

PUSS214201

v. 0.1

Writing in English - A Small Formatting Guide

Group 2

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this text is to serve as a guide when writing the project documents.

2 Capital Letters... When?!

2.1 Headers

The first letter of each word in a header should be capitalised **except** articles (*a, an, the, that*, and so on), short prepositions (e.g., *on, to*), conjunctions (like *and, or, neither... nor*).

- Rule of thumb: Capitalise words that have lexical meaning. Compare the words *cat* and *a*.

2.2 Commas

Moreover, capitalise the first letter of the first word after a colon:

- Like this: There was more work to be done.

2.3 Days and Months

All weekdays and months begin with a capital letter:

- The project plan is due Friday.
- See you in April.

3 Is It *It Is* or *It's*?

Contractions are not used in formal writing in English. One writes *we are, there is, it is, how is, and so on*.

4 Punctuation and Quotes

4.1 Commas and Full Stops

Commas and full stops (*period* in American English) are put *within* the quotation marks.

- Christine says that "Group 2 is doing really well so far."
- "That was really nice of her," she said.

4.2 Colons and Semicolons

Colons and semicolons are put *outside* the quotation marks:

- There were "many problems": First, there was the...

4.2.1 The Oxford Comma

I like apples, oranges, and pears. The last comma is called the Oxford Comma and is grammatically correct and should be used.

5 American or British English?

The project group have decided that British spelling and grammar be used in the project documents. Some important differences are listed below:

5.1 Spelling

British Spelling	American Spelling
neighbour, behaviour, colour	neighbor, behavior, color
cancelled, cancelling	canceled, canceling
traveller, travelling	traveler, traveling
theatre, centre	theater, center
analyse, paralyse	analyze, paralyze

5.2 Grammar

Collective nouns, like *Project Group* or *Manchester United*, take either a singular or a plural verb agreement in British English, whereas in American English they only take the singular agreement (they see the group as one unit).

- Example: Manchester United were okay today (BrE).
- Example: The Development Team was excited to get going (AmE).

5.3 Dates and Time

British English	American English
3 February 2021	February 3, 2021 <i>or</i> 3 February 2021
03/02/21	02/03/21

6 Looking Forward to See You... or Seeing You?

When should the -ing form (the progressive form) be used? It is used after prepositions (to, from, on, and so on) and When the word or phrase following *to* could be replaced with *it* - use the -ing form:

- I am looking forward to seeing you.

Seeing you can be replaced with *it*. The correct form is *seeing you* and not *see you*.

- I am very excited to see you.

I am very excited to it does sound weird. Conclusion: *See* is the correct verb form.

Note that the progressive verb form is always used after all forms of the verb *be* (*am*, *are*, *is*):

- I am going to bed.
- He is singing.