

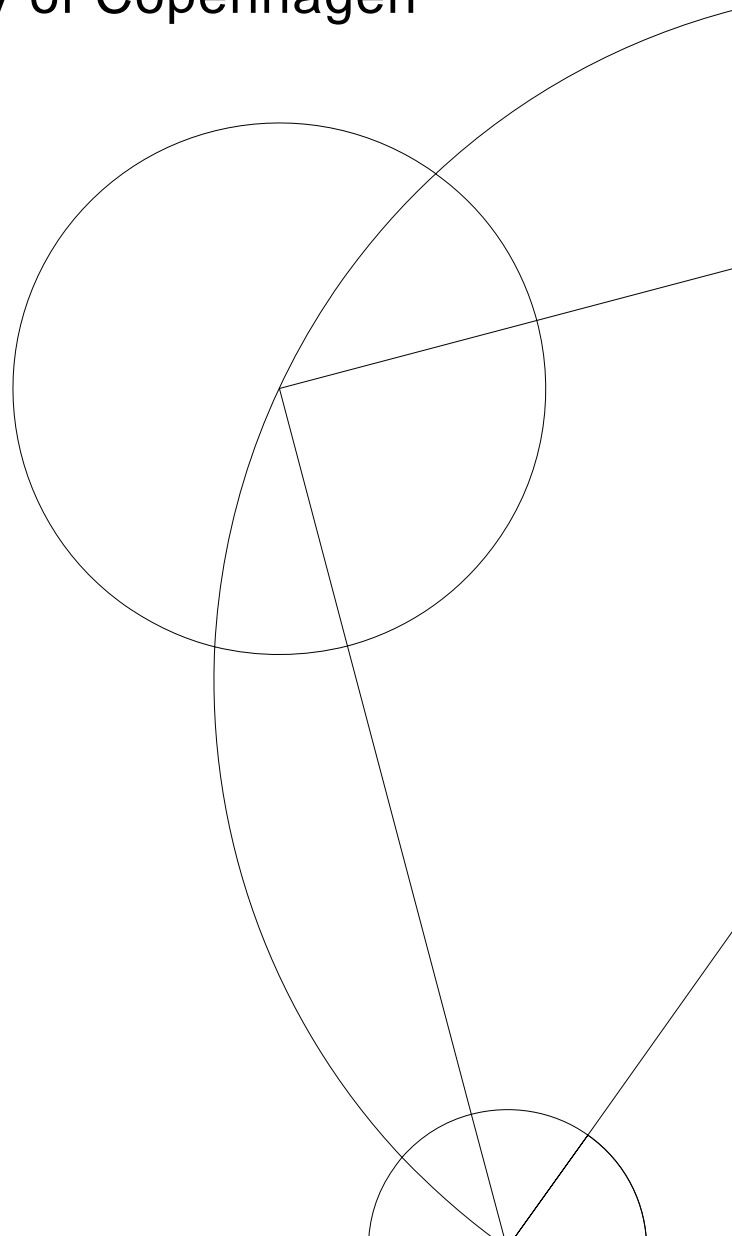


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# English Style Guide

## English at the University of Copenhagen

1. Udgave  
Forår 2007



## INTRODUCTION

This style guide is meant to act 1) as an aid for employees who use English on a professional level in their daily work, and 2) as a set of guidelines for external translation agencies. The style guide will be updated annually and suggestions are welcomed.

The University of Copenhagen uses English as it is written in the British Isles. It differs from American English in spelling (i.e. theatre vs. theater) and sometimes in word use (i.e. aeroplane vs. airplane, programme vs. program). See the relevant sections in the style guide for more information about spelling.

The University of Copenhagen's style guide is based on the style guide designed by the European Commission Directorate-General for Translation, except for the section on prepositions, which is based on Michael Swan's *Practical English Usage*, 1995. We have adapted the EU style guide to suit the University of Copenhagen by leaving out certain sections and adding others. However, the rules of spelling, punctuation etc. correspond with the use recommended by the EU. The original EU style guide can be viewed at: [http://ec.europa.eu/translation/writing/style\\_guides/english/style\\_guide\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/translation/writing/style_guides/english/style_guide_en.pdf)

## INTRODUKTION

Udarbejdelsen af denne sprogvejledning har to formål: Dels at være et redskab for medarbejdere der arbejder professionelt med det engelske sprog på universitetet, og dels at fungere som en rettesnor for eksterne oversættelsesbureauer der løser opgaver for universitetet. Sprogvejledningen vil blive opdateret årligt. Forslag til ændringer er velkomne.

Københavns Universitet bruger britisk engelsk frem for amerikansk engelsk. Der er visse forskelle i stavemåder og brug af ord. Læs mere om britisk stavemåde i sprogvejledningen.

Sprogvejledningen er baseret på Europakommissionens oversættelsesvejledning om brug af det engelske sprog, med undtagelse af afsnittet om præpositioner, der er baseret på Michael Swan's *Practical English Usage* fra 1995. Vi har tilpasset EU-vejledningen til universitetet ved at fjerne og tilføje afsnit efter behov. Reglerne for stavemåde, tegnsætning, osv. er dog stadig helt i overensstemmelse med Europakommissionens anbefalinger. EU-vejledningen kan læses i sin helhed her:

[http://ec.europa.eu/translation/writing/style\\_guides/english/style\\_guide\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/translation/writing/style_guides/english/style_guide_en.pdf)

Der findes også en mindre udgave af sprogvejledningen, skrevet på dansk. Den kan fås ved henvendelse til [kommunikation@adm.ku.dk](mailto:kommunikation@adm.ku.dk)

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1. udgave april 2007.

Henvendelser om denne style guide bedes rettet til [kommunikation@adm.ku.dk](mailto:kommunikation@adm.ku.dk)

# 1. TONE AND STYLE

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- 1.1 *The tone and style* of English writing is often more formal than that of Danish writing. For instance, the use of “Sir”, “Madam”, “Mr” and “Ms” is common in English whereas the Danish equivalents are rarely used in Danish. Likewise, the word “please” is commonly used in English and the lack hereof in appropriate places may even be considered impolite. However, the degree of formality depends on who you are writing to. Official letters and letters to people you do not know will naturally be expected to be more formal than letters to old acquaintances. Be discreet and pay attention to how people address you. If in doubt, adopt a formal first approach and adjust your tone from there.

Note that sarcasm and irony, although commonly used among Danes, can easily be misunderstood by foreigners.

- 1.2 *Active voice*. Use the active rather than passive voice whenever possible. This is a particular challenge for Danes, because the passive voice is more widespread in Danish than in English. For example, write:

*We will give priority to candidates with the following qualifications*

NOT

*Candidates with the following qualifications will be given priority*

## 2. SPELLING

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### SPELLING CONVENTIONS

- 2.1. *British spelling.* Follow English usage of the British Isles, but remember that influences are crossing the Atlantic all the time (the spellings *program* and *disk* have become normal British usage in data processing, for example).
- 2.2. *Words in -ise/-ize.* Use -ise. Both spellings are correct in British English, but the -ise form is now much more common in the media. Using the -ise spelling does away with the need to list the most common cases where it must be used anyway. (There are up to 40 exceptions to the -ize convention: the lists vary in length, few claiming to be exhaustive).
- 2.3. *The -yse form* for such words as *paralyse* and *analyse* is the only correct spelling in British English.
- 2.4. *Singular/plural.* Note that some nouns take a different ending in plural than in singular, for example:

<b><u>SINGULAR</u></b>	→	<b><u>PLURAL</u></b>
<i>Thesis</i>	→	<i>Theses</i>
<i>Parenthesis</i>	→	<i>Parentheses</i>
<i>Crisis</i>	→	<i>Crises</i>

- 2.5. *Its/It's.* Note that “its” is a possessive determiner (like mine, yours, his, hers, ours), whereas the -s in “it’s” is an abbreviation for *is* (it is). Do not confuse with the use of possessive -s (genitive), which is usually separated by an apostrophe: Peter’s thesis, the faculty’s students.
- 2.6. *Digraphs (ae).* Keep the digraph in *aetiology*, *caesium*, *foetus*, *oenology*, *oestrogen*, etc. (*etiology* etc. are US usage), but note that a number of such words (e.g. *medieval*) are now normally spelt without the digraph in British English.
- 2.7. *Double consonants.* In British usage (unlike US practice), a final -l is doubled after a short vowel on adding -ing or -ed to verbs (sole exception: *parallel*, *paralleled*) and adding -er to make nouns from verbs:

*travel, travelling, travelled, traveller*  
*level, levelling, levelled, leveller*

Other consonants double only if the last syllable of the root verb is stressed or carries a strong secondary stress:

*admit, admitting, admitted*  
*refer, referring, referred*  
*format, formatting, formatted*

but:

*benefit, benefiting, benefited*

*focus, focusing, focused*  
*combat, combating, combated*  
*target, targeting, targeted*

Exception: a few verbs ending in *-p* (e.g. *handicapped, kidnapped, worshipped, unlike developed*).

- 2.8. *Input/output*. Avoid the forms *inputted* and *outputted*; write *input* and *output*: e.g. *70,000 records were input last month*.
- 2.9. Use *-ct-* not *-x-* in *connection, reflection*, etc. But note *complexion* and *flexion*.
- 2.10. Write *gram, kilogram* (not *gramme, kilogramme*). However, use *tonne* not *ton* ('ton' refers to the non-metric measure).
- 2.11. Write *metre* for the unit of length, *meter* for measuring instruments e.g. speedometer.
- 2.12. *Judgment*. In legal terminology, use the form without the middle *-e-*. In non-legal context, use *judgement*.

## **INTERFERENCE EFFECTS**

- 2.13. *Confusion between English words*. Look out for errors involving the pairs below:

*dependent* (adj. or noun) *dependant* (noun only)  
*license* (verb) *licence* (noun)  
*practise* (verb) *practice* (noun)  
*principal* (adj. or noun) *principle* (noun)  
*programme* (noun or verb) *program* (noun or verb when relating to IT)  
*stationary* (adj.) *stationery* (noun)

Note also: all together (*in a body*), altogether (*entirely*); premisses (*propositions*), premises (*building*); discreet (describes people or their behaviour = careful and sensible), discrete (separate, distinct).

- 2.14. *Confusion between English and Danish*. Beware of interference effects when switching from one language to the other:

<b><u>DANISH</u></b>	→	<b><u>BRITISH ENGLISH</u></b>
<i>adresse</i>	→	<i>address</i>
<i>center</i>	→	<i>centre</i>
<i>teater</i>	→	<i>theatre</i>
<i>medicin</i>	→	<i>medicine</i>
<i>tarif</i>	→	<i>tariff</i>

## CAPITAL LETTERS

- 2.15. *General*. Capitalise specific references, but lowercase general references. See also Chapter 2 on compass points, Chapter 4 on abbreviations, and Chapter 8 on scientific usage.
- 2.16. As a rule, *capitalise* all nouns and adjectives in names of specific institutions and their subdivisions (faculties, institutes, departments, centres, divisions), committees, programmes/courses:

*Faculty of Theology*  
*Niels Bohr Institute*  
*Department of Anthropology*  
*Health and Life Science Centre*  
*Communications Division*  
*Research and Development Committee*  
*Literature of the Harlem Renaissance*

In cases where this rule would produce a long series of capitalised words, use discretion, especially where the name of a department, committee or programme reads more like a description of its function than a real title:

*Committee for the adaptation to technical progress of the Directive on the introduction of recording equipment in road transport (from the EU)*

The general rule is “the longer the title, the fewer the capitals”.

Note. When using an original name in Danish or another language where only the first word is capitalised, follow the foreign style and put in italics or add inverted commas if confusion could arise.

- 2.17. Use *lower case* for *general* references:

*The eight faculties of the University of Copenhagen have numerous departments and institutes.*

- 2.18. *Legislative and other formal instruments*. Remember to capitalise *specific* references but use lower case for *general* references:

*Regulation (EEC) No 1837/80 (= the Council Regulation of 27 June 1980 or the basic Regulation on sheepmeat)*

*On 29 May 1990, the Council adopted Directive 90/270/EEC on the minimum safety and health requirements for work with display screen equipment.*

but:

*It was felt a directive rather than a regulation was the appropriate instrument.*

Apply the same rule to title, chapter, section, article and annex in such instruments.

Note: the words *draft* and *proposal* should always be written in lower case when referring either specifically or generally to draft legislation.

- 2.19. *Titles*. Capitalise the titles of administrative and scientific staff if it is put before the name:

*Professor John Doe*  
*Information Officer Jane Doe*

but:

*John Doe, professor*  
*Jane Doe, information officer*

- 2.20. Note also:

*The meeting opened at 10:00 with Ms Smith presiding. The Chair asked ...*

- 2.21. *Managerial entities*. Remember to capitalise *specific* managerial entities and to use lowercase when the reference is *general*, e.g.:

*The Rector's Office*  
*The Dean's Office*

but:

*The deans' offices*

- 2.22. *Permanent and ad hoc bodies*. Permanent bodies (e.g. the Board of Studies) require capitals, while ad hoc groups (e.g. the style guide group) do not.

- 2.23. *Seasons, etc*. No capitals for *spring, summer, autumn, winter*; capitals for weekdays, months and feast-days: *Tuesday, November, Christmas Day*.

Note that Spring/Fall Semester takes capitals when used as a specific reference, but are lowercased when used as a general references e.g:

*This Spring Semester*

but:

*The past ten spring semesters*

- 2.24. *Events*. Initial capitals throughout for events such as *Mother's Day, Mermaid Parade, the International Year of Physics*. No capitals, however, for *the 2006/07 marketing year, the 2007 budget year* and so on.

- 2.25. *Celestial bodies and objects*. Since they are proper nouns, the names of planets, moons, stars and artificial satellites are capitalised (*Venus, Rigel, Palapa B*).

However, the earth, the moon and the sun do not normally take an initial capital unless they are specifically referred to as celestial bodies:

*The Starship Enterprise returned to Earth.*

but:

*The daydreamer returned to earth.*

- 2.26. *Quotations.* Start with a capital in running text only if the quotation is a complete sentence in itself:

*Walther Rathenau once said “We stand or fall on our economic performance.”*

*The American Government favours “a two-way street in arms procurement”.*

## **GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES**

- 2.27. *General.* Many place names have an anglicised form, but as people become more familiar with these names in the language of the country concerned, so foreign spellings will gain wider currency in written English. As a rule of thumb, therefore, use the native form for geographical names except where an anglicised form is overwhelmingly common.
- 2.28. *Danish Geography.* Use *Denmark, Sealand, Jutland, Fyn, Copenhagen, Aarhus, Aalborg, Odense.*
- 2.29. *Currency.* The Danish currency is known as DKK.
- 2.30. *Scandinavian/Nordic.* When referring to the countries of the Nordic Council, i.e. Denmark (including the Faeroes and Greenland), Finland (including Åland), Iceland, Norway and Sweden, use ‘Nordic’ rather than ‘Scandinavian’ in terms such as ‘Nordic countries’ or ‘Nordic cooperation’. However, you may use ‘Scandinavia(n)’ if you do not need to be specific, though bear in mind the following points. In its narrow geographical interpretation, ‘Scandinavia’ refers to the two countries of the Scandinavian peninsula, i.e. Norway and Sweden. In practice, however, it includes Denmark and is often stretched to cover Finland. As a cultural term, ‘Scandinavian’ also embraces Iceland and the Faeroes. Note that ‘Scandinavian languages’ refers to the northern Germanic languages, i.e. Danish, Faeroese, Icelandic, Norwegian, and Swedish, but not Finnish.
- 2.31. *Compass points.* No capitals for *north, north-west, north-western*, etc. unless part of an administrative or political unit or a distinct regional entity. Hence *South Africa, Northern Ireland* but *southern Africa, northern France*. Note, however, *Central and Eastern European countries* (capitalised because the connotations are more political than geographic).
- 2.32. *Compound compass points.* Compound compass points are hyphenated and, in official designations, each part is capitalised (*South-West Germany, the North-West Frontier*); always abbreviate as capitals without stops (*NW France*).

## **HYPHENS AND COMPOUND WORDS**

- 2.33. *General.* Compounds may be written as two or more separate words, or with hyphen(s), or as a single word, and many compounds have followed precisely those steps: *data base, data-base, database*. One indication of whether words should be joined or separated is stress: *underpass* is a single word, but *under way* should be written as two words. Use hyphens sparingly but to good purpose: the phrase *crude oil production statistics* needs a hyphen to tell the reader whether ‘crude’ applies to the oil or to the statistics. Sometimes hyphens are absolutely necessary to clarify the sense as they might otherwise be confused with existing words:



*re-cover — recover; re-creation — recreation; re-form — reform; re-count — recount*

- 2.34. There are few hard and fast rules, but note the following examples: well-known problem; hot-rolled strip; broad-based programme (*but* a broadly based programme); oil-bearing rock; user-friendly software; two-day meeting; four-month stay (*but* four months' holiday) balance-of-payments policy; cost-of-living index; low-interest loans; flood-control measures.
- 2.35. In adverb-adjective modifiers, there is no hyphen when the adverb ends in -ly: occupationally exposed worker, a beautifully phrased sentence
- 2.36. Many phrases are treated as compounds, and thus need a hyphen only when used as modifiers: long-term effects *but* policy for the long term, large-scale redundancies *but* production on a large scale
- 2.37. *Prefixes* are usually hyphenated in recent or ad hoc coinages:

*anti-smoking campaign, co-responsibility levies, co-sponsor, ex-army, non-resident, non-flammable, pre-school, quasi-autonomous*

If they are of Latin or Greek origin, however, they tend to drop the hyphen as they become established:

*antibody, codetermination, codecision, cofinancing, cooperation, subcommittee, subparagraph*

Others are more resistant to losing the hyphen:

*all-embracing, all-metal, off-market operations, off-duty, all-inclusive*

but note

*nonsense, overalls*

- 2.38. *Nouns from phrasal verbs*. These are often hyphenated, but the situation is fluid. Thus:
- handout, takeover, comeback*

but

*follow-up, run-up, spin-off*

- 2.39. *Present participles of phrasal verbs*. When used as attributes they are generally hyphenated:
- cooling-off period*

- 2.40. *Avoiding double consonants and vowels*. Hyphens are often used to avoid juxtaposing two consonants or two vowels: aero-elastic, anti-intellectual, part-time, re-election, re-entry, re-examine

However, the hyphen is often omitted in frequently used words: bookkeeping, coeducation, cooperation, coordinate, macroeconomic, microeconomic, radioactive.

- 2.41. *Numbers and fractions*. Numbers take hyphens when they are spelled out.

Fractions take hyphens when used attributively, but not when used as nouns:

*twenty-eight, two-thirds completed*

but:

*an increase of two thirds*

2.42. *Prefixes before proper names.* Prefixes before proper names are hyphenated: *pro-American, intra-Community, mid-Atlantic, pan-European*. Note, however, that *transatlantic* is written solid.

2.43. *Coordination of compounds.* Hyphenated compounds may be coordinated as follows:

*gamma- and beta-emitters, acid- and heat-resistant, hot- and cold-rolled products*

Where compounds are not hyphenated (closed compounds), or should you choose to write them so, they should not be coordinated but written out in full:

*macrostructural and microstructural changes, minicomputers and microcomputers, prenatal and postnatal effects, agricultural inputs and outputs*

*NOT*

*macro- and microstructural changes, mini- and microcomputers, pre- and postnatal effects, agricultural in- and outputs*

2.44. *Closed compounds in technical texts.* Some expressions that are written as separate words in everyday language become closed compounds in more specialist contexts, e.g. *pigmeat, longwall*. This reflects the fact that in a particular field such expressions have the status of precise terms.

2.45. *Hyphen used as comma.* Remember to put spaces around hyphens/dashes when used as comma:

*The student was – however – lost for words.*

### 3. PUNCTUATION

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- 3.1. The punctuation in an English text must follow the rules and conventions for English, which sometimes differ from those applying to other languages. Note in particular that:
- punctuation marks in English are always — apart from hyphens/dashes and ellipsis points — closed up to the preceding word;
  - quotation marks may be either straight ("...") or preferably smart (“...”), but not both in the same text, and never chevrons (<<...>>) or as in Danish („...“).

#### **FULL STOP**

- 3.2. No further full stop is required if a sentence ends with an abbreviation that takes a point (e.g. ‘etc.’) or with a quotation complete in itself that ends in a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark before the final quotes:

*René Descartes said “I think therefore I am.”*

- 3.3. *Full stops as omission marks (aka ellipsis points...)*. Always use three points. If a sentence ends with an omission, no fourth full stop should be added. If any other punctuation mark follows, there is no space before it.

#### **COLON**

- 3.4. Colons are most often used to indicate that an expansion, qualification or explanation is about to follow (e.g. a list of items in running text). The part before the colon must be a full sentence in its own right, but the second need not be.

See also Chapter 9 for lists.

- 3.5. Do not use colons at the end of headings.
- 3.6. Colons do not require the next word to start with a capital: contrast usage in Danish. (However, see Chapter 9 for an exception.)

#### **SEMICOLON**

- 3.7. Use a semicolon rather than a comma to combine two sentences into one without a linking conjunction:

*The committee dealing with the question of commas agreed on a final text; however, the issue of semicolons was not considered.*

You may also use semicolons instead of commas to separate items in a series; especially phrases that themselves contain commas (see also Chapter 9 for the use of semicolons in lists).

## COMMA

- 3.8. *Items in a series.* Here, the comma may be considered to stand for a missing ‘and’ or ‘or’.

*John mowed the lawn, Mary did the cooking and Frank lazed around.  
He came, saw and conquered.*

Insert an additional comma before the final ‘and’ (or ‘or’) if needed for clarification (the Oxford comma):

*Sugar, beef and veal, and milk products*

A comma also comes before ‘etc.’ in a series:

*Sugar, beef, milk products, etc.*

But not if no series is involved:

*They discussed milk products etc., then moved on to sugar.*

Commas also divide adjectives in series:

*Moderate, stable prices*

But not if the adjectives do not form a series:

*Stable agricultural prices*

In the second example, ‘stable’ modifies ‘agricultural prices’, i.e. the phrase cannot be read as ‘stable and agricultural prices’.

- 3.9. *Linked sentences.* Use a comma to separate two sentences linked by a conjunction such as ‘but’, ‘yet’, ‘while’ or ‘so’ to form a single sentence:

*The committee dealing with the question of commas agreed on a final text, but the issue of semicolons was not considered.*

Where there is no conjunction, use a semicolon (see 3.7).

- 3.10. *Parenthetical and introductory phrases.* If a phrase is intended to complement or introduce the information in a sentence and has a separate emphasis of its own, it is set off by a comma or by a pair of commas if inside the sentence:

*Mindful of the need to fudge the issue, the committee on commas never came to a conclusion.*

*The committee on commas is composed of old fogeys, as you know.*

*The committee on commas, however, was of a different opinion.*

Note that the sentence must remain a complete sentence even if the parenthetical or introductory phrase is omitted.

Parenthetical phrases may also be created by setting off part of the sentence with a comma (or commas) while retaining the normal word order. Both the following are possible:

*The President was a great man despite his flaws.*  
*The President was a great man, despite his flaws.*

Without the comma, the phrase ‘despite his flaws’ forms part of the statement. With the comma, the phrase complements it, i.e. the sentence retains its sense if the phrase is omitted. The comma is therefore correctly left out in the following sentence:

*Phrases must not be set off by commas if this changes the intended meaning of the sentence.*

However, a comma is required if the phrase has a separate emphasis simply by virtue of being moved out of position, for example to the beginning of the sentence:

*If this changes the intended meaning of the sentence, phrases must not be set off by commas.*

Note, though, that short introductory phrases need not have any separate emphasis of their own, i.e. they may be run into the rest of the sentence. Both the following are possible:

*In 2003, the committee made three decisions.*  
*In 2003 the committee made three decisions.*

Parenthetical phrases (but not introductory phrases) may sometimes be marked by hyphens/dashes or brackets.

- 3.11. *Non-defining relative clauses.* Non-defining relative clauses are special cases of parenthetical phrases. Note the difference compared with relative clauses that define the preceding noun phrase (i.e. ‘the translations’ or ‘the translation in the tray’ in the examples below):

*The translations, which have been revised, can now be sent out.*  
(added detail — they have all been revised)

*The translations which (or better: that) have been revised can now be sent out.*  
(defining the subset that is to be sent out — only those that have been revised are to be sent out)

Note also that the use of ‘*which*’ in defining relative clauses is often considered to be stilted and overly formal. ‘*That*’ reads more naturally. It also helps make the meaning clearer, reinforcing the lack of commas, since it is used as a relative pronoun only in defining clauses. Unlike ‘*which*’, however, ‘*that*’ needs to be close to the noun to which it refers.

- 3.12. *Combined uses of commas.* The uses of commas described above can of course be combined. Worth noting is that an initial comma is not needed before introductory phrases in linked sentences:

*The committee dealing with the question of commas agreed on a final text, but despite the importance of the matter, the relationship with semicolons was not considered.*

- 3.13. *Avoiding commas.* Avoid liberally sprinkling sentences with commas, but do so by constructing sentences so as to minimise the number of commas required rather than by breaching the comma rules described above. For example, inserted phrases can often be moved to the beginning of the sentence.

Parenthetical phrases can also be rendered with brackets or dashes. Moreover, a parenthetical phrase may not in fact be appropriate (see the examples in 3.10 and the discussion of relative clauses in 3.11).

Finally, a complex sentence can be divided by a semicolon or even split into two or more sentences.

## **BRACKETS/PARANTHESES**

- 3.14. *Round brackets.* Also known as parentheses, round brackets are used much like commas in 3.10 above, except that the text they contain has a lower emphasis. They are often used to expand on or explain the preceding item in the text:

*SIS (Student Information System) is one of the University's IT systems.*

- 3.15. *Bracketed sentences.* A whole sentence in brackets should have the final stop inside the closing bracket. Do not forget the stop at the end of the preceding sentence as well.

- 3.16. *Square brackets.* Square brackets are used to make insertions in quoted material e.g.:

*"I will always remember to use square brackets [as opposed to round brackets, ed.] around inserts in quotes" said the translator.*

They are also used by convention in administrative drafting to indicate optional passages or those still open to discussion so do not replace with round brackets. When translating, also use square brackets to insert translations or explanations after names or titles left in the original language.

## **QUESTION MARK**

- 3.17. *Courtesy questions.* No question mark is needed after a request or instruction put as a question for courtesy:

*Would you please sign and return the attached form.*

- 3.18. Do not use a question mark in indirect speech:

*The chairman asked when the deadline would be fixed.*

## **EXCLAMATION MARK**

- 3.19. In English, exclamation marks are used solely to mark exclamations:

*How we laughed!*

or

*What a fiasco!*

or to add exclamatory force to a statement, e.g.

*Two million cows had to die!*

or a command, e.g.

*Please read this paragraph!*

Exclamatory expressions are appropriate in texts that directly address the reader or audience, such as speeches or informal instructions, but are usually out of place in formal texts. Note that exclamation marks are not used to mark the imperative as such in English.

## QUOTATION MARKS

- 3.20. *Double v single quotation marks.* Use double quotation marks to signal direct speech and verbatim quotes, and single quotation marks for quotations within these, e.g.

*“He said to me ‘I will always remember the British grammar rules’, but he lied”.*

Note that some publishers adopt the reverse convention.

Use single quotation marks to identify words and phrases that are not themselves quotes but to which you wish to draw attention as lexical items: for instance, the word ‘quotation’.

- 3.21. *Short quotations.* Short quotes of up to four lines or thereabouts are normally run into the surrounding text. They are set off by opening and closing quotation marks only.
- 3.22. *Block quotations.* Extended (block) quotations should be indented and separated from the surrounding text by paragraph spacing before and after. No quotation marks are required with this distinctive layout.

## APOSTROPHE

- 3.23. *Possessive form of nouns.* The possessive form of nouns is marked by an apostrophe followed by an -s. After the plural ending -s, however, the possessive -s is omitted:

*the owner’s car*

*women’s rights*

*footballers’ earnings*

Note that the apostrophe is never used in possessive adjectives: its (*as distinct from it’s, i.e. ‘it is’*), ours, theirs, yours

- 3.24. *Nouns ending in -s,* including proper names and abbreviations, form their singular possessive with -’s, just like nouns ending in other letters.

*an actress’s pay; Mr Jones’s paper;*

*Helios’s future is uncertain; AWACS’s success*

The -s after terminal -s’ used to be omitted in written English, but this is now done only in classical and biblical names, e.g.

*Socrates’ philosophy, Xerxes’ fleet*

Note that some place names also omit the apostrophe (*Earls Court, Kings Cross*). Possessives of proper names in titles (e.g. *Chambers Dictionary*) sometimes omit the apostrophe as well. There is no apostrophe in *Achilles tendon*.

- 3.25. *Contractions*. Apostrophes are also used to indicate contractions, i.e. where one or more letters have been omitted in a word or where two words have been joined together. Contractions are common in informal texts, but not in formal texts. Examples:

*don't = do not*

*it's = it is (as distinct from the possessive 'its')*

*who's = who is (as distinct from whose)*

*you're = you are (as distinct from your)*

- 3.26. *Plurals of abbreviations*. Plurals of abbreviations (*MEPs, UFOs,*) do not take an apostrophe.

- 3.27. *Plurals of figures*. Plurals of figures do not take an apostrophe:

*Pilots of 747s undergo special training.*

- 3.28. *Plurals of single letters*. The plurals of single lower-case letters may, however, take an apostrophe to avoid misunderstanding:

*Dot your i's*

*Mind your p's and q's*

- 3.29. In tables, write *'000 tonnes* (or of course *thousand tonnes* or *thousands of tonnes*), not in *1,000 tonnes*.



## 4. NUMBERS

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- 4.1. *General.* In deciding whether to write numbers in words or figures, the first consideration should be consistency within a passage. As a general rule write low numbers (nine and below) in words and larger numbers (10 and above) in figures. If the passage contains both kinds, however, use either figures or words for all the numbers.

Note that you should always use figures for statistics (*3 new officials were appointed in 2002, 6 in 2003 and ...*), for votes (*12 delegations were in favour, 7 against, and 6 abstained*), for ranges denoted by a dash, and for serial numbers (*Chapter 5, Article 9, Item 4*) unless you are quoting a source that does otherwise.

On the other hand, try not to start a sentence with a figure or a symbol followed by a figure. Either write out in full or, if this does not work, make use of devices such as inversion:

*Altogether 92 cases were found ..., Of the total, €55 million was spent on ...*

- 4.2. *Commas vs. points.* Use commas to separate thousands (*4,000,000*) and points to separate fractions (*3,000.5*) – contrast usage in Danish. Note that serial numbers are not grouped in thousands (*p. 1452*).

In tables write

*EUR '000 or EUR thousand but not in EUR 1,000.*

*'000 tonnes or thousand tonnes or thousands of tonnes, but not in 1,000 tonnes*

- 4.3. Always use figures with units of measurement that are denoted by symbols or abbreviations:

*EUR 50 or fifty euros*

*250 kW or two hundred and fifty kilowatts*

*205 µg or two hundred and five micrograms*

*5°C or five degrees Celsius*

The converse does not hold. If the units of measurement are spelled out, the numbers do not also have to be spelled out but may be written with figures:

*250 kilowatts, 500 metres.*

- 4.4. With *hundred* and *thousand* there is a choice of using figures or words:

*300 or three hundred but not 3 hundred*

*EUR 3,000 or three thousand euros but not EUR 3 thousand*

*Million and billion, however, may be combined with figures:*

*2.5 million, 3 million, 31 billion*

### WRITING OUT NUMBERS

- 4.5. As a rule, avoid combining single-digit figures and words using hyphens (a 2-hour journey) but write out instead:

*a three-year period; a five-door car*

But note set phrases such as:

*40-hour week, 24-hour clock, 4-wheel drive*

4.6. When two numbers are adjacent, spell out one of them:

*90 fifty-gram weights, seventy 25-cent stamps*

4.7. Compound numbers that are to be written out (e.g. in treaty texts) take a hyphen:

*the thirty-first day of December, nineteen hundred and eighty-one*

4.8. *Abbreviating “million” and “billion”.* Do not use *mio*. The letters *m* and *bn* can be used for sums of money to avoid frequent repetitions of *million*, *billion*; this applies particularly in tables where space is limited. The abbreviation should be closed up to the figure (examples: *€230m, £370m, \$230bn*).

## **FRACTIONS**

4.9. *Written out.* Insert hyphens in fractions used as adverbs or adjectives but not if they are nouns:

*a two-thirds increase, but an increase of two thirds.*

4.10. Avoid combining figures and words: two-thirds completed, *not* 2/3 completed

4.11. *Decimal points.* In English, the decimal fractions are separated by points in contrast to Danish decimal commas (3.5%)

## **RANGES**

4.12. *Written out.* When a range is written out, repeat symbols and multiples (i.e. thousand, million, etc.):

*from EUR 20 million to EUR 30 million  
between 10°C and 70°C*

4.13. *Abbreviated form.* When a range is indicated by a dash, do not repeat the symbol or multiple if they do not change and close up the dash between the figures:

*€20–30 million, 10–70°C*

If the symbol or multiple changes, however, leave a blank space on either side of the dash

*100 kW – 40 MW*

## **DATES AND TIME**

### **DATES**

4.14. Write out the month, preceded by a simple figure for the day, e.g. *23 July 1997*. Use all four digits when referring to specific years (i.e. 1997 not '97). However, in footnotes and where space is at a premium, the month can be written as a number.

Note that in American usage, 23 July 1997 is 7.23.97 and in the international dating system it is 1997-07-23.

- 4.15. *Avoiding redundancy.* If the year in question is absolutely clear from the context, the year number may be left out: *on 23 July 2001, the Department did this ... but subsequently on 2 August, it did something else ...*
- 4.16. *Decades.* When referring to decades write *the 1990s* (no apostrophe).
- 4.17. *Systems of chronology.* The letters *AD* come before the year number (*AD 2000*), whereas *BC* follows it (*347 BC*). *CE* (Common Era), *BCE* (Before Common Era) and *BP* (Before Present) also follow the year number.
- 4.18. *Time spans.* Use a closed-up dash. For the second figure, you should not repeat the century if it is the same, but you should always include the decade:  
1870–1901, 1905–10, 1914–18, 1939–45, 1980–86, 1996–2006
- 4.19. Note the following patterns:  
*from 1990 to 1995 (not: from 1990–95)*  
*between 1990 and 1995 (not: between 1990–95)*  
*1990 to 1995 inclusive (not: 1990–95 inclusive)*
- 4.20. Note that *1990–91* is two years. Single marketing years, financial years, etc. that do not coincide with calendar years are denoted by a forward slash: e.g. *1990/91*, which is twelve months or less.

## TIME

- 4.21. Use the 24-hour system in preference to the 12-hour system. When you use the 24-hour system you do not need to use *p.m.* (*post meridiem*) or *a.m.* (*ante meridiem*).
- Write times with a colon between hours and minutes, without adding *hrs* or *o'clock*: *11:30*.
- For midnight either write the word *midnight* or use *24:00* (for periods ending then) or *00:00* (for periods starting then).
- 4.22. For duration use *h*:  
*the time allowed for the test is 2½ h.*
- 4.23. Distinguish *summertime* (the season) from *summer time*, e.g. *British Summer Time (BST)*.

## 5. ABBREVIATIONS, ACRONYMS and SYMBOLS

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### ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

- 5.1. *General.* As a general principle, abbreviations, acronyms (abbreviations that are pronounced as words) and symbols should be used as much for the convenience of the reader as of the writer. Overuse will baffle and irritate most readers.

Acronyms are normally uppercased. However, if an acronym has come to be regarded as a proper name, it retains only an initial capital. This requires it to conform to the rules for English spelling, to be pronounced as a normal word and to carry no risk of confusion with an existing word. As a rule, the longer the acronym, the more likely it is to lose its capitals. To ensure consistency and remove the need for subjective decisions, follow the ‘five-letter’ rule in 5.2 below. Bear in mind, though, that this rule is necessarily arbitrary. Finally, ignore the convention in many online databases of uppercasing all acronyms and abbreviations.

Note also that some acronyms may become common nouns, losing even the initial capital, e.g. radar and laser.

- 5.2. *Longer acronyms.* Lowercase acronyms with more than five letters, but retain initial capital if they can be pronounced. Thus:

*Benelux, Unesco, Unctad*

*but:*

*EFILWC, EMCDDA*

- 5.3. *Short acronyms.* Five letters or fewer: Uppercase throughout without points:

*MA, BA, EEA, ISDN, OECD, R&D (no spaces!)*

and, though pronounceable:

*IARU, AIDS, EFTA, NASA, NATO*

- 5.4. *Indefinite/definite article.* Use the definite/indefinite article before abbreviations. The definite/indefinite article is usually dropped in acronyms. Thus:

*the USA, an LSE professor, the LSE*

*but:*

*Unesco, Benelux*

- 5.5. *Plurals of abbreviations.* Plurals of abbreviations do not take an apostrophe:

*BAs, MAs, PhDs*

- 5.6. *Lowercase or mixed-case abbreviations.* There is a small but high-frequency class of abbreviations that traditionally are written in lowercase (including at the beginning of a sentence in footnotes) and require points after each letter, such as *e.g.* and *i.e.*

Most other lowercase and mixed-case abbreviations are written without stops:

*aka, fob, cif, PhD, MSc, BSc*

including most scientific abbreviations and symbols:

*pH*

- 5.7. *Single truncated words.* Single truncated words take a point unless the last letter is included:  
*Jan., Sun., Co., fig., etc., cf., chap., prof.*  
*Mr, Mrs, Dr, Ltd, St Petersburg*
- 5.8. Abbreviate ‘number’ as No (plural Nos), which has no final stop as it is derived from Latin *Numero*.
- 5.9. *Single letters.* Single letters (uppercase and lowercase) conventionally take a point. Exceptions: scientific symbols (chemical elements, basic and derived units, etc.) and the v in the names of court cases.
- 5.10. First names should be abbreviated with a single initial only (Phillip: P., Marc: M., Thomas: T.). For compound first names, use both initials (Jean-Marie: J-M).
- 5.11. Note also: p. = page (plural: pp.); l. = line (plural: ll.).
- 5.12. *Foreign-language abbreviations.* Untranslated foreign-language abbreviations should retain the capitalisation and punctuation conventions of the original (e.g. A/S).
- 5.13. Abbreviate *Nota Bene* as *NB* not *N.B.*

## **MATHEMATICAL SYMBOLS**

- 5.14. *Percent.* Note that *percent* can be one or two words (per cent). Usually *percent* is considered American spelling, but it is becoming increasingly more common use in British spelling as well and is recommended use by the EU style guide. Use the word where the number is also spelled out in words: *rounded down to the nearest tenth of one percent*. Note also *several percent higher, a few percent*, and similar expressions. With figures, use the percent sign (%).

Observe the distinction between *percent (or %)* and *percentage point(s)*; an increase from 5% to 7% is an increase of two percentage points (or an increase of 40%), not an increase of 2%.

## **SCIENTIFIC SYMBOLS AND UNITS OF MEASUREMENT**

- 5.15. *General.* Most scientific symbols in current use are interlingual forms and do not require any adaptation when writing in English. In the specific case of weights and measures, the International System of Units has now been adopted almost universally for science and technology, as well as generally for trade and industry in the EU.
- 5.16. *Names of units of measurement.* Names of basic and derived units of measurement are always lowercased even if they are derived from a personal name, e.g.:

*ampere, kelvin, hertz, newton, pascal, watt, siemens, becquerel*

They have normal plurals in –s:

*250 volts, 50 watts*

Note that proper names used adjectivally retain their initial capital:

*Richter scale, Mach number, degree Celsius*

- 5.17. *Degree sign.* The degree sign in temperatures and compass bearings, e.g. 25°C or 65°NE, is closed up on both sides.
- 5.18. *Symbols for units of measurement.* These are normally abridged forms of the names of these units. They are written without stops, are not closed up to figures and do not have plurals (4 ha, 9 m, 60 km, 50 km/h, 200 g, 5 kg, 40 t, 20 bar, 55 dB (A), 2,000 kc/s).

## 6. FOREIGN IMPORTS

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### ***FOREIGN WORDS AND PHRASES IN ENGLISH TEXT***

- 6.1. Personal names should retain their original accents, e.g. Grybauskaitė, Potočník, Wallström.
- 6.2. *Latin* Avoid obscure Latin phrases if writing for a broad readership. When faced with such phrases as a translator, check whether they have the same currency and meaning when used in English.

The expression “per diem” (“daily allowance”) and many others have English equivalents, which should be preferred, e.g. “a year” or “/year” rather than “per annum”.

## 7. PREPOSITIONS (for, of, by, at, in, on, about, etc.)

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For non-native speakers of English, it can be very difficult to use the right prepositions. For example, we travel **in** a car, but **on** a bus. We hear the news **on** the radio and read about it **in** the paper. It happened **at** 11:45 **on** Tuesday **in** January. As there are few hard and fast rules about how to use prepositions, it is often a matter of learning the correct use by heart:

*I **agree with** you.*

*We **agree about** the necessity of having a style guide.*

*Let us **agree on** the decision.*

*I will **agree to** come with you if we can take the bus.*

If in doubt, use a dictionary!

- 7.1. *Verbs* after prepositions always take the –ing form:

*He saved time **by following** five courses in the Spring Semester.*

*I can't hold a test tube **without breaking** it.*

- 7.2. *Word order*. Especially in informal language, prepositions can be at the end of a sentence, for example in relative clauses and *wh*- questions:

*What are you talking **about**?*

*This is the bed Elvis used to sleep **in**.*

In a more formal language, prepositions are usually not placed at the end of the sentence:

*This is the bed **in** which Elvis slept.*

In *passive* structures, the preposition usually stays with the verb:

*Elvis' bed has not been **slept in** since he died.*

In adverbial expressions such as “**with patience**”, the preposition usually stays with the noun:

*I admire the **patience with** which she studied.*

But NOT

*I admire the **patience** she studied **with**.*

- 7.3. *Left out prepositions*. There are certain expressions in which prepositions are left out:

*He wanted to discuss (about) the new website.*

*It was almost noon when he entered (into) the office.*

*Expressions of time*. Before expressions of time beginning *this, next, last, that, one, every, each, some, all*, prepositions can sometimes be left out:

*Let us have a meeting about this (on) next Tuesday evening.*

*We talked about this (in) last January.*

*Expressions of measurement*. The preposition is usually left out in expressions containing *height, weight, length, age, size, shape, or colour*, as the sentences below:



*She is (of) the same height as her brother.*

*(of) What colour is your car?*

*Her dress is (of) the same size as mine.*

## 8. VERBS

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### **SINGULAR OR PLURAL AGREEMENT**

- 8.1. *Collective nouns*. Use the singular when the emphasis is on the whole entity:

*The Study Board is considering the matter.*

*The Department of Geology was not informed.*

Use the plural when the emphasis is on the individual members:

*The Study Board have received many parking tickets.*

*The Department of Geology were given a pay rise.*

- 8.2. Countries and organisations with a plural name take the singular:

*The Netherlands is reconsidering its position.*

*The United Student Councils was unable to reach agreement.*

- 8.3. Use a singular verb when a multiple subject clearly forms a whole:

*Checking and stamping the transcripts is the job of the Study and Examinations Office.*

- 8.4. *Words in -ics*. These are singular when used to denote a scientific discipline or body of knowledge (mathematics, statistics, economics) but plural in all other contexts.

*Economics is commonly regarded as a soft science.*

*The economics of the new faculty were studied in depth.*

- 8.5. *A statistic*. The singular *statistic* is a back-formation from the plural and means an individual item of data from a set of statistics.

- 8.6. *Data* is properly a plural noun and therefore goes with a plural verb.

- 8.7. The word *none* takes either a singular or plural verb, depending on sense.

- 8.8. *Uncountable nouns*. Some nouns are not countable and therefore always take a singular verb: research, money, information, news, water, understanding, knowledge, accommodation etc.

### **VERBS IN LEGISLATION**

- 8.9. The use of verbs, in particular the modal verb *shall*, in legislation often gives rise to problems, since such uses are rarely encountered in everyday speech. Consequently, writers may lack a feel for the right construction. The following section is intended to provide guidance.

- 8.10. For a *positive command*, use *shall*:

*This Exchange Agreement shall be valid for the University of Copenhagen.*

Note that this provision expresses an obligation. However, this is not always the case:

*This Exchange Agreement shall enter into force on ...*

In the first but not the second case, *must* could be used instead of *shall*. :

- 8.11. Where a *negative command* expresses a prohibition, use *may not*:

*This Exchange Agreement may not be used by Copenhagen Business School.*

Linguistically speaking, *shall not* or *must not* could also be used to express a prohibition. Note, however, that *shall not* is used where no prohibition is meant, for example:

*This Exchange Agreement shall not be valid in any of the cases below:*

*This Exchange Agreement shall not enter into force until/if ...*

- 8.12. For a *positive permission*, use *may*:

*This Exchange Agreement may be used ...:*

- 8.13. For a *negative permission*, use *need not*:

*This exam need not be attended in the following cases:*

## **SPLIT INFINITIVE**

- 8.14. This refers to the practice of inserting adverbs or other words before an infinitive but after the 'to' that usually introduces it, as in "*to daringly introduce a style guide at the University*". Although there is nothing wrong with this practice from the standpoint of English grammar, there are still many who think otherwise. One way of encouraging such readers to concentrate on the content of your text rather than on the way you express it is to avoid separating the 'to' from its following infinitive.

Note, however, that this does not justify qualifying the wrong verb, as in "*we called on her legally to condemn the students' behaviour*". In these and similar cases, either split the infinitive with a clear conscience ("*we called on her to legally condemn the students' behaviour*") or move the qualifying adverb to the end of the phrase ("*we called on her to condemn the students' behaviour legally*").

## 9. LISTS AND TABLES

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When translating lists, always use the same type of numbering as in the original, e.g. Arabic numerals, small letters and/or Roman numerals. If the original has bullets or dashes, use these. However, you need not use the same punctuation (points, brackets, etc.) for list numbers, and indeed should not do so if they would otherwise look the same as numbered headings elsewhere in the text.

The four basic types of lists are illustrated below. In multi-level lists, follow the same rules for each level.

- 9.1. *Lists of short items* (without main verbs) should be introduced by a full sentence and have the following features:
- ◆ introductory colon
  - ◆ no initial capitals
  - ◆ no punctuation (very short items) or comma after each item
  - ◆ a full stop at the end.
- 9.2. *Where each item completes* the introductory sentence, you should:
- begin with the introductory colon;
  - label each item with the appropriate bullet, number or letter;
  - end each item with a semicolon;
  - close with a full stop.
- 9.1. *If all items are complete statements* without a grammatical link to the introductory sentence, proceed as follows:
- a. introduce the list with a colon;
  - b. label each item with the appropriate bullet, number or letter;
  - c. start each item with a lowercase letter;
  - d. end each one with a semicolon;
  - e. put a full stop at the end.
- 9.2. If any one item consists of several complete sentences, announce the list with a complete sentence and continue as indicated below:
- 1) Introduce the list with a colon.
  - 2) Label each item with the appropriate bullet, number or letter.
  - 3) Begin each item with a capital letter.
  - 4) End each statement with a full stop. This allows several sentences to be included under a single item without throwing punctuation into confusion.

## **TABLES**

- 9.5. *Table headings.* Place table headings above the table without a main verb. Diagrams, figures and graphs should be labelled at the bottom, also without a main verb. It is not necessary to repeat the word *table* in the heading. See 4.2 for numbers in tables.

## 10. SCIENCE GUIDE

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### SCIENTIFIC NAMES

10.1. *Biological sciences.* As the binomial system for classifying living organisms is used in all languages, it is normally sufficient that the name is capitalised, while species epithets are always lowercased, even if derived from proper names (e.g. *Martes Americana*, *Pusa sibirica*):

<b>ORDER:</b>	Rosales	Carnivora
<b>FAMILY:</b>	Rosaceae	Felidae
<b>GENUS:</b>	<i>Rosa</i>	<i>Felis</i>
<b>SPECIES:</b>	<i>Rosa moschata</i>	<i>Felis catus</i>

10.2. *Italicisation.* The names of genera, species and subspecies (varieties, cultivars) are always italicised.

10.3. Most text references are to genus or species (i.e. the name of the genus followed by an epithet). The genus name should be spelled out in full on first occurrence and subsequently abbreviated: *Escherichia coli*, abbreviated *E. coli*.

10.4. *Non-technical usage.* Some scientific plant names are identical with the vernacular name and of course should not be capitalised or italicised when used non-technically (e.g. “rhododendron growers”; but *Rhododendron canadense*).

10.5. *Geology.* Use initial capitals for formations (*Old Red Sandstone*; *Eldon formation*) and geological time units (*Cenozoic*; *Tertiary period*; *Holocene*), but not for the words era, period, etc.

10.6. *Chemical compounds.* Like chemical elements, the symbols for chemical compounds (i.e. chemical formulae) are interlingual: *NaCl*, *H<sub>2</sub>O*, *C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>25</sub>NO*, etc.

10.7. *Avoiding hyphenation.* Current practice is to avoid hyphenation altogether, except between letters and numbers (see below). This applies both to prefixes (such as *di*, *iso*, *tetra*, *tri*: *diisopropyl fluorophosphate*, *ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid*) and other compound forms (*benzeneethanol*), where normal hyphenation rules would require a hyphen between the double vowels.

10.8. *Names containing numbers.* Use hyphens to link numbers to letters in the names of chemical compounds (on both sides if the number is an infix). If there are several numbers in sequence, they are separated by commas:

*2-pentanone*; *1,2-dichloroethane*; *2,2,3 3-tetrabromobutane*.

10.9. *Sentences beginning with numbers.* If the first word in a sentence is a chemical compound that starts with a number, the first letter is capitalised:

*2-Pentanone is a compound obtainable from propionic acid.*

10.10. *Common names.* Most chemical compounds in widespread use have one or more common names besides their scientific name. Such common names or abbreviations of the scientific names are often used for brevity's sake in scientific texts. For example, *ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid* is more customarily known as *edetate* or abbreviated to *EDTA*. If translating, follow source document usage.

## 11. FOOTNOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHIES AND CITATIONS

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- 11.1. *Citations*. Put titles of periodicals, books and newspapers in italics, but cite titles of articles within such publications in single quotation marks: In *The Best Book Ever Written* is an article called 'How to Write a Book'.

Use the English titles of publications where an official English version exists, but do not translate titles of works that have appeared only in a foreign language.



## 12. CORRESPONDENCE

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- 12.1. *Drafting and translating outgoing letters.* Remember the basic pairs for opening and closing letters:

*Dear Sir/Madam ... Yours faithfully*

*Dear Mr/Ms/Dr Bloggs ... Yours sincerely*

*Dear Mark ... Best regards/Kind regards/Best wishes*

The tendency is towards greater use of the second, less formal pair when the correspondent's name is known. It should certainly be used in letters of reply to individuals. Emails are often less formal than letters sent on paper.

Note that **commas** should be placed either after both opening and closing formula, or after neither.

- 12.2. *Letters to ambassadors and permanent representatives.* For the UK, start "Sir" or "Madam". For all other countries, start "Your Excellency". For all countries, close as follows.

*I have the honour to be, Sir/Madam,*

*Yours faithfully (or just Yours faithfully)*

- 12.3. *Letters to ministers.* For the UK, start "Sir/Madam/My Lord" and close:

*I remain (or I am), Sir /Madam/My Lord,*

*Yours faithfully*

*(or just Yours faithfully)*

For all other countries, start "Sir/Madam" and close:

*I have the honour to be, Sir/Madam,*

*Yours faithfully*

*(or just Yours faithfully)*

- 12.5 *Letters to presidents of EU institutions.* Start "Sir/Madam," and close:

*I have the honour to be, Sir/Madam,*

*Yours faithfully*

## 13. PERSONAL NAMES AND TITLES

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- 13.1. *Personal names.* Avoid the non-English practice of using the initial for the first name in running text. Wherever possible spell out the first name the first time round and contract thereafter. Thus:

*Lykke Friis* (first mention), *Ms Friis* (subsequently)

*Ralf Hemmingsen* (first mention), *Mr Hemmingsen* (subsequently)

If it is impossible to track down the first name, then drop the initial.

- 13.2. *Job titles.* Use upper case for job titles before a name, as this is the person's title: Professor John Doe. However, use lower case after a name as this is a description of what the person does: John Doe, professor.
- 13.3. *Signatures and business cards.* Upper case all words when the title is written below the name in an email signature or on a business card (save prepositions): Assistant Professor, Communications Officer, Head of Department.
- 13.4. *Ms/Miss/Mrs.* As a matter of courtesy use "Ms" in English unless you know that the person concerned prefers otherwise. Ms can be used for both Miss and Mrs.
- 13.5. *Foreign-language titles.* Avoid titles not customary in English, but note that if you use Mr or Ms, you must obviously be sure of the gender of the person in question.

### **FOR**

*Prof. Dr. H. Schmidt*

*Dipl.-Ing. W. Braun*

*Drs. A. Baerdemaeker*

*Ir. B. De Bruyn*

*Me Reuter*

### **WRITE**

*Prof. H. Schmidt*

*Mr W. Braun*

*Ms A. Baerdemaeker*

*Ms B. De Bruyn*

*Mr Reuter*

- 13.6. *Doctor.* The title Dr should be given when it appears in the original (except in combined titles, as above), regardless of whether the holder is a doctor of medicine or not.

## 14. GENDER-NEUTRAL LANGUAGE

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- 14.1. Using gender-neutral formulations is more than a matter of political correctness. Using the generic “he” is incongruous, since our documents are just as likely to be addressed to women.
- 14.2. *He/she*. Avoid the clumsy he/she, except perhaps in non-running text such as application forms. The best solution is often to use the plural (they), which in any case is more commonly used in English for the generic form as it does not require the definite article. It is also acceptable to use forms such as *everyone has their own views on this*.
- 14.3. In some texts, for example in manuals or sets of instructions, it is more natural in English to address the reader directly using the second-person form or even the imperative:

*You should first turn on your computer*

or

*First turn on your computer*

instead of

*The user should first turn on his/her computer.*

- 14.4. *Noun forms*. Use your judgment in choosing noun forms to emphasise or de-emphasise gender. *The policewoman* has arrived, *the dustwoman* has not, and we will no doubt go on using *fisherman* until the culture of fishing communities change. *Pilot* and the like no longer have variants with woman tacked on the front. In some cases a substitute is available, e.g. *firefighters* instead of *firemen*.

For *Chairman*, *Chairwoman* and *Chair* use your discretion. Note that the use of *Chair* instead of *Chairman* or *Chairwoman* is becoming standard in the European Parliament.

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