

# ABBREVIATIONS : INITIALISM & ACRONYM

# Definition of Abbreviation

- Abbreviation is the one other popular way of forming words. It is a shortened or contracted form of a word or phrase, used to represent the whole.
- Abbreviation is similar in nature to blends.

- According to Ingo Plag (*Word-Formation in English* 2003, p. 163), abbreviations ~~grouped~~ based on two orthographic and phonological properties, **initialism** and **acronyms**.

- A brief definition of Initialism is made from the first letter or letters of a string of words, but can't be pronounced as words themselves.

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# Definition of Initialism

Initialism defined as a group of initial  
letters used as an abbreviation for  
a

name or expression

# Examples of Initialism

- "BBC" (British Broadcasting Corporation),  
or "PBS" (Public broadcasting System)
- "U.K." is an intialism for United Kindom

# Definition of Acronym

- Acronym is an initialism pronounced according to ordinary grapheme-phoneme conversion rules. (Bauer)
- Acronym is a special type of blends. (Stockwell & Minkova 2001, p. 7)
- Acronym is the most extreme kind of truncation in which a component of a blend reduce to just one sound or letter. (McCarthy 2002, p. 65)
- Acronym (and initialism) is an extreme form of clipping results. (Brinton 2005, p. 99)

*“A combination of initial letters of word sequence that is pronounced as a word, rather than as a combination of letters.”*



# Examples of Acronym

- NATO □ North Atlantic Treaty Organization
- HOPE □ Health Opportunity for People  
Everywhere
- CARE □ Cooperative for American Remittances to  
Europe
- NOW □ the National Organization of Women

# Terms related to acronym

- True Acronym: a typical acronym takes the first sound from each words and is pronounced like any other word.

e.g: WAC /wæk/, ASCII /æs.ki:/, NATO /neɪ.toʊ/

- Reverse Acronym or *Bacronym*: acronyms created from some word that has been existed.

e.g: NOW □ National Organization of Women,  
AID □ Agency for International Development,  
PUSH □ People United to Serve Humanity.

# Notes:

- Initialisms and acronyms functions as nouns and adjectives.
- Why acronyms should be avoided in some cases is a mystery.  
(Baeur)
- When an acronym becomes fully accepted as a word, it often comes to be spelled with lower- case letters just like other words, e.g: *radar, sonar, aids*, and so on. (Stockwell & Minkova 2001, p. 7)