

# MECHANICS OF TECHNICAL WRITING

STW UNIT 02

# CAPITALIZATION

## 1. Proper Nouns and Locations

Capitalize the first letter of all proper names e. g. John, Mary

Capitalize well-known names for a location e. g. to indicate the location of a beach, the first letters should be capitalized as in West Palm Beach.

However, the direction in the phrase ‘drive west’ should not be capitalized.

# CAPITALIZATION

## **2. Named places, roads, buildings, vehicles**

The first letters of famous buildings, streets, vehicles, tunnels, railroads, and other manmade structures must be capitalized e. g. the name of the car 'Ford Focus', but not the word 'car'.

Other examples: Pir Panjal Tunnel, Rajdhani Express etc.

## **3. People and their innovations**

First letters of inventions and discoveries named after scientists must be capitalized e. g. Alzheimer's disease, Fahrenheit, Celsius, Kelvin etc..

# ITALICS

## 1. Introducing the title of a book, story, newspaper, etc.

I watched an episode of *Family Guy* yesterday; the whole thing was a parody of *The Da Vinci Code*.

## 2. Emphasizing a word.

I *hate* eating apples.

The word *hate* in italics expresses the emphasis on the aversion towards the action of eating apples.

## 3. Sounds reproduced as words.

I heard my cat *meooowww* under the table and my dog *grrrr* in the backyard.

The sounds of the animals are italicised in order to show production of the sounds by them.

# ITALICS

## 4. Introducing words from a different language.

Three pills are to be administered to the patient *ante cibum*.

*Ante cibum* is a Latin word which means ‘before meals’ as a medical term.

## 5. Physical quantities and mathematical constants.

Measures of quantity or mathematical constants are written in italics.

We measured the particle velocity, *v*, recorded in the experiment...

The constant *v* representing velocity is written in italics.

# ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations are shortened version of a phrase or a longer word e. g. the phrase 'Request for Proposal' may be abbreviated as RFP.

Abbreviations are often used when a name or a phrase appears several times in a document.

Words like 'Dr.' which stands for 'doctor' and 'Oct' for 'October' are also abbreviations.

**NOTE:** Abbreviations are different from contractions such as don't, won't, can't, I'm etc. Contractions are usually avoided in technical writing.

# ABBREVIATIONS

- Abbreviate social titles (Ms., Mr.) and professional titles (Dr., Rev.).
- In resumes and cover letters, do not abbreviate titles of degrees (e.g. write “Bachelor of Science” in full).
- Follow abbreviations with a period, except those of units of measure (“Mar.” for March; “mm” for millimeter).
- Do not abbreviate geographic names and countries i.e. write “Saint Cloud”, not “St. Cloud”; “United States”, not “U.S.” (except in tables and figures).

# ABBREVIATIONS

- Use the ampersand symbol (&) in company names if the companies themselves do so, but do not use it in other writing.
- Abbreviate city addresses that are part of street names (Central Street SW).
- When presenting a references page, follow the conventions of abbreviation employed by the citation system followed in your field. Many journals commonly use abbreviations without periods in their references pages (e.g. “J” for Journal; “Am” for “American”).



# ACRONYMS

Acronyms are shortened version of a longer phrase where the initial letters of the words are extracted and capitalized to form a word e. g. . For example, the word, 'NASA' is an acronym for National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

An acronym used for the first time should be enclosed within parentheses along side its full form e. g.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) is headquartered in Switzerland. The IOC President is elected by secret ballot.

# ACRONYMS

- As subjects, acronyms should be treated as singulars, even when they stand for plurals; therefore, they require a singular verb (“NIOSH is committed to . . .”).
- Acronyms can be pluralized with the addition of a lowercase “s” (“three URLs”)
- Acronyms can be made possessive with an apostrophe followed by a lowercase “s” (“the DOD’s mandate”).

# ACRONYMS

- Acronyms are usually written in full capital letters (FORTRAN; NIOSH).
- Some acronyms such as “scuba” and “radar,” are so common that they are not capitalized.
- When an acronym must be preceded by “a” or “an” in a sentence, discern the opening sound of the acronym rather than the acronym’s first letter i. e. write “a special boat unit,” but “an SBU”.



THANK YOU!