VT)
Virginia (VA)
Washington (WA)
West Virginia (WV)
Wisconsin (WI)
Wyoming (WY)

a DC is not a state.

## Canada

### Provinces

Alberta
British Columbia
Manitoba
New Brunswick

Newfoundland and Labrador
Nova Scotia
Ontario
Prince Edward Island
Quebec (Québec)
Saskatchewan

**Territories**

Northwest Territories
Nunavut
Yukon

## Olympic games

### Summer

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I | Athens | 1896 |
| II | Paris | 1900 |
| III | St Louis | 1904 |
| IV | London | 1908 |
| V | Stockholm | 1912 |
| VI | Berlin (cancelled) | 1916 |
| VII | Antwerp | 1920 |
| VIII | Paris | 1924 |
| IX | Amsterdam | 1928 |
| X | Los Angeles | 1932 |
| XI | Berlin | 1936 |
| XII | Tokyo/Helsinki (cancelled) | 1940 |
| XIII | London (cancelled) | 1944 |
| XIV | London | 1948 |
| XV | Helsinki | 1952 |
| XVI | Melbourne | 1956 |
| XVII | Rome | 1960 |
| XVIII | Tokyo | 1964 |
| XIX | Mexico City | 1968 |
| XX | Munich | 1972 |
| XXI | Montreal | 1976 |
| XXII | Moscow | 1980 |
| XXIII | Los Angeles | 1984 |
| XXIV | Seoul | 1988 |
| XXV | Barcelona | 1992 |
| XXVI | Atlanta | 1996 |
| XXVII | Sydney | 2000 |
| XXVIII | Athens | 2004 |
| XXIX | Beijing | 2008 |
| XXX | London | 2012 |
| XXXI | Rio de Janeiro | 2016 |
| XXXII | Tokyo | 2020 |

### Winter

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I | Chamonix, France | 1924 |
| II | St Moritz, Switzerland | 1928 |
| III | Lake Placid, United States | 1932 |
| IV | Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany | 1936 |
| | Cancelled | 1940 |
| | Cancelled | 1944 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| V | St Moritz, Switzerland | 1948 |
| VI | Oslo, Norway | 1952 |
| VII | Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy | 1956 |
| VIII | Squaw Valley, United States | 1960 |
| IX | Innsbruck, Austria | 1964 |
| X | Grenoble, France | 1968 |
| XI | Sapporo, Japan | 1972 |
| XII | Innsbruck, Austria | 1976 |
| XIII | Lake Placid, United States | 1980 |
| XIV | Sarajevo, Yugoslavia | 1984 |
| XV | Calgary, Canada | 1988 |
| XVI | Albertville, France | 1992[a] |
| XVII | Lillehammer, Norway | 1994[a] |
| XVIII | Nagano, Japan | 1998 |
| XIX | Salt Lake City, United States | 2002 |
| XX | Torino (Turin), Italy | 2006 |
| XXI | Vancouver, Canada | 2010 |
| XXII | Sochi, Russia | 2014 |
| XXIII | Pyongchang, South Korea | 2018 |

a Since 1994 the summer and winter Olympic games have taken place in alternate even-numbered years. Hence, the Albertville and Lillehammer winter games are only two years apart.

## Organisations

These are the exact names and abbreviated titles of the main international organisations. Where membership is small or exclusive, members are listed too.

**African Union** formerly the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), founded in 1963, headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

*Members*

Algeria
Angola
Benin
Botswana
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Cameroon
Cape Verde
Central African Republic
Chad
Comoros
Congo-Brazzaville
Djibouti
Egypt
Equatorial Guinea
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Gabon
The Gambia
Ghana
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau

Ivory Coast
Kenya
Lesotho
Liberia
Libya
Madagascar
Malawi
Mali
Mauritania
Mauritius
Mozambique
Namibia
Niger
Nigeria
Rwanda
São Tomé and Principe
Senegal
Seychelles
Sierra Leone
Somalia
South Africa
South Sudan
Sudan
Swaziland
Tanzania
Togo
Uganda

**ALADI** Asociación Latinoamericana de Integración (Latin American Integration Association), founded in 1980, based in Montevideo, Uruguay.

*Members*[a]

Argentina
Bolivia
Brazil
Chile
Colombia
Cuba
Ecuador
Mexico
Panama
Paraguay
Peru
Uruguay
Venezuela

a There are also 17 observer countries and 10 observer organisations.

**Andean Community of Nations** founded in 1969, headquarters in Lima, Peru.

*Members*

Bolivia
Colombia
Ecuador
Peru

**APEC** Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, founded in 1989, based in Singapore.

*Members*

Australia
Brunei Darussalam
Canada
Chile
China
Chinese Taipei (Taiwan)
Hong Kong, China
Indonesia
Japan
Malaysia
Mexico
New Zealand
Papua New Guinea
Peru
Philippines
Russia
Singapore
Thailand
United States
Vietnam

**ASEAN** Association of Southeast Asian Nations, established in 1967, headquarters in Jakarta, Indonesia.

*Members*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Brunei Darussalam | Malaysia | Thailand |
| Cambodia | Myanmar | Vietnam |
| Indonesia | Philippines | |
| Laos | Singapore | |

**BIS** Bank for International Settlements, the central bankers' central bank, founded 1930, based in Basel, Switzerland.

*Members*[a]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Algeria | Greece | Philippines |
| Argentina | Hong Kong | Poland |
| Australia | Hungary | Portugal |
| Austria | Iceland | Romania |
| Belgium | India | Russia |
| Bosnia & Herzegovina | Indonesia | Saudi Arabia |
| | Ireland | Serbia |
| Brazil | Israel | Singapore |
| Bulgaria | Italy | Slovakia |
| Canada | Japan | Slovenia |
| Chile | Latvia | South Africa |
| China | Lithuania | South Korea |
| Colombia | Luxembourg | Spain |
| Croatia | Macedonia | Sweden |
| Czech Republic | Malaysia | Switzerland |
| Denmark | Mexico | Thailand |
| Estonia | Netherlands | Turkey |
| Finland | New Zealand | United Arab Emirates |
| France | Norway | United Kingdom |
| Germany | Peru | United States |

a The European Central Bank is a shareholder.

**CARICOM** Caribbean Community and Common Market, formed in 1973, secretariat in Georgetown, Guyana.

*Members*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Anguilla[a] | Antigua and Barbuda | Bahamas[b] |

Barbados
Belize
Bermuda[a]
British Virgin Islands[a]
Cayman Islands[a]
Dominica
Grenada
Guyana
Haiti
Jamaica
Montserrat
St Kitts-Nevis
St Lucia
St Vincent and the Grenadines
Suriname
Trinidad and Tobago
Turks and Caicos Islands[a]

a Associate member.
b Member of the Community but not the Common Market.

**COMESA** Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, founded in 1994, headquarters in Lusaka, Zambia.

*Members*

Burundi
Comoros
Congo, Democratic Republic of
Djibouti
Egypt
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Kenya
Libya
Madagascar
Malawi
Mauritius
Rwanda
Seychelles
Sudan
Swaziland
Uganda
Zambia
Zimbabwe

**Commonwealth** based in London, UK.

*Members*

Antigua and Barbuda
Australia
Bahamas
Bangladesh
Barbados
Belize
Botswana
Brunei Darussalam
Cameroon
Canada
Cyprus
Dominica
Fiji Islands[a]
Ghana
Grenada
Guyana
India
Jamaica
Kenya
Kiribati
Lesotho
Malawi
Malaysia
Maldives
Malta
Mauritius
Mozambique
Namibia
Nauru[b]
New Zealand
Nigeria
Pakistan
Papua New Guinea
Rwanda
Samoa
Seychelles
Sierra Leone
Singapore
Solomon Islands
South Africa
Sri Lanka
St Kitts and Nevis
St Lucia
St Vincent and the Grenadines

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Swaziland | Trinidad and Tobago | United Kingdom |
| Tanzania | Tuvalu | Vanuatu |
| Tonga | Uganda | Zambia |

a Suspended on September 1st 2009.
b Member in arrears.

***Dependencies and associated states***

*Australia*

| | |
|---|---|
| Ashmore and Cartier Islands | Coral Sea Islands Territory |
| Australian Antarctic Territory | Heard and McDonald Islands |
| Christmas Island | Norfolk Island |
| Cocos (Keeling) Islands | |

*New Zealand*

| | |
|---|---|
| Cook Islands | Ross Dependency |
| Niue | Tokelau |

*UK*

| | |
|---|---|
| Anguilla | Isle of Man |
| Bermuda | Montserrat |
| British Antarctic Territory | Pitcairn Island |
| British Indian Ocean Territory | South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands |
| British Virgin Islands | St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha |
| Cayman Islands | Turks and Caicos Islands |
| Channel Islands | |
| Falkland Islands | |
| Gibraltar | |

**Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)** founded by the former Soviet Socialist Republics in December 1991, based in Moscow, Russia.

*Members*

| | |
|---|---|
| Armenia | Moldova |
| Azerbaijan | Russia |
| Belarus | Tajikistan |
| Georgia | Turkmenistan |
| Kazakhstan | Ukraine |
| Kyrgyzstan | Uzbekistan |

**ECOWAS** Economic Community of West African States, founded 1975, secretariat in Abuja, Nigeria.

*Members*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Benin | Guinea-Bissau | Nigeria |
| Burkina Faso | Ivory Coast | Senegal |
| Cape Verde | Liberia | Sierra Leone |
| Ghana | Mali | The Gambia |
| Guinea | Niger | Togo |

**EEA** European Economic Area, negotiated in 1992 between the European Community and members of EFTA, came into force in 1994 and has been maintained because the three signatories – Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein – wanted to participate in the single market without being full members of the EU.

**EFTA** European Free Trade Association, established 1960.

*Members*

| | |
|---|---|
| Iceland | Norway |
| Liechtenstein | Switzerland |

**Euro area** Name given to the economic region formed by the EU member countries that have adopted the euro as their currency. Also known as the euro zone.

*Members*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Austria[a] | Greece (2001) | Netherlands[a] |
| Belgium[a] | Ireland[a] | Portugal[a] |
| Cyprus (2008) | Italy[a] | Slovakia (2009) |
| Estonia (2011) | Latvia (2014) | Slovenia (2007) |
| Finland[a] | Lithuania (2015) | Spain |
| France[a] | Luxembourg[a] | |
| Germany[a] | Malta (2008) | |

a Joined in 1999 when the euro was introduced.

**EU** European Union, the collective designation of three organisations with common membership: the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC, treaty expired in 2002), European Economic Community (EEC) and European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM). They merged to become the European

Community (EC) in 1967. In November 1993 when the Maastricht treaty came into force the EC was incorporated into the EU. Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) formed one of the articles of the Maastricht treaty, in which were set out the stages by which the EU would progress to full convergence, with a single currency, the euro. Headquarters in Brussels, with some activities in Luxembourg and Strasbourg.

*Main institutions*

Council of the European Union
European Commission
European Council
European Parliament

*Other EU institutions*

Committee of the Regions
Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT)
Court of Auditors
Court of Justice of the EU
European Central Bank
European Data Protection Supervisor
European Economic and Social Committee
European External Action Service (EEAS)
European Investment Bank
European Investment Fund
European Ombudsman
European Personnel Selection Office
European School of Administration
Publications Office

*Decentralised agencies*

Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER)
Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC)
Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO)
European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA)
European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders (FRONTEX)
European Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice (EU-LISA)
European Asylum Support Office (EASO)
European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA)

European Banking Authority (EBA)
European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)
European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP)
European Chemicals Agency (ECHA)
European Defence Agency (EDA)
European Environment Agency (EEA)
European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA)
European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)
European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (EUROFOUND)
European GNSS Agency (GSA)
European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)
European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA)
European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA)
European Medicines Agency (EMA)
European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)
European Network and Information Security Agency (ENISA)
European Police College (Cepol)
European Police Office (Europol)
European Public Prosecutor's Office (in preparation) (EPPO)
European Railway Agency (ERA)
European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA)
European Training Foundation (ETF)
European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)
European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS)
European Union Satellite Centre (EUSC)
Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market (OHIM)
Single Resolution Board (in preparation) (SRB)
The European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit (EUROJUST)
Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union (CDT)

*Executive agencies*
Consumers, Health and Food Executive Agency (CHAFEA)
Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)
European Research Council Executive Agency (ERC Executive Agency)

Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME)
Innovation & Networks Executive Agency (INEA)
Research Executive Agency (REA)

*Other EU agencies*
European Atomic Energy Community Treaty (EURATOM)
European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)

*Members*

Austria (1995)
Belgium[a]
Bulgaria (2007)
Croatia (2013)
Cyprus (2004)
Czech Republic (2004)
Denmark (1973)
Estonia (2004)
Finland (1995)
France[a]
Germany[a]
Greece (1981)
Hungary (2004)
Ireland (1973)
Italy[a]
Latvia (2004)
Lithuania (2004)
Luxembourg[a]
Malta (2004)
Netherlands[a]
Poland (2004)
Portugal (1986)
Romania (2007)
Slovakia (2004)
Slovenia (2004)
Spain (1986)
Sweden (1995)
UK (1973)

a Founding member.
Note: Year of joining in brackets.

**FTAA** Free Trade Area of the Americas, set up in November 2002 to integrate the economies of the western hemisphere into a single free trade agreement.

*Members*

Antigua & Barbuda
Argentina
Bahamas
Barbados
Belize
Bolivia
Brazil
Canada
Chile
Colombia
Costa Rica
Dominica
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
El Salvador
Grenada
Guatemala
Guyana
Haiti
Honduras
Jamaica
Mexico
Nicaragua
Panama
Paraguay
Peru
St Kitts & Nevis
St Lucia
St Vincent & the Grenadines
Suriname
Trinidad & Tobago
United States
Uruguay
Venezuela

**GCC** Co-operation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf or Gulf Co-operation Council, established in 1981, headquarters in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

*Members*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Bahrain | Oman | Saudi Arabia |
| Kuwait | Qatar | United Arab Emirates |

**G7, G8, G10, G22, G26** In 1975, six countries, the world's leading capitalist countries, ranked by GDP, were represented in France at the first annual summit meeting: the United States, the UK, West Germany, Japan and Italy, as well as the host country. The following year they were joined by Canada and, in 1977, by representatives of the European Union, although the group continued to be known as the G7. At the 1989 summit, 15 developing countries were also represented, although this did not give birth to the G22, which was not set up until 1998 and swiftly grew into G26. At the 1991 G7 summit, a meeting was held with the Soviet Union, a practice that continued (with Russia) in later years. In 1997, although it was not one of the world's eight richest countries, Russia became a full member of the G8. It was excluded again, because of its actions in Crimea and Ukraine, in 2014. Meetings of the IMF are attended by the G10, which includes 11 countries.

*G10 members*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Belgium | Italy | Switzerland |
| Canada | Japan | United Kingdom |
| France | Netherlands | United States |
| Germany | Sweden | |

**IATA** International Air Transport Association, head offices in Montreal and Geneva; regional offices in Miami and Singapore.

*Members*: most international airlines

**International Seabed Authority** an autonomous organisation in relationship with the UN, established 1994, based in Kingston, Jamaica

*Members*: 157 signatories to the Convention on the Law of the Sea.

**Mercosur** Mercado Común del Sur (Southern Common Market), founded in 1991, based in Montevideo, Uruguay.

| *Members* | *Associate members* |
|---|---|
| Argentina | Bolivia |
| Brazil | Chile |
| Paraguay | Colombia |
| Suriname | Ecuador |
| Uruguay | Guyana |
| Venezuela | Peru |

**NAFTA** North American Free Trade Agreement, which came into force on January 1st 1994.

| *Members* | | |
|---|---|---|
| Canada | Mexico | United States |

**NATO** North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, an alliance of 28 countries from Europe and North America committed to fulfilling goals of North Atlantic Treaty signed on April 4th 1949; headquarters in Brussels.

| *Members* | | |
|---|---|---|
| Albania | Greece | Portugal |
| Belgium | Hungary | Romania |
| Bulgaria | Iceland | Slovakia |
| Canada | Italy | Slovenia |
| Croatia | Latvia | Spain |
| Czech Republic | Lithuania | Turkey |
| Denmark | Luxembourg | United Kingdom |
| Estonia | Netherlands | United States |
| France | Norway | |
| Germany | Poland | |

**OAS** Organisation of American States, formed in 1948, headquarters in Washington, DC.

| *Members*[ab] | | |
|---|---|---|
| Antigua and Barbuda | Belize | Chile |
| Argentina | Bolivia | Colombia |
| Bahamas | Brazil | Costa Rica |
| Barbados | Canada | Dominica |

Dominican Republic
Ecuador
El Salvador
Grenada
Guatemala
Guyana
Haiti
Honduras[c]
Jamaica
Mexico
Nicaragua
Panama
Paraguay
Peru
St Kitts-Nevis
St Lucia
St Vincent and the Grenadines
Suriname
Trinidad and Tobago
United States
Uruguay
Venezuela

a Has many permanent non-member observers.

b Cuba was excluded from the OAS in 1962. However, on June 3rd 2009 it was decided that the 1962 Resolution would no longer apply.

c Honduras was suspended from active participation on July 5th 2009.

**OECD** Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, capitalism's club, founded in 1961, based in Paris. The European Commission also takes part in the OECD's work.

*Members*

Australia
Austria
Belgium
Canada
Chile
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
Finland
France
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Iceland
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Japan
Luxembourg
Mexico
Netherlands
New Zealand
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Slovakia
Slovenia
South Korea
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
Turkey
United Kingdom
United States

**OPEC** Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, established 1960, based in Vienna.

*Members*

Algeria
Ecuador[a]
Indonesia[b]
Iran
Iraq
Kuwait
Libya
Nigeria
Qatar
Saudi Arabia
United Arab Emirates
Venezuela

a Ecuador suspended its membership between December 1992 and October 2007.

b Indonesia suspended its membership from January 2009.

**OSCE** Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, originally founded in 1972 as the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE).

*Members*: 57, including European countries, Canada, the US and former republics of the Soviet Union

**SADC** Southern African Development Community, replaced the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference in 1992, based in Gaborone, Botswana. Its aim is to work for development and economic growth in the region with common systems and institutions, promoting peace and security, and achieving complementary national and regional strategies.

*Members*

Angola
Botswana
Congo, Democratic Republic of
Lesotho
Madagascar
Malawi
Mauritius
Mozambique
Namibia
Seychelles
South Africa
Swaziland
Tanzania
Zambia
Zimbabwe

**The United Nations (UN)** officially came into existence on October 24th 1945, based in New York, US.

*Main bodies*

General Assembly
Security Council
Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
Trusteeship Council
International Court of Justice
Secretariat
Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs

*Secretaries-general*

Sir Gladwyn Jebb (UK), acting, 1945–46
Trygve Lie (Norway), February 1946 to his resignation in November 1952
Dag Hammarskjöld (Sweden), April 1953 until his death in a plane crash in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), September 1961
U Thant (Burma, now Myanmar), November 1961–December 1971
Kurt Waldheim (Austria) 1972–81
Javier Pérez de Cuéllar (Peru) 1982–91

Boutros Boutros-Ghali (Egypt), January 1992 to the American veto of his second term in December 1996
Kofi Annan (Ghana), 1997–2006
Ban Ki-moon (South Korea), 2007–

| *Regional commissions* | | *Head office* |
|---|---|---|
| Economic Commission for Africa | ECA | Addis Ababa |
| Economic Commission for Europe | ECE | Geneva |
| Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean | ECLAC | Santiago |
| Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific | ESCAP | Bangkok |
| Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia | ESCWA | Beirut |
| *Other UN bodies and programmes* | | |
| Department of Peacekeeping Operations | DPKO | New York |
| International Trade Centre | ITC | Geneva |
| Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs | OCHA | New York |
| Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights | OHCHR | Geneva |
| United Nations Capital Development Fund | UNCDF | New York |
| United Nations Children's Fund | UNICEF | New York |
| United Nations Conference on Trade and Development | UNCTAD | Geneva |
| United Nations Development Programme | UNDP | New York |
| United Nations Environment Programme | UNEP | Nairobi |
| United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees | UNHCR | Geneva |
| United Nations Human Settlements Programme | UN-Habitat | Nairobi |
| United Nations Institute for Research and Training | UNITAR | Geneva |
| United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime | UNODC | Vienna |
| United Nations Population Fund | UNFPA | New York |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East | UNRWA | Gaza City, Palestinian Territories |
| United Nations Volunteers | UNV | Bonn |
| United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women | UN Women | New York |
| World Food Programme | WFP | Rome |
| *Specialised agencies within the UN system* | | |
| Food and Agriculture Organisation | FAO | Rome |
| International Civil Aviation Organisation | ICAO | Montreal |
| International Fund for Agricultural Development | IFAD | Rome |
| International Labour Organisation | ILO | Geneva |
| International Maritime Organisation | IMO | London |
| International Monetary Fund | IMF | Washington, DC |
| International Telecommunication Union | ITU | Geneva |
| United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation | UNESCO | Paris |
| United Nations Industrial Development Organisation | UNIDO | Vienna |
| Universal Postal Union | UPU | Berne |
| World Bank Group[a] | | Washington, DC |
| World Health Organisation | WHO | Geneva |
| World Intellectual Property Organisation | WIPO | Geneva |
| World Meteorological Organisation | WMO | Geneva |
| World Tourism Organisation | UNWTO | Madrid |

a Comprising the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), the International Development Association (IDA), the International Finance Corporation (IFC), and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Related organisations* | | |
| International Atomic Energy Agency | IAEA | Vienna |
| Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation | CTBTO | Vienna |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons | OPCW | The Hague |

**WTO** World Trade Organisation, the international organisation of the world trading system with co-operative links to the UN, established in 1995 as successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), based in Geneva.

*Members*: 160 countries

## Presidents and prime ministers

Here are lists of presidents of America and prime ministers of the UK.

### Presidents of the United States

| *Date* | *President* | *Date* | *President* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1789–97 | George Washington | 1881–85 | Chester Arthur |
| 1797–1801 | John Adams | 1885–89 | Grover Cleveland |
| 1801–09 | Thomas Jefferson | 1889–93 | Benjamin Harrison |
| 1809–17 | James Madison | 1893–97 | Grover Cleveland |
| 1817–25 | James Monroe | 1897–1901 | William McKinley |
| 1825–29 | John Adams | 1901–09 | Theodore Roosevelt |
| 1829–37 | Andrew Jackson | 1909–13 | William H. Taft |
| 1837–41 | Martin Van Buren | 1913–21 | Woodrow Wilson |
| 1841 | William Henry Harrison | 1921–23 | Warren Harding |
| 1841–45 | John Tyler | 1923–29 | Calvin Coolidge |
| 1845–49 | James Polk | 1929–33 | Herbert Hoover |
| 1849–50 | Zachary Taylor | 1933–45 | Franklin D. Roosevelt |
| 1850–53 | Millard Fillmore | 1945–53 | Harry Truman |
| 1853–57 | Franklin Pierce | 1953–61 | Dwight Eisenhower |
| 1857–61 | James Buchanan | 1961–63 | John F. Kennedy |
| 1861–65 | Abraham Lincoln | 1963–69 | Lyndon Johnson |
| 1865–69 | Andrew Johnson | 1969–74 | Richard Nixon |
| 1869–77 | Ulysses S. Grant | 1974–77 | Gerald Ford |
| 1877–81 | Rutherford B. Hayes | 1977–81 | Jimmy Carter |
| 1881 | James Garfield | 1981–89 | Ronald Reagan |

| *Date* | *President* | *Date* | *President* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1989–93 | George H.W. Bush | 2001–09 | George W. Bush |
| 1993–2001 | William J. Clinton | 2009– | Barack Obama |

## Prime ministers of the United Kingdom

| *Date* | *Prime minister* |
|---|---|
| 1721–42 | Sir Robert Walpole |
| 1742–43 | Spencer Compton, Earl of Wilmington |
| 1743–54 | Henry Pelham |
| 1754–56 | Thomas Pelham-Holles, Duke of Newcastle |
| 1756–57 | William Cavendish, Duke of Devonshire |
| 1757 | James Waldegrave, 2nd Earl Waldegrave |
| 1757–62 | Thomas Pelham Holles, Duke of Newcastle |
| 1762–63 | John Stuart, Earl of Bute |
| 1763–65 | George Grenville |
| 1765–66 | Charles Wentworth, Marquess of Rockingham |
| 1766–68 | Earl of Chatham, William Pitt "The Elder" |
| 1768–70 | Augustus Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Grafton |
| 1770–82 | Lord North |
| 1782 | Charles Wentworth, Marquess of Rockingham |
| 1782–83 | William Petty, Earl of Shelburne |
| 1783 | William Henry Cavendish Bentinck, 3rd Duke of Portland |
| 1783–1801 | William Pitt "The Younger" |
| 1801–04 | Henry Addington |
| 1804–06 | William Pitt "The Younger" |
| 1806–07 | William Wyndam Grenville, Lord Grenville |
| 1807–09 | William Henry Cavendish Bentinck, 3rd Duke of Portland |
| 1809–12 | Spencer Perceval |
| 1812–27 | Robert Banks Jenkinson, Earl of Liverpool |
| 1827 | George Canning |
| 1827–28 | Frederick Robinson, Viscount Goderich |
| 1828–30 | Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington |
| 1830–34 | Earl Grey |
| 1834 | William Lamb, Viscount Melbourne |
| 1834–35 | Sir Robert Peel |
| 1835–41 | William Lamb, Viscount Melbourne |

| *Date* | *Prime minister* |
|---|---|
| 1841–46 | Sir Robert Peel |
| 1846–52 | Earl Russell |
| 1852 | Earl of Derby |
| 1852–55 | Earl of Aberdeen |
| 1855–58 | Viscount Palmerston |
| 1858–59 | Earl of Derby |
| 1859–65 | Viscount Palmerston |
| 1865–66 | Earl Russell |
| 1866–68 | Earl of Derby |
| 1868 | Benjamin Disraeli |
| 1868–74 | William Ewart Gladstone |
| 1874–80 | Benjamin Disraeli |
| 1880–85 | William Ewart Gladstone |
| 1885–86 | Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne-Cecil, Marquess of Salisbury |
| 1886 | William Ewart Gladstone |
| 1886–92 | Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne-Cecil, Marquess of Salisbury |
| 1892–94 | William Ewart Gladstone |
| 1894–95 | Earl of Rosebery |
| 1895–1902 | Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne-Cecil, Marquess of Salisbury |
| 1902–05 | Arthur James Balfour |
| 1905–08 | Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman |
| 1908–16 | Herbert Henry Asquith |
| 1916–22 | David Lloyd George |
| 1922–23 | Andrew Bonar Law |
| 1923 | Stanley Baldwin |
| 1924 | James Ramsay MacDonald |
| 1924–29 | Stanley Baldwin |
| 1929–35 | James Ramsay MacDonald |
| 1935–37 | Stanley Baldwin |
| 1937–40 | Neville Chamberlain |
| 1940–45 | Sir Winston Churchill |
| 1945–51 | Clement Richard Attlee |
| 1951–55 | Sir Winston Churchill |

| *Date* | *Prime minister* |
|---|---|
| 1955–57 | Sir Anthony Eden |
| 1957–63 | Harold Macmillan |
| 1963–64 | Sir Alec Douglas-Home |
| 1964–70 | Harold Wilson |
| 1970–74 | Edward Heath |
| 1974–76 | Harold Wilson |
| 1976–79 | James Callaghan |
| 1979–90 | Margaret Thatcher |
| 1990–97 | John Major |
| 1997–2007 | Tony Blair |
| 2007–10 | Gordon Brown |
| 2010– | David Cameron |

## Presidents of the European Commission

| *Date* | *President* |
|---|---|
| 1958–67 | Walter Hallstein |
| 1967–70 | Jean Rey |
| 1970–72 | Franco Maria Malfatti |
| 1972–3 | Sicco Mansholt |
| 1973–7 | François-Xavier Ortoli |
| 1977–81 | Roy Jenkins |
| 1981–5 | Gaston Thorn |
| 1985–95 | Jacques Delors |
| 1995–9 | Jacques Santer |
| 1999 | Manuel Marín |
| 1999–2004 | Romano Prodi |
| 2004–14 | José Manuel Barroso |
| 2014– | Jean-Claude Juncker |

## Proofreading

Look for errors in the following categories:

1 "Typos", which include misspelt words, punctuation mistakes, wrong numbers and transposed words or sentences.
2 Bad word breaks.
3 Layout mistakes: wrongly positioned text (including captions,

headings, folios, running heads) or illustrations, incorrect line spacing, missing items, widows (the last word of a paragraph going to another line), orphans (even worse, part of the last word going to another line).

4 Wrong fonts: errors in the use of italic, bold, typeface (eg, Arial not Times New Roman), etc.

If the text contains cross-references to numbered pages or illustrations, the proofreader is often responsible for inserting the correct reference at page-proof stage, and for checking cross-references.

The most effective way of proofreading is to read the text several times, each time with a different aim in mind, rather than attempting to carry out all checks in one go.

**proofreading marks** are illustrated on pages 254–6. (The full set of proofreading marks is defined by British Standard BS 5261 "Copy preparation and proof correction".) The intention of these marks is to identify, precisely and concisely, the nature of an error and the correction required. When corrections are extensive or complex, it is usually better to spell out in full the correct form of the text rather than leave the typesetter to puzzle over a string of hieroglyphs, however immaculately drawn and ordered. Mark all proof corrections clearly and write them in the margin.

**word breaks** It may be necessary to break words, using a hyphen, at the end of lines. Computer word-processing programs come with standard hyphenation rules but these can always be changed or overruled. Ideally, the aim should be to make these breaks as undisruptive as possible, so that the reader does not stumble or falter. Whenever possible, the word should be broken so that, helped by the context, the reader can anticipate the whole word from the part of it given before the break. Here are some useful principles for deciding how to break a word.

1 Words that are already hyphenated should be broken at the hyphen, not given a second hyphen.

2 Words can be broken according to either their derivation (the British convention) or their pronunciation (the US

convention): thus, *aristo-cracy* (UK) or *aristoc-racy* (US), *melli-fluous* (UK) or *mellif-luous* (US). (*See* Part 2 for American usage.)

3 Words of one syllable should not be broken.
4 Words of five or fewer characters should not be broken.
5 At least three characters must be taken over to the next line.
6 Words should not be broken so that their identity is confused or their identifying sound is distorted: thus, avoid *fun-dament*, *the-rapist*.
7 Personal names and acronyms (eg, NATO) should not be broken.
8 Figures should not be broken or separated from their unit of measurement.
9 A word formed with a prefix or suffix should be broken at that point: thus, *bi-furcated*, *ante-diluvian*, *convert-ible*.
10 If a breakable word contains a double consonant, split it at that point: thus, *as-sess*, *ship-ping*, *prob-lem*.
11 Do not hyphenate the last word on the right-hand page.

**on-screen proofreading** Proofreaders are increasingly being asked to proofread on screen, and there are various ways of doing this.

1 Print out the document or pdf, mark it up in the usual way, then scan it and save as a pdf to return by e-mail.
2 Mark up the pdf using the editing tools in a program such as Adobe Acrobat. This can be done in the traditional way with a graphics tablet, using the pen to add proofreading marks, missing letters, and so on. Missing words or phrases, comments and queries can be typed in text or comments boxes or directly onto the pdf using the typewriter tool (available in Adobe Acrobat version 7 onwards). If the creator has "enabled" the pdf, it is possible to mark up changes and add comments using Adobe Acrobat Reader (version 8 onwards).
3 Mark up a text file (in, for example, Microsoft Word) using track changes. Changes and insertions are highlighted in a different colour, deletions and formatting changes are listed in the margin, and you can add comments and queries using the Comments facility.

| INSTRUCTION | TEXTUAL MARK | MARGINAL MARK AND NOTES |
|---|---|---|
| Correction is concluded | None | Mark after each correction. Use the circled number to indicate the number of times the same change occurs in the same line without interruption. |
| Leave unchanged | ••••• under characters to remain | |
| Insert in text the matter indicated in the margin | (caret mark) | New matter followed by or |
| Delete | through character(s) or through words | |
| Delete and close up space | through character(s) or through words | |
| Close up – delete space | | |
| Substitute character or substitute part of one or more words | through character or through all characters | new character or new characters |
| Wrong font. Replace with correct font | Circle character(s) to be changed | |
| Set in or change to italic | under character(s) to be set or changed | |

| INSTRUCTION | TEXTUAL MARK | MARGINAL MARK AND NOTES |
|---|---|---|
| Set in or change to capital letters | under character(s) to be set or changed | |
| Set in or change to small capital letters | under character(s) to be set or changed | |
| Set in or change to bold type | under character(s) to be set or changed | |
| Set in or change to bold italic type | under character(s) to be set or changed | |
| Change capital letters to lower case letters | Circle character(s) to be changed | or l.c. |
| Change italic to upright type | Circle character(s) to be changed | or roman |
| Turn type or figure | Circle type or figure to be altered. Use circled number to indicate the number of degrees of rotation. | 180 |
| Substitute or insert character in superior position | through character or where required | or under character eg or |
| Substitute or insert full stop or decimal point | through character or where required | |
| Substitute or insert comma | through character or where required | |

| INSTRUCTION | TEXTUAL MARK | MARGINAL MARK AND NOTES |
|---|---|---|
| Substitute or insert colon | through character<br>or<br>where required | |
| Substitute or insert hyphen | through character<br>or<br>where required | |
| Substitute or insert semi-colon | through character<br>or<br>where required | |
| Insert or substitute space | or | |
| Make space equal | between words or letters | |
| Reduce space | between words or letters | |
| Start new paragraph | | |
| Run on (no new paragraph) | | |
| Transpose characters or words | between characters or words, numbered when necessary | |
| Transpose lines | | |
| Indent | | |
| Move to the left | xxxx | |
| Insert single or double quotes | where required | |

## Roman numerals

| | |
|---|---|
| I | 1 |
| II | 2 |
| III | 3 |
| IV | 4 |
| V | 5 |
| VI | 6 |
| VII | 7 |
| VIII | 8 |
| IX | 9 |
| X | 10 |
| XI | 11 |
| XII | 12 |
| XIII | 13 |
| XIV | 14 |
| XV | 15 |
| XVI | 16 |
| XVII | 17 |
| XVIII | 18 |
| XIX | 19 |
| XX | 20 |
| XXI | 21 |
| XXX | 30 |
| XL | 40 |
| L | 50 |
| LX | 60 |
| XC | 90 |
| C | 100 |
| CC | 200 |
| D | 500 |
| DCC | 700 |
| DCCXIX | 719 |
| CM | 900 |
| M | 1000 |
| MC | 1100 |
| MCX | 1110 |
| MCMXCI | 1991 |
| MM | 2000 |
| MMX | 2010 |

## Solar system

| | *Distance from the sun* | | | *Diameter (equatorial)* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *au*[a] | *km (m)* | *mi (m)* | *relative to Earth (=1)* | *km ('000)* | *mi ('000)* |
| Sun | 0 | 0 | 0 | 109.00 | 1,392.140 | 865.040 |
| Mercury | 0.39 | 58 | 36 | 0.38 | 4.880 | 3.032 |
| Venus | 0.72 | 108 | 67 | 0.95 | 12.103 | 7.520 |
| Earth | 1 | 150[b] | 93[b] | 1 | 12.756 | 7.926 |
| Moon | – | 150 | 93 | 0.27 | 3.475 | 2.159 |
| Mars | 1.52 | 228 | 142 | 0.53 | 6.794 | 4.221 |
| Jupiter | 5.20 | 778 | 483 | 11.21 | 142.984 | 88.846 |
| Saturn | 9.54 | 1,429 | 888 | 9.45 | 120.536 | 74.898 |
| Uranus | 19.19 | 2,875 | 1,786 | 4.00 | 51.118 | 31.763 |
| Neptune | 30.07 | 4,504 | 2,798 | 3.89 | 49.600 | 30.820 |

a Astronomical unit, roughly equal to the mean distance between Earth and the sun, approximately 150m km or 93m miles.

b Or 8.3 light minutes. Average distance; for the Earth the perihelion distance (at the point nearest to the sun) is $147.1 \times 10^6$ km = $91.4 \times 10^6$ mi = 8.2 light minutes, and the aphelion distance (at the point furthest from the sun) is $153.1 \times 10^6$ km = $95.1 \times 10^6$ mi = 8.5 light minutes.

Note: Pluto used to be included as one of the planets in the solar system, but it was downgraded in 2006. Some astronomers disagree with this decision.

## Technology abbreviations

Here is a list of commonly used technology abbreviations.

| | |
|---|---|
| **ADSL** | asymmetric digital subscriber line |
| **AOL** | America Online |
| **ASCII** | American standard code for information interchange |
| **ASP** | application service provider (or active server page) |
| **BCC** | blind carbon copy |
| **BPS** | bits per second |
| **CAD** | computer-aided design |
| **CC** | carbon copy |
| **CDMA** | code-division multiple access |
| **CPC** | cost per click |
| **CSS** | cascading style sheets (or client-security software) |
| **CGI** | common gateway interface (or computer-generated imagery) |
| **COM** | component object model |
| **DES** | data-encryption standard |
| **DHCP** | dynamic host configuration protocol |
| **DHTML** | dynamic hypertext mark-up language |
| **DNS** | domain-name system |
| **DRM** | digital-rights management |
| **DSL** | digital subscriber line (or loop) |
| **EDI** | electronic data interchange |
| **EFF** | electronic frontier foundation |
| **FAQ** | frequently asked questions |
| **FDM** | frequency-division multiplexing |
| **FSF** | free software foundation |

| | |
|---|---|
| **FTP** | file transfer protocol |
| **GIF** | graphics interchange format |
| **GPRS** | general packet radio service |
| **GSM** | global system for mobile communications |
| **GUI** | graphical user interface |
| **HTML** | hypertext mark-up language |
| **HTTP** | hypertext transfer protocol |
| **IAB** | internet architecture board |
| **IANA** | internet assigned-numbers authority |
| **ICANN** | internet corporation for assigned names and numbers |
| **ICQ** | I seek you |
| **IDS** | intrusion-detection system |
| **IETF** | internet engineering task-force |
| **IM** | instant messaging |
| **IMAP** | internet message-access protocol |
| **IOT** | internet of things |
| **IP** | internet protocol |
| **IPTV** | internet protocol television |
| **IRC** | internet relay chat |
| **IRL** | in real life |
| **ISDN** | integrated services digital network |
| **ISP** | internet service provider |
| **JANET** | joint academic network |
| **JPEG** | joint photographic experts group (or JPG) |
| **KBPS** | kilobits per second |
| **LAN** | local-area network |
| **LDAP** | lightweight directory access protocol |
| **LINX** | London internet exchange |
| **LTE** | long-term evolution |
| **MBPS** | megabits (millions of bits) per second |
| **MIME** | multi-purpose internet mail extensions |
| **MMS** | multimedia messaging service |
| **MOO** | multi-user domain (MUD), object oriented |
| **MPEG** | moving-picture experts group |
| **NAP** | network access point |
| **NCSA** | National Centre for Supercomputing Applications |
| **NNTP** | network-news transfer protocol |

| | |
|---|---|
| OFDM | orthogonal frequency-division multiplexing |
| OS | open source/operating system |
| OSI | open-source initiative |
| P2P | peer to peer |
| PAAS | platform as a service |
| PCS | personal communications service |
| PDA | personal digital assistant |
| PDF | portable document format |
| PGP | pretty good privacy |
| PHP | hypertext preprocessor |
| PKI | public key infrastructure |
| POP | point of presence |
| POP3 | post-office protocol (latest version) |
| POTS | plain old telephone service |
| PPP | point-to-point protocol |
| QOS | quality of service |
| RDF | resource-description framework |
| RFC | request for comments |
| RSS | really simple syndication (or rich site summary) |
| SAAS | software as a service |
| SMS | short message service |
| SMTP | simple mail-transport protocol |
| SOAP | simple object access protocol |
| SQL | structured query language |
| SSL | secure sockets layer |
| TCP | transmission-control protocol |
| TCP/IP | transmission-control protocol/internet protocol |
| TD-SCDMA | time-division synchronous code-division multiple access |
| TDM | time-division multiplexing |
| TLA | three-letter acronym |
| TLD | top-level domain |
| TTP | trusted third party |
| UC | unified communications |
| UDDI | universal description, discovery and integration |
| UDRP | uniform domain-name dispute-resolution policy |
| UMTS | universal mobile-telecommunications system |
| URI | uniform resource identifier |

| | |
|---|---|
| **URL** | uniform resource locator |
| **UTF** | unicode transformation format |
| **UUCP** | unix-to-unix copy protocol |
| **UWB** | ultra-wideband |
| **VM** | virtual machine |
| **VOD** | video-on-demand |
| **VOIP** | voice-over IP |
| **VPN** | virtual private network |
| **VRML** | virtual-reality modelling language |
| **W3C** | world wide web consortium |
| **WAN** | wide area network |
| **WAP** | wireless-application protocol |
| **WASP** | wireless-application service provider |
| **W-CDMA** | wideband code-division multiple access |
| **WDM** | wavelength-division multiplexing |
| **WEP** | wired equivalent privacy |
| **WIMAX** | worldwide interoperability for microwave access |
| **WLAN** | wireless local area network |
| **WMA** | windows media audio |
| **WML** | wireless mark-up language |
| **WPA** | Wi-Fi protected access |
| **WPAN** | wireless personal area network |
| **WSDL** | web services description language |
| **WWW** | world wide web |
| **XHTML** | extensible hypertext mark-up language |
| **XML** | extensible mark-up language |
| **XRBL** | extensible business-reporting language |
| **XSL** | extensible stylesheet language |

## Time of day around the world

Here is a list of countries of the world showing how many hours fast (+) or slow (-) they are relative to Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). The figures show the winter clock time; where summer time is normally observed, the hour is marked with*.

Algeria +1
Angola +1
Argentina −3
Australia
New South Wales, Canberra, Tasmania, Victoria +10*
Queensland +10

South Australia +9.5*
Northern Territory +9.5
Western Australia +8
Austria +1*
Azerbaijan +4*
Bahamas −5*
Bahrain +3
Bangladesh +6
Belarus +2*
Belgium +1*
Bolivia −4
Brazil
Fernando de Noronha −2
Coast & Brasilia −3*
West −4*
Acre −5
Brunei +8
Bulgaria +2*
Canada
Newfoundland Island −3.5*
Atlantic −4*
Eastern −5*
Central −6*
Mountain −7*
Pacific −8*
Chile −4*
China (mainland) +8*
Colombia −5
Congo
Katanga, Kivu +2
Kinshasa +1
Costa Rica −6
Croatia +1*
Cyprus +2*
Czech Republic +1*
Denmark +1*
Dominican Republic −4
Ecuador −5
Egypt +2*
Estonia +2*
Ethiopia +3
Finland +2*
France +1*
Germany +1*
Ghana GMT
Greece +2*
Hong Kong +8
Hungary+1*
Iceland GMT
India +5.5
Indonesia
Eastern +9
Central +8
Western +7
Iran +3.5*
Iraq +3*
Ireland GMT
Israel +2*
Italy +1*
Ivory Coast GMT
Jamaica −5
Japan +9
Kazakhstan (West) +4
Aktau, Atyrau, Aktyubinsk, Uralsk +5
Almaty, Astana +6
Kenya +3
Korea, North & South +9
Kuwait +3
Latvia +2*
Lebanon +2*
Libya +2
Lithuania +2*
Luxembourg +1*
Malaysia +8
Malta +1*
Mexico, Mexico City −6*
Morocco GMT
Netherlands +1*
New Zealand +12*
Nigeria +1
Norway +1*
Oman +4
Pakistan +5
Panama −5
Papua New Guinea +10
Paraguay −4*
Peru −5
Philippines +8
Poland +1*
Portugal GMT*
Puerto Rico −4
Qatar +3
Romania +2*
Russia
Moscow +3*
Omsk +6*
Saudi Arabia +3
Serbia and Montenegro +1*
Sierra Leone GMT
Singapore +8
Slovakia +1*
Slovenia +1*

South Africa +2
Spain +1*
Sweden +1*
Switzerland +1*
Syria +2*
Taiwan +8
Tajikistan +5
Thailand +7
Trinidad & Tobago −4
Tunisia +1
Turkey +2*
Ukraine +2*
United Arab Emirates +4
United Kingdom
GMT*
United States
Eastern −5*
Central −6*
Mountain −7*
Pacific −8*
Alaska −9*
Hawaii −10
Uruguay −3
Uzbekistan +5
Venezuela −4
Vietnam +7
Yemen +3
Zambia +2
Zimbabwe +2

# Index

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