

Spelling

Please use British English spelling conventions. Examples include, but are not limited to:

British	American	Examples
-our	-or	colour vs color, behaviour vs behavior, labour vs labor
-re	-er	centre vs center, kilometre vs kilometer, theatre vs theater
ae/oe	e	oestrogen vs estrogen, faeces vs feces, diarrhoea vs diarrhea
-ise/-yse	-ize/-yze	realise vs realize, analyse vs analyze, organise vs organize

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of spellings, but just a jumping off point to guide a uniform style. Setting your word processor language to UK English will simplify this process.

Numbers

Always spell out numbers between zero to ten, and use digits for numbers 11 and higher. If the number is at the start of a sentence, please spell it out regardless of the value of the number. For example:

Do: *Thirty households were served by this community water source, and ten people from the community shared responsibility for its maintenance and upkeep.*

Don't: *30 households were served by this community water source, and 10 people from the community shared responsibility for its maintenance and upkeep.*

If a sentence has a lot of numbers, then use digits throughout to keep it easy to read (but not at the start of the sentence).

Measurements

Use SI units for all measurements. Here is a concise and helpful guide:

<https://www.aje.com/arc/editing-tip-si-units-technical-writing/>

Punctuation

Apostrophe

It can be used to indicate possession (eg *John's car*) or used in contractions (eg *can't, won't*).

When using it to indicate possession:

- Use **'s** for words not ending with an **s**, whether singular or plural (eg *cat's toy, children's room*)
- Use just **'** at the end of the word for plural nouns ending with an **s** (eg *miners' health*)
- Use **'s** for proper nouns ending in an **s** (eg *Charles's bike*)

Quotation marks

Use single quotation marks (' ') for direct quotes, and double quotation marks (" ") for a quote within a quote. If a quote is very long, do not use quotation marks and instead put it in a separate indented paragraph and italicise it, as follows:

Far far away, behind the word mountains, far from the countries Vokalia and Consonantia, there live the blind texts. Separated they live in Bookmarksgrove right at the coast of the

Semantics, a large language ocean. A small river named Duden flows by their place and supplies it with the necessary regalia.

Hyphen (-) vs en dash (–)

Use a hyphen when using hyphenated words (eg *x-ray*) or phrases (eg *up-to-date*), and use en dashes to break up a sentence. For example:

- *They chose to collect water from the tube well – even though it was further than the pond – because they knew it was a safer source.*

When indicating ranges, use a hyphen, such as:

- *10-20 articles*
- *January-July 2020*

Abbreviations and acronyms

Do not use full stops between and after the letters in acronyms, abbreviations and abbreviated titles. Do not use spaces in between the letters either. For example:

- *WHO, CDC, PhD*
- *4 pm, 50 km*
- *eg, ie, etc*
- *Mrs Smith, Mr Zhang, Dr Patel*

In general, do not use abbreviations and acronyms by themselves (unless they are very well-known). Use the full form when mentioning it for the first time, followed by the short form in round brackets. Subsequently, the short form may be used as is. For example:

- *I saw it in a BBC documentary.*
- *The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is an independent executive agency of the United States federal government. The EPA was established in 1970.*

General formatting

Avoid underlining words as it might look like a hyperlink. Use **bold**, but do so sparingly. It can be used to call attention to a key piece of information or as a design choice – avoid overusing. *Italics* should be used when indicating the title of a book, movie or other piece of work, and when using foreign words (eg Latin names for flora and fauna species).

Inclusive language

Please use language that is sensitive and respectful. Avoid any words that can be construed as discriminatory and offensive. As an example, when referring to a specific ethnic group, use the terms they prefer (eg First Nations peoples of Canada). Sometimes words may not seem obviously offensive, so please be careful and considerate when choosing words to describe people and places. For example, instead of a word like “villagers” please use “residents of this village” or “members of this community”. Use words like “developed/developing” when referring to countries rather than “rich/poor” or “first world/third world”.

Please avoid using words that are unnecessarily gendered (eg use “chairperson” rather than “chairman” or “chairwoman”). Please remember to use “male” and “female” as adjectives rather than nouns when referring to people – for the latter, use “men” and “women”. For example, do not write “There were two females in that household” but rather “There were two women in that household” or “That household had two female members”.