



Linguistics Society

AAHKUSU

Style Guide

January 2019

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The style guide aims to provide a guide to writing and formatting documents written by the Executive Committee of Linguistics Society, AAHKUSU. It is part of the Society's corporate image which allows the Society's documentation to be consistent. The style guide is not legally binding, but it is strongly recommended that you follow the style guide.

This style guide is for internal use only. It applies to all documents except the Constitution of Linguistics Society, AAHKUSU and any attachments to it.

This style guide is heavily based on the University of Oxford Style Guide and the editorial style guide of the University of Cambridge. No copyright is claimed by this style guide.

1.1 Objectives of the style guide

We have three main objectives in writing this style guide:

- to provide an all-purpose guide to consistent presentation for the Executive Committee in written communications
- to review the guide at least once a year by the Executive Committee, ensuring that it properly reflects modern usage and is fit for purpose, and to update it as required
- as part of the review process, to invite suggestions from members of Linguistics Society who disagree with any existing guidance

1.2 How to use this guide

- search for a specific term (such as 'dash')
- browse through a section (such as 'capitalisation')

The guide does not tell you how to write. That is, even you find an entry on 'abbreviation', it does not mean you should use abbreviations everywhere.

The guide is here to help you write consistently across the Society's written communications by providing a standard format. When you write, you should write with your audience in mind and write in an appropriate context.

1.3 Rule of thumb

If there are multiple (correct) ways of doing something, choose the one which uses the least space and the least ink. For instance:

- close up spaces and don't use full stops in abbreviations (eg 3pm)
- Use lower case whenever possible
- Only write out numbers up to ten and use figures for 11 onwards

CHAPTER 2

ABBREVIATIONS, CONTRACTIONS AND ACRONYMS

Abbreviations, contractions and acronyms are used to shorten words that appear repeatedly in a long text, or they stand in for names that are more commonly known by their short form.

Most of them are commonly used. However, abbreviations, contractions and acronyms specific to HKU may not be understood by everyone, so you should be careful when using them.

If in doubt, you should spell the word out in full, or write them out in full at first mentioned in text, then enclose the shortened form in brackets, eg Chong Yuet Ming Amenities Centre (CYM).

2.1 General Rule

Don't use full stops after any abbreviations, contractions or acronyms and close up space between letters.

2.2 Abbreviations

These abbreviations are formed by omitting letters from the end of the word.

- ✓ Bachelor of Education in Language Education → BEd(LangEd)
- ✓ Professor → Prof
- ✓ ante meridiem → am
- ✓ post meridiem → pm

2.3 Contractions

These are formed by omitting letters from the middle of a word.

- ✓ Mister → Mr
- ✓ Doctor → Dr
- ✓ The Reverend → The Revd
- ✓ Saint → St
- ✓ Street → St
- ✓ Road → Rd
- ✓ Building → Bldg
- ✓ Tower → Twr
- ✓ The City University of Hong Kong → CityU
- ✓ The Polytechnic University of Hong Kong → PolyU
- ✓ Linguistics Society, AAHKUSU → LingSoc

2.4 Acronyms

These are formed from the initial letters of words (whether the result is pronounceable as a word or as a series of letters) and should be written as a single string of uppercase letters.

- ✓ The University of Hong Kong → HKU
- ✓ The Chinese University of Hong Kong → CUHK
- ✓ International Phonetic Alphabet → IPA
- ✓ *The Sound Pattern of English* → SPE
- ✓ Universal Grammar → UG
- ✓ Portable Document Format → PDF

When using an acronym that may be unfamiliar to your readers, spell it out in full the first time it is mentioned, with the acronym following in brackets; thereafter, use the acronym alone.

- ✓ The proposed changes are to be approved in the Constitution Review Committee (CRC). Both Arts Association, H.K.U.S.U. and HKUSU hold meetings of CRC.

2.5 Specific abbreviations

2.5.1 Special use of full stops

Don't use full stops after any abbreviations, unless they are part of the name.

- ✓ Mass Transit Railway → MTR
- ✓ The Hong Kong University Students' Union → HKUSU
- ✓ Arts Association, H.K.U.S.U.

The name of the Society does not include any full stops.

- ✓ Linguistics Society, AAHKUSU

2.5.2 Ampersands

Ampersands should only be used if they are part of official titles or names. Otherwise, spell out 'and'.

- ✓ Information Technology & Teaching Task Force (IT&T)
- ✓ Academic Support and Examinations Section (ASE)

2.5.3 Degree abbreviation

Use the canonical abbreviation. For a canonical list of degree abbreviations, go to <https://www4.hku.hk/pubunit/calendar>

2.5.4 People's initials

Use a space to separate each initial.

- ✓ A N Chomsky
- ✓ S A Pinker
- ✓ D L Everett
- ✓ S J Matthews
- ✓ Yip C Y
- ✓ Au Yeung W H

2.5.5 Measurements

When discussing large numbers in text, it is fine to use k/m/bn as shorter ways of spelling out 1,000/1,000,000/1,000,000,000 (or writing out 'one thousand'/'one million'/'one billion'), as long as you are consistent throughout the document. For multiple millions/billions you can use a mixture of words and numbers (eg 7 million, 8bn); again, ensure you are consistent throughout.

2.5.6 Latin abbreviations

If you use Latin abbreviations, make sure you know what they mean and when to use them. Do not use full stops after them and don't italicise them – see the **Highlighting/emphasising** text section for when to italicise.

etc [*et cetera*] – means ‘and the rest’; indicates the continuation of a list

- ✓ The Linguistics Society organises many activities: Inauguration Ceremony, Bazaar, Linguistics Festival etc [The list could continue with the other activities organised by the Linguistics Society].

eg [*exempli gratia*] – means ‘for example’ or ‘such as’; use with examples which are not exhaustive (and do not follow with a comma)

- ✓ The Linguistics Society organises many activities, eg Inauguration Ceremony, Bazaar, Linguistics Festival.
[These are some, but not all, of the activities organised by the Linguistics Society]

ie [*id est*] – means ‘that is’; use with definitions or lists which are exhaustive (and do not follow with a comma)

- ✓ Catch a cross-harbour bus, ie numbers 970, 970X or 973.
[These are the only buses which crosses the harbour]

ibid [*ibidem*] – means ‘in the same place’; used when making a subsequent reference/citation to a publication or other source mentioned in the immediately preceding note (ie no references to anything else have appeared in between). Do not use as it is not used in APA Style.

2.5.7 Building codes

When abbreviating building names, always use the canonical code. If in doubt, use the name in full. If the abbreviation is not in common use, consider using the name in full, or annotating the full name next to the building code.

CPD	Central Podium (Rooms LG2–3/F)
CCT	Cheng Yu Tung Tower
CYC	Chong Yuet Ming Chemistry Building
CYM	Chong Yuet Ming Cultural/Amenities Centre
CYP	Chong Yuet Ming Physics Building
CB	Chow Yei Ching Building
COB	Composite Building (Abbreviation unused)
EH	Eliot Hall
FS	Fong Shu Chuen Amenities Centre
FP	Fung Ping Shan Building
GH	Graduate House
HW	Haking Wong Building
HC	Hui Oi Chow Science Building

HH	Hung Hing Ying Building
JL	James Hsioung Lee Science Building
KK	K.K. Leung Building
KBS	Kadoorie Biological Science Building
KB	Knowles Building
LBN	Library Building (New Wing)
LBO	Library Building (Old Wing)
MB	Main Building
MH	May Hall
MW	Meng Wah Complex
PS	Pao Siu Loong Building
RHT	Rayson Huang Theatre
RBC	Robert Black College
RR	Run Run Shaw Building
CRT	Run Run Shaw Tower
RM	Runme Shaw Building
SLH	Simon K.Y. Lee Hall
SWH	Swire Hall
TT	T.T. Tsui Building
TC	Tang Chi Ngong Building
UD	University Drive No.2
UL	University Lodge
YP	Yam Pak Building

See **Number** for advice on room numbers.

CHAPTER 3

DEFINITE ARTICLES IN ANAPHORIC NOUN PHRASES

Very often, we shorten a proper noun to form an anaphoric noun phrase. We do this by retaining only the head noun.

- ✓ The University of Hong Kong (antecedent)
→ the University (anaphora)
- ✓ Linguistics Society, AAHKUSU (antecedent)
→ the Linguistics Society (anaphora)
→ the Society (anaphora)

We define a term in a terminology section to clarify its meaning. The terminology exists to clarify the use of specific terms, not to overrule their usage. It does not grant the anaphora the same grammatical properties as the antecedent.

When you write, make sure the anaphoric noun phrase is grammatical.

- ✓ The University of Hong Kong was founded in 1912. Arts, Engineering and Medicine were the three founding faculties of the University.
- ✗ The University of Hong Kong was founded in 1912. Arts, Engineering and Medicine were the three founding faculties of University.
[missing determiner]

CHAPTER 4

CAPITALISATION

Use lower case as much as possible. There is a tendency for people to capitalise words unnecessarily just because they are deemed ‘important’. Resist this. Company names may feature unusual capitalisation (or lack of capitalisation). Try to follow the company’s convention, even if it looks ridiculous.

4.1 General rule

Do **not** use a capital letter unless it is absolutely required.

4.2 Specific words

4.2.1 Locations

Capitalise names of locations. Do not capitalise if it is a description of the location.

- ✓ The exhibition will take place on Haking Wong Podium.
- ✓ The booth will be set up in the area outside Bank of East Asia.

4.2.2 Semesters

Do not capitalise the word ‘semester’.

- ✓ Our Bazaar will be held in the first semester.
- ✓ Our Orientation Camp will be held during the summer semester.

If you need to abbreviate the term, use sem-1, sem-2. Do not abbreviate ‘summer semester’; use ‘summer’ instead.

- ✓ Our Bazaar will be held in sem-1.
- ✓ Our Orientation Camp will be held during summer.

4.2.3 University

Capitalise when referring to The University of Hong Kong. When ‘university’ is used in a general way, eg a place at university (meaning any university) the u should remain lowercase.

Capitalise the article ‘The’ only when referring to the University in its full name (‘The University of Hong Kong’). Do not omit the article (even if the word is defined elsewhere in the text).

- ✓ The University of Hong Kong is an equal-opportunity employer.
- ✓ Candidates must satisfy the minimum requirements for entrance to The University of Hong Kong.
- ✓ Candidates must satisfy the minimum requirements for entrance to the University.
- ✓ The well-respected tertiary education institutions in Hong Kong are collectively known as ‘the eight universities’.
- ✓ She attended the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. It’s a well-respected university.

4.2.4 Faculty

Capitalise when the noun is specific, but use lowercase letters in general use. Never omit the article ‘the’.

- ✓ The Faculty of Arts is one of the founding faculties of The University of Hong Kong. The Faculty’s phone number is 3917 8977.

4.2.5 School

Capitalise when the noun is specific, but use lowercase letters in general use. Never omit the article ‘the’.

- ✓ The School of Humanities is one of the many schools that make up the Faculty of Arts.

4.2.6 Department

Capitalise when the noun is specific, but use lowercase letters in general use. When referring to the Department of Linguistics, never omit the article ‘the’, even when in the form ‘the Department’.

- ✓ The Department of Linguistics houses research in phonetics, phonology, syntax...
- ✓ The office of the Department is on the ninth floor of Run Run Shaw Tower.
- ✓ The Department of Linguistics is one of the many departments under the School of Humanities.

4.2.7 Society

Capitalise only when used as part of the title of a society. When society is used in a general way, eg the constitution of a society (meaning any society) the s should remain lowercase.

- ✓ Linguistics Society, AAHKUSU is one of the many academic societies at HKU.

Capitalise ‘Society’ when referring to Linguistics Society, AAHKUSU. You should omit the article ‘the’ only when referring to Linguistics Society, AAHKUSU in its full name (even if the word ‘Society’ is defined elsewhere in the text).

- ✓ Linguistics Society, AAHKUSU was founded in 1998. Students who study linguistics are encouraged to join the activities organised by the Society.
- ✓ Every year, many students join the activities organised by the Society.
- ✓ The Department of Linguistics is friends with the Linguistics Society.

4.2.8 Government

Never capitalise, whether referring to a specific country’s government or the concept of a government.

- ✓ The current Hong Kong government is headed by Carrie Lam.

4.2.9 Names with prefixes

Follow the preference of the individual, if known; if not, use lower case for the prefix. Alphabetise by the prefix.

- ✓ Dick Van Dyke is a star of daytime TV.
- ✓ Jan van Eyck painted in the 15th century.

4.2.10 Professor

Capitalise only when used as part of an academic’s formal title, not when referring to professors in general.

- ✓ It is common for HKU professors to publish their works in learned journals.
- ✓ *Cantonese: A Comprehensive Grammar* is a grammar book on Cantonese authored by Professor Stephen Matthews and Professor Virginia Yip.

4.2.11 Reverend

Capitalise both ‘Reverend’ and ‘The’ (as well as other parts of the title).

- ✓ My tutor is The Reverend John Smith/The Very Reverend John Smith.

4.2.12 Linguistics

The term was mandatorily capitalised before 2018. It is no longer capitalised now. Do not capitalise ‘linguistics’ unless it is part of the title.

- ✓ Many arts students study linguistics.
- ✓ The Linguistics Society is committed to promoting linguistics on the campus.

4.2.13 Names of activities organised by the Society

The names of the activities organised by the Society are capitalised because they are specific. When they refer to the same activities in general, or the activities organised by another society, they are not capitalised.

- ✓ Many societies in HKU organise bazaars throughout the year. Our Bazaar will be held from today to next Wednesday. The bazaar of Example Society will be held from next Wednesday to next Friday.

4.2.14 Orientation

Capitalise when the noun is specific, but use lowercase letters in general use.

- ✓ Orientation 2018
- ✓ Orientation Camp 2018
- ✓ Joint-University Orientation Day 2018
- ✓ Many societies organise orientation camps for freshmen of HKU.
- ✓ There were over 30 participants in Orientation 2018.

4.2.15 Executive Committee

Capitalise only when referring to a particular executive committee, not when referring to executive committees in general, or a proposed executive committee.

- ✓ Societies at HKU have their own executive committees.
- ✓ The Executive Committee of Linguistics Society, AAHKUSU must at least consist of four persons.

4.2.16 Session

Capitalise only as part of the Society’s signature. The word should not be capitalised elsewhere.

- ✓ The Society session commences at the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting. Linguistics Society, AAHKUSU Session 2017–2018

4.2.17 Specifically defined terms

When using terms defined in a terminology section, retain the capitalisation when the terms are used in the same context. When these terms are used in a general way, do not capitalise.

- ✓ The Constitution of Linguistics Society, AAHKUSU defines the functions and duties of the Executive Committee. Members of the Executive Committee should familiarise themselves with the Constitution.
[All these terms refer to the same thing as they do in the Constitution]
- ✓ There are many things that a member of an executive committee should be wary of. First and foremost, they should read the constitution of their society carefully.
[All these terms refer to things in general]

Do not capitalise any defined terms when the referent is 'proposed'.

- ✓ ExamplIng is the proposed executive committee of Linguistics Society, AAHKUSU. The proposed year plan will be reviewed in the Campaign Meeting tonight. Once ExamplIng is elected, it will become the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will organise the activities listed on the Year Plan of the session.

If a prefix is added before such terms, capitalise the prefix, not the word.

- ✓ Non-members

4.3 Titles

4.3.1 People

See **Names and titles** for details.

4.3.2 Books/films/songs/games etc

Capitalise the first word of the title, and all words within the title except function words eg articles (a/an/the), prepositions (to/on/for etc) and conjunctions (but/and/or etc).

- ✓ *Ip Man 2*
- ✓ *Gone with the Wind*
- ✓ *Grand Theft Auto V*
- ✓ 'Always Look on the Bright Side of Life'

4.3.3 Subtitles

Capitalise subtitles only if the original title is printed that way.

- ✓ *The Tale of Samuel Whiskers, or The Roly-Poly Pudding*
- ✓ *Dr Strangelove or: How I learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*

4.3.4 Headlines, journal articles, chapter titles and lecture titles

Only capitalise the first word, any proper nouns and the first word following a full stop/question mark/exclamation mark.

- ✓ 'Who speaks for climate? Making sense of media reporting on climate change'
- ✓ Rock rafts could be 'cradle of life'
- ✓ 'Multiplicity of data in trial reports and the reliability of meta-analyses: empirical study'

4.3.5 Webpage

See **Miscellaneous** for advice on capitalisation of URLs, email addresses etc.

4.4 Small caps

Do not use small caps in text, even for BC and AD.

- ✓ Egyptian hieroglyphs were the formal writing system used in Ancient Egypt from around 3200 BC to AD 400.

Small caps can only be used for labels in interlinear gloss, or as part of a typographic design.

- ✓ (1) gesehen
PTCP-see-PTCP
'seen'

4.5 Special notes

Use caution with the following terms, which were mandatorily capitalised. They are not capitalised anymore.

- ✓ Linguistics → linguistics
- ✓ Welfare Packages → welfare packages

CHAPTER 5

NUMBERS

5.1 How to write numbers

Spell out whole-number words for one to ten; use figures for numbers above ten.

- ✓ There were two people in the queue ahead of me, and six behind me.
- ✓ I need to buy Christmas presents for 12 people this year.
- ✓ 這次會議總共有六人出席。
- ✓ 我們的活動總共有 25 人參加。

Use a combination of a figure and a word for very large round numbers (such as multiple millions/billions etc), or abbreviate it to ‘m’, ‘bn’ etc.

- ✓ The population of the earth is now 7 billion people.
- ✓ The population of the earth is now 7bn people.
- ✓ Last time the organisation spent \$2m.

If there are a lot of figures in a paragraph or text, some above ten and some below, use figures throughout to allow easy comparison by readers.

- ✓ There were 2 people in the queue ahead of me, and 22 behind me. The queues for other advisors had 10, 3 and 12 people.
- ✓ 今天有 6 人缺席會議，而星期一至三分別有 10、13 及 20 人缺席。

Spell out words for ‘first’, ‘second’ and so on up to and including ‘tenth’; use numbers and ‘st’/ ‘nd’/ ‘rd’/ ‘th’ for larger ordinal numbers. Don’t use superscript (to prevent problems with line spacing).

- ✓ She was the first person from her school to get a place at HKU.
- ✓ He got an upper second, to his relief.

- ✗ She got a 3rd class degree.
- ✓ The 17th president of the United States was Andrew Johnson.

Always use figures and symbols for percentages, measurements and currency. Use commas to punctuate large numbers. Close up spaces between the number and the unit.

- ✓ Participation is worth 25% of the available marks.
- ✗ 20 percent of the commuters use their cars.
- ✓ The Pillar of Shame is 8m tall.
- ✓ The cost, at \$600, was less than the overall budget of \$550.
- ✓ The population of New York City is estimated to be 8,008,278.

5.1.1 Times

Use either the 12- or 24-hour clock – not both in the same text. Both 12-hour clock and the 24-hour clock use a colon between the hours and minutes, but the 24-hour clock omits am/pm.

- ✓ The activity starts at 11:30am and ends at 1pm.
- ✓ The activity starts at 11:30 and ends at 13:00.
- ✗ The activity starts at 11:30am and ends at 13:00
- ✗ The lecture starts at 16:00pm.

Use ‘noon’ or ‘midnight’ instead of ‘12’, ‘12 noon’ or ‘12 midnight’.

- ✓ The closing date for applications is noon on 12 July.

Consider using 11:59pm or 23:59 for deadlines around midnight to avoid ambiguity.

- ✓ The closing date for application is 23:59 on 12 July.

If using the 12-hour clock, don’t use additional ‘:00’ for times on the hour, and close up space between the number and the ‘am’ or ‘pm’.

- ✓ The activity starts at 9am.
- ✓ The activity starts at 11:30am and ends at 1pm.
- ✗ The activity starts at 9:00am.
- ✗ The activity starts at 9 am.

5.1.2 Dates

Always put the date before the month.

- ✓ Easter this year is on 21 April.
- ✗ Easter this year is on April 21.

Don't use 'th' etc with dates – just the number and month – and never precede the number with 'the'.

- ✓ Easter this year is on 21 April.
- ✗ 11th November is Remembrance Day this year.
- ✗ Remembrance Day this year is on the 11 November.

Use days with dates only for emphasis or the avoidance of confusion/ambiguity.

- ✓ The wedding is on 30 December.
- ✗ The wedding is on Saturday 20 December.
- ✓ The Modern Superstitions conference is on Friday 13 April.
- ✓ You must submit your draft on 13 November.
- ✓ You must submit your assignment on or before Sunday 15 November. We will discuss the answers on Monday 16 November.

5.1.3 Spans of numbers and years

Shorten periods where it is not ambiguous to do so and use the shortest text possible. However, do not elide numbers between 11 and 19, which must always be written in full (as they would be spoken).

- ✓ The 'short twentieth century' refers to the period 1914–91.
- ✓ The First World War (1914–18) was shorter than the Second World War (1939–45).
- ✗ The First World war lasted from 1914–8.
- ✓ The professorship was held 1993–5 by Alice Jenkins.
- ✗ Inner-city flats cost \$100–\$200,000. [Price could start at \$100 or \$100,000.]

To refer to an academic or financial year, use an n-dash ('2018–2019', '2018–19'). Do not shorten the session span in the name of the Society.

- ✓ The Executive Committee Members for the upcoming session of office will be elected in the first semester of the 2018–19 academic year.
- ✓ Linguistics Society, AAHKUSU Session 2018–2019

If using ‘from’ with a start date/time, always use ‘to’ to indicate the end date/time rather than an n-dash; alternatively, just use an n-dash without ‘from’.

- ✓ Linguistics Festival will be held from 26 Mar to 13 Apr.
- ✓ Linguistics Festival will be held 26 Mar–13 Apr.
- ✗ Linguistics Festival will be held from 26 Mar–13 Apr.

5.1.4 Date as part of the name

The date of a Session of the Society goes after the name.

- ✓ Linguistics Society, AAHKUSU Session 2017–2018
- ✓ 香港大學學生會文學院學生會語言學學會二零一七至二零一八年度

If adding a year to a name of an activity, the year can go before or after the name, provided you use them consistently.

- ✓ Linguistics Festival 2018
- ✓ Orientation 2018

5.1.5 Room numbers

Do not put spaces between the building code and the room number.

- ✓ KK101
- ✓ LE9

Room numbers on Centennial Campus must have a hyphen connecting the building code and the room number. The full stop, which separates the floor number and the room number, must be retained.

- ✓ CRT-9.30

CHAPTER 6 _____

_____ PUNCTUATIONS

6.1 General rule

Use as little punctuation as necessary while retaining the meaning of the sentence.

6.2 Apostrophe

6.2.1 To indicate possession

Use 's after singular nouns, plural nouns which do not end in s and indefinite pronouns.

- ✓ Jack's book
- ✓ anybody's guess
- ✓ the children's play area is next to the men's toilet.

Use just ' after plural nouns ending in s.

- ✓ Strong tea is sometimes called builders' tea.

If a name already ends in s or z and would be difficult to pronounce if 's were added to the end, consider rearranging the sentence to avoid the difficulty.

- ✓ Jesus's methods were unpopular with the ruling classes.
- OR ✓ The methods of Jesus were unpopular with the ruling classes.

In compound nouns and where multiple nouns are linked to make one concept, place the apostrophe at the end of the final part (and match it to that noun).

- ✓ the Archbishop of Canterbury's tortoise
- ✓ my mother-in-law's dog
- ✓ Lee and Herring's *Fist of Fun*

Do not use an apostrophe in its with the meaning 'belonging to it' (this is analogous with his/hers/theirs): note that **it's** is a contraction of 'it is'.

- ✓ The cat has been out in the rain and its paws are muddy.
- ✓ The cat has been out in the rain and it's muddy.
- ✗ The cat has been out in the rain and it's tail is wet.

Some names have an apostrophe and some don't – this can't be predicted and must be checked. Some street names have an apostrophe (usually linked to saints' names from nearby organisations or churches); these are also idiosyncratic.

- ✓ Rennie's Mill
- ✓ King's Park
- ✓ Belcher's Street
- ✓ Gilman Street
- ✓ Gilman's Bazaar
- ✓ St Joseph's Path
- ✓ St John's Lane
- ✓ St. John's College

Use apostrophes with noun phrases denoting periods of time (use an apostrophe if you can replace the apostrophe with 'of').

- ✓ He took a week's holiday [holiday of a week].
- ✓ You must give three months' notice [notice of three month].

But do not use an apostrophe in adjectival phrases.

- ✓ She was eight months pregnant when she went into labour.

6.2.2 To indicate that letters have been omitted (contractions)

Use an apostrophe in the position the omitted letters would have occupied, not where the space was between the original words.

- ✓ I don't like cheese. [= do not]
- ✗ I do'nt like cheese. [≠ do not]
- ✓ He wouldn't do that.

Do not use an apostrophe before contractions accepted as words in their own right.

- ✓ He is on the phone.
- ✓ He had swine flu.
- ✗ There is no vaccine for all types of 'flu.

Do not use an apostrophe to make a plural, even with a word/phrase that is not usually written in the plural or which appears clunky. All of the following examples take an **s** as normal in English to make their plurals.

- ✗ Three video's for a tenner.
- ✗ I trust all the MP's.
- ✗ Clothes were colourful in the 1970's.
- ✗ CD's will soon be obsolete.
- ✗ This is a list of do's and don't's.

To clarify something which will look odd if an **s** is added, consider italicising it or placing it in single quotation marks.

- ✓ Subtract all the *x*s from the *y*s.
- ✓ Dot the 'i's and cross the 't's.

6.3 Brackets

6.3.1 Round brackets ()

Use in place of a pair of dashes or commas around a non-defining phrase (one which adds extra information, a translation, dates, an explanation or a definition).

- ✓ The Main Building (which was built in 1912) needs to be repaired.
- ✓ It was (as far as I could tell) the only example of its kind.
- ✓ Swire Building (built in the 1980s) has only one lift.
- ✓ The tactic of Blitzkrieg (which means 'lightning war' in German) was used in the invasion of Poland in 1939.

✓ Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C).

6.3.2 Using other punctuation with brackets

Include full stops/exclamation marks/question marks/quotation marks before the closing bracket only if the complete sentence/quote is in brackets; otherwise, punctuate after the closing bracket.

✓ The last bus today is at 16:45 (which is earlier than usual).

✓ The last bus today is at 16:45. (That's earlier than usual.)

6.3.3 Square brackets []

Use to enclose comments, corrections, references or translations made by a subsequent author or editor.

✓ An article referring to the restrictions placed by some airlines on the appearance of female cabin crew stated that even footwear was proscribed [sic].

✓ I have been responsible in the real sense, that I have had the blame for everything that has gone wrong. [Laughter and cheers.]

✓ This was quoted by Brown [1940, Chicago].

Also use to contain narrow phonetic transcriptions.

✓ [kʰɑʔ]

6.3.4 Angle brackets < > and curly brackets { }

These are used for technical purposes – only use them in the correct context. Use mathematical angle brackets to contain orthography.

✓ [kʰɑʔ] ⟨cat⟩

✗ [kʰɑʔ] <cat>

6.4 Bullet points

Don't use hyphens in place of bullet points in the first level of the list.

- ✓
 - item 1
 - item 2

- ✗
 - item 1
 - item 2

Don't punctuate the end of bullet points which are a list of items.

✓ Early benefactors of the University

- Loke Yew
- Mody
- Sir Cecil Clementi

If the bullet points form a complete sentence with preceding text, add a full stop to the end of the last point.

✓ The early benefactors of the University include:

- Loke Yew
- Mody
- Sir Cecil Clementi.

If text inside the bullet point is a complete sentence in its own right, add a semicolon to the end of each point, 'or' or 'and' (depending on the sense of your sentence) to the end of the penultimate point, and a full stop to the end of the last one.

✓ The following will be considered good reasons for missing the final meeting of the year:

- there was a postal strike. This only applies if the postal strike took place before the date of the meeting and if you have not signed up for email alerts;
- you are absent as a result of illness;
- you are unable to attend because of problems with public transport (proof of this will be required);
- there is something more interesting happening elsewhere which you would rather attend; or
- you have obtained a ticket to see Dayo Wong's stand-up comedy.

6.5 Colon and semicolon

Use a colon to introduce a subclause which follows logically from the text before it, is not a new concept and depends logically on the preceding main clause.

✓ When I was young, I went on two holidays: to the Lake District and to Cornwall.

✓ A new drink was born in Hong Kong: Yuenyeung.

Do not use a colon if the two parts of the sentence are not logically connected.

✗ I used to be slim: I will try to lose weight.

✓ I would like to be slim: I will try to lose weight.

✗ We were in trouble this time: we'd never been in trouble before.

- ✓ We were in trouble this time: the lid had come right off.
- ✓ There are two parts to this sentence: the first part, which precedes the colon, and the second part, which doesn't.

Use a semicolon to link two related parts of a sentence, neither of which depends logically on the other and each of which could stand alone as a grammatically complete sentence.

- ✓ The best job is the one you enjoy; the worst job is the one you hate.
- ✓ It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to, than I have ever known.

Use semicolons in place of commas in a complicated list or sentence if it will improve clarity, particularly if list items already include commas.

- ✓ We plan to review the quality of the research of the department, including its participation in interdepartmental, interdivisional and interdisciplinary activities; its research profile and strategy; and future challenges and opportunities.
- ✓ I visited the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; and the Pencil Museum, Keswick.

6.6 Comma

Use a pair of commas to surround a non-defining clause (one which adds descriptive information but which can be removed without losing the meaning of the sentence) – note that only 'which' or 'who' can be used in this type of clause, not 'that'.

- ✓ The Main Building, which was built in 1912, needs to be repaired.
- ✓ The man, who climbed the tower without a safety harness, died of old age.

Do not use commas to surround a defining clause (which cannot be removed without losing the meaning of the sentence) – note that 'which' or 'who' can be replaced by 'that' in this type of clause.

- ✓ The building which was built in the 1910s needs to be repaired [but the building which was built in the 1920s does not].
- ✓ The man that climbed the tower without a safety harness died of old age [but the other man died in a different way].
- ✓ He asked his friend Sam to be his second [not any of his other friends].

Use commas to surround a non-defining word or phrase (which adds information but could be omitted without changing the sense of the sentence), and follow the non-defining word/phrase with a single comma if it is at the start of the sentence.

- ✓ Shakespeare, the prolific playwright, might not have existed.
- ✓ A prolific playwright, Shakespeare might not have existed.
- ✓ He asked Sam, his friend, to be his second [not the Sam who is his barber].
- ✓ The Chief Executive, Carrie Lam, is an alumna of the University.

Do not use a comma where defining information is used at the start of a sentence.

- ✓ The prolific playwright Shakespeare might not have existed.
- ✗ The prolific playwright, Shakespeare might not have existed.
- ✓ His friend Sam was his second.
- ✗ His friend, Sam was his second.

6.6.1 Defining vs non-defining information

Do not use a comma to join two main clauses, or those linked by adverbs or adverbial phrases (eg 'nevertheless', 'therefore', 'however'). This is sometimes referred to as 'comma splicing'. Either use a semicolon or add a coordinating conjunction (eg 'and', 'but', 'so').

- ✓ Shakespeare was popular, and his plays were all profitable.
- ✓ Shakespeare was popular; his plays were all profitable.
- ✗ Shakespeare was popular, his plays were all profitable.

Use a comma after an introductory adverb, adverbial phrase or subordinate clause; or use a pair of commas surrounding it if it is in the middle of a sentence.

- ✓ However, it was too late for that.
- ✓ It was, however, too late for that.
- ✓ With his possessions in a bundle, Dick Whittington walked to London.
- ✓ Dick Whittington, with his possessions in a bundle, walked to London.

Do not use a comma after a time-based adverbial phrase.

- ✓ After playing tennis all day she was tired.
- ✓ Whenever she went to the cinema she ate popcorn.
- ✓ In 2010 the most popular game among children was hopscotch.

Use a comma between multiple qualitative adjectives (those which can be used in the comparative/superlative or modified with ‘very’, ‘quite’ etc).

✓ He was a big, fat, sweaty man with soft, wet hands.

Do not use a comma between multiple classifying adjectives: absolutes which either are or are not, such as ‘unique’, ‘English’, ‘black’ etc (although note that stylistically these can be modified).

✓ It was an edible German mushroom.

✓ The eighteenth-century sandstone tower is lit up at night.

Do not use a comma between classifying and qualitative adjectives.

✓ It was a large German mushroom with hard black edges.

✓ It was a large, squishy German mushroom with hard, frilly black edges.

Use a comma between items in a list.

✓ I ate fish, bread, ice cream and spaghetti.

✓ I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat.

Note that there is no comma between the penultimate item in a list and ‘and’/‘or’, unless required to prevent ambiguity – this is sometimes referred to as the ‘Oxford comma’. However, always insert a comma in this position if it would help prevent confusion.

✗ He took French, Spanish, and Maths A-levels.

✓ I ate fish and chips, bread and jam, and ice cream.

✓ We studied George III, William and Mary, and Henry VIII.

✗ She left her money to her parents, Mother Theresa and the pope.

6.6.2 Society Signature

The legal name of the Society includes a comma. When the legal name is presented in text, the legal name must be written in one line and the comma must be presented.

✓ Linguistics Society, AAHKUSU

In email signatures, the name can be split into two lines, but the comma remains.

✓ Linguistics Society,
AAHKUSU

In case the name does not occur in text, rather as a separate graphic element, the comma can be replaced by a line break for stylistic purposes.

✓ Linguistics Society
AAHKUSU
LATEST EXAMPLE ACTIVITY!
We at Linguistics Society, AAHKUSU are proud to present our latest activity –
Example!

6.7 Dashes and hyphens — – -

6.7.1 m-dash (—)

Do not use; use an n-dash instead.

6.7.2 n-dash (–)

To type an n-dash,

- type option + hyphen on a Mac
- type alt + numpad 0151 on a Windows
- type two hyphens (--) in \LaTeX .

Use in a pair in place of round brackets or commas, surrounded by spaces.

- ✓ It was – as far as I could tell – the only example of its kind.
- ✓ The Main Building – which was built in the 1910s – needs to be repaired.

Use singly and surrounded by spaces to link two parts of a sentence, in place of a colon.

- ✓ The bus was late today – we nearly missed the lecture.

Use to link concepts or ranges of numbers, with no spaces either side.

- ✓ German–Polish non-aggression pact
- ✓ The salary for the post is \$25,000–\$30,000.
- ✓ Radio 1 is aimed at the 18–25 age bracket.

Use between names of joint authors/creators/performers etc to distinguish from hyphenated names of a single person.

- ✓ Lennon–McCartney compositions
- ✓ Superman–Batman crossover comics

6.7.3 Hyphen (-)

When to use a hyphen

In an adjectival phrase before a noun

- ✓ the up-to-date list
- ✓ The value of a first-class degree is indisputable.
- ✓ a hot-air balloon
- ✓ 'Rethinking provincialism in mid-nineteenth-century narrative fiction: Villette from our village'

In an adjectival phrase including a verb participle

- ✓ The jumper was tight-fitting.

With prefixes only if required to avoid confusion/mispronunciation, such as where prefixes themselves or letters are repeated

- ✓ predynastic Egypt gifts of pre-eminent objects and works of art to the nation
- ✓ The animals are re-released into the wild when recovered.
- ✓ A protein precursor can also be called a pro-protein.
- ✓ Procapitalists and anticapitalists clashed in the streets.
- ✓ The email address for the webmaster can be found on the website.

With prefixes before a proper name, number or date

- ✓ anti-Thatcherism
- ✓ pre-2000 politics
- ✓ Midterms start in mid-October.

In numbers which are spelt out

- ✓ Twenty-seven is the most popular 'random' number.
- ✓ *The Thirty-Nine Steps*

In compass points (unless used geographically rather than as directions)

- ✓ They're heading south-east.
- ✓ nor'-nor'-east
- ✓ The southwest is a popular holiday destination.

When not to use a hyphen

In noun phrases

- ✓ distance learning
- ✓ The 19th century saw much reform.

To make a new compound noun – if it is a recognisable concept, make it one word; if it isn't, use two words.

- ✓ Websites are made up of webpages.
- ✓ Send me an email when you're ready to proceed.
- ✗ Send me an e-mail.

In an adjectival phrase following a noun

- ✓ The list was up to date.
- ✓ His marks just scraped into the first class.
- ✓ She wasn't top-drawer.

In an adjectival phrase before a noun where the first element is an adverb ending in -ly (but note that any other adverbs in adjectival phrases do take a hyphen)

- ✓ She had a finely tuned ear for off-key music.
- ✓ XML documents must be well-formed texts.
- ✗ She was a highly-respected tutor.
- ✓ She was a badly paid apprentice.

6.8 Ellipsis (...)

Use an ellipsis to show that some text is missing, usually from a quotation – do not surround it with spaces.

- ✓ we shall fight on the beaches...we shall never surrender...
- ✓ It is a truth universally acknowledged...

There is no need to add square brackets around an ellipsis.

- ✗ [...]we shall fight on the beaches[...]

Use an ellipsis to indicate a pause for comic or other effect – follow the ellipsis with a space in this case, as it stands in place of a comma or full stop.

✓ You don't have to be mad to work here...but it helps!

Note that, if used either in place of omitted text at the end of a clause/sentence or to indicate a pause for effect, a full stop/comma should not follow the ellipsis. However, an exclamation mark or a question mark can and should follow the ellipsis if required.

✓ Are you...?

✓ Did he say that...?

Use an ellipsis to indicate a trailing off in speech or thought.

✓ We could do this...or maybe that...

6.9 Full stop, exclamation mark and question mark

Use one – but only one – of these at the end of every sentence.

✓ What time did you leave last night?

✓ We went home at 5 o'clock.

✓ Go home now!

Do not use a full stop at the end of titles, even if they make a sentence, but, if a title ends with an exclamation mark or question mark, do include it.

✓ *All's Well that Ends Well* is my favourite play.

✓ 'Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?' was a hit for the Shirelles.

✓ 'Help!' was covered by Bananarama in 1989.

Do not use a full stop if it will be followed, or preceded, by an ellipsis.

✗ Behind him stood a figure. ...It was ghostly grey.

Use a full stop, not a question mark, at the end of a reported question – only use a question mark for a direct question (whether in quotation marks or not).

✓ He asked if I wanted to go home that morning.

✓ 'Do you want to go home this morning?' he asked.

✗ He asked if I wanted to go home?

Use a full stop, not an exclamation mark, at the end of a reported imperative.

- ✓ Wait for me!
→ He asked me to wait for him.

6.10 Quotation marks

Use single quotation marks for direct speech or a quote, and double quotation marks for direct speech or a quote within that.

- ✓ 'I have never been to Norway,' he said, 'but I have heard it described as "the Wales of the North"'

Use no quotation marks if the quote is displayed (ie not in line with the rest of the text).

- ✓ as I noted then,

Those of us who toil in the Groves of Academe know full well that our research helps inform our teaching...

Use single quotation marks and roman (not italic) type for titles that are not whole publications: eg short poems, short stories, songs, chapters in books, articles in periodicals etc. See also **Highlighting/emphasising** text.

- ✓ *I, Robot* contains nine short stories, of which 'Little Lost Robot' is my favourite.
- ✓ Queen's 'Bohemian Rhapsody', from the album *Night at the Opera*, reached number one in both 1975 and 1991.

6.10.1 Using other punctuation with quotation marks

If the quote would have required punctuation in its original form, place the punctuation inside the quotation marks. (If it is unclear, try writing the whole sentence out without quotation marks and 'he said' etc, and replicate the resulting punctuation.)

- ✓ Bob likes cheese.
→ 'Bob,' I said, 'likes cheese.' OR
'Bob likes cheese,' I said.
- ✓ Bob, do you like cheese?
→ 'Bob,' I asked, 'do you like cheese?'
- ✓ Out, damn'd spot!
→ 'Out,' said Lady Macbeth, 'damn'd spot!'
- ✓ 'You're engaged to Florence?' I yipped, looking at him with a wild surmise.

Place any punctuation which does not belong to the quote outside the quotation marks (except closing punctuation if the end of the quote is also the end of the sentence).

- ✓ After all, tomorrow is another day.
→ 'After all,' said Scarlett, 'tomorrow is another day.' OR
'After all, tomorrow', said Scarlett, 'is another day.'
- ✗ 'The kitchen,' he said, 'is the heart of the home'.
- ✓ 'The kitchen', he said, 'is the heart of the home.'

Note that American English has different rules about the use of quotation marks.

CHAPTER 7

NAMES AND TITLES

7.1 Aliases

Chinese names are transcribed phonetically in English, eg CHAN Tai Man. Many will choose an English alias for use in daily conversation, eg Peter.

When referring to a Chinese name in English, follow the official name verbatim. The official name is the name shown on personal identification documents, the name shown on a student registration card/staff card, or the name stored in the Student Information System (SIS). Write the surname in uppercase.

✓ CHAN Tai Man

If a person has an English alias, you can add it after their official name, separating them with a comma.

✓ CHAN Tai Man, Peter

In cases where the name must match the official name, do not add an alias.

✓ Name of student: CHAN Tai Man

If the English name is part of the person's official name, do not add a comma. Follow the name verbatim.

✓ CHEUNG Sam Sammy

7.2 General titles

Use capitals for titles prefixing names, but not for job descriptions. Note that some job descriptions are never used with names, such as ‘prime minister’.

- ✓ Although being president of the United States is stressful, President Obama was glad to be re-elected.
- ✓ The prime minister of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is the leader of the party that wins the most seats. The Right Honourable Theresa May MP is the current prime minister.
- ✓ The current pope, Pope Francis, is Argentine.

Give people’s title, forename and surname when first mentioned. On subsequent mentions, use either surname only or title and surname (unless further information is required to prevent ambiguity), but be consistent with whichever usage you choose.

- ✓ Dr John Smith was present at the ceremony, as was Professor Susan Jones. Dr Smith had to leave early.
- ✓ Dr John Smith and Professor Susan Jones presented their research paper to a large audience. The results will be published in book form, which Smith says will be available in the spring.
- ✗ Dr John Smith and Professor Susan Jones debated the topic. Smith recently reviewed Professor Jones’s book.

Note that it can be helpful to your readers to clarify the sex of the person if it is unclear (eg if they have a name given to men and women, or an unusual name).

7.3 HKU-specific titles

Use capitals when referring to the specific person holding a specific position and to their work in this role, but not when referring to any holder of that role unless it is a statutory position (see **Capitalisation and Word Usage** sections for further information).

A list of Officers of the University can be found on <https://www.hku.hk/about/officers.html>

- ✓ Professor Xiang Zhang became President and Vice-Chancellor in 2018.
- ✓ The current Chancellor of the University is The Honourable Mrs Carrie Lam.

7.4 Other titles

In formal contexts, you may need to include other titles of an individual. Depending If an individual has expressed a wish to be addressed in a particular way, even if it is technically incorrect, use their preferred style.

For someone entitled to a styling such as Sir/Dame as well as an academic title, the academic title always precedes the Sir/Dame if both are used.

- ✓ Professor Sir John Smith
- ✓ Professor Dame Susan Jones
- ✗ Sir Professor John Smith

For Reverends, Right Reverends, Very Reverends etc, the religious title precedes the academic title. Always use a capitalised 'The' before the title.

- ✓ The Revd Dr Giles Fraser
- ✓ The Revd Professor Andrew Linzey
- ✗ Dr Revd Giles Fraser

In a shortened subsequent mention, use either Sir/Dame/The Revd or the academic title, not both – consider which title is more appropriate for the context (academic titles are often better for University purposes). Note that non-academic titles should not be used with surnames only and that 'The Revd' should not be used with surnames alone; revert to Dr/Mr/ Miss/Mrs as appropriate.

- ✓ Sir John
- ✓ Professor Jones
- ✓ Dr Fraser
- ✗ The Revd Fraser
- ✗ Revd Professor Linzey
- ✓ Professor Sir John Baggins will attend the lecture to be given by The Revd Dr Peter Precise in the School of Examples on Thursday. Dr Precise and Sir John are both senior members of the University Tiddlywinks Club, and Dr Precise is the author of the bestselling *Pedantry and Hypothetical Names*. He is not to be confused with his colleague, The Revd Bona-Exempla Familyname. Miss Familyname will give her lecture next week.

7.4.1 Postnominals

Remember that you do not need to list all awards, degrees, memberships etc held by an individual – only those items relevant to your writing.

The order for postnominals is:

1. civil honours
2. military honours
3. QC

4. degrees, in the order
 - (a) bachelors'
 - (b) masters'
 - (c) doctorates
 - (d) postdoctoral
5. diplomas
6. certificates
7. membership of academic or professional bodies.

Do not include a BA for Oxford/Cambridge graduates if they also have the MA.

7.4.2 Academic qualifications

Consider giving the name of the awarding university (using a shortened form if required and if easily recognisable (Oxf, Camb, UCL, MIT etc) if academic qualifications are relevant.

A space is used to separate degrees from the same institution, and a comma is used to separate sets of degrees from different institutions; if the same level degree has been awarded by more than one institution, list them in alphabetical order of institution.

- ✓ Professor Xavier Postlethwaite, QC, BEng PhD UCL, MA PhD Camb, MA DPhil Oxf, PhD Manc, FRS
- ✓ Sir Charles Overlord, VC, BA S'ton

CHAPTER 8

HIGHLIGHTING/EMPHASISING TEXT

8.1 Bold

Use bold sparingly to emphasise the part of your text you wish to stand out. This could be someone's name, a deadline date or another key piece of information.

Punctuation which follows bold text should not itself be bold (unless the whole sentence is in bold type).

If you are transcribing a speech, you might want to use bold text (or italic text) to emphasise words in writing on which the speaker placed particular emphasis in speech.

- ✓ The train station was officially named **Sung Wong Toi**.
- ✓ Applications can either be made online or emailed to sample@email.com. The deadline for submissions is **noon on 2 April** and any applications received later than this will not be considered.

8.2 Italic

Use italics to flag part of your text which is different from that surrounding it.

Titles of books, journals, plays, films, musical works etc should be given in italics if they are a complete published work; if you are referring to an individual short story, song, article etc within a larger publication, use single quotation marks (see also **Quotation marks** under **Punctuation**).

- ✓ *I, Robot* contains nine short stories, of which 'Little Lost Robot' is my favourite.
- ✓ The number-one single in the hit parade this week is 'Candy' by Robbie Williams, from the album *Take The Crown*.

If the title includes 'The' or 'A' as the start of the title, italicise that as well.

- ✓ *A Tale of Two Cities* has perhaps the most famous opening sentence in English literature.

Use italics for foreign words and phrases embedded within your text, including species and genera names in Latin.

- ✓ There are nine *ex officio* members in the Council.
- ✓ When producing its annual report, the committee shall consider, *inter alia*, any relevant HEFCE evaluations.
- ✓ A seven-sisters rose bush (*Rosa multiflora*) can be either white or pink.
- ✓ Dante tells us that above the entrance to the Inferno is inscribed *Lasciate ogne speranza, voi ch'entrate*.

Plurals, past tenses or other grammatical changes to italicised titles or phrases should only be italicised up to the end of the title or phrase – do not italicise the **s**, **ed** etc – and punctuation should only be italicised if it is part of the title, quote etc. Note that it is not always easy to tell whether a full stop/comma is in italic.

- ✓ The remaining *Gazettes* of Exemplas are published on 22 and 29 November and 6 December.
- ✓ Changes to regulations need to be *Gazetted* at least eight weeks before they are due to take effect.

8.3 Underlining

Avoid using underlining for emphasis; this generally suggests hyperlinks, especially on webpages.

CHAPTER 9

WORD USAGE AND SPELLING

9.1 Common confusions in word usage

Confused words	How they differ	Example
among vs between	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Among is used for undifferentiated items. • Between is used with individual, named items. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She couldn't decide among all the halls. • She couldn't decide between Swire or St John's.
mutual vs reciprocal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mutual is used when more than one person has the same feeling/opinion as another towards a third party/object/concept etc. • Reciprocal is used when two or more people feel, think or act in the same way about or to one another. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ 'I disagree with the government's policy on carrots.' ■ 'So do I. The feeling's mutual.' ▲ 'I won't steal your cheese.' ■ 'I won't steal your cheese either. We have a reciprocal arrangement.'
less vs fewer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less is used with nouns which are not countable objects: if you could use much to describe having a lot of the noun, use less. • Fewer is used with countable objects: if you could use many to describe having a lot of the noun, use fewer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'I can't eat that much cheese: please give me less.' • 'I can't eat that many sprouts: please give me fewer.'

effect vs affect (verb)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effect as a verb means to bring about, or to have the result that. • Affect as a verb means to have an impact on or to change something; it also means to simulate something which is untrue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A glass of brandy may effect his recovery [bring his recovery about]. • A glass of brandy may affect his recovery [have an impact on whether he recovers]. • He affected to have drunk only one glass of brandy [when he had actually drunk more than one glass].
effect vs affect (noun)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effect as a noun means the impact something causes. • Affect as a noun means someone's outward appearance of their psychological state. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The storm had wide-reaching effects. • His affect was one of cheerful indifference.
infer vs imply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infer is to read a meaning into a statement which has not been explicitly stated: to read between the lines. • Imply is to suggest something without explicitly stating it: to hint at something (usually something negative). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He told me that these one-size-fits-all gloves fit most people's hands. I inferred that he thought my hands were too big, and resented what he was implying.

9.2 Spelling

9.2.1 General guidelines

Use suffix -ise/-yse/-isation not -ize/-yze/-ization. We prefer ‘-ise’ as it is more common in British usage and requires fewer exceptions.

- ✓ Derren Brown hypnotised his subject live on TV.
- ✓ They didn’t receive authorisation to take the trip.
- ✗ She wished she had organized her books alphabetically.

Retain -e where required for pronunciation: ageing/acknowledgement. This rule is sometimes known as the ‘magic e’ rule.

Contractions: use of ‘hasn’t’ rather than ‘has not’ etc is fine in the majority of cases, especially informally.

9.2.2 Foreign spellings

For non-technical, laymen terms archaically spelt with ‘ae’, just use ‘e’ spellings, not ae or æ.

- ✓ encyclopedia
- ✓ medieval

Technical words (scientific Greek- or Latin-root words) that have æ do not retain the ligature, but they are spelt with ae nonetheless.

- ✓ archaeology
- ✓ haematology
- ✓ orthopaedics

Use accents and different letters in foreign words (ø, ç, capitalisation for German nouns etc) only when:

- a word is still considered foreign and has not (yet) been absorbed into English
- they are required to differentiate from another word (in English or the source language)
- they are required as part of the name of a person, place, book etc.

Diacritics are often left out in commonly used words for the ease of typing. You can choose to omit the diacritics if this does not cause ambiguity.

- ✓ elite
- ✗ élite
- ✓ résumé [CV]
- ✓ resume [to start again]
- ✓ café

✓ cafe

9.2.3 Plurals

Use appropriate foreign (particularly ancient Greek and Latin) plural forms where still in common usage (also see **alumna/ae/i/us** below).

- ✓ nucleus → nuclei
- ✓ stratum → strata
- ✓ genus → genera
- ✓ analysis → analyses
- ✓ basis → bases
- ✓ crisis → crises
- ✓ phenomenon → phenomena
- ✓ bacterium → bacteria
- ✓ millennium → millennia

Note that more than one plural form is sometimes in use for different meanings of a word.

- ! formula → formulas **but** formulae in maths/chemistry
- ! index → indices for maths **but** indexes for books
- ! appendix → appendices for books **but** appendixes in anatomy
- ! medium → media **but** mediums for spiritualists
- ! datum → data in technical cases **but** points of data in everyday use

Proper names ending in -y do not change to -ies if pluralised.

✓ One of the most popular stories in Bunty was 'The Four Marys'.

With compound words formed by a noun and an adjective, or two nouns connected by a preposition, pluralise the (more important) noun. This is often the 'head' noun.

- ✓ Attorney General → Attorneys General
- ✓ brother-in-law → brothers-in-law
- ✓ passer-by → passers-by
- ✓ gin and tonic → gins and tonic

9.2.4 Tricky words

- ! accommodation
- ! alumna – female former member (of college etc)
- ! alumnae – plural form for female-only former members (of college etc)
- ! alumni – plural form for either male-only or mixed-gender former members (of college etc)
- ! alumnus – male former member (of college etc)
- ! benefited
- ! biased
- ! comprise (not comprise of)
- ! co-operation (hyphenated)
- ! dependant (noun)/dependent (adjective)
- ! email (lowercase and no hyphen)
- ! enquire/enquiry (preferred to inquire/inquiry)
- ! enrol/enrolment
- ! focused
- ! fundraising
- ! instalment
- ! internet (lowercase)
- ! judgement (moral, academic etc)
- ! judgment (legal decision only)
- ! liaise/liaison
- ! manoeuvre
- ! no-one (hyphenated)
- ! paralleled
- ! postdoctoral (no hyphen)
- ! postgraduate (no hyphen, whether as noun or adjective)
- ! postholder (no hyphen and lower case)
- ! principal (noun or adjective: chief, main, head)
- ! principle (noun only: ethical standpoint)

- ! program (computer applications only)
- ! programme (schedule of events)
- ! riveting
- ! stationary (not moving)
- ! stationery (paper, pens etc)
- ! supersede
- ! till (not 'til: not an abbreviation of until)
- ! website/webpage (no hyphen and lower case)

9.2.5 Words usually spelt differently in American English

These are given for information only. You may stumble upon exceptions. Do not use the US spelling unless you are quoting an American speaker or from American text (in which case the original should be kept).

British	American	Example
-our	-or	colour/color
-ise	-ize	organise/organize
-yse	-yze	analyse/analyze
-re	-er	centre/center
-ling	-ling	travelling/traveling
-lled	-led	travelled/traveled
-ller	-ler	traveller/traveler

The following words are spelt differently in British English depending on whether they are nouns or verbs, whereas American English uses only the British verb form or the spelling for both senses.

UK noun	UK verb	US noun	US verb
defence	defend	defense	defend
licence	license	license	license
offence	offend	offense	offend
practice	practise	practise	practise
pretence	pretend	pretense	pretend

CHAPTER 10

MISCELLANEOUS

10.1 Personal pronouns

I is always the subject of the verb and **me** is always the object.

- ✓ I cooked lunch.
- ✓ He cooked lunch for me.

This doesn't change if there is more than one subject or object in a sentence.

- ✓ Pete and I cooked lunch.
- ✓ He cooked lunch for Pete and me.

If you are unsure whether to use **I** or **me** in this kind of sentence, try it without the other person's name and it will be clear which to use.

- ✓ He gave top marks to Serena, Keith and me. → He gave top marks to me.
- ✗ He gave top marks to Serena, Keith and I. → He gave top marks to I.

10.1.1 Myself, yourself etc

All pronouns ending in -self or -selves are reflexive pronouns and are used only to refer back to the subject of the sentence. They can never be subjects of a sentence themselves.

- ✓ I treated myself to a new set of speakers.
- ✓ Mordecai takes himself very seriously.
- ✓ Where do you see yourself in ten years' time?
- ✓ Theresa and I googled ourselves and didn't like what we found.
- ✗ Cassandra and myself crossed the road.

Never use any of these pronouns as a more polite or formal way of addressing people, or if the subject of the sentence is different from the reflexive object (eg I must always be paired with myself).

✗ If you have any questions, please contact Professor Plantaganet or myself.

10.2 Plural or singular?

Use singular verbs for describing faculties, teams, groups etc.

- ✓ The faculty has voted to keep the building open.
- ✓ The HKU Dragon Boat Team has won the 2018 International Dragon Boat Festival World Cup.

To disambiguate when talking about the individuals who make up a group, use ‘the members of’ or ‘each member of’.

- ✓ The members of the faculty are mostly absent during holidays.
- ✓ Each member of the faculty has an email address.

10.3 Address, phone numbers, website etc

10.3.1 URLs

Omit `http://` unless the URL does not begin with `www` and omit any trailing slash at the end of the URL, unless the URL does not work without it – check before you omit (but ensure that any links in online documents retain the `http://` so that they point to the correct place).

For secure websites, include the `https://`

Use a typewriter or monospaced font if possible.

- ✓ `www.fb.com/lingsochku`
- ✓ `https://hku.hk/publications/7695`
- ✗ `www.fb.com/lingsochku/`
- ✗ `https://hku.hk/publications/7695/`

10.3.2 Referring to webpages

Only capitalise the first word (and any proper nouns), but consider instead using the actual URL for disambiguation in print or hyperlinking the descriptive text. **Never** change the capitalisation within a URL as it may cease to work. Leave out the full stop if the URL ends the last sentence of the paragraph.

Make sure all hyperlinks are properly configured. It is common for hyperlinks to fail because punctuations eg full stops are accidentally included in the URL.

- ✓ For the latest ongoing research, please see the Department website's Research page.
- ✓ For the latest ongoing research, please see
`https://www.linguistics.hku.hk/research/labs`
- ✓ For the latest ongoing research in the Department, please see
`https://www.linguistics.hku.hk/research/labs`. You can also find a list of researchers there.
- ✗ For the latest ongoing research in the Department, please see
`https://www.Linguistics.hku.hk/research/labs/`
- ✗ For the latest ongoing research in the Department, please see
`https://www.linguistics.hku.hk/research/labs`.

10.3.3 Email addresses

These are case sensitive in the part before the @: `lingsoc@hku.hk` is not the same as `Lingsoc@hku.hk`. In practice, the majority of ISPs ignore this distinction, but consider carefully whether to use uppercase if required to avoid ambiguity (eg between lower-case l and number 1). In case of ambiguity, consider using another font.

10.3.4 Phone numbers

Using spacing between parts of numbers (international code, phone number) to make it easier to read.

- ✓ To contact us, ring John on 1234 5678.

Include international code for international publications (eg +852).

- ✓ To contact us, ring John on +852 1234 5678.

For local/internal publications, give extension numbers and include in brackets the number to dial from outside the University phone network.

10.3.5 Street addresses

Give full address when writing to a primarily non-HKU audience (naming the campus allow people to find buildings more easily online).

- ✓ The event takes place in Rayson Huang Theatre, Main Campus, The University of Hong Kong.

If writing for an HKU audience, the name of a well-known building is enough on its own.

✓ The event takes place in KK101, K.K. Leung Building.

10.4 Translations and terminology

When producing bilingual text, follow the terminology listed on <https://www.cpao.hku.hk/cpao/terminology>

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Check for updates and download related materials online from <https://sites.google.com/a/connect.hku.hk/lingsoc-branding>

