# Text content style guide

## Sentence length

* Do not use long sentences. Check sentences with more than 25 words to see if you can split them to make them clearer.

## Indicator section headings

* **Rationale** (Theme Lead)
  + What is the stat? Why is it included? What question is it answering? E.g. the stat is x and helps us measure y, telling us z.
  + How does the stat link to food security?
  + 2-3 sentences, giving reader key understanding before they see the assessment.
* **Assessment** (Analyst lead)
  + What is the key data point and source? (Make clear to the reader what is being measured)
  + Are there any caveats/ changes to the key data point?
  + Explain what the data says about the state of UK food security and how this has changed or remained constant since 2021.
    - [Assessment language placeholder] Jeeves/Will to work up some phrases which can be used to summarise the Assessment section (e.g., “this trends expands the risk to food security”; “the strength to food security is shown through…”)
  + If there is something specific which can link the assessment section to the commentary section, mention it in Assessment, and develop it further in the Commentary.
  + 3-4 sentences. There will likely be 1 graph for the key statistic.
* **Commentary** (Theme Lead / confirmed by analyst)
  + There will likely be 2-3 graphs for the supporting statistic (consider Analyst’s capacity to produce the graphs).
  + **Short term:** use the supporting data points to provide context to the **key** data point across a three-year period.
  + **Long term:** use any supporting data points which are relevant to showcasing meaningful trends (or absence of trend) over the long term. Look at past data and a forward look. Climate data could be integrated into this section.
    - This section should have a clear time element (Recommended timescale is between 1950-2050)
    - More detail/nuance on the statistic or supporting data/risks/opportunities.

## Labelling data

* Each data set (table, bar chart, etc.) should be labelled as ‘Figure’ with the corresponding indicator number and a letter. For instance, for data in theme 1, this could look like ‘Figure 1.1.2a’, Figure ‘1.1.2b’, etc.

## References

See 2.5 for general linking guidance. Include a reference in-text after the relevant sentence/paragraph. References should follow the style guide. When writing a reference:

* do not use italics
* use single quote marks around titles
* write out abbreviations in full: page not p, Nutrition Journal not Nutr J.
* use plain English, for example use ‘and others’ not ‘et al’
* do not use full stops after initials or at the end of the reference

*References can also be included as footnotes, particularly where too long or unwieldy for convenience in text.*

If the reference is available online, make the title a link and include the date you accessed the online version. For example:

* Although food availability is increasing in low and middle-income countries, fruit and vegetables are still high-value items, meaning fats and sweeteners will make up large parts of the increase in consumption (FAO. [‘OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2021-2030’](https://www.fao.org/3/cb5332en/cb5332en.pdf) 2021).
* There is a recurring reference through multiple themes to AUK, check for consistency to make sure it is referenced as follows: (Defra. [‘Agriculture in the United Kingdom 2020’](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1056618/AUK2020_22feb22.pdf) 2020)
* Example given on gov.uk: Corallo AN and others. [‘A systematic review of medical practice variation in OECD countries’](https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/health-policy) Health Policy 2014: volume 114, pages 5 to 14.

## URLs/Links

See 2.6 for references to academic reports. *Link to sources, data and relevant online material liberally*, and when in doubt, link! Remember that this is not necessarily relevant to the print edition but fundamental to the online version. Todays readers expect to be able to click through to verify or explore further the data and other sources we refer to. It is fundamental to the credibility of the report.

Alongside from the principle of ‘link liberally’, is the principle of ‘link sensibly’. This simply means point to the place where a user might generally expect to go when they click. This might be a specific document/report, a summary page containing relevant content, or even the home page for an organisation. Use your judgement and put yourself in the position of an end user. Some examples:

* **Data links:** Every chart must have a link to the downloadable dataset. See Section 4 for guidance on that. In addition all sources must be linked to. Curious users might want to explore the raw data sources beyond our curated csvs if they are happy to do so. Either way they should have a link to the owner/producers of the data so we need to add links to unedited sources. Which leads on to…
* **Collection pages:** Most statistics and regular gov.uk publications have a ‘collection page’ which is a place to collate current and previous versions. Consider the difference between the [CPI collection page](https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/consumerpriceinflation/previousReleases) which always shows the catalogue of recent publications, and an individual [release](https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/consumerpriceinflation/september2023). Generally the collection page is more future proof for users, unless you are making a reference to a specific edition in the UKFSR. The UKFSR has its own [collection page](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/united-kingdom-food-security-report), although at the time of writing it only contains the UKFSR 2021 - eventually this will become an archive and repository of the most recent analysis.
* **General links:** If there is no logical place to go, link to the organisation home page or somewhere else sensible, eg [uktradeinfo](https://www.uktradeinfo.com/trade-data/ots-custom-table/). Keep in mind that these links need to be relevant for at least three years - in 2027 will they still take people to places that are useful? Its OK to link to time sensitive material such as dated news reports but consider whether links are persistent and will not become stale.

## Acronyms

* Write out acronym for the first time in each theme, put abbreviation in brackets, then use abbreviation going forwards. This means acronyms should be re-introduced anew between the introduction and themes.
* Note that for web publishing, acronyms need a little more work (see 6.6.1). **Its a good idea to maintain a master list of all acronyms and their full descriptions** - it will help speed up the publishing preparation.

## Numbers

* Write all other numbers in numerals (including 2 to 9) except where it’s part of a common expression like ‘one or two of them’ where numerals would look strange.
* Use a % sign for percentages: 50%
* Use ‘500 to 900’ and not ‘500-900’ (except in tables)

## The ‘Voice’

* Avoid using sentences such as ‘We produce x amount of wheat’. The tone should be more neutral, i.e. write ‘The UK produces x amount of wheat’.

## Spelling/Word choice

* Say “UKFSR” or “this report”, not “the Report”.
* Use ‘coronavirus (COVID-19)’ in the text at first mention, then ‘COVID-19’ after that.
* government, UK government (not capitalised unless it’s Welsh or Scottish Government)
* other government departments
* Use ‘the’ when talking about ‘the FSA’, but don’t use ‘the’ when talking about ‘FSS’
* FSA and FSS can be referred to collectively as “UK food safety bodies”, but not “food standards agencies.”
* Capitals when talking about ethnicities, e.g. ‘White’, ‘Black’
* Disabled people and not people with disabilities
* For the Ukraine War, refer to it as the “Ukraine War”, “the war in Ukraine” or “Russia-Ukraine War” or Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.
* Total Factor Productivity can be abbreviated to TFP. It’s a commonly used abbreviation
* Production to Supply Ratio does not have a standard abbreviation, do not abbreviate
* Instead of referring to the cost-of-living crisis, instead say that it is the “period of high inflation between 2021 and 2023”.
* Talking about Brexit:
  + You can use the term ‘Brexit’ to provide historical context, but it’s better to use specific dates where possible. For example, use:
    - ‘31 December 2020’ rather than ‘Brexit’ or ‘when the UK left the EU’
    - ‘before 31 December 2020’ rather than ‘during the transition period’
    - ‘after 1 January 2021’ rather than ‘after the transition period’
* Dates: do not use a comma between the month and year: 4 June 2017
* white paper (lower case)
* Be very careful with the word “affordable”. Food is more affordable if it’s cheaper relative to incomes and other factors – if the price has gone down (but other factors mean it’s harder to afford) it’s simply *cheaper*. The general argument of the UKFSR is that over the last decade food *has got cheaper, but not more affordable* – so check this!

## Words to avoid

* Robust
* Overarching
* Strengthen (unless we are actually strengthening an architectural structure)
* Tackling
* Going forward
* In order to (superfluous, never use it)
* impact (do not use this as a synonym for have an effect on, or influence)
* facilitate (instead, say something specific about how you’re helping)
* focusing
* key (unless it unlocks something. A subject/thing is not key - it’s probably important)

## e.g. / i.e. / etc.

* **e.g.** can sometimes be read aloud as ‘egg’ by screen reading software. Instead use ‘for example’ or ‘such as’ or ‘like’ or ‘including’ - whichever works best in the specific context.
* **etc** can usually be avoided. Try using ‘for example’ or ‘such as’ or ‘like’ or ‘including’. Never use etc at the end of a list starting with these words.
* **ie** - used to clarify a sentence - is not always well understood. Try (re)writing sentences to avoid the need to use it. If that is not possible, use an alternative such as ‘meaning’ or ‘that is’.

## Symbols

* ‘&’ use ‘and’, e.g. Context and rationale
* ‘/’ use ‘and’, e.g 2007/2008 = 2007 and 2008
* ‘-’ use ‘to’ (for example in dates), e.g. 2011-14 = 2011 to 2014

## Quotation marks:

Use single quotes

* in headlines
* for unusual terms
* when referring to words
* when referring to publications

Use double quotes:

* Use double quotes in body text for direct quotations