

English honorifics

In the English language, an **honorific** is a form of address conveying esteem, courtesy or respect. These can be titles prefixing a person's name, *e.g.*: *Mr*, *Mrs*, *Miss*, *Ms*, *Mx*, *Sir*, *Dr*, *Lady* or *Lord*, or titles or positions that can appear as a form of address without the person's name, as in *Mr President*, *General*, *Captain*, *Father*, *Doctor* or *Earl*.^[1]

Many forms of honorifics are for members of the nobility, clergy, military/naval forces, or royalty, mostly in countries that are monarchies. These include "Your Majesty", "Your Royal Highness" or simply "Your Highness", which are used to address certain members of royalty and "My lord/lady" or "Your Lordship/Ladyship" to address a peer other than a Duke, who is referred to as "Your Grace".

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Common titles

- Master: (/ˈmɑːstər/) for boys and young men, or as a style for the heir to a Scottish peerage. It may also be used as a professional title, *e.g.* for the master of a college or the master of a merchant ship.^[2]
- Mr: (/ˈmɪstər/) for men, regardless of marital status, who do not have another professional or academic title.^{[3][4]} The variant Mister, with the same pronunciation, is sometimes used to give jocular or offensive emphasis, or to address a man whose name is unknown.^[5]
 - "Mr" is used with the name of some offices to address a man who is the office-holder, *e.g.* "Mr President"; "Mr Speaker", see "Madam" below for the equivalent usage for women.
- Miss: (/ˈmɪs/) for girls, unmarried women and (in the UK) married women who continue to use their maiden name (although "Ms" is often preferred for the last two). In the UK, it has traditionally been used in schools to address female teachers, regardless of marital status. It is also used, without a name, to address girls or young women and (in the UK) to address female shop assistants and wait staff.^{[6][7][8]}

- **Mrs:** (/ˈmɪsɪz/ in the UK, /ˈmɪsəz/ or /ˈmɪsəs/ in the US generally, or /ˈmɪzəz/ or /ˈmɪzəs/ in the southern US) for married women who do not have another professional or academic title, an abbreviation of *Mistress*.^{[9][10]} The variant *Missus* (/ˈmɪsəz/) is used in the UK to address a woman whose name is unknown.^[11] There are examples of professional women who were unmarried using the title Mrs, such as Mrs Crocombe, the Cook at Audley End House in the late 19th century.
- **Ms:** (/ˈmɪz/ or /ˈməz/) for women, regardless of marital status or when marital status is unknown.^{[12][13]}
- **Mx:**^[14] (/ˈmɪks/ or /ˈmæks/) a gender-neutral honorific for those who do not wish to specify their gender or who do not identify with Mr/Master or Ms/Mrs/Miss, for example if they are non-binary.^{[15][16]}

Formal titles

- **Sir:** for men, formally if they have a British knighthood or if they are a baronet (used with first name or full name, never surname alone) or generally (used on its own) as a term of general respect or flattery, when it is equivalent in meaning to "Madam" for women (see below). Also traditionally used to address male teachers in British schools.^[8]
- **Gentleman:** Originally a social rank, standing below an esquire and above a Yeoman. The term can now refer to any man of good, courteous conduct. It is only generally used as an honorific form of address in the plural ("gentlemen" if referring to a group of men, or as part of "ladies and gentlemen" if referring to a mixed group), with "sir" (or "ladies and sir") being used for the singular.^[17]
- **Sire:** a term of address for a male monarch, previously could be used for a person in a position of authority in general or a lord.
- **Mistress** is an archaic form of address for a woman, equivalent to Mrs. Used on its own, it was used to address the female head of a household.^[18] The titles *Mrs*, *Miss* and *Ms* are abbreviations derived from *Mistress*. The term is no longer commonly used because of its connotative meaning; "*mistress*" is used to refer to a woman with whom a married man is having an affair.
- **Madam** or **Ma'am** (/ˈmæm/ in General American and either /ˈmæm/, /ˈmɑːm/, or /ˈməm/ in Received Pronunciation.^[19]): for women, a term of general respect or flattery. Originally used only for a woman of rank or authority. May also refer to a female procurer. Equivalent to "Sir" (see above).
 - "Sir", "Madam", and "Ma'am" are commonly used by workers performing a service for the beneficiary of the service, e.g. "May I take your coat, Ma'am?"
 - "Madam" is used with the name of an office to address a woman who is the office-holder, e.g. "Madam President".
- **Dame:** for women who have been honoured with a British knighthood in their own right. Women (who are not dames) married to knights are commonly referred to as "Lady".
- **Lord:** for male barons, viscounts, earls, and marquesses, as well as some of their children. In some countries judges, especially those of higher rank, are referred to as lords, ladies or lordship/ladyship. (Style: Lordship or My Lord).
- **Lady:** for female peers with the rank of baroness, viscountess, countess, and marchioness, or the wives of men who hold the equivalent titles. By courtesy the title is often also used for wives of Knights and Baronets. (Style: Your Ladyship or My Lady). As a plural, it may be used as an honorific for women generally ("ladies"

if referring to a group of women, or as part of "ladies and gentlemen" if referring to a mixed group); "madam" (or "madam and gentlemen") is used in the singular.^[17]

- **Esq:** (/ɪˈskwaɪər/) (abbreviation of "esquire") in the UK used postnominally in written addresses for any adult male if no pre-nominal honorific (Mr, Dr, etc.) is used. In the United States it is used in the same manner for lawyers irrespective of sex; usage of "esquire" by a person not licensed to practice in a jurisdiction may be used as evidence of unauthorized practice of law in some cases.^[20] May be punctuated "esq" or "esq." following practice for other post-nominals.
- **Excellency**, also **Excellence**, a title of honor given to certain high officials, as governors, ambassadors, royalty, nobility, and Roman Catholic bishops and archbishops, (preceded by his, your, etc.).
- **Her/His Honour**: Used for judges, mayors and magistrates in some countries. (Style: Your Honour)
- **The Honourable** or **The Honorable** (abbreviated to **The Hon.**, **Hon.** or formerly **The Hon'ble**) used for certain officials, members of congress, parliament, presidents, and judges (Style: My Lord/Lady or Your Lordship/Your Ladyship, Mr./Madam Ambassador, Your Honor)
- **The Right Honourable**: used in the UK (sometimes abbreviated **Rt Hon**) for members of the Privy Council (high government officials, senior judges, archbishops, etc.)^[21] and, formally, for peers below the rank of Marquess (normally abbreviated to simply "The", e.g. "The Lord Norton" instead of "The Right Honourable Lord Norton").^[22]
- **The Most Honourable**: for marquesses and marchionesses (and, as a group the Most Honourable Order of the Bath and Her Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council).^[23]

Academic and professional titles

- **Dr:** (/ˈdɒktər/) (abbreviation for **Doctor**) for the holder of a doctoral degree (e.g. PhD, DPhil, MD, or DO in many countries) and for medical practitioners, dentists and veterinary surgeons (including as a courtesy title in countries where these professionals do not normally hold doctoral degrees), although in some countries it is normal to address surgeons as "Mr", "Ms", etc.^[24] The informal abbreviation "doc" (/dɒk/) is sometimes used.^[25] UK citizens who hold doctoral degrees or are registered medical practitioners may have the title "Doctor" recorded in their British passports.^[26]
- **Professor:** (/ˈprəˈfɛsər/) (informally abbreviated to "prof" (/prɒf/)) for a person who holds the academic rank of professor in a university or other institution. In the UK this is a senior academic position and the title is always used in preference to "Dr", while in the US it refers to tenured or tenure-track academic staff and the title "Dr" is often preferred.^[27]^[28] Professors may have their title recorded in British passports.^[26]
- **QC:** postnominally in written addresses for a judge or barrister who has been made a Queen's Counsel (King's Counsel (**KC**) during the reign of a king). QCs may have this title recorded in British passports.^[26]
- **CI** (**Counsel**) or **SCI** (**Senior Counsel**): In some common-law jurisdictions, barristers are addressed as Counsel or Senior Counsel, as the case may be. For example, CI Smith or SCI Smith.
- **Eur Ing:** for engineers registered as European Engineers with the European Federation of National Engineering Associations. European engineers may have this

title recorded in British passports.^[26]

- Chancellor: for the chancellor of a university.^[29]
- Vice-Chancellor: for the vice-chancellor of a university.^[29]
 - At the University of Cambridge, "The Right Worshipful the Vice-Chancellor" is used formally.^[29]
 - At the University of Oxford, "The Reverend the Vice-Chancellor" is used formally and the salutation is "Dear Mr Vice-Chancellor" rather than "Dear Vice-Chancellor".^[29]
- Principal, President, Master, Warden, Dean, Regent, Rector, Provost, Director, or Chief Executive: as appropriate for heads of colleges at the universities of Cambridge, Durham, London and Oxford, heads of the constituent universities of the National University of Ireland, and the head of Trinity College Dublin.^[29]
 - Note titles sometimes double up, e.g. "Vice-Chancellor and Warden" at Durham University or "Provost and President" at University College London

Religious titles

Christianity

- His Holiness (abbreviation HH), oral address *Your Holiness*, or Holy Father – the Pope and the Pope Emeritus, the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, Patriarch of Peć and the Serbs, Catholicos of All Armenians, Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia, Catholicos of the Holy See of Cilicia of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Malankara Orthodox Catholicos and some other Christian Patriarchs.
- His All Holiness (abbreviation HAH), oral address *Your All Holiness* – the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople.
- His Beatitude or The Most Blessed, oral address *Your Beatitude* – Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox and Eastern Catholic patriarchs, Macedonian Orthodox Church and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Major Archbishop of Kyiv-Halych.^{[30][31]}
- His Excellency (abbreviation HE), salutation *Most Reverend Excellency* or *Your Excellency* – Latin patriarchs and Papal nuncios.^[30]
- His Most Eminent Highness (abbreviation HMEH), oral address *Your Most Eminent Highness* – The Prince and Grand Master of Sovereign Military Order of Malta.
- His Eminence (abbreviation HE),^[32] oral address *Your Eminence* – Roman Catholic cardinals and Eastern Orthodox metropolitans and archbishops who are not the First Hierarchy of an autocephalous church.
- Most Reverend Eminence – Roman Catholic cardinals (not used in English-speaking countries).^[33]
- The Most Reverend (abbreviation *The Most Rev* or *The Most Revd*) Eastern Orthodox metropolitans and archbishops who are not the First Hierarchy of an autocephalous church, Roman Catholic archbishops^{[34][30]} and bishops in Ireland,^[34] and the US,^[30] the Church of Ireland Bishop of Meath,^[34] the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church of the United States of America, and Marthoma Metropolitans
- His Grace, oral address *Your Grace* – Roman Catholic archbishops in Commonwealth countries, and Marthoma Metropolitans
- His Grace or The Right Reverend (abbreviation *The Rt Rev* or *The Rt Revd*), oral

address *Your Grace* – Eastern Orthodox bishops.

- His Lordship or The Right Reverend (abbreviation *The Rt Rev*), oral address *My Lord* – Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops in Commonwealth countries.
- The Reverend: (abbreviation "The Rev" or "The Revd") used generally for members of the Christian clergy regardless of affiliation, but especially in Catholic and Protestant denominations. Unlike 'Father' (see below) may be applied to both priests and deacons.
 - Except in the US, "The Reverend" is used either with first name and surname or with a second title and surname, e.g. "The Revd James Smith" or "The Revd Fr Smith", but not "The Revd Smith".^[34]
- Fr: (Father) for priests in Catholic and Eastern Christianity, as well as some Anglican or Episcopalian groups. Unlike 'Reverend' (outside of the US), may be used with either first name, surname or both.
- Pr: (Pastor) used generally for members of the Christian clergy regardless of affiliation, but especially in Protestant denominations. Equivalent to 'Reverend' (see above).
- Br: (Brother) for men generally in some religious organizations, such as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; in the Catholic Church and Eastern churches, for male members of religious orders or communities, who are not Priests.
- Sr: (Sister) Nun or other religious sister in the Catholic Church; for women generally in some religious organizations, such as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Sometimes informally abbreviated as 'Sis'.
- Elder: Used as a title for members of a ruling church body in a Presbyterian polity. They may be either appointed by a more powerful body like a session or elected by the congregation, but both are ordained for the purpose of governing a church. Elder is also used generally for male missionaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church) and for members of the adult leadership known as the general authorities. Although most all male adults of the LDS church are Elders, the title is reserved for the prior mentioned groups.^[35]

Judaism

- Rabbi: In Judaism, a **rabbi** /ˈræbaɪ/ is an ordained religious officiant or a teacher of Torah. This title derives from the Hebrew word רַבִּי *rabi* [רַבִּי], meaning "My Master" (irregular plural רבנים *rabanim* [רַבָּנִים]), which is the way a student would address a master of Torah. The word "master" רַב *rav* [רַב] literally means "great one".
- The Reverend: Was often used for rabbis, cantors, *mohalim*, and *shochetim* in English speaking countries. May sometimes be used for Jewish chaplains who are not ordained rabbis. This usage has widely gone out of usage in the modern era.
- Cantor: Generally used for Jewish clergy who lead prayer services on a regular basis.
- Chief Rabbi: Generally used for a leading rabbi of a city or country, often known in Hebrew as רב הראשי. Sometimes an honorific title if a community rabbi has an ancestor who served as a chief rabbi of a town, or for a son of a grand rabbi who is heir apparent to the position of grand rabbi and serves a rabbinical role in a Hasidic community. Generally, in such cases, this is known in Hebrew as אב בית דין, meaning "leader of the rabbinical court" (literally "father of the house of law"), and abbreviated אב"ד. May also be titled as ראש אב בית דין or גאון אב בית דין, which would

be abbreviated as ראב"ד or גאב"ד. These abbreviations may be rendered in English spelling as Ab"d, Gaava"d, or Raava"d, and will often be called "Rav". Generally the abbreviated title will be followed either by the name of the city or town (including ancestral towns), or the name of the congregation, or when called "Rav" the town or congregation will come before the title. For example, the chief rabbi of the Vien community is known either as "Ab"d Vien" or the "Viennner Rav". In some communities, particularly those from Hungarian and Galician backgrounds, the title is used interchangeably with the title of Grand Rabbi or Admo"r.

- **Grand Rabbi:** The charismatic leader of a Hasidic court or community. Generally known in Hebrew as אדונינו מורינו ורבינו, literally "our lord, our teacher, our rabbi", and abbreviated as אדמו"ר and rendered in English spelling as Admo"r or Rebbe. Generally the abbreviated title will be followed either by the name of the city or town (including ancestral towns), or the name of the congregation, or when called "Rebbe" the town or congregation will come before the title. For example, the grand rabbis of the Boston Hasidic communities would be known as either "Admo"r miBoston" or "Bostoner Rebbe".
- **Rebbetzin:** A rabbi's wife, although in some sense a religious leader for the women in her community in some communities.

Islam

- **Imām:** for Islamic clergymen, especially the ones who lead prayers and deliver sermons.
- **Shaykh:** umbrella term used for those qualified in various fields of knowledge of Islam, (Informally, Bearing no relation to the religion, and in addition to its religious title, it's occasionally used as an honorary term to refer to a wealthy person or a person with authority or from the dynasty lineage synonymous with the title "Prince").
- **Muftī:** males qualified in Islamic jurisprudence with ability to pass legal verdicts.
- **Hāfiz** or **Hāfizah:** respectively males and females who have memorised the entire Qur'an (literally 'protector').
- **Qārī:** males who are qualified in the multiple ways of reading the Qur'an (literally 'reciter').
- **Mawlānā:** used in some cultures for those who have completed Dars un-Nizām to qualify as a scholar (literally 'our leader').
- **Hājī** (/ˈhædʒi:/): used by Muslims who have completed the hajj pilgrimage.^[36]
- **Sayyid** and **Sayyidah:** respectively males and females accepted as descendants of the Islamic prophet Muhammad through his grandsons, Hasan ibn Ali and Husayn ibn Ali, sons of Muhammad's daughter Fatimah and his son-in-law Ali (Ali ibn Abi Talib).^{[37]:149}
- **Sharif:** used for descendants of Hasan.

Buddhism

- **His Holiness:** Used for leaders such as the Dalai Lama and the Karmapa.
- **Venerable** (abbreviation *Ven*): Ordained Buddhist monks and nuns, as well as novices are referred to as Venerable.^[38]
- **Eminent** (abbreviation *Emi*): Buddhist gurus who perfect their mastery of religious practices and philosophy by physical enhancement or ideals which make them

renowned.

See also

- [Canadian honorifics](#)
- [Chinese honorifics](#)
- [Courtesy titles in the United Kingdom](#)
- [French honorifics](#)
- [German honorifics](#)
- [Indian honorifics](#)
- [Japanese honorifics](#)
- [Style \(manner of address\)](#)

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