**ABBREVIATION**

**Definition of *abbreviation* (according to Merriam-Webster Dictionary)**

**1:**a shortened form of a written word or phrase used in place of the whole word or phrase

"Amt" is an *abbreviation* for "amount”.

“USA" is an *abbreviation* of "United States of America".

**2:**the act or result of [abbreviating](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/abbreviate) something**:**[ABRIDGMENT](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/abridgment)

I know you would not be satisfied with an *abbreviation* of its contents, and you shall have the whole, save, perhaps, a few passages here and there of merely temporary interest to the writer …— Anne Brontë

**Synonyms for *abbreviation*:** [abridgment](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/abridgment)(*or* [abridgement](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/abridgement)), [bowdlerization](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bowdlerization), [condensation](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/condensation), [digest](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/digest)

**WHAT IS AN ABBREVIATION?**

An *abbreviation* is a shortened form of a written word or phrase. Abbreviations may be used to save space and time, to avoid repetition of long words and phrases, or simply to conform to conventional usage.

The styling of abbreviations is inconsistent and arbitrary and includes many possible variations. Some abbreviations are formed by omitting all but the first few letters of a word; such abbreviations usually end in a period: *Oct.* for *October*, *univ.* for *university*, and *cont.* for *continued*. Other abbreviations are formed by omitting letters from the middle of the word and usually also end in a period: *govt.* for *government*, *Dr.* for *Doctor*, and *atty.* for *attorney*. Abbreviations for the names of states in the U.S. are two capitalized letters, e.g., *AR* for *Arkansas*, *ME* for *Maine*, and *TX* for *Texas*.

[Acronyms](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/acronym) are abbreviations formed from the initial letters of an expanded phrase and usually do not include periods: *PR* for *public relations*, *CEO* for *chief executive officer*, and *BTW* for *by the way*. Some acronyms are pronounced as words: *FEMA* for *Federal Emergency Management Agency* and *NATO* for *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*. Although some people assert that all acronyms not pronounced as words, such as *EPA* for *Environmental Protection Agency*, be referred to as [*initialisms*](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/initialism), the term *acronym* is in fact applied to both.

**WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN *ABBREVIATION* AND AN *ACRONYM*?**

Some people are unsure of whether to call *ASAP* or *appt* abbreviations or acronyms. Both [*abbreviation*](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/abbreviation) and [*acronym*](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/acronym) are used to refer to a shortened form, but an acronym is a shortened form of a phrase and is usually made up of the initial letters of that phrase. For example, *NATO* comes from “North Atlantic Treaty Organization,” and *ASAP* comes from “as soon as possible.” Abbreviations, on the other hand, can be shortened forms of words or phrases, and need not necessarily be made up of the initial letters of either. *ASAP* and *appt* (for *appointment*) are both considered abbreviations, but only *ASAP* is an acronym. Acronyms are a type of abbreviation.