Wood
Mackenzie

A Verisk Business

Style guide 2020

Do you have style?

Welcome to your updated Wood Mackenzie style guide, an alphabetical resource outlining how we use the words we use, illustrated with real WoodMac examples. The document also features guidance on grammar, structure and concepts – with tabs highlighting these entries. Refer to the style guide as needed as you write and as you proof your own and others' reports (a simple Control+F should take you to the right entry).

Even armed with your style guide, the real starting point for any written communication is the WoodMac tone of voice, which is:

- **Clear and concise**
- **Professional and accessible**
- **Confident and balanced**

Where you find inconsistencies, ambiguity or missing entries, please let us know. The real value in a document like this is how well it anticipates and answers the issues its users – you – face.

But, ultimately, our audience is our clients, who should expect a level of professionalism, quality and consistency in everything they read from us. That's why this style guide exists – so analysts across WoodMac are consistent, no matter where they sit or which industry they cover.

"Even armed with your style guide, the real starting point for any written communication is with the WoodMac tone of voice."

As ever, please share your comments and suggestions by email and visit the **@Writing forum** and the **editorial microsite**, where you'll also find best practice tips and all our resources.

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A or an

Use 'an' before a vowel-sounding letter (including abbreviations starting with F, H, L, M, N, R, S, X), such as *an FTA*, or a number, such as *an 8-mmtpa facility.*

Abbreviations

Spell out abbreviations on first use, and put the abbreviation in brackets (parentheses). Don't use too many within a sentence, paragraph or page.

- **Organisations known by their initials:** spell out in the first instance to establish who you're talking about, then use initials in brackets afterwards; thereafter, you can use the initials. For instance, Libya's National Oil Corporation (NOC) should be spelt out the first time, and can subsequently be referred to as NOC. This does not apply to organisations officially known by their initials, such as BP, HSBC and EY.

- **Shorthand names:** for more cumbersome names, like Bolivia's Yacimentos Petroliferos Fiscales Bolivianos, write '*Bolivia's state oil company, YPFB*' and thereafter, simply '*YPFB*'. Once you've introduced the proper name, use '*the company*', '*the committee*', '*the legislation*' as appropriate to avoid repetition or an alphabet soup on every page.

- **When not to spell out abbreviations:** liquefied natural gas (LNG) is sufficiently well known to our readers, while others have entered the language – IBM, BMW, CIA, FBI, BBC, PhD and so on. Use judgement, but realise there's no harm in spelling something out for the benefit of clarity.

- **Single use:** remember, if you don't refer to the term again, there is no need to include the abbreviation – only do this if you'll use it at least once more.

- **Look professional:** don't use in-house shorthand abbreviations in a final document, particularly those that don't save much time or space (*Q1 '15* instead of *Q1 2015*) or aren't house style (*SE Asia* rather than *Southeast Asia*).

About, approximately, around, nearly and roughly

Don't use the tilde (~) to denote approximately in the main narrative. Instead, spell out these adverbs that specify varying degrees of quantity and measurement. 'About' and 'around' can mean other things as well so be careful when using.

- **About:** means close to in the context of measurements; as in *The crushing area has a stockpile capacity of **about** 40 kt.* More common in British English.

- **Approximately:** means nearly exact; it is the most formal of the terms, as in *In 2019, oil represented **approximately** 5% of the company's production.*

- **Around:** means close to in the context of measurements; as in *Austria has one copper smelter at Brixlegg with a production capability of **around** 50-60 ktpa.* More common in American English.

- **Nearly:** almost but not quite, as in *This would represent **nearly** a 50% cut in the number of operational US land rigs from the November 2014 peak.*

- **Roughly:** close to, as in *Iron ore from El Volcan is trucked **roughly** 120 kilometres from the mine site to its processing plant outside Ciudad Obregon.*

Abstract nouns　Concepts

Change vague words (like *aspect*, *variables* or *progress*) or nominalisations (such as *implementation*, *indication* or *recognition*) to concrete words or use examples so your writing is more memorable and easily understood, and has greater impact.

- **Rewrite example:** change *First-mover advantage secures Shell industry-leading positions in deepwater oil and LNG* to *Shell gains first-mover advantage in securing industry-leading positions in deepwater oil and LNG.*

- **Never sacrifice clarity to save on word count.** It's far better to use a few more words if it avoids confusing or dense language that relies on abstract concepts or nominalisations to make a point. See 'Clarity'.

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Accents

You can use foreign words (with their accents) in our content management system, as in *The smelter was originally commissioned in the late 1990s as a Søderberg operation.* Retain the correct accents, particularly for proper names, companies, official bodies and so on. Define the term, if necessary, as soon as it is used. But where it is sensible, use an English equivalent – many clients are not native English speakers so avoid introducing a third language.

- For country names, align with our **taxonomy list** ('Location' tab). There are no accents used in our listing of countries, such as Cote d'Ivoire, as in *The Government of **Cote d'Ivoire** has applied to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS).*

- Excel can't use accents so be aware that tables and charts won't reflect their usage.

Accept and except

- Accept means to take or to agree, as in *Sonangol **accepted** a maximum remuneration fee of US$5 per barrel to develop Qaiyarah.*

- Except means other than or to exclude, as in *Occasional interest has been shown in the country's open acreage, but with little activity carried out **except** by CPC.*

Additional

Use 'more' instead.

Adjectives `Grammar`

Too many adjectives and adverbs (which describe adjectives or verbs) weaken your writing, so use them sparingly. Choose nouns and verbs that express your meaning precisely. For example, rather than write '*run fast*' say '*sprint*'.

Adverse and averse

- Adverse means bad, as in *Shocks are damaging to both household and corporate confidence, and have **adverse** implications for economic growth and commodity demand.*

- Averse means be opposed to or disinclined, as in *The Thai public has been **averse** to coal generation because of pollution.*

Advice and advise

- Advice is the noun, so *Africa Oil has sought independent tax **advice** and believes that this deal will not be subject to capital gains tax under Kenyan legislation.*

- Advise is the verb, so *Given the limited delineation of the maritime borders in Africa, investors are **advised** to conduct careful research into any border agreement in place.*

Advised

Use 'told' instead.

Affect and effect

- Affect is the verb and means to influence or to have an effect on, as in *A lack of financial resources **affected** the ability of many project owners to proceed with their plans.*

- Effect is the noun and means result, as in *The **effect** on Chinese NPI production will have a much more significant impact on the global market.*

  » Less frequently, it is used as a verb to mean bring about, as in *'effect a change'* but this is a more formal usage.

Aggravate

To make worse; it doesn't mean 'annoy', so *Further **aggravating** Kazakhstan's problems are its strong links to Russia and the tumbling Russian rouble in recent months.*

Ambiguity `Concepts`

We leave our writing open to interpretation when we're not clear and specific, such as using words like significant or substantial, which can mean different things to different readers, and ambiguous punctuation, such as asset purchase/sale (is that asset purchase and sale, or asset purchase or sale?). Be as specific as possible to save your readers from any misunderstanding.

Among and amongst

Use 'among' rather than the more formal 'amongst', as in *The Fyodorovskoye field has been **among** Russia's top-10 producing oil fields since 1974.*

Amount and number

Both refer to quantity but each word has its own specific use.

- Amount is used for things that cannot be counted individually, such as gas, oil and steel, as in *The **amount** of gas being transported by road has risen in recent years.*

- Number is used for things that can be counted, such as oil rigs, cars and projects, as in *The **number** of cars on the road has doubled since 2003.*

Also see **Fewer and less**.

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And

It's fine to use conjunctions like 'and' or 'but' to start a sentence but use sparingly. Here is an example of how it should be used: ***And** for the 'haves' in tight oil, there is plenty more growth and at a relatively low cost.*

And/or

Make sure it really is an 'and or' situation. Better to rephrase and be explicit about what you mean, so write *'either X or Y, or both'*. See '**Slash**' in the Punctuation section.

Anticipate

To prepare for a contingency (rather than simply expecting it), so *The steel mills **anticipated** higher prices by restocking earlier than usual.*

Anxious

Uneasy; it doesn't mean 'eager', as in *Rio Tinto is **anxiously** awaiting the outcome of its NSW Supreme Court appeal regarding expansion of its Mt Thorley Warkworth operation.*

Appositives `Grammar`

An appositive is a noun or noun phrase placed next to another noun to explain or identify it, as in *Sinopec, the state-owned enterprise, is reconsidering the deal.*

An appositive phrase usually follows the word it explains or identifies, but it may also precede it.

- When the appositive is essential to a sentence, such as when a sentence's meaning would change if you removed the appositive, there is no need to separate it with commas. As in *The state-owned enterprise Sinopec is reconsidering the deal.* This is known as a **restrictive appositive**. In this case, Sinopec is 'restricting' the meaning of the words it is modifying ('The state-owned enterprise'). If we removed 'Sinopec', we wouldn't know which state-owned enterprise is being discussed.

- **Non-restrictive appositives** can be left out without changing the basic meaning of the sentence. A non-restrictive appositive is always separated by commas. *Sinopec, the state-owned enterprise, is reconsidering the deal.* In this example, the sentence's meaning wouldn't change if we still know that it is Sinopec reconsidering the deal.

The most important thing to remember when using a non-restrictive appositive is to include the commas – especially the second one.

Articles `Grammar`

Nouns are preceded by an article, either indefinite (more generic – *a*, *an*) or definite (more specific – *the, this, these, that, those*). Find more guidance on how to use articles **here**.

As of, as at and as from

There is no one answer for which phrase is correct but for consistency's sake, let's use 'as of', as in ***As of** August, it had agreed or closed approximately US$2.9 billion in divestments…*

As such

Meaning in the exact sense of the word, although this is quite a formal usage, so use sparingly. As in *The company's North Sea assets accounted for 20% of production in 2012, but are mature and in decline. **As such**, they are increasingly peripheral to the company.*

Asia Pacific

Omit the hyphen in Asia Pacific – whether we're using it as a noun or an adjective – since the meaning doesn't become ambiguous without one, as in:

- *While the outlook for North America and Europe remains grim, things look more hopeful in **Asia Pacific**.* (Noun)

- *The maturity and quality of the remaining subsurface potential varies across **Asia Pacific** countries and basins.* (Adjective)

Of course, keep the hyphen if it is used in an official name, such as Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation. As always, the easiest way to determine whether it is used in the name is to visit that entity's website.

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Bahamas, the

Keep the definite article as part of the country's name but don't capitalise the article unless at the start of a sentence, as in *All licensed acreage in **the Bahamas** is governed by a concessionary fiscal regime.*

Balance Concepts

Coordinate and balance words and phrases so the whole sounds as elegant as its parts are informative, as here *It is this regime that the WTO sought to address, and the Indian government sought to defend.* Using the same word phrase ('sought to') helps balance two parts of the sentence.

- This rhetorical device has been used to great effect by politicians, famously by Britain's wartime prime minister Winston Churchill ('*We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds…*') and US president John F Kennedy ('*Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country*'). See '**Parallel phrasing**'.

Because

A subordinate clause beginning with 'because' usually introduces new information so it should sit at the end of a sentence – after the familiar information, as here *Coal preparation costs are minimal **because** the Satui coal only requires crushing and screening.*

- If you want to begin a sentence with a clause expressing familiar information about causation, use 'since' because it implies that the reader already knows what's coming. See '**Since**'.

Beside and besides

Both are prepositions, although 'besides' is also an adverb.

- Beside means close to or next to, as in *Sourdough is the most easterly onshore discovery on the North Slope and sits **beside** the boundary of the Alaska National Wildlife Reserve.*

- Besides means in addition to or apart from, as in ***Besides** the two new blast furnaces (BF), the plant has two 450-cubic-metre BFs and two 580-cubic-metre BFs.*

  » As an adverb, besides means 'furthermore' or 'and another thing', as in '*I didn't use the style guide because I don't have a copy. **Besides** I know how to hyphenate.*'

Between

It is fine to use this with more than two people or objects, despite what some grammarians say, as here *But previous liquidity injections by the ECB have been unsuccessful: the transmission mechanism **between** the central bank, financial sector and the real economy appears broken.*

Biannually, bimonthly or biweekly

Avoid these particular words because of their ambiguity. Bimonthly can mean both twice a month and every two months. Likewise, biannually means twice a year and every two years. Just say 'twice a month' or 'every two months' or 'twice a year' and 'every two years' and so on.

Biofuels

One word not two, so *Despite being one of the world's largest producers of palm oil, the domestic consumption of **biofuels** has remained very low in Malaysia.*

Bottomhole (adj)

One word not two, so *The **bottomhole** location for GC 699 #1ST2 is understood to be in Atlantis East.*

Breakeven (noun, adjective) and break even (verb)

- Breakeven (noun or adjective) is one word, as in *Reducing high cash flow **breakevens** is a priority.*

- Break even (verb) is the verb 'break' followed by the adjective 'even' – they have separate functions and so are written as two words, as in *We calculate that 2020 cash flow will **break even** at US$60/bbl following these cuts.*

British vs American English

At Wood Mackenzie, we use British English spelling. That said, American English is fine if your audience is predominantly based in the US, as with L48 reports.

Brownfield

Don't capitalise this term referring to land that has previously been developed and is being considered for new development, as in *We expect the government to approve the **brownfield** expansions.*

But and however

Both these words can be used interchangeably to indicate contrast, but they are punctuated differently.

'But' is the less formal of the pair. It can be used to link two independent clauses – clauses that can stand alone as separate sentences – and demonstrate contrast. A comma is required before 'but' to draw attention to this contrast, as in: *An extension was previously awarded to PetroChina, **but** the deal failed.*

A comma is not required when 'but' is used to join an independent clause (one that can stand alone as a sentence) with a dependent clause (one that would form an incomplete sentence). For example: *'The line is stated as 350 kb/d for NGLs **but** could likely be lower for crude.'*

The first is an independent clause while *'could likely…'* is a dependent clause since it lacks a subject.

Also, a comma isn't required when 'but' is used to connect two elements in the same clause or sentence, as in: *'PennEnergy is part of a small **but** active group of private equity-backed operators.'*

It's fine to use 'but' at the start of the sentence, as in: *Traders that do not have a buyer secured can't offload coal at most ports. **But** coal suppliers dealing directly with mills do not have these limitations.*

A comma after 'but' is required if it is immediately followed by an interrupting word, phrase or clause, as in: ***But**, of course, the situation is different now.*

'However' has a similar function, but requires different punctuation.

When using the word to link two clauses, precede 'however' with a semi-colon and follow it with a comma. As in: *Pumped-storage hydro accounts for the majority of global energy storage capacity; **however**, other technologies lead growth.*

The comma after 'however' helps prevents ambiguity. Without the comma, a reader may think you are using 'however' in the sense of its other meanings – 'to whatever extent or degree' or 'in whatever manner'. These two examples demonstrate how confusion can arise:

- ***However**, there could be some other possible markets for these reduced opportunities for US coals.*
- ***However** there could be some other possible markets for these reduced opportunities for US coals.*

In the example without punctuation, how 'however' is being used should become clear after reading the whole sentence – but save the reader that momentary confusion by inserting the comma.

It's also fine to start a sentence with 'however'. In fact, we encourage the word to be used at the start of a sentence, so that it emphasises more strongly the contrastive nature of what follows.

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Capex

All lowercase, not CAPEX, CapEx or Capex, so *Total has announced that it will cut* **capex** *by 10%, or US$2-3 billion in 2020.*

Capital letters

Use only for proper names of people, places and organisations. Our house style is sentence case, so always opt for lowercase if you are unsure whether a word should be capitalised.

- **Proper names and titles:** use capitals for proper names, place names and titles. So, someone called Michael Jones might be referred to as *Michael Jones, Marketing Manager.* But if we refer to Michael Jones as the marketing manager in the Edinburgh office, there is no need for capital letters. This rule applies no matter the position.

- **Governments:** when referring to governments, states and so on, use lowercase. So *British government, state of Texas, Shandong province.* But use capitals for Congress and Parliament.

- **Places and seasons:** general words like north and west, or spring and summer, do not normally require capitals, as in *It lies in the Diyarbakir district of* **southeast** *Turkey.*

  » But the *East China Sea* or the *North Sea* are specific places, so should be capitalised as befits proper names (but note, within that, *northern North Sea* or *southern East China Sea*).

- **Geography:** major bodies of land and water should be capitalised, such as *Gulf of Mexico, Pacific Ocean, the North Sea* and other geographic locations when they represent worldwide (not just local) accepted usage. But don't capitalise geologic formations such as *basin, belt, delta, field, formation, play, pool, reservoir, sand, shale, trend and zone.* See '**Geologic formations**'.

- **Chart and table titles and legends:** these should be written in sentence case.

- **Cardinal directions:** write north, south, east and west for compass directions or general location. Don't use capitals unless it's part of a proper name, like the North Sea (unless it's northern North Sea, for instance), or a recognised section or region, such as the (US) South or Midwest. Write southwest, southwards, southwestern and southwesterly and so on, as in *It is one of the most* **northerly** *developments in the US.*

Cargoes

Spell the plural of cargo with an 'e', so cargoes not cargos. As in *Egypt has already deferred a handful of its contracted LNG import* **cargoes**.

Cash flow

Two words, not *cashflow*, so *The company also has additional flexibility to cut spend and reduce* **cash flow** *breakevens.*

CBM

Abbreviation of coalbed methane. *The majority of China's* **CBM** *reserves are located in the north and northwest areas of the country.*

But in Australia, it's referred to as CSG (coal seam gas).

CDM

Can mean cost-driven modelled or clean development mechanism, so if there is the slightest doubt, spell it out, as in *In 2007, SOCAR initiated work under the auspices of the* **clean development mechanism (CDM)** *of the Kyoto Protocol.*

Characters `Grammar`

The subjects of your verbs – whether a person, a company or an idea – should be the main characters (the agents) in your sentences and easily identifiable. It makes the sentence clearer to the reader. And it's why using abstractions, nominalisations or compound nouns as your main subject can be confusing or off-putting for many readers.

- If you do use an abstraction or nominalisation (such as *intention, argument, representation, guidance*) as your main character in a sentence, make sure you don't use others in the same sentence (or even paragraph) because it makes your writing too dense.

Charts, graphs and tables `Structure`

Don't repeat the key findings in our text. Let the charts, tables and graphs speak for themselves. Make sure you provide a clear name as these headers will be used to pull charts, tables and graphs into the mobile app, as well as sell our reports online to ecommerce buyers.

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Chemical symbols

Spell out the name, rather than using the chemical symbol, as in *The **zinc** smelter at Xingan Bouyan is expected to be commissioned during the latter part of 2014.*

- Only use symbols in charts, graphs and tables, or when writing about grading (with percentages), as in *Over 35 years, around 8Mt ore grading **7% Zn**, **3% Pb** and **60g/t Ag** was processed.*

Choke back

This is the verb 'choke' followed by the adverb 'back' – they have separate functions and so are written as two words without a hyphen. As in *Gas gathering systems were not fully built out in the field, so producers had to **choke back** wells until the midstream construction was complete.*

Circumstances

The phrase is 'in the circumstances' (American English uses 'under'). Place a comma after the phrase when using at the start of the sentence, as here ***In these circumstances**, we forecast that Ukraine's coal-fired power generation output will fall short of meeting winter demand by 11.4 TWh.*

Clarity Concepts

There are too many principles to include here, but here is just a few (see '**Six rules of writing**' for more):

- **Old before new:** begin sentences with information familiar to your readers. The last few words of one sentence should set up the sentence that follows.

- **New info at the end:** likewise, new information should be at the end – readers prefer to read what's new and complex after they read what's familiar and simple.

- **Subjects:** make the main character – the agent of the key actions in the sentence – the subject.

- **Verbs:** make the important actions verbs. Change nominalisations if necessary.

Clause Grammar

A clause is a ***group of words that has a verb*** (as bold here), which may or may not function independently from the rest of the sentence (independent and dependent clauses, respectively). A phrase has a subject, but not a verb – ***a short piece of information*** (like this).

Coal preparation plant

Use this term, not 'washery', so *The mine's cash cost is inflated due to a relatively high strip ratio and a 60-kilometre road haul to the **coal preparation plant**.*

Coalbeds, coalbed methane and CBM

Not coal beds, so *Gas-related exploration has also concentrated on **coalbed methane** opportunities in the Fort Assiniboine area of central Alberta.*

Commence

Use 'start' instead.

Commingle

This is the correct spelling to refer to the blending together of two or more streams of production, it is not 'co-mingle'. As in *Lochranza production is **commingled** and transported directly to the Global Producer III FPSO for processing.*

Company names

We refer to companies as singular entities, so use a singular verb with a company name, as in *'BP is…'* or *'Wood Mackenzie assumes…'* and ***Tullow has** participated in four basin-opening discoveries since 2006.*

- **Wholly owned subsidiary:** our style is to refer to the parent company's name. For example, *'Shell Norske'* is referred to simply as *'Shell'* as it is a wholly owned subsidiary.

- **If the subsidiary is not wholly owned:** use the subsidiary name. For example, in our Africa research, we refer to *'Shell Gabon'* as this entity is only 75% owned by Shell, so it's important to differentiate between the subsidiary and the parent.

- **Name change:** if a company has subsequently changed names since a particular event, use the current name when writing about it, with its previous name in brackets.

Compare with and compare to

- Use 'compare with' when you want to draw attention to the difference, as in *We expect deal activity to rebound in 2020, but remain low in absolute value terms **compared with** prior years.*

- Use 'compare to' when you want to stress similarity (as in, *liken*) or are in search of a metaphor (*'Shall I **compare thee to** a summer's day?'*).

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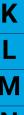K
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Complement and compliment

- Complement means to add to, complete or enhance, as in *This enables the company to maintain a focused exploration programme that **complements** its existing portfolio of growth opportunities.*

- Compliment is praise, as in *Many of our clients have **complimented** the accuracy of our data.*

The adjective forms also differ.

- Complementary is used to describe something that adds to, completes or enhances, as in *The merger brought together two **complementary** portfolios.*

- Complimentary is used to describe something that praises, such as ***complimentary** remarks.* It is also used to describe something given for free, as in *Existing subscribers to Wood Mackenzie's LNG Service will receive **complimentary** access to this report for a limited time only.*

Complete subject `Grammar`

Make sure the verb in the sentence agrees with the 'core' subject (usually just one word), rather than any constituent parts of the subject, which may be plural. In the following example, the core subject is 'number' even though the complete subject contains plurals ('companies', 'restrictions'): *The **number** of companies declaring force majeure following the restrictions **has** sharply increased.*

Compound noun phrase `Grammar`

Several nouns together that act as one noun, with some acting as adjectives, as in *the ISNE historical solar generation pattern.* Nouns can describe other nouns – oil field, for one – but the longer the phrase is, and the more nouns it contains, the harder it is to decipher what describes what, and which is the actual noun. So, in the interest of clarity, break up a long compound noun phrase, even if it means you're left with a longer sentence.

Comprise

Embrace the whole of, as in *Production now **comprises** 49% oil, 14% other liquids and 37% gas.* When, for instance, a management team comprises X, Y and Z, it means there is no one else involved – as opposed to 'include', which leaves open the possibility that there might be others on the management team.

- To remember, think 'comp' in both 'complete' and 'comprise'.

Concur

Use 'agree' instead.

Concurrently

Just say 'at the same time'.

Conjunctions `Grammar`

These short words – *these, that, those, another, such, more* – link words and phrases, as in *The company established its onshore US portfolio through a series of acquisitions, notably **those** of Amoco and ARCO.* When you use a conjunction to refer to a person, group or thing previously explained, use it as close to the word you're referring to as possible (*acquisitions*). Otherwise, the reader may assume you are referring to something else entirely, particularly if another clause has been introduced since the initial referent.

There are several different kinds of conjunctions:

- **Adverbial:** because, although, when, since.

- **Relative:** who, whom, whose, which, that.

- **Sentence:** however (but only use at the start of a sentence).

- **Coordinating:** and, but, yet, for, so, or, nor.

- **Correlative:** both X and Y, not only X but Y, (n)either X (n)or Y, X as well as Y.

- **Subordinate:** because, if, when, since, unless, which, who, that, whose.

Consist

Same meaning as comprise, but requires the addition of the word 'of', as in *The simplified flowsheet **consists** of ore drying, crushing, screening, sintering and then blast furnace smelting and casting.*

Consistency `Concepts`

Common consistency issues:

- Use colons rather than dashes in headlines.

- Use a lowercase letter after a colon (unless it's a quote).

- Use sentence case in headlines.

- Spell out numbers one to nine (See '**Numbers**' for exceptions).

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Continual and continuous

- Continual means an activity continued through time, again and again, but with interruption, as in *The plan includes **continual** rehabilitation and re-vegetation of the site.*

- Continuous means without interruption, as in *Abqaiq was one of the earliest fields to start producing in Saudi Arabia, and has produced **continuously** for almost seven decades.*

Contractions `Grammar`

Use contractions – such as can't, couldn't, don't, isn't, it's, won't, shouldn't and so on – when appropriate, as in *Ethane may find itself in a precarious position if the product **can't** find a home as a replacement for natural gas in the near term.* It's more natural and accessible and, what's more, there is research that says the use of contractions enhances readability. But vary it as needed.

Conveyor

Not conveyer, so *The mine will consist of a single ramp using two **conveyors** rated at 4,500 tph each.*

Coordinate and cumulative adjectives `Grammar`

Coordinate adjectives are a series of two or more adjectives that independently modify a noun and are roughly equal in importance. Coordinate adjectives can be joined by 'and', and the order of the adjectives can be reversed. Separate coordinate adjectives with a comma, as in *The **hot, windy** conditions often lead to dust storms that disrupt transport.*

Cumulative adjectives are two or more adjectives that build on one another and together modify a noun. Their order cannot be reversed and they should not be separated by a comma, as in *this is the company's **fifth offshore** project in the region.*

CPP

This can mean central processing platform, coal preparation plant, cents per pound or Clean Power Plan (US environmental regulation) so it's best to spell it out first to be clear how you want it to be understood.

Criterion and criteria

This may well go the way of other Latin-derived words in English usage – such as data and datum, agenda and agendum – whereby the plural becomes acceptable as the singular. But, strictly speaking, here is how it should be used:

- Criterion is singular, as in *To remove the barriers for geothermal, the government of Indonesia has engaged ADB and World Bank as consultants to propose a pricing **criterion** for geothermal.*

- Criteria is the plural, as in *Additional screening and filtering **criteria** were also applied.*

CSG

Coal seam gas (referred to elsewhere as CBM, for coalbed methane). *Blue Energy drilled its first **CSG** well on the permit in 2008.*

Cultural references

Don't use these. You can't assume your readers share your background, whether it's an interest in cricket, Tom Cruise movies or US college basketball, as in *March Madness kicked off last week with the requisite upsets by 12 seeds of 5 seeds, buzzer-beaters and extended overtime sessions, but in the gas markets….* Besides baffling those not familiar with the reference, it could turn off those who are but find the links gratuitous.

Curse of knowledge `Concepts`

When the writer assumes the reader is in possession of the same knowledge as themselves so makes leaps of logic that leave the reader behind. Explain jargon, include detail and add context if there's any doubt.

Currencies

- In text, write the currency unit in full that you are referring to (for instance, *the US dollar*; thereafter, *the dollar*).

- Use the currency symbol with sums and spell out million, billion and trillion (for instance *US$15.2 million*).

- In tables and charts, use the currency's three-letter abbreviation (ISO 4217).

  » An exception to the above rules is the Chinese currency. Use RMB rather than ¥ or CNY with sums of money, and describe as renminbi rather than yuan when discussing the currency.

- **Repeated use:** establish at the start of a report (or as a footnote) which currency you are using – say, US dollars – and say clearly, in the narrative or as a footnote, that all dollar symbols thereafter will represent that currency.

...Currency *continued*

- **Dollars:** always define which dollars with the appropriate prefix. So we write *US$25 million* rather than just *$25 million* (to distinguish them from, say, Australian or Singapore dollars). Don't use USD (except in charts and tables).

  » The exception to this rule is when comparing two dollar currencies multiple times in a report. Once you've spelled out the currency unit, use the three-letter abbreviations, as in USD and AUD, for instance.

- **Pound:** use 'sterling' in narrative but as we only refer to the pound in a UK context, just use the symbol without any prefix. Use GBP in charts and tables.

- **euro**: this is always lowercase, so avoid starting a sentence with it. Use EUR in charts and tables.

- **Other currencies:** be precise. If referring to Norwegian krone, for example, we write *Nkr25 million* and *Dkr25 million* for Danish krone.

- **Rouble:** we use the UK spelling of rouble; use RUB in tables and charts.

- **Currency units:** use a prefix before currency abbreviations to avoid confusion, so *US$1.00* and *US$0.60* (two decimal places and not 'c' for cents).

  » For a gas price, for example, write *US$3.60/mcf* (not *per*, and no spaces either side of the slash).

  » Coal prices should be written in the form of *US$60/tonne* (or *US$60/st* in the US).

- **Ranges:** use *US$5 million to US$6 million* or (abbreviated style) *£5,000-6,000*, as appropriate. See '**Ranges**'.

- **Rounding up or down:** When the exact figure is not essential, round up or down millions, billions and trillions to two decimal places, so *1,648,253* would become *1.65 million.*

Current

There is no need to use 'current' with a present tense verb as it's implied by the tense. So state *He is the manager of Shell's China operation,* rather than *He is the current manager of Shell's China operation.*

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Data

It is acceptable to use data (the plural) as singular, with eminent news organisations, such as the *Wall Street Journal* and *The Guardian*, sanctioning its use. So, either example is acceptable, just remember to be consistent in a report:

- **Singular:** *Export data shows an interesting trend.*
- **Plural:** *Export data show an interesting trend.*

Database

Write as one word, as in *Our **database** tracks planned wells for all projects.*

Data file

Write as two words, as in *The accompanying **data file** can also be downloaded from here.*

Dataset

Write as one word, as in *Our complete Global IP **dataset** is available in Excel format from the 'Downloads' section.*

Dates

Use the UK style: day-month-year and with no ordinal symbol (st, nd, rd, th), as in *On **2 February 2019**, Whitecap Resources Inc announced it will acquire all of the issued and outstanding common shares of Beaumont Energy Inc.*

For the date in tables and charts, use day/month/year format, so 01/10/2020 for 1 October 2020.

- Only use the exact date – day and month – if relevant, for instance, for recent events. For Informs, the date a deal is signed is relevant, as above, but less so in an asset report when you're writing about a pipeline start date from the 1990s.

- There's no need to state the year if it's the current year and is obvious from the context of the report and the date it is published. For example, if you were writing on 1 October 2020 about an event in the same year, you would write: *On 30 September, Shell sold its assets in....*

Day rate

Two words, no hyphen. As in *In mid-2011, the rig began drilling at a reduced **day rate** of US$120,000 on Hasbah.*

Dealmaking/dealmaker

Write as one word, as in:

- *Tumbling oil prices had sent **dealmaking** into a spin.*
- *Upstream **dealmakers** start 2019 facing an uphill battle.*

Debottlenecking

One word, no hyphens, as in *We expect the **debottlenecking** project to begin in H2.*

Decision-making/decision-maker

Two words, hyphenated, as in:

- ***Decision-making** is still implicitly subject to government approval.*
- *The study provides valuable insight for **decision-makers** into the market risks.*

Deepwater (adj) and deep water (noun)

- Deepwater (adjective) is one word, as in *As the first movers in the basin, Shell, BP and Exxon acquired a significant portion of their **deepwater** acreage between 1983 and 1989.*

- If using 'deep water' as a noun in the literal sense of the word, it's two words, as in *A further complication at Absheron is that the field lies in **deep water**.* However, if it's being used as a noun as shorthand for the deepwater industry, one word is fine, as in *Tight oil vs **deepwater**: which is more valuable?*

Definite and indefinite articles `Grammar`

- For the indefinite article, use '*a*' or '*some*' on first introducing a character, event or idea as in *BP and partner RWE Dea signed **a long-awaited deal** with the Egyptian Ministry of Petroleum…*

- For the definite article, use the more familiar '*the*' (or '*this*', '*that*' or a possessive) once the initial introductions are out of the way, or the audience is already familiar with the subject, as here: ***This** latest agreement is based on a new development plan designed to minimise costs and bring the gas onstream as quickly as possible.*

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Degrees Celsius

Present the noun as °C. There's no need to spell out Celsius, but make sure the C is uppercase and insert a space between the number and the degree symbol, as in *The temperature went above* **30 °C** *in July.*

Similarly, use °C as an adjective, as in *Experts don't think the* **2 °C** *target will be met on time.* There's no need for a hyphen between the number and the symbol.

However, spell out 'degree' in headlines (for SEO purposes, no one is likely to do a search using the ° symbol) or when degrees Celsius has already been established and the term is being used more abstractly, such as in reference to a **2-degree future** or a **3-degree world**.

Demonstrate

Use 'show' instead.

Dependant and dependent

- Dependant is the noun (a person who **depends** on you).

- Dependent is the adjective, as in *Development of the project is* **dependent** *upon the US Congress passing a 'Land Exchange' bill.*

  » However, in this example, dependent is acting as a nominalisation, so use 'depends', the verb form, instead, as in *Development of the project* **depends** *on the US Congress passing a 'Land Exchange' bill.*

Determine

If using in this sense, use 'decide' instead.

Determiner `Grammar`

These are the short words, such as articles or possessive pronouns, that define which object, person or thing is being discussed, like '*each*' and '*every*'. See also '**Conjunctions**' and '**Pronouns**'.

Digitisation and digitalisation

Note the difference in meaning.

- Digitisation is the process of converting information from a physical format into a digital one, such as scanning a letter on paper to create a PDF that can be emailed.

- Digitalisation is when the digitisation process is used to improve business processes, as in **Digitalisation** *holds significant promise for success in the L48.*

Discreet and discrete

Spellchecker won't pick up the difference in meaning of these homophones, so make sure you use the correct spelling.

- Discreet means prudent or unobtrusive, as in **Discreet** *enquiries were made with a number of the company's former employees.*

- Discrete means separate or individual, as in *The acreage occupies almost a third of Abu Dhabi's territory and is managed as four* **discrete** *geographical units.*

Disinterested and uninterested

- Disinterested means having no material interest in; impartial, *a* **disinterested** *judge.*

- Uninterested simply means not interested, as in *Chinese buyers seem* **uninterested** *in making significant purchases of copper.*

Double negatives `Grammar`

When two negatives in a phrase cancel out each other, making the statement positive, as in *A significant price increase* **isn't unlikely** *in the next two years.* It's challenging for most readers, but particularly for non-native English speakers. Rewrite.

- Rewrite example: *A significant price increase* **is likely** *in the next two years.*

Downcycle

One word when describing a period of decline, as in *In the past, Majors built reserves during a* **downcycle**.

Drill bit

Not 'drillbit'.

Drill- words

Aside from 'drill bit', most of the drill- words are one word, as in '*drillship*', '*drillsite*', '*drillstem*' and '*drillstring*', as in **Drillstem** *test data from the pre-salt Cluster Area has been very promising to date.*

Due to

This expression can be used in three different contexts, although the third should be avoided.

- **Owed to:** *The sum of US$100 is **due to** Dr Jones.*

- **Scheduled to: *Due to** take effect next year, the policy will restrict supply in some regions.*

- **Caused by, because of:** *South African refineries suffer from high crude delivery costs **due to** reliance on long-haul Middle Eastern crudes.* Many people take issue with this usage because its function is ambiguous – so use 'because' or 'as a result of', both of which are clearer.

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Each and every

Using both words together is unnecessary. These 'determiners' (used alongside nouns to indicate if they are specific or general) are often interchangeable but not always. Use a singular noun (and, where relevant, singular verb) with '*each*' and '*every*'.

- 'Each' stresses the individual nature of a person or thing in a list of two or more objects, as in *The field was unitised in 2012, and **each** of the five partners was awarded a 20% stake in Stampede…*

  » 'Each' can also be used as a pronoun, as in *'each was awarded…'* where the 'of them' is implicit.

- 'Every' emphasises the group aspect and is used in generalisations with three or more objects, people or ideas, as in *In fact, along with cost, we found nearly **every** metric we looked at declined in 2014 – except production.*

  » 'Every' can't be used as a pronoun, but can be used to refer to regular events as in *Every September, our forum is attended by…*

ebike, etrike

Use a lowercase e and no hyphen, as in *The huge number of **ebikes** on China's roads will support the sales of replacement batteries.*

Economic and economical

- Economic means related to trade, industry or money, as in *Power demand continues to grow in line with sustained **economic** growth.*

- Economical means giving good value or return in relation to the money, time, or effort expended, as in *The project was eventually shelved as the government claimed it would not prove **economical** in the long term.*

Economics

This word should be treated as singular or plural depending on how you're using the term.

- It's treated as **singular** if you're referring to the social science, as in ***Economics is*** *now widely taught in colleges across the country.*

- It's treated as **plural** if you're referring to financial considerations or economically significant aspects, as in *Conventional oil project **economics are*** *also highly sensitive to long-term planning assumptions on oil price.*

Eight-inch

Not 8 inch or 8", so *Oil and gas are transported to the Gorm 'E' platform via a 17-kilometre, **eight-inch** dual phase pipeline for processing.*

EIA

The US Energy Information Administration, as in *But this week the **EIA** reported that propane stocks built by 0.1 mmbbls.*

If you mean 'environmental impact assessment', spell out on first use.

EIS

Environmental impact statement or environmental impact study, so spell out the first time you use this, as follows: *An **environmental impact statement (EIS)** is being prepared for the project.*

email

One word, no hyphen.

Embed and imbed

Although there is no difference between the meaning of these two words, use the 'e' spelling for consistency. This also applies to the verb and noun variations 'embedding', 'embedded' and 'embedment', as in *Digitalisation isn't yet **embedded** in upstream but will be more prominent in 2018.*

Encounter

If using in this sense, use 'meet' instead.

Energy transition

Do not capitalise or reduce this term to initials. Always spell out, as in *The ability to scale quickly could slow the pace of the **energy transition***.

Engrained and ingrained

While engrained is an accepted variant of ingrained, which means firmly fixed or deep-rooted, prefer the latter spelling. As in *Given the public's **ingrained** expectations of cheap fuels, it is uncertain whether these subsidy reforms will be reversed very quickly.*

Enquiry and inquiry

- In British English, an enquiry indicates an unofficial query, as in *Wood Mackenzie has received numerous **enquiries** around the emerging LNG buyers in China.*

- An inquiry indicates an official query, such as a formal investigation by a government body. As in *An EC competition **inquiry** into tendering procedures for new CCGT capacity at Landivisiau has delayed the project to 2018.*

- In American English, 'inquiry' is used for either meaning.

Estimate

Means 'to calculate approximately' when used as as a verb, so don't place 'approximately', 'roughly', 'around' or similar before the figure.

Use a lowercase e when abbreviating the noun to denote future numbers in a chart title or legend, as in *Total imports by country 2016-**2022e**.*

EUR

Stands for estimated ultimate recovery. However, take caution in abbreviating if ever used in a document where EUR is also being used to refer to the euro currency in charts and tables.

Eurozone

One word. Although the currency should be lowercase, use a capital letter when referring to the group of EU countries that have fully incorporated the euro as their national currency, as in *Disorderly default and exit from the **Eurozone** is not a good outcome for Greece.*

Eventuate

Use 'happen' instead.

Excel

Always capitalise the name of the spreadsheet program.

As a product name, it should be styled the way Microsoft styles it, as in: *The accompanying **Excel** download to this report lists all the new orders placed in 2018/2019.*

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Farther and further

- Farther refers to distance, as in *An additional salt structure and faulting **farther** west provided the trapping mechanism in Block GB 387.*

- Further refers to a greater extent or degree as in ***Further** contraction in GDP is likely through 2015.*

Federal

Don't capitalise unless it's part of an official name (such as Federal Trade Commission).

- *Power generators will be watching to see if **federal** policy adopts an increasingly low-carbon trajectory.*

- *Forward guidance from the US **Federal** Reserve suggests rates will rise again.*

Feedgas

One word (despite what Word spellchecker says), as in *The plant's **feedgas** shortage will persist for the next six years.*

Feedstock

One word, as in *The polyethylene markets are pricing in for the potential increase in **feedstock** prices.*

Few and a few

Careful, this is quite nuanced. 'A few' is a quantifier meaning 'some' or 'a small number'. But by taking away the indefinite article, 'few' has a greater meaning, not only is it 'some' or 'a small number', but it is also 'not as much as may be expected or wished for'. And depending on the context, this can add positive or negative connotations.

- *The government has introduced **a few** measures to speed up the development process.* This means the government has introduced some or a small number of measures. However, this doesn't tell us whether this is considered a good or a bad thing.

- *The government has introduced **few** measures to speed up the development process.* This means the government has introduced some or a small number of measures, but not as many as expected or hoped for – suggesting it is a bad thing.

- 'Quite a few' is a fairly large number or many, so for the sake of brevity just say 'many'.

Fewer and less

Use 'fewer' with things you can count, and 'less' with those you cannot. You have fewer wells, tankers and pipelines, but less oil and gas.

- Fewer refers to number, as in ***Fewer** hurdles remain for the politically embroiled Keystone XL pipeline.*

- Less refers to quantity, as in *The country exports **less** than 5% of its production.*

Also see **Amount and number**.

Fiscal

When relating to government finances, which is the sense we generally use it in our reports, fiscal is an adjective, as in *The change has provided investor certainty over the **fiscal** terms, which has encouraged investment.*

Fiscal does exist as a noun, but has a different meaning – either a public prosecutor or a stamp signifying payment of a tax. So, either follow it with the relevant noun – say, policy or terms – or if you are using fiscals when you mean finances, just say 'finances'.

Flatline

One word, as in *China's gold production growth target of 3.5% year-on-year until 2020 is contrary to the recent trend in **flatlining** production.*

Flowback

One word, as in *Treatment facilities and re-injection wells are used to handle produced water, including **flowback** water from hydraulic fracturing operations.*

Flowline

Whether used as a noun or adjective, this should be one word, as in *The development consists of a well cluster, manifold and **flowline** system.*

Flowsheet

One word when using the alternative to flow chart, as in *The conceptualised **flowsheet** considers the recovery of magnetite.*

Focus

Spell the present participle (-ing) and past participle (-ed) versions with just one 's', as in *All three are **focused** on increasing their liquids exposure.*

Force majeure

Don't italicise (it's a foreign word, but should be familiar to our audience) and don't capitalise (it's not a proper noun, even if we are talking about a force majeure clause, for instance), as in *In July, Sohar declared **force majeure** for several weeks on P1020 ingot and sow.*

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Forecast

Spell the past tense of the verb like this, rather than with an '-ed' at the end (in other words, the past and present tense look the same). As in *This differs to our H2 2014 outlook, in which we **forecast** growth of 15% from 2015 to 2020.*

Foreign words and phrases

Use foreign words (with their accents) when necessary. If it's cumbersome – for instance, when it comes to naming political parties, such as the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party – then use the English equivalent, followed by its original-language abbreviation, as in *The decision by the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB) to formally leave the ruling coalition….* See '**Accents**'.

- For country names, align with our **taxonomy list**. There are no accents used in our listing of countries, such as Cote d'Ivoire, as here *The government of **Cote d'Ivoire** has applied to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS)…*

- Be aware Excel does not accept accents.

Foreseeable future

Avoid using this cliché to describe a period of time. The amount of time considered foreseeable varies widely. Instead, use a more specific description such as 'in the next six months', 'by the end of the decade' or, to avoid any ambiguity, state an actual month or year.

Formal vs informal Concepts

Where you face a choice – in particular words (whilst v while) or style (writing 'heretofore' vs 'so') – err on the side of informality. None of us would write our reports in text speak, for instance, but we should communicate to our clients in fluent human. Be professional, mature and clear with a tone of voice to match – we don't write academic papers so don't write in a stuffy, formal or academic style.

Former

Sentences that use a past-tense verb with 'former' are redundant, as former means in the past. So state *He is the **former** manager of Shell's China operation*, or *He was the manager of Shell's China operation*.

FPSO

Spell out the meaning and add 'vessel' on first use, as in *The company has ordered a **floating production, storage and offloading (FPSO) vessel**.*

Refer to as just an 'FPSO' on subsequent mentions, as in *The **FPSO** will be delivered in 2022.*

Frac/fracking

Strive to write out in full as 'hydraulic fracturing' each time rather than using 'frac' or 'fracking'. Similarly, write 're-fracturing' rather than 're-frac'.

Front-load

Hyphenate, as in *Following the **front-loading** of production in late 2019, the effect of tariffs has kicked in.*

Gambia, the

Keep the definite article as part of the country's name but don't capitalise the article unless at the start of a sentence, as in *The return of stability is a boost to the upstream industry in **the Gambia**.*

Gas lift (adjective and noun)

Both the noun and the adjective are two words, as in *Some gas is used for **gas lift** operations and platform fuel usage, and the remainder is sold and transported.*

Gasfield (adjective) and gas field (noun)

- Gasfield (adjective) is one word, as in *The threat of **gasfield** shutdowns is real.*

- Gas field (noun) is two words, as in *All three **gas fields** are linked to the nearby gas treatment and desulphurisation plants.*

Gasoil

Not gas oil, so *Marine **gasoil** is still expected to be the main beneficiary of the tightening sulphur limits within the ECAs.*

Geographic locations

When referring to geographic locations that include the city and state or province, or the city and country, use a comma to offset both. For example, *The company's aluminium smelter in **Wuhan, Hubei province**, has employed an additional 50 workers in the past year to meet increasing demand.*

Geologic formations

Don't capitalise geologic formations such as *basin, belt, delta, field, formation, play, pool, reservoir, sand, shale, trend* and *zone.* Use as here *The Krishna-Godavari **basin** still dominates Reliance's deepwater portfolio and development of discoveries in the KG-D6 block.*

- **Exceptions:** if the formation is universally well known, such as West Nile Delta and Permian Basin, but not, for instance, the Tunisian Pelagian basin.

Geologic time

When describing geologic time, capitalise 'Early', 'Mid' and 'Late', or 'Upper', 'Middle' and 'Lower', where a formation is by convention sub-divided into upper, middle and lower elements, as in *The Bassein Limestone of **Middle Eocene** age is the main reservoir of the Heera, Neelam and Ratna fields.*

- If the formation is not usually sub-divided, and the discussion relates merely to the upper part of the formation, then reference 'upper part of the XXX formation', or along those lines. Use of 'Upper' in the latter case would indicate that the sub-division is in use as a genuine chronostratigraphic sub-division.

- Formal divisions like Era, Period and Epoch are capitalised – in the above example, 'Eocene age' is not a recognised division.

Gerunds and present participle `Grammar`

Both kinds of words end in *-ing* but a gerund is a verb that acts as a noun, while the present participle is a verb that acts as an adjective. In either case, be careful not to overuse.

- Gerunds are verbs ending in *-ing* that act as nouns, as in '*the pipeline's important role in **transporting**…*' or, here, where 'finding buyers' is the subject (a noun) and 'to be challenging' is a present participle: *But these are tough times for M&A globally – so finding buyers could prove to be challenging.*

- Present participles are verbs ending in *-ing* that act as adjectives, as in *The oil price declined at an **alarming** rate.*

- The present participle, when used with a form of the verb 'to be', is a continuous action, as in *GDF is appraising the field.* Sometimes it is unnecessary – if you write '*Production is starting soon*', you could make your point more forcibly if you just wrote '*production starts soon*'.

GoM

Gulf of Mexico. Note the lowercase 'o' in the abbreviation. *Production in deepwater **GoM** depends on a limited number of fields.*

Government

Don't capitalise 'government', even when referring to a specific one, as in *As a result of the Macondo oil spill, the US **government** instituted a temporary deepwater drilling moratorium.*

Greenfield

Don't capitalise this term referring to an area of land that has never had buildings on it before, as in *Gazpromneft's portfolio spans a number of challenging **greenfield** projects.*

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H1, H2

Use for half years rather than 1H or 2H, as in
In **H2 2014**, *the government made moves to reduce subsidies to manage the fiscal deficit.*

Headings (sub-heads) `Structure`

Use these to break up the text in your report – it helps the reader to navigate, helps with search and avoids long blocks of text on a page. Aside from the 'Executive summary', the headers (or sub-heads) are up to the author of Insights and Informs. So think practically ('Mining operations' and 'Smelters and refineries') or be more creative ('Economic stagnation will remain' and 'Government spending compromised'), depending on the nature of your report. A few guidelines:

- **Don't use full sentences:** keep it brief and direct (with no full stops and question marks only as necessary).
- **Be specific:** don't use vague terms like 'background'.
- **Use sentence case only**: Never Use Title Case Which Is More Difficult To Read.

Hence

Avoid using this stuffy, old-fashioned term. Replace with *so, as a consequence, for this reason* or similar.

Henry Hub

Always spell this out, as in *This equates to a long-term **Henry Hub** price assumption of US$4.12/mcf.*

High-grade

- Follow standard rules for hyphenation when using as an adjective before or after a noun, so 'high-grade deposits' or 'these deposits are high grade'.
- Include the hyphen when referring to the noun or verb 'high-grading' in the financial sense, when producers allocate capital to their highest-return assets, or the mining sense, mining out the portion of the orebody that has the highest grade of material to be mined. As in, *We expect service cost relief, asset **high-grading** and efficiency improvements in operations.*

Historic and historical

- 'Historic' is a momentous event (think 'first man on the moon'-type events).
- 'Historical' simply means relating to the past, as in *Cargoes this year are below **historical** volumes.*

Home and hone

Don't get these two confused when you want to use the phrase 'home in on'.

- Home in this sense means to direct on a target, as in *US Independents **home** in on US tight oil.*
- Hone means to sharpen or perfect, as in *The relatively modest size of Dussafu and Kudu make them good opportunities for BW to **hone** operating skills at relatively low cost.*

When you want to say 'home in on', think of a homing pigeon finding its way home.

Hookup

Noun or adjective, this is one word, as in *In 2021, a floatel will be used to support operations during the **hookup** stage.*

However

Can be used in two ways:

- Meaning 'to whatever extent', 'in whatever way' or 'no matter how', as in **However** *hard I try, I can't get my head around hyphenation.*
- Showing a contrast with what went before – like '*but*', except more emphatic and formal (as are '*nonetheless*' or '*nevertheless*'), as in **However,** *for prices to rise, fundamentally one of two things must happen…*
  - » You can use it at the start or near the beginning of a sentence and follow it with a comma.
  - » If using it mid-sentence, precede it with a semi-colon and follow with a comma to avoid confusion about which part of the sentence it refers to or contrasts with, as in *Chevron expects these trains to be online within the next 12 months**; however,** Wood Mackenzie assumes a nine-month gap between Trains 1 and 2.* Alternatively, consider using 'but' (no comma needed).

HP/HT

High pressure/high temperature, as in *The UK government announced it will introduce a new fiscal incentive targeting ultra **HP/HT** fields.*

Hydraulic fracturing

Strive to write out in full rather than using 'frac' or 'fracking'. Similarly, write 're-fracturing' rather than 're-frac'.

Imbed

Spell with an 'e' – embed.

Impact

The verb means to have an effect on something or someone, while the noun either means collision or, more usually for us, an effect.

- Verb usage doesn't always require a preposition but when it does, it's generally '*on*' or, less frequently, '*of*' but not '*to*'.

- Verb, no preposition: *A falling Australian dollar increases the cost of imported goods, which will **impact** miners.*

- Noun, no preposition: *The **impact** is small but material as miners struggle to survive in a weak price environment.*

- Noun, followed by 'on': *We applied the 2020 forecast diesel price to 2019 costs to assess the **impact** on mine site costs.*

- Noun, followed by 'of': *The average **impact** of the lower price is greater.*

Imply and infer

- Imply means suggest or hint at, as in *All of these ambitions **imply** robust energy demand growth.*

- Infer means deduce or conclude, as in *We have **inferred** the impact on production and development spend under different price ranges.*

Implication

Something has implications *for* something, not *on* something, as in *The move from fuel oil to gasoil has **implications for** crude price differentials.*

This applies even when the thing being affected appears later in the sentence – often after the cause is specified, as in *It's not yet clear what the **implications** of the new legislation will be for the national oil company.*

Avoid using this in headlines because it's long and it's a nominalisation (a noun from a verb; in this case, 'implicate') and 'effects' will usually do or, even better, rephrase. So rather than ***Implications** of the energy transition on the US wind energy market*, say instead *What the energy transition means for US wind energy* or similar.

In terms of

This is often used unnecessarily. Reword or simply cut so it's shorter and reads better.

Independents

Capitalise, so *The **Independents'** budgets are prominent in North America; the Majors dominate in Europe and Africa.*

Indices and indexes

Both are acceptable plural forms of 'index' but take on different usage in their senses.

- Use indices when referring to mathematical, scientific and statistical contexts.

- Use indexes when referring to written documents, such as bibliographical or citation listings.

However, usage also differs between British and American English, with the former favouring indices and the latter indexes, regardless of the specific context. Since Wood Mackenzie house style adheres to British English, opt for indices – unless you are writing for a US audience only.

Whatever spelling you choose, stick to it and don't swap between the two in the same report or a group of reports. This rule applies to any words that have more than one acceptable spelling.

Infill

Not in-fill, so *Poor reservoir connectivity has required **infill** drilling, workovers and gas injection to improve the oil recovery.*

Interburden

One word, no hyphen, as in *Surface mining involves blasting the overburden and **interburden** material.*

Interfuel

One word, no hyphen, as in *Structural factors such as slower GDP growth and **interfuel** competition have led us to revise down our demand forecast.*

International Large-Caps

Capitalise, as in *This is based on guidance released by other **International Large-Caps**.*

International Mid-Caps

Capitalise, as in *Recurring exploration disappointment has driven Tullow's market value close to the **International Mid-Caps** average.*

Internet

Always starts with a lowercase 'i' unless starting a sentence. As in *The development of the **internet** and email has further enhanced the role of copper in telecommunications in recent years.*

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Interstate

Not inter-state, so *The Gulf Coast region has a system of **interstate** and intrastate pipelines.*

Into and in to, onto and on to

Be aware of the difference a space makes. 'Into' and 'onto' are prepositions. They are positioned before the object so are forward looking, and have several meanings generally related to movement, action or change. As in:

- *US gasoline exports will need to move **into** the Pacific Basin if high refinery utilisation is to be maintained.*

- *An attempt to get 1 million electric cars **onto** Germany's roads was expanded to include hybrids, mostly fuelled by gasoline.*

'In to' and 'on to' are combinations of an adverb ('in' or 'on') and the preposition 'to'. Unlike the single-word forms, they look both backward ('in' and 'on' refer to a preceding verb) and forward ('to' pertains to the following object). As in:

- *Interested parties had four months to hand their proposals **in to** the local government.*

- *After discussing carbon cuts the delegates moved **on to** consider a revised pricing structure.*

Try saying the sentence aloud, pausing distinctly between 'in' and 'to'. If the result sounds wrong, you probably need 'into'. The same goes for 'on' and 'to'.

Intransitive verbs Grammar

A verb that doesn't need a direct object (such as go, *lie, laugh* and *sneeze*) so the action is not done to something or someone, as in *The price of SCO **plunged***. See '**Transitive**' and '**Lay and lie**'.

Intrastate

Not intra-state, as in *The Gulf Coast region has a well-developed system of interstate and **intrastate** pipelines.*

Investable

Spell with -able ending rather than -ible ending when referring to something available to be invested in, as in *How to stay **investable** – the oil industry's challenge.*

Its and it's

Always check usage.

- When used as the possessive form of the pronoun 'it', an apostrophe is not required. As in *This enhances the probability of Fortuna FLNG achieving **its** 2020 first gas target.*

- When used as a contraction of 'it is' (or 'it has'), the apostrophe is required. As in ***It's** unlikely these targets will be met by the end of the decade*

Jackup

- Jackup (adjective and noun) is one word, as in *Sinopec then began drilling in shallow water using offshore **jackups***.

- Jack up (verb) is simply the verb 'jack' followed by the preposition 'up' – they have separate functions and so are written as two words.

Jargon `Concepts`

Don't use jargon if you can avoid it. Even for those who are familiar with the terms, it's far more pleasurable to read plain English wherever possible. Some readers may also be new to the industry or not have English as a native language. Keep it simple where you can, and where you can't, explain any jargon on first use. See also '**Nominalisations**'.

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Keywords Concepts

These are the words or phrases our clients would type into a search engine for the industry topics that matter to them. Use them in your headline – and the closer to the start, the better. Whether it's Indonesia, LNG or oil prices, look out for the most searched-for terms in your industry and, where relevant, use them.

• Keep up to date by checking the monthly portal analytics reports on **@Portal Analytics** or go straight to the Spotfire landing page.

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Latin

Avoid using Latin terms – from *per annum* (use *'a year'* or *'annually'*) to *i.e.* (*that is*) or *e.g.* (*for example*). Besides being overly formal, we simply don't use these terms in everyday speech so leave it out of your writing, as in *Kevitsa is expected to produce approximately 11,000 tonnes of nickel and 20,000 tonnes of copper* **annually**.

Lay and lie

- Lay is a transitive verb (it needs an object) – you lay something down, or lay someone off, as in *Patriot Coal decided to* **lay off** *just 75 miners at its Wells metallurgical coal complex.*

- Lie is intransitive (no object required) – you may lie down but you don't lie anything else down. We often use it in this sense: *We estimate 27,600 acres* **lie** *within the Deep Basin sub-play and 43,643 acres lie within the Ozona sub-play.*

- Lay is also the past tense of 'lie' so 'I lay down' – hence, much confusion.

- Laid is simply the past tense of 'lay' – 'I laid my book on the table'. We use in this sense: *A six-inch underground pipeline was* **laid** *to transport gas from two wells to Inuvik.*

Lead (verb)

The past tense of the verb is spelled 'led', as in *Declining electricity demand has* **led** *to over 30 GW of coal electric generating unit retirements recently.*

Leapfrog

One word when used as a transitive verb to mean going past others quickly or missing some stages of an activity or process. It should also be followed by the thing being surpassed, as in *The deal will see Chevron* **leapfrog** *ExxonMobil and Shell to become the second-largest producing Major.*

Lens

Refer to either *Lens Upstream* or *Lens Lower 48* in your reports, presentations, emails or in discussions.

- When you refer to them again, do so as *solutions*.

- Link to them via **lens.think.woodmac.com**.

Licence and license

- Licence is the noun in British English, as in *Operators will seek flexibility where possible on* **licence** *length and terms, to avoid spending now.*

- License is the verb, as in *Vast areas of frontier offshore acreage have been* **licensed** *in the past five to ten years.*

- Note the correct spelling of 'licensing', as in *The* **licensing** *round closes on 31 August 2020.*

Light before heavy `Concepts`

Put the heaviest words at the end of a phrase or sentence – as in, 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness'. This gives your reader a chance to digest all the other constituent parts of the sentence and put it into context.

- As with the example just cited, it works particularly well if applied with the 'Rule of three' writing principle, as here *If so, over the long term Russia faces prolonging its economic difficulties, increasing its geopolitical isolation and potentially inflicting lasting damage on the nation's oil and gas production capacity.* See '**Rule of three**'.

Links `Structure`

Where relevant, link to other reports on our portal for clients' benefit – here are a few guidelines:

- Make the links as brief and specific as possible, and use appropriate keywords – don't use cryptic words, like 'click here' or 'more'.

- Use the keywords your clients might use and write descriptive and concise link text.

- Stick to one or two links per report and keep these towards the end – too many links are distracting.

- Use links that are on subject so users are more likely to be entitled to the linked reports.

- Only link to relevant external sites, be explicit that it's external and leave these until the end of the report, if possible.

Lockdown (noun), lock down (phrasal verb)

- *Inter-union rivalry led to a* **lockdown** *in operations.*

- *Police have* **locked down** *the entire area.*

Low-vol

Not low vol, so *The Brule mine normally produces an ultra* **low-vol** *PCI coal for the export market.*

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Majority

When used in an abstract sense, treat as singular, as in *A two-thirds **majority is** needed to amend the bill.*

When used to denote the elements making up the majority, treat as plural, as in *The **majority** of the board **were** opposed.*

For brevity, use 'most' rather than 'majority of'.

Majors

Capitalise, as in *The Independents' budgets are prominent in North America; the **Majors** dominate in Europe and Africa.*

Manoeuvre

Use the British preference to spell this French word, as in *The deal potentially sets the scene for more corporate **manoeuvres**.*

Marketable

Use this rather than 'saleable'.

Measurement while drilling

Spell out on first use, then use MWD.

Metadiscourse `Concepts`

This is writing about writing, thinking about thinking and so on. It's generally unnecessary in our reports so skip the metadiscourse about how you will write a report ('In this report, we will explain…') – just do it. Note that our methodology and assumptions documents are always available on the portal where your material will be published.

Microseismic

One word, as in *Diamondback has been running **microseismic** and tracer surveys in simultaneously stimulated wellbores.*

Modification

Use 'change' instead.

Modifiers `Grammar`

These words describe a noun or a noun phrase or a verb or verb phrase. They offer extra detail, but are not integral to the sentence. In other words, the sentence would work just as well without them, but using a modifier allows you to elaborate. The modifying phrase should sit as close as possible to the thing, person or idea that it qualifies.

There are three kinds of modifiers: these operate in much the way a 'which' phrase might, but do so with more style.

» **Resumptive modifier:** repeats the key word or phrase in the next clause, as 'price' does here: *Oil dropped to its lowest price yet, a price that saw many companies look more closely at their breakevens…*

» **Summative modifier:** uses a term that sums up the preceding clause before adding more detail, as 'a disappointing trend' does here: *Growth in per-capita energy demand has reversed, a disappointing trend in a country where a sizeable proportion of the population has limited access to anything but traditional fuels.*

» **Free modifier:** these allow you to comment on the subject of the closest verb (as 'adding' does to 'double', here), as in *US onshore liquids is production expected to double by 2017, adding more than 150,000 boe/d of net production.*

• **Link with a previous sentence or thought:** modifiers work for the reader when they help to link with the previous sentence or a previously expressed thought. And when they're short, as here *Ambitious in scope, the budget was nonetheless widely regarded as lacking in detail.*

• **Don't front-load:** be careful not to front-load your reports with modifiers that are too long or complex, as here, where the main verb ('*have been*') takes some finding: *Efforts to contain the outbreak, such as an extended holiday period, traffic restrictions and temperature checks, introduced at the end of January when the number of newly reported cases was rising rapidly, have been successful.*

» Rewrite example: *Efforts to contain the outbreak were introduced at the end of January when the number of newly reported cases was rising rapidly. These included an extended holiday period, traffic restrictions and temperature checks. Such efforts have been successful.*

...**Modifiers** *continued*

- **Don't leave it dangling:** a dangling modifier is when a phrase has an implied subject that doesn't coordinate with the explicit subject, as here ***After announcing Round Zero ahead of schedule in August, the delay*** *of a few weeks in the launching of Round One suggests that the plunging oil price may have triggered some anxiety.* The modifier implies a person who has made an announcement (the energy minister) but the explicit subject is 'delay'. This sort of unintentional confusion is demonstrated here:

  » **Example 1:** courtesy of a local newspaper: *'When Her Majesty had broken the traditional bottle of champagne over the bows of the ship, she slid slowly and gracefully down the slipway, entering the water with scarcely a splash…'*

  » **Example 2:** courtesy of Groucho Marx: *'One morning I shot an elephant in my pyjamas. How he got into my pyjamas I'll never know.'*

Moot

Has opposite meanings in British and American English, so best avoid using. The British definition is 'debatable', so a moot point would be something that needs to be discussed. Conversely, the American definition is 'irrelevant', so a moot point would be something that could be ignored.

More than and over

Use either when referring to a numerical value but vary it so you don't repeat one or the other too often (note that grammarians prefer the use of 'more than' to 'over' in this sense). *The refinery has crushers that take **over** 60% of feed material* and, from the same document, *Expansions have seen capacity rise to **more than** 700 ktpa.*

Multi-well pad

Only use a hyphen between multi and well, as in *We undertook a proprietary spatial analysis of well location data to analyse the growing use of large **multi-well pads** in Northeast gas plays.*

Multilateral wells

Multilateral is one word, no hyphen. As in *Three **multilateral** wells are planned to tap a Triassic reservoir.*

Nationwide

Not nation-wide, as in *The government had earlier estimated that US$11 billion is needed to achieve its* **nationwide** *electrification target by 2022.*

Necessity

Use 'need' instead.

Netback

Not net-back, as in *Despite the decrease in incremental prices, domestic gas* **netbacks** *remain attractive.*

Nominalisation `Grammar`

A noun derived from a verb (like failure from fail, prevention from prevent, realisation from realise, argument from argue, and so on), as in *For more information on the* **incentivisation** *of renewables…* or, less frequently, an adjective derived from a verb, often made-up and unnecessary, words like *'In furtherance…'.*

- **Why they don't work:** nominalisations (which often end in *-ion, -ment, -ence, -ing*) obscure who did what to whom and can distort the sequence. It makes writing less clear, uses more words and shifts the hard work to the reader. So if there's an action buried somewhere in your subject phrase, turn it back into the verb it really wants to be. See this example: *The French commercial sector is also mostly* **reliant** *on electricity.*

  » **Rewrite example:** *The French commercial sector mostly* **relies** *on electricity.*

- **Wordier:** nominalisations are wordier, too, because they require more articles, prepositions and awkward constructions to make the sentence work. In the following example, the clunky sentence construction means the main verb is at the end of the sentence, which forces readers to hold three pieces of information before they know what to do with them, as in *A positive resolution to the tax dispute, successful appraisal of discovered resources offshore Senegal and project execution are all catalysts for a market re-rating.*

  » **Rewrite example:** far better to say *Senegal owes its market re-rating to resolving the tax dispute, appraising resources discovered offshore and strong project management.*

- **When to use nominalisations:** nominalisations are useful in referring, for instance, to previous sentences or common terms or concepts.

- Common nominalisations:
  » Come to an agreement – agree
  » Deterioration – deteriorate
  » Have a meeting with – meet with
  » Implementation – implement
  » Make an assessment – assess
  » Make a decision – decide
  » Make an announcement – announce
  » Reach a settlement with – settle with
  » Recognition – recognise

Non sequitur `Concepts`

A statement that does not follow logically from the one before.

None

None does not always have to take a singular verb. Follow none with the form of the verb that makes best sense in the context.

- If you roughly mean 'not one' or 'no single one', use a singular verb, as in *Of the company's assets, none* **is** *more troublesome than the Kazatan field.*

  » Use a singular verb when used with a mass noun, such as *None of the water* **is** *polluted.*

- If you roughly mean 'not any' or your sentence has a sense of plurality, use a plural noun, as in *We spoke to several traders and none of them* **are** *feeling optimistic.*

North American Large-Caps

Capitalise all words, as in *This is slightly higher than the* **North American Large-Cap** *peer group average of 30%.*

North American Mid-Caps

Capitalise all words, as in *Only the Majors and* **North American Mid-Caps** *were unsuccessful in replacing production via conventional greenfield exploration.*

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Nouns `Grammar`

A person, place, thing or idea.

- **Concrete nouns:** use concrete rather than abstract nouns to talk about real people and things. The subject of this sentence – '*Exploration spending will be cut by at least 30%, especially in high-risk frontiers*' – begs the question who is cutting this spending. Write in the active voice and use a concrete noun where possible

  » **Rewrite example:** '*Explorers will cut their spending by at least 30%, especially in high-risk frontiers.*'

- **Compound nouns:** avoid long strings of nouns, like *the ISNE historical solar generation pattern*. Readability suffers when three or more words that are ordinarily separate nouns follow in succession, even if it is grammatically correct.

  » **Rewrite example:** …*the pattern of ISNE solar generation over time.*

- **Nominalisation:** a noun derived from a verb. See '`Nominalisation`'.

NPV10

Net present value @10%. Ideally, 'real' or 'nominal' should be used when referring to economic metrics such as *NPV, IRR* and similar. *Rosneft paid US$500 million for the 23.3% stake, compared with our base case* **NPV10** *of US$880 million.*

Numbers

In the narrative (as opposed to tables and charts), spell out single-figure numbers (one to nine), but use numerals for 10 or more, as in *This coincided with hard coking coal prices increasing fivefold.*

Use 'from' with 'to', or 'between' with 'and', when you write out the numbers. Other examples: *four shale oil reserves, the five-year average, 15 years from the start of gas production, a 30% ratio.* Some exceptions:

- Digits only

  » **Units of measurements:** always use numerals, even if less than 10, as here *Chevron estimates its potentially recoverable resources at* **7 billion boe**. The rule is to spell out a number if it starts a sentence – but a measurement unit would be an awkward way to start a sentence.

  » **Percentages:** use the percentage symbol with the figure, as in *Synthetic crude oil depreciated against WTI, widening the gap to more than* **9%**. Don't spell out, except at the start of a sentence, as in **Ninety-five per cent** *of the country's energy requirements are met through imports.* Note, when this happens spell out using the British English spelling, per cent. Percent is American English.

  » **Proper name:** as in **Block 9** *is located in the west of the Masila basin.*

  » **Page numbers:** as in *Found on* **page 4** *of Statoil's annual report.*

  » **Dates:** such as 10 October 2019 *(which, incidentally, is the date format to follow) as in On* **18 March**, *the partners of Israel's Tamar field signed a gas sales agreement with Dolphinus Holdings Limited.*

  » **Ranges:** see '`Ranges`'.

  » **Sets of numbers:** don't mix styles in sets. Where there is a mix of numbers below and above 10, use all numerals, as in *The company plans to close* **8** *to* **12** *sites.*

- Spelled out

  » **Fractions:** unless attached to a whole number (2.5, 8.5), hyphenate and spell out (one-half, three-quarters, tenth, twentieth), as in *Gunvor is to acquire a* **one-third** *interest in the Bull Mountain mine.*

- **Ordinal numbers:** don't use '2nd' or '3rd' in any instance in text – just write out 'second', 'third', 'fourth' and so on until ninth, as in *Lampung is Indonesia's* **second** *regasification terminal.* Thereafter, as above, use 10th, 11th and so on, as here *Gazprom held its* **10th** *annual Investor Day presentation in early February.*

- **Start of a sentence:** spell out numbers, as in **Ninety-five per cent** *of the country's energy requirements are met through imports.*

- It's fine to start a sentence with a year if you must, but try to avoid this by rephrasing or rearranging, as in **The year 2019** *marked a turning point in the gas sector.*

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Nylon

- When referring to the generic term, use nylon. As in *Chinese commodity spandex is now cheaper than some **nylon** yarns.*

- When referring to a specific type, such as nylon 6, use PA6. As in *These start-ups are causing some concern among other **PA6** polymer producers.*
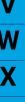
Object `Grammar`

A noun or pronoun that is governed by a verb.

- **Direct object:** noun that follows a transitive verb, the thing that is being acted upon – it receives the action, as in *Israel must form a new **government** following elections* (form > government).

- **Prepositional object:** the noun that follows a preposition, as in *Israel must form a new government following **elections** (following > elections).*

- **Indirect object:** the noun between a verb and its direct object; it is the recipient of the direct object, as in *He gave the presentation to his **clients*** (presentation > clients).

Offshore

Not off shore, as in *We have removed all **offshore** wind from the base case forecast.*

Offtake

One word, no hyphen, for the noun, adjective and verb, as in *BP has been particularly successful at securing new markets, including customers for all of its US LNG **offtake**.*

Oilfield (adjective) and oil field (noun)

- Oilfield (adjective) is one word, as in *Sinopec's **oilfield** service subsidiary has experience with unconventional exploration in the Fuling project.*

- Oil field (noun) is two words, as in ***Oil fields** of this size are not found in benign regions in shallow water any more.*

Oilwell (adjective) and oil well (noun)

- Oilwell (adjective) is one word, as in *The company outsourced its **oilwell** production.*

- Oil well (noun) is two words, as in *Gas lift is used to assist production from the **oil wells**.*

Ongoing

One word, no hyphen (despite what Word spellchecker says), as in *The **ongoing** US-China trade tensions will keep pressure on prices.*

Only

Place 'only' directly before the word or phrase it modifies to reduce the potential for ambiguity, as in *BHP Billiton will now operate **only** four rigs*. The more words that separate 'only' from its correct position, the less obvious it is which word 'only' relates to.

Onshore

Not on-shore, as in ***Onshore** production in Lower Congo is very mature.*

Onstream

Not on-stream, as in *New oil and gas projects that were recently brought **onstream** will continue to support CNOOC's output.*

Open-hole

Always include the hyphen, so *The company experienced localised success with the application of water-driven, underbalanced drilling with **open-hole** completions.*

Opex

All lowercase, not OPEX, OpEx or Opex, as in *Asset sales are being accelerated and deeper cuts to **opex** were announced.*

Outperformance

One word, no hyphen, as in *The **outperformance** was due to improving Eagle Ford well results.*

Outside

No need to follow with 'of', as in *How many shale wells will be drilled **outside** North America in 2015?*

Overburden

One word, no hyphen, as in *Surface mining involves blasting the **overburden** and interburden material.*

Overcapacity

One word, no hyphen, as in *The government recently announced a plan to tackle **overcapacity** in the domestic coal sector.*

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Pad drilling

No hyphen necessary, as in *Flexible drilling rigs are becoming more common in the Bakken as companies transition to* **pad drilling**.

PADD

Petroleum Administration for Defence Districts. Note, it is not *padd* or *Padd*. Use Roman numerals – PADD I, II, III, IV and V – not numbers. **PADD III has been the growth engine for the recent boom in distillate exports, and we expect that to continue.**

Paragraphs Structure

Keep these short wherever possible, aiming for an average of four sentences so it's easier to read. Stick to one main idea in a paragraph. Vary the length of paragraphs throughout so it doesn't appear too formulaic. See '**Sentences**' for their recommended length.

Parallel phrasing Grammar

Matching grammatical structures and the elements in your sentence so that verb coordinates with verb, noun with noun or gerund with gerund and so on. As with so much of how we write, the key is to maintain consistency.

This particularly applies to anything in a series, such as bullet lists – each bullet should stick to the same structure as the other, and follow on from the introductory clause.

- As here, *Europe is mired in depression, Japanese growth continues to disappoint, producer economies are suffering the impacts of low commodity prices and central banks across the world are engaged in a race to cut interest rates to defend against a resurgent US dollar.*

See '**Balance**'.

Passed and past

- Passed is the past tense of the verb 'pass', and means to move or the action of passing, as in *Argentina* **passed** *hydrocarbon reform in late October.*

- Past is used for distance or time; it can be an adjective, adverb, noun or preposition but never a verb.

  » **Adjective:** in terms of time, as in *Ghana achieved strong economic growth over the* **past** *decade.*

  » **Noun:** in terms of time, as in *Environmental concerns weren't such a pressing issue in the* **past**.

  » **Preposition:** in terms of distance, as in *Walk* **past** *the mine, and you'll find the facility.*

Passive voice Grammar

Use the passive voice when readers don't need to know who or what is responsible for the action, as in *Risk mitigation* **will be required** *in these particular areas.* Or it's self-evidently clear, as in this report about a company's results: *Clarity on investment plans* **will be provided** *in the March analyst meeting.*

Aim for the active voice whenever possible because concrete language is clearer to the reader, and it's more likely clients will understand – *A hit B* is much easier to grasp than *B was hit by A.* But, on occasion, the passive voice is appropriate, for instance, when the agent of the action is not important (*B was hit*).

- Own your opinion: say '*we believe that…*' or '*Wood Mackenzie estimates…*' but don't use the passive construction, as in '*It is thought that…*'. This leaves vague who is actually doing the thinking – we should be clear in our opinions (and if it's not our opinion we're writing here, then all the more reason to be clear whose opinion it is).

Past and last

To avoid ambiguity, prefer 'past' rather than 'last' when referring to a period up to the time of writing, as in *The iron ore price is likely to fluctuate around this level if the trend of the* **past** *year continues.*

Percentages

Use a numeral with the symbol, as in *The share price was down **0.5%** on a broadly neutral day for oil stocks.*

- Don't spell out *per cent* (American spelling: *percent*) unless the number is at the start of the sentence, as here **Ten per cent** *of the intrinsic value will be payable upfront (bid security).*

- Per cent vs percentage points: should not be confused; if inflation falls from 10% to 9%, this is a fall of one percentage point, or of 10%.

- Per cent vs percentage

  » Use per cent with a number (obeying the above rule of using the symbol, unless the number is at the start of the sentence), as in *More than **65%** of the oil produced in the region is exported.*

  » Use percentage when there isn't a number, as in *A surprisingly high **percentage** of the oil produced in the region is exported.*

Perforation cluster

Always spell out in full, do not abbreviate as 'perf cluster'.

Perspective

Use 'view' if using in that sense.

Phrasal verbs `Grammar`

These combine a verb with a preposition (often unnecessarily) as in *ramp up, set out, start up, build up* and *rein in*. Avoid too many instances of phrasal verbs within a sentence or paragraph.

- Note that phrasal verbs are not hyphenated since each word serves a different function (verb plus preposition), whereas the noun versions are frequently hyphenated into a single term. See 'Ramp up'.

  » Use in moderation with some hyphenated compound words, such as *round-up, start-up, giveaway* and *setback*, as happened here *A staged ramp-up to full production was being considered in order to reduce initial start-up costs and speed up the project development timeframe.*

Phrase `Grammar`

A group of words that has a subject, but not a verb – **a short piece of information** (like this). A clause is *a group of words that has a verb* (as here), which may or may not function independently (independent and dependent clauses, respectively).

Pipeline

Not pipe line, so *These supplies are still plagued by **pipeline** constraints and limited market access.*

Placement

Where you place your words in a sentence matters. Keep modifiers – from pronouns to modifying phrases – near to the words they are modifying. Put old information before new. Place a verb near its object. See '**Balance**'.

Planned

A pipeline or other asset that has been officially approved, but is not yet under development. As in *…to implement some short-term measures ahead of a north-south pipeline expansion **planned** for 2018.*

- Don't use interchangeably with 'proposed', which may not yet have approval.

Plug-and-perf

Always spell with hyphens.

PowerPoint

As a product name, PowerPoint should be styled the way Microsoft styles it, as in: *These notes accompany our **PowerPoint** slide deck.*

For guidance on using PowerPoint, download the **Wood Mackenzie PowerPoint style guide**.

Practice and practise

In British English, practice is used for the noun, practise for the verb.

- Practice (noun), as in *Power is entered at a commercial rate even though, in **practice**, it may have been supplied at cost or at a preferential rate.*

- Practise (verb), as in *SDX-6 was an experimental well, drilled to **practise** new well design.*

Premia

Use this as the plural form of premium, rather than 'premiums'. As in *Trade cases are affecting imports of steel into the US even as US price **premia** continue to attract global steel exporters.*

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Prepositions `Grammar`

These words – from, to, across, between, on, in, with – show the relationship between a noun (or noun phrase) and other words in the sentence.

- If you can, don't end a sentence with a preposition, not because it's against the rules (it isn't) but because it just doesn't read as well; the sentence ends on a whimper rather than an emphatic point.

Present participle and gerunds `Grammar`

See '**Gerunds and present participle**'.

Prior

Generally means the same as 'previous' but sounds more formal. Use 'before', 'earlier' or 'previous' as appropriate.

Principal and principle

Word Spellchecker won't pick up when you've used the incorrect spelling depending on your intended meaning.

- Principal means first or primary, as in *The **principal** risk with this scenario is how long Iraq can withstand oil prices significantly lower than breakeven costs.*

  » A quick tip to remember which is which is that 'principal' in this sense is spelled with an 'a', as in the first letter of the alphabet.

- Principle is a fundamental truth or law, as in *This resource-sharing **principle** has remained the basis of all petroleum development since the discovery of oil at Wafra, despite the settlement of an international boundary in 1969.*

Private equity

Do not capitalise this term since it's a generic reference rather than the name of a particular company. As in *The smaller plays could become prime targets for **private equity** firms.*

When using as part of a compound adjective, the hyphen should come after 'equity' only, as in *Wesfarmers sold its Curragh mine to **private equity-backed** North American metallurgical coal miner Coronado Coal.*

If the term is used frequently throughout a report, you may reduce it to the initials 'PE', as in *Wesfarmers sold its Curragh mine to **PE-backed** North American metallurgical coal miner Coronado Coal.*

Proceed

Use 'go' instead.

Pronouns `Grammar`

This is a large family of words that represent nouns or noun phrases. Use pronouns that clearly refer to a specific noun or noun phrase that your readers can easily identify and that agree with both the verb and the referent (the someone or something that the pronouns represent). Keep the pronoun as close to its referent as possible. Check that the pronoun and its referent can't be confused with another person, object or phrase.

- **Demonstrative:** *this, that, these, those* (use to demonstrate or indicate).
- **Indefinite:** *all, any, anyone, both, each, either, few, none, no one, nothing, several, some* (*-one, -body, -thing*) (use to refer to non-specific things).
- **Interrogative:** *how, who, what, where, which, why* (use in questions).
- **Object:** *her, him, me, them, us* (use after verbs or prepositions).
- **Personal:** *he, I, it, she, they* (generic and gender-neutral), *we, who, you* (use to represent people).
- **Possessive:** *her(s), his, its, mine, my, our, their(s), whose, your(s)* (also known as possessive adjectives, use to show possession; some can sit by themselves).
- **Reciprocal pronouns:** *each other, one another.*
- **Reflexive pronouns:** *myself, herself, himself, itself, ourselves, themselves, yourself, yourselves* (refers to another noun or pronoun in the sentence; usually the subject).
- **Relative:** *that, which, whichever, who, whom, whomever* (use to make clear which person or thing we are talking about as you add more detail to your sentence).
- **Subject:** *I, he, it, she, they, we, you* (use before a verb).

Proofing principles `Concepts`

The first principle is simple – if the reader doesn't understand what you've written, it's not the reader's fault, it's yours. So don't rush this stage. Take time to read your writing with fresh eyes – overnight is best, but even an hour or two will help. Read at least twice – once for content and once for style. Use the **Proofing checklist**. See '**Curse of knowledge**'.

Proposed

A pipeline or other asset that has yet to be officially approved, as in *Two of the three remaining **proposed** regas projects have been cancelled.*

- The next stage would be 'planned', so don't use interchangeably with 'planned' as the two mean different things.

Pro rata

Only hyphenate when used as an adjective, as in *The three remaining partners took over Chevron's share on a **pro-rata** basis.*

Purchase

Use 'buy' instead.

Pursuant

Use 'according' instead.

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Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4

Use rather than 1Q, 2Q etc, so *North American M&A erupted in* **Q3***: deal count broke three figures for only the second time, and spend reached its highest point since* **Q4***.*

Qualifying statements Concepts

Spell out the circumstances in which a statement does or does not hold true. If there is a chance that a reader could misinterpret a statistical tendency as an absolute law, include a qualifier like 'on average' or 'all things being equal', or even a 'slightly' or 'somewhat', as in *Gearing increased* **slightly to 29% from 28%** *at Q1.*

- But where we can, we should be clear and direct in our opinions so only use qualifiers when necessary.

Ramification

Use 'result' instead.

Ramp-up (noun) and ramp up (verb)

- Ramp-up (noun) is hyphenated, as in *Australian LNG* **ramp-up** *will be slower than anticipated at FID.*

- Ramp up (verb) is two words – the verb 'ramp' followed by the preposition 'up' – so no hyphen is required, as in *The company will* **ramp up** *coal exports.*

Ranges

We have two styles. If you have just a handful of ranges across a report, then use the full form, as below. If you have a series of similar ranges (for instance, all sums of money or all percentages), then use the abbreviated style; also use in tables and charts. Note, use 'from' with 'to'; and 'between' with 'and'.

- **General style:**

  » **House style:** spell out, so from *30% to 35%, 400 million to 500 million boe, from US$5 million to US$6 million, between 2003 and 2012…*

  » **Abbreviated:** if you are using more than several ranges in a report, you can use the shortened form, so *30-35%, 400-500 million boe, US$5 million-6 million, 2003-12.*

- **Currencies:** as here *The discount narrowed quarter-on-quarter* **from Cdn$35.50 in Q3 to Cdn$32.20 in Q4**.

  » **Abbreviated:** write as *£4 billion-5 billion* (with the currency symbol only at first use), as in *The government has announced that it could sustain itself on an oil price of* **US$60-70** *a barrel for a few years.*

  » Use 'million' or 'billion' with both ends of a range to avoid any chance of misinterpretation or inaccuracy.

- **Percentages:** as here *The proposed level of duties on aluminium sheet will range from* **56.54% to 59.72%**.

  » **Abbreviated:** only use the percentage symbol with the second number in the range, as in *Despite oil prices falling* **40-50%** *over the past half year, miners are reporting stickiness in diesel prices.*

- **Years:** as here **Between 2003 and 2012**, *Australian costs increased 174%.* And here *A cold European winter (***October 2014 to March 2015***) will add 10 bcm to demand.*

  » **Abbreviated:** 1914-18, 2016-20 (but use all digits if crossing a century, as in *1999-2004*).

Readability `Concepts`

See '**How to check readability**'.

Redundant words `Concepts`

Remove unnecessary words such as 'could potentially', 'future prospects', 'will…going forward', as in *The French government* **decided to introduce** *a carbon tax on households that use fossil fuels.* You could delete 'decided to' and just use 'introduced' – the 'decided to' is implicit.

Similarly, the future is implied by the use of the word 'will' so you don't need to add 'continue to' as well. Likewise, you often don't need to say 'be able to [verb]' – the ability is implied when you use the verb.

- In this sentence, the writer could lose some text and make their point more quickly and with more impact: *Pacific Rubiales* **has been able to grow** *production from just 1,000 b/d in 2002 to over 200,000 b/d currently.*

  » **Rewrite example:** *Pacific Rubiales* **has grown** *production from just 1,000 b/d in 2002 to over 200,000 b/d currently.*

...Redundant words *continued*

Here are other redundant words to watch for:

A number of	Several, a few, many
A sufficient number of	Enough
An amount of X	X
Added bonus	Bonus
Advance plan/preplan	Plan
Are now currently	Are
At this point in time	Now
At this time	Now
At which time	Then
Based on the fact that	Because
Be responsible for	Must
Export abroad	Export
End result	Result
If at all possible	If possible
In a number of cases	Many or some
In order to	To
Is able to	Can
It is obvious that	Obviously
On a monthly basis	Monthly
On the grounds that	Because
Or alternatively	Or
Reason why	Reason
Slow down	Slow
Specific example	Example
True facts	Facts
Will continue to	Will
Work in partnership with	Work with

Reign and rein

Don't confuse the spelling.

- Use reign if you are talking about a monarch or someone's time in charge, as in *Naimi was appointed oil minister during the **reign** of King Fahd.*

- Use rein when you are talking about giving someone 'free rein' or 'reining in spending', as in *A lower-for-longer outlook pushed two of the largest US operators to **rein in** investment.*

Relative and relatively

Only use these words when a clear comparison is being made, as in *Gas-focused operators appear to be maintaining higher spending **relative** to 2019 levels.*

- Don't say '*There are relatively few people here*' unless you contrast with the number, for instance, that were there last year, or the much larger number assembled next door.

Render

Use 'give' instead.

Request

Use 'ask' instead.

Respectively

Use 'respectively' when two or more items need to be distinguished in the order in which they occur, in relation to what is said about them later in a sentence. As in: *The dollar paid per acre and lease sale spend increased by 45% and 43%, **respectively**.*

Note the punctuation. The word 'respectively' is put at the end of the sentence or phrase it refers to, and is set off with a comma.

If it occurs in the middle of a sentence, 'respectively' is offset either side by commas, as in: *The Macau and Fazenda Belém clusters produced 4,850 b/d and 1,650 b/d of liquids**, respectively,** in 2017.*

However, if you find 'respectively' is being used excessively in a report, consider simply rephrasing the sentence. For example: *We forecast demand to be 3 Mtpa and 5 Mtpa in 2019 and 2020, respectively.* This could easily be rephrased as: *We forecast demand to be 3 Mtpa in 2019 and 5 Mtpa in 2020.*

Retrenchment

Use to mean reduce costs or spending in response to economic difficulty, as in *Fiscal **retrenchment**, corporate defaults and job losses will be a drag on the economy in the short to medium term.*

- Do not use to mean 'make employees redundant'.

Ring-fence

Hyphenate, as in *It is impossible to **ring-fence** the metallurgical coal sector from the impact of such controls.*

Rouble and ruble

Use the British English spelling of rouble, as in *Since July, the Russian **rouble** has depreciated against other currencies.*

Rule of three `Concepts`

The principle that people find ideas or information easier to understand and remember if presented in groups of three, as in *However, the fact remains that **China's steel industry is oversupplied, operating margins are poor and uncertainty over China's new environment law remains***.

- More famously: *'government of the people, by the people and for the people'* (Abraham Lincoln) or *'to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth'* (US court oath). See '**Balance**', '**Light before heavy**' and '**Parallel phrasing**'.

Russia and Caspian

Write 'and' rather than using an ampersand, and omit 'the' before 'Caspian' when specifically referring to this region, as in *Discovered resource opportunities are a compelling global upstream theme – but how does **Russia and Caspian** fit in?*

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Saltwater disposal

Saltwater is one word, as in *Saltwater disposal expenses can differ greatly between operators and non-operators.*

Seabed

Not sea-bed or sea bed, so *In areas where marine life and reefs lie on the seabed, permitting can be nearly impossible.*

Seafloor

Not sea floor or sea-floor. So *The tendons are anchored to the seafloor using a mechanical connection at the top of a tubular pile.*

Seasons

Spring, summer, autumn and winter should not be capitalised, even when used with a year, as in *We estimate the coal stockpile at 128 Mt by the end of February, the lowest level since summer 2014.* However, capitalise if part of a formal name, such as *2022 Winter Olympics.*

Given the seasons in the northern hemisphere are opposite those in the southern hemisphere, specify the hemisphere with the season if there's a chance of ambiguity – such as when the report has a global focus. And note we also use lowercase for hemispheres. For example, *Supply has improved in China and Australia, and demand was affected by the northern hemisphere winter.*

Alternatively, specify the months or quarter instead of the hemisphere and season.

Seismic

This is an adjective so must always be followed by a noun, as in *Licensees have recently acquired significant volumes of seismic data.*

Don't use as an adjective to describe something of enormous proportions or having highly significant consequences.

Sentence case `Structure`

Use sentence case (first letter of first word capitalised, as in a sentence) for headlines. It's easier to read, makes proper nouns easier to identify and means we have one consistent style on the portal homepage. So use *Might Petrobras' dominance of Brazilian LNG wane?* rather than *Might Petrobras' Dominance of Brazilian LNG Wane?*

Sentences `Structure`

The clearest sentences are those that follow subject > verb > object. Make them short where you can to avoid ambiguity. Word order matters so be careful about which word modifies, or appears to, another and don't use too many clauses. See '**Six rules of writing**', '**Paragraphs**' and '**Clarity**'.

Some guiding principles:

- **Length:** 15 to 20 words on average should do it, but don't be formulaic.

- **One idea:** express only one idea in each sentence – shorter sentences are better for conveying complex information.

- **Verbs:** keep subjects and objects close to their verbs.

- **Modifiers:** keep modifiers – such as '*only*' or '*always*' – as close as possible, preferably immediately to avoid any ambiguity.

- **Prepositions:** limit the number of prepositions you use in one sentence because too many makes your writing choppy.

- **Short words:** use short words wherever possible – if you must use long words (three syllables or more) don't use too many in one sentence, or even within one paragraph. Another reason not to use nominalisations.

- **Old before new:** start with old information before introducing new information.

- **Conditions:** put long conditions after the main clause.

  » **Short conditions:** if an exception or condition to the main clause is short – and reading it first provides context – then put it at the start, before the main clause.

- **Clauses and exceptions:** similarly, don't overload your sentence with dependent clauses and exceptions – they confuse the audience, muddy the message and obscure the main point, as here: *These prices will be higher than average oil-indexed prices, something that will incentivise utilities still biased towards oil-indexed contracts to maximise contract offtakes from Q2 2015, and capitalise on the trading opportunity that this differential offers.*

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...Sentences *continued*

- **Start anew:** start a new sentence if you have too many conditions, exceptions or dependent clauses

  » **Rewrite example:** *These prices will be higher than average oil-indexed prices. For utilities that are still biased towards oil-indexed contracts, the price will incentivise them to maximise contract offtakes from Q2 2015 and capitalise on the trading opportunity this differential offers.*

- **Good sentences gone bad:** this 47-word beast demonstrates how unwieldy sentences can get when they are too complex with too many dependent clauses: *The emergence of a premium between PEG Sud and PEG Nord, a consequence of pipeline capacity bottlenecks exacerbated by increased export to Spain and reduced LNG availability, has prompted the French regulator to implement some short term measures ahead of a north- south pipeline expansion planned for 2018.*

  » **Rewrite example:** *Pipeline bottlenecks – the result of increased export to Spain and reduced LNG availability – led to a premium between PEG Sud and PEG Nord Pipeline. This move prompted the French regulator to implement some short-term measures ahead of a north-south pipeline planned for 2018.*

Shale

Avoid just saying 'shales', always include the word that 'shale' is modifying, such as 'shale bed', 'shale play' or 'shale formation'.

Shallow-water (adj) and shallow water (noun)

- Shallow-water (adjective) is hyphenated, as in *Bid terms are very similar to those for **shallow-water** exploration.*

- Shallow water (noun) is two words, as in *Blocks 04/36 and 05/36 lie in the **shallow waters** of the Bohai Bay.*

SHFE-LME arbitrage

Use a hyphen rather than a slash when referring to the arbitrage between the two markets, as in *The **SHFE-LME** arbitrage actually began to widen in March.*

Ship and vessel names

Don't italicise names of ships or other vessels.

Shorthand names

Use clear shorthand descriptions so you don't repeat particular names excessively throughout your report. Once you've introduced the proper name, use '*the company*', '*the committee*', '*the legislation*' or similar. See this example from a report on ExxonMobil's annual results: ***The Supermajor** also hinted at M&A.*

Shut down (verb) and shutdown (noun)

- Shut down (verb) is two words, as in *A new mill was commissioned and the original mill was **shut down**.*

- Shutdown (noun) is one word, as in *Rio Tinto announced a phased **shutdown** of the Gove refinery in 2014.*

Shut-in (verb)

Always hyphenate, so *There is no guarantee these volumes would be **shut-in**.*

Sideline

One word when used as either a noun or a verb, as in:

- Noun: *Many have chosen to remain on the **sidelines** by avoiding making investment decisions.*

- Verb: *Thailand's Power Development Plan **sidelines** coal and wind.*

Sidewall

Not side-wall or side wall, so *The mine entrance is located in a **sidewall** of the Affarlikassaa fjord.*

Simple subject `Grammar`

The whole subject may be several words but the simple subject is the core and determines whether a verb is singular or plural. The subject here is 'News' so the verb ('brings') is singular: ***News** of Anglo American's contract settlements **brings** to an end a week of uncertainty.*

Since

There are two uses:

- **What follows the reader is assumed to know already:** so it often heads the sentence, as in, *Since a large portion of Diamondback's acreage will be developed with horizontal wells, we assume 50% of its acreage will support vertical development.* The old-before-new principle means you begin sentences with information familiar to your readers before introducing new information. This sets the context and helps readers to process and understand the new information.

  » Likewise, 'because' usually introduces new information so the clause tends to go towards the end of a sentence.

- **Temporal use:** from a particular time, as here *Since April 2010, the average has dropped to just over 300 mmboe per year.*

Six rules of writing `Concepts`

George Orwell offered this now-famous set of rules for writers in his 1946 essay, '*Politics and the English Language*':

1. Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing.
2. Never use a long word where a short one will do.
3. If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.
4. Never use the passive where you can use the active.
5. Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word or jargon if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.
6. Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.

Slide pack

Two words, no hyphen, as in *See the attached* **slide pack** *for how we benchmark sub-plays and companies' positions across the Lower 48.*

- Direct users to the 'Downloads' section, not to the 'upper right' or any other direction.

Sliding sleeve

No hyphen, so **Sliding sleeves** *use a series of spherical elements to sequentially open each stage for fracture.*

Southeast Asia

In keeping with our guidance on presenting intercardinal directions as one word, keep '*Southeast*' as one word.

Spacing `Structure`

Use only one space after a full stop to separate sentences (two spaces looks bad online and leads to odd formatting, such as jagged edges on the left of the text).

Split infinitives `Grammar`

These are fine to use, but the more pedantic might take offence so if you can, avoid. However, if avoiding them makes the sentence structure awkward or its meaning ambiguous, split them.

Standalone

Not stand alone or stand-alone, so *The field has been developed as a* **standalone** *project utilising a spar drilling and production platform.*

Start-up (adjective and noun)

Not start up or startup, so *Production from each of Spiderman's three wells was achieved in November 2007, two months after* **start-up**.

State

Don't capitalise unless it's part of an official name, such as *State Grid Corporation of China.*

- *In July 2018, China's* **State** *Council released the full text of a three-year action plan to curb air pollution.*
- *An environmental impact assessment has always been required under* **state** *law.*

Stationary (adjective) and stationery (noun)

- Stationary (adjective) means still, not moving or not intended to be moved, as in *The smelter operated a single green charge reverberatory furnace, two Peirce-Smith converters and a* **stationary** *anode furnace.*
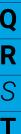- Stationery (noun) are the goods you find on your desk – pens, paper, stapler if you're lucky.

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Steam crackers

Two words, as in *China's ethylene supply has been historically dominated by* **steam crackers**.

Steamflood

One word, as in *Recovery could be improved further using* **steamflood** *techniques developed by Chevron and Texaco.*

Stratum and strata

- Stratum is singular, as in *From top to bottom, the oil-bearing* **stratum** *is divided into the Heidimiao, Sa'ertu, Putaohua, Gaotaizi, Fuyu and Yangdachengzi strata.*

- Strata is the plural, as in *Production from these* **strata** *is often dependent on natural fractures within the rocks and flow rates can therefore vary dramatically.*

Subsea

Not sub sea or sub-sea, so **Subsea** *tie-backs have become less prevalent as exploration has migrated to deeper waters.*

Such as and like

When listing examples of something, use 'such as' because it implies inclusion and is more specific. 'Like' should be reserved for making comparisons. As in *The greatest impact of the fall in crude prices has been on prices of liquid feedstock* **such as** *naphtha and methanol.*

Supermajor

Always capitalised and not super-major, so *Total has become the first* **Supermajor** *to invest in the UK's shale gas industry via a farm-in agreement with the small UK energy firm IGas.*

Sustain

This is a transitive verb, which means it requires an object to express a complete thought. In other words, something (the subject) must sustain something else (the object), as in: *CNPC and Sinopec need to take action to* **sustain** *production levels.* CNPC and Sinopec are the subjects, production levels is the object.

However, sustain is often used incorrectly without an object, as in *We expect the recovery to* **sustain** *until 2022.* As something (the object) must be sustained by something else, this should be: *We expect the recovery to be* **sustained** *until 2022.*

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Table headings `Structure`

Where possible, do not abbreviate words in table headings. Spell out in full to avoid any ambiguity – even if this means the heading no longer fits on one line.

Than

Use 'than' only when comparing people or things. *Cairn is now better placed to outperform **than** it has been for some time.*

That

Introduces a defining, or restrictive, clause containing essential information, as in *This will soften the blow of budget cuts **that** are set to average 30% across the industry.* Don't close off with commas (which you might do with the use of 'which' to include additional detail). See '**Which**'.

Then

Use as an adverb meaning 'at that time' or 'after that, next', as in *If the rouble strengthens, **then** government finances will suffer.*

Therefore and thus

Avoid using these stuffy, old-fashioned terms. Replace with *so*, *as a consequence* or *for this reason*.

Thermal coal

Use this rather than 'steam coal', as in *More weakness in **thermal coal** prices is likely until demand shows signs of life.*

Throughput

Not through-put or through put, so *The tariff for use of the pipeline is complex and depends on total estimated **throughput**.*

Tie-back

Hyphenate when using as a noun or an adjective, as in *At the time of development, the **tie-back** was one of the longest in the North Sea.*

No hyphen when used a phrasal verb, as in *Development consisted of three wells **tied back** to a small satellite platform.*

Time

Although rare in research content, if specifying time use a 12-hour clock. Separate hours and minutes with a full stop if not on the hour and follow immediately with *am* or *pm* (no full stops), as in *9.30am* or *11pm*. Time ranges should include a hyphen with no space either side, as in *9-10.30am* or 11am-3pm.

Use local time and only provide the time zone abbreviation if there is a possibility of misunderstanding.

Timeframe

One word, as in *The company signed two agreements for supply over similar **timeframes**.*

Timescale

One word, as in *The planned start-up of the terminal is 2017, which was moved forward from the original **timescale** of 2019 to 2020.*

Title case `Structure`

Don't use this in headlines, use sentence case instead (first letter of first word capitalised, as in a sentence). Sentence case is easier to read, looks better and means we have one consistent style across the portal. So use *Might Petrobras' dominance of Brazilian LNG wane?* rather than *Might Petrobras' Dominance of Brazilian LNG Wane?*

To date

This phrase, which means 'until now', does not require a hyphen when used alone. As in ***To date**, US and Chinese companies have been wary of signing binding long-term contracts.*

Toolkit

One word, as in *A machine-learning **toolkit** was able to map salt bodies in about three days.*

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Transition words `Grammar`

These words let the reader know if the sentence or paragraph they are about to read expands on the one before, contrasts with it or heads in a different direction.

- **To connect:** *that, this*

- **To add a point:** *additionally, also, further, in addition to, similarly, what is more.*

- **To give an example:** *for example, for instance.*

- **To restate:** *again, in other words, in short, put differently.*

- **To introduce a result:** *accordingly, as a result, so, subsequently, then.*

- **To contrast:** *but, conversely, however, nevertheless, on the other hand, still.*

- **To sum up:** *in short, in conclusion, in summary, to sum up, to summarise, to conclude.*

- **To sequence:** *firstly, secondly, thirdly and so on, finally.*

Transitive verbs `Grammar`

Verbs that take an object (like 'take' does in this sentence). See '**Intransitive verbs**' and '**Lay and lie**'.

Try to

Not 'try and', so *Shell has said it will* **try to** *complete the project by late 2014*. However, depending on the context 'try to' is often redundant wording so consider removing.

Typefaces `Structure`

All our research is written using a style built into the templates (except for PowerPoints and other downloads). But note these points:

- **Bold:** use to draw attention to headers, sub-heads and the start of paragraphs or bullet points, as here *Saudi leaves crude price to market forces: Brent slid 6% to US$54/bbl, and is now US$7/bbl (or 11%) below the recent highs.*

- **Underline:** don't use this – it's hard to read and will make people believe it's a hyperlink.

- **Capitals:** aside from abbreviations, where it's legitimate, using capital letters is the written equivalent to shouting. It's also harder to read, so only use for names and abbreviations, like BP or TVD.

Tyrecord

One word, not two. As in *Tyre surplus could also impact* **tyrecord** *yarn and fabric.*

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UK vs US spelling

At Wood Mackenzie, we use British English spelling. That said, American English is fine if your audience is predominantly based in the US, as with L48 reports. You can find more on the differences between British and American English **here**.

Ukraine

No need for 'the' in the country's name, as in *Virtually all upstream projects in **Ukraine** operate under the concession regime.*

Ultra-deep and ultra-deepwater

Not ultradeep, ultra deep, or ultra deepwater, so *The upcoming flow test from McMoRan's Davy Jones #1 well will be the first production from an **ultra-deep** reservoir.*

UN classification

We adhere to the **UN geographical regions and sub-regions classification of country and regional names** (with some exceptions, below), as well as with "**ISO standard 3166-1**". Our **taxonomy list** is for tagging purposes, as you can see by searching by country on the portal. Use these lists to clarify the right spelling of a country name – for instance, use Cote d'Ivoire rather than Ivory Coast.

There are some minor differences in country names from the ISO list (along the lines of our use of 'Bolivia' in preference to ISO's official name of 'Plurinational State of Bolivia'). Differences with the UN list are noted here, and are mostly to make groupings more intuitive for our clients:

• North America (UN: Northern America)

• Russia and Caspian (UN: included in Asia)

• Middle East (UN: included in Asia)

• Caucasus (UN: Western Asia, a sub-region of Asia)

• Central Asia (UN: sub-region of Asia)

• Taiwan (UN: not recognised)

• Iran (UN: Asia)

• Cyprus (UN: Western Asia)

• Kosovo (UN: not recognised)

• Mexico (UN: Central America)

Unconventional

Avoid using as a noun, it should only be used as an adjective, as in 'unconventional play', 'unconventional oil' or 'unconventional gas'.

Uncountable nouns `Grammar`

Uncountable nouns are things we can't count with numbers. They are often abstract ideas or qualities or physical objects that are too small or too amorphous to be counted (liquids, powders, gases). They usually don't have a plural form. However, it is common for non-native English speakers to add an unnecessary 's' on the end of such words.

Go **here** for a list of examples.

Underperform

One word, as in *Northeast production growth **underperforms** amid pipeline woes.*

Upcycle

One word when describing a period of increase, as in *The recovery is much slower and shallower than past **upcycles**.*

US

Not U.S. or USA, as in *Market share in the **US** oil and gas services business is difficult to maintain and even more challenging to grow.* And there's no need to write out as *United States* on first use.

US states

Don't use abbreviations for US states, spell them out, except in tables and charts, as in *All of the scrap is sourced within **Texas** and is done through CMC's own scrap sourcing operations.*

Vague word use `Concepts`

'Significant' and 'substantial' are examples of words that can mean different things to different readers so be as specific as possible.

- Never sacrifice clarity to save on word count. It's far better to use a few more words if it avoids confusing or dense language that relies on abstract concepts or nominalisations to make a point. See 'Clarity'.

Abstract words – like *aspect, concept, inputs, operation, resources, situation, variables* – should also be avoided

Verbs `Grammar`

These are the engines of your writing – they move things along. Verbs should have concrete subjects and actions and sit in a clear logical sequence.

- **Agreement:** a singular subject takes a singular verb and a plural subject takes a plural verb. *'The development of fields are assumed to keep pace…'* is incorrect – 'development' is the (singular) subject (what is assumed to keep pace), not 'fields', so it should read *'The development of fields **is** assumed to keep pace…'*

- **Consistency:** make sure tenses within a sentence agree. *'The key asset that has been retained was X'* could confuse the reader because it mixes two tenses – past present (has been) and past (was).

- **Conditional:** 'would' is the conditional tense, as in *Each of Bolognesi's power plants would require 6 Mcm/d (1.6 mmtpa) of feedgas to run at 100% utilisation.*

- **Nominalisation:** a noun derived from a verb (like failure from fail, prevention from prevent, realisation from realise, argument from argue, and so on), as in *For more information on the **incentivisation** of renewables…* or, less frequently, an adjective derived from a verb (furtherance from further, difference from differ): *The French commercial sector is also mostly **reliant** on electricity .*

  Nominalisations (which often end in *-ion, -ment, -ence, -ing*) obscure who did what to whom and can distort the sequence. It makes writing less clear, and shifts the hard work to the reader. So if there's an action buried somewhere in your subject phrase, turn it back into the verb it really wants to be. See 'Nominalisation'.

- **Gerunds:** if you add *-ing* to a verb, it becomes a present participle or a gerund, which can also be a nominalisation, acting as a noun. See '**Gerunds and present participle**'.

Find more guidance on how to use verbs **here**.

Versus

Write out in full in main narrative but if abbreviating in a heading, do not use a full stop, as in *Tight oil **vs** deepwater: which is more valuable?*

Vice versa

Not visa versa. Use when referring to the order being reversed, so *Federal tax payments are not deductible for the calculation of provincial tax and **vice versa**.*

Voice `Grammar`

This is the form a verb takes to indicate whether its subject acts (active) or is acted upon (passive). Active emphasises the 'doer' of the action so is clearer and more emphatic; it's also generally shorter and keeps things in a logical order.

- **Passive:** In the passive voice, the sentence subject names the goal of the action, as here *In 2011, tariffs were frozen, but this decision was later upheld in French courts and compensation was granted to reimburse gas suppliers.*

- **Active:** *'A hit B'* is more immediately clear than *'B was hit by A'*. As here, a re-worked version of the passive sentence (assuming the agent of the action is the French regulator) *In 2011, the French regulator froze tariffs, which was upheld in the French courts, and gas suppliers were reimbursed.*

  » **When the passive voice is appropriate:** when readers don't need to know who or what is responsible for the action; or to flow and link from the previous sentence.

  » **Wood Mackenzie:** never say *'It is thought that…'*. Use the active voice and own your opinion, by writing *'we believe that…'* or *'Wood Mackenzie estimates…'* or similar.

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Wall map

Two words, as in *Visitors to our conference stand will receive a complimentary* **wall map**.

Washery

Don't use this; write 'coal preparation plant' instead, as in *The mine's cash cost is inflated due to a relatively high strip ratio and a 60-kilometre road haul to the* **coal preparation plant**.

Waterflood

Not water flood or water-flood, as in *The high oil price has allowed continued investment, including an extensive* **waterflood** *programme*.

Well pad

Two words, no hyphen, as in **Well pads**, *access roads and utility corridors are necessary constructions for the development of a shale gas play.*

Wellbore

Not well bore or well-bore, as in *Flexible risers will transfer the* **wellbore** *fluids to the production vessel.*

Wellhead

Not well head or well-head, as in *Three conventional satellite* **wellhead** *platforms are used on the field.*

Wellsite

Not well site or well-site, as in *The operator performed turnarounds at several* **wellsites**.

Which

'Which' introduces valuable information that adds detail to the main clause but is non-restrictive. In other words, removing the 'which' clause won't change the meaning of the sentence. As in *Such high dependency makes Russia acutely susceptible to the oil price,* **which** *declined 60% between June 2014 and January 2015*. Set off this information with commas.

- Use 'that' before a restrictive clause and 'which' with everything else. See '**That**'.

While and whilst

Use while rather than whilst, which is unnecessarily formal, so **While** *another delay is not out of the question, the potential blowback could hurt the Jonathan campaign.*

Who and whom

Both are relative pronouns, but 'who' is the subject of a sentence while 'whom' is the object of a verb.

- **Who:** use when it is the subject of a verb in its own clause (it can't be removed from the sentence), as in *This is good news for export refiners,* **who** *should have a ready market available.*
- **Whom:** use 'whom' when it is an object in its own clause (*a person whom they trusted*) or the object of a preposition, as in *To whom it may concern…*

Who's and whose

Avoid confusing these two.

- Who's is the contracted form of 'who is' or 'who has'. It can be used as a relative pronoun to introduce relative clauses, as in *Greg Franklin,* **who's** *based in the London office, will be retiring in September.*
  - » It can also be used as an interrogative pronoun (in questions), as in **Who's** *retiring in September?*
- Whose is the possessive form of 'who', and means 'belonging to whom'. It can be used as a relative pronoun, as in *Greg Franklin,* **whose** *steady hand guided the company for many years, will be retiring in September.*
  - » It can also be used as an interrogative pronoun, as in **Whose** *steady hand guided the company for many years?*

Wireline

Not wire line or wire-line, as in *The operator performed* **wireline** *maintenance on several wells.*

Wood Mackenzie

When referring to Wood Mackenzie in our research, you should write either 'Wood Mackenzie' or 'WoodMac' (not 'Woodmac' or 'WM'). Alternatively, use 'we' since the reference will be clear, as here: **We expect** *GDP to contract in 2015 by 5%.* 'We' sounds better than repeating Wood Mackenzie several times.

- Use the singular verb with Wood Mackenzie, as in *Wood Mackenzie* **expects** *US market prices to remain flat at around US$600/tonne over the next five years.*

Workover (adjective and noun) and work over (verb)

- Workover (noun or adjective) is one word, as in *The joint venture has been able to maintain production at constant levels thanks to* **workover** *activity.*

- Work over (verb) would be two words if you needed to use it, as in *Will you* **work over** *the holiday?* But check the 'over' is the right preposition for the job.

Worldwide

Not world wide or world-wide, as in *Murphy Oil Corp is an international integrated oil and gas company, with exploration and production activities* **worldwide**.

Year-end

Avoid using this term as a noun. Instead, write out 'end of the year' where possible, as in *We believe imports will increase by the **end of the year***.

Hyphenate when using as an adjective, as in *The company's **year-end** results have even surprised investors.*

Year-on-year

Spell this out, with hyphens, rather than using 'yoy' or 'y-o-y', *as in Marathon's 2020 capital budget of US$3.5 billion represents a 36% cut **year-on-year.***

Years

Write as here: *Between **2003** and **2012**, Australian costs increased 174%.* And here: *A cold European winter (**October 2014** to **March 2015**) will add 10 bcm to demand.* Note, use 'from' with 'to', or 'between' with 'and'.

- **Decades:** no apostrophe, as in *The smelter was originally commissioned in the late **1990s** as a Søderberg operation.*

- **'Mid' years:** don't hyphenate 'early 1980s' or 'late 1999' but do hyphenate 'mid-' (short for 'middle of') with the year, as in *Capacity reached 205 ktpa by **mid-2014**. And with decades, as in The fields were brought onstream in the **mid-1970s**.*

- **Financial years and seasons:** use **2016/17**.

- **Quarters and half-years:** use Q4 2014, H1 2015 and so on, as in *Canadian Oil Sands decreased its quarterly dividend in **H1 2015**.*

- **Ranges:** write out as above, but if you must shorten it or talk about periods, as with the 2016-2020 five-year plan, use that convention, as in *Turkmengaz' Institute of Oil and Gas developed an exploration programme for the periods **2006-2010** and **2011-2020**.* See the entry on '**Ranges**'.

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Ampersand (&)

Do not use this symbol in text, just write 'and', so *Newfield Exploration is an independent oil **and** gas exploration **and** production company.*

- Exceptions are when the ampersand is part of a company name or abbreviation like **M&A** where it would seem odd spelled out, so **Fidelity E&P Company** *is the exploration and development arm of WBI Holdings.*

- Our taxonomy doesn't use any ampersands in country names, as in **Trinidad and Tobago** *is one of the highest gas-producing countries in Latin America*… Note use of singular verb. See '**UN classification**'.

Apostrophe (')

Has two main uses:

- **To indicate missing letters or numbers:** as in a contraction, like *it's* (meaning 'it is') or *we'll* (for 'we will'), or even the *class of '91* (meaning 1991).

  » **Decades:** don't use to abbreviate decades – just write 1980s, 1990s, 2000s. See '**Years**'.

- **To indicate possession:** *Wood Mackenzie's Edinburgh office*; *the client's expectations* (or *clients' expectations*, if referring to more than one). The possessive pronouns – his, hers, its, theirs, yours, ours – do not require an apostrophe.

  » **Words ending in 's':** when a word already ends with an 's' in the singular, don't add another for the possessive, so **Petrobras'** *unique integrated business model also provides protection against the low oil price.*

  » **With plurals:** the apostrophe must always come after the 's', so *several **clients'** expectations, many **customers'** opinions, two **analysts'** views.*

  » **Possessive, not plural:** don't confuse the possessive with plural. Mr and Mrs Jones are **the Joneses**, not the Jones's. And their front door is the **Joneses' front door**.

  » **Do not use apostrophes to form plurals of numbers and abbreviations:** We say *The project began in the 1990s* rather than *The project began in the 1990's*. Similarly, we say *He has worked for several NGOs* rather than *He has worked for several NGO's.*

  » **With time:** Apostrophes should be used in phrases such as *three years' time*, where the time period *(three years)* modifies a noun *(time)*. But no apostrophe is required in three years old, where the time period *(three years)* modifies an adjective *(old)*.

Brackets (parentheses)

Only use brackets to provide brief technical explanations, translations, acknowledge sources or insert specific references, as in *The central government plans to set aside RMB3 trillion **(US$484 billion)** for potential debt swaps.*

Brackets interrupt the flow of your writing so just use commas when the clause is short. Use the en dash if the clause itself has a series of commas, if it's long or if you want to add a drum roll, so to speak, as here: *Murphy Oil has completed the first of a three-well exploration programme in offshore Perth Basin **–** the first offshore exploration well drilled in the basin in seven years*. See '**En dash**'.

But first ask yourself if it might make more sense to turn the clause into its own sentence.

Square brackets should be used to enclose words added by someone other than the person or document being quoted. The added words are usually to clarify detail that may be missing from the original quote, as in *The company could suffer if it **[demand]** is not as strong as expected.*

Bullet points

Use bullet points to break up items in a list rather than write them in narrative. It should be at least three items.

- **Punctuation:** if each bullet contains a full sentence, then punctuate with a full stop. If the bullet point only contains a word or a phrase, only punctuate the last bullet (with a full stop) to indicate the end of the list.

- **Parallel construction:** each bullet point should adhere to the same style – for instance, all nouns or all verbs – and each phrase should follow the text that introduces the series. So, if the introduction reads '*This year, we plan to:*' then each item should begin with a verb ('*begin*', '*conduct*', '*complete*' and so on).

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Colon (:)

A colon introduces, a semi-colon separates.

- Use a colon in headlines, headers and sub-heads, rather than an en dash or hyphen, as in *Upstream Africa: what to look for in 2015*. It means we have consistency on the portal homepage and headlines use fewer characters and spaces.

- **Use a colon when you introduce something:** an explanation, a quotation or a list (as here), as in *Stable electricity supply will support other government aims mentioned in the speech: development programmes for high-speed rail, broadband highways and other infrastructure projects.*

- Don't use a capital letter after a colon unless you are introducing a quotation.

Comma (,)

The comma simply invites the reader to take a short pause within a sentence. It is not enough to separate independent thoughts so begin a new sentence if that's the case.

- **Phrases:** using one or two commas as necessary, use to separate an item or phrase (conjunctions like '*for instance*', '*however*', '*currently*' or '*in conclusion*') from the next part of the sentence, as in **Meanwhile**, *there would be a massive surplus of solar generation during most spring and fall days* or …*ever since the record snowfalls began in late January, **particularly** in Massachusetts.*

- **Titles:** use to separate a title (or, in this case, a person) when preceded with the definite article, as in: **The finance minister, Joaquim Levy,** *has begun an unpopular programme of fiscal reform.*

  » If the sentence didn't begin with an article, it wouldn't need commas to separate the person's name, as in: **Finance Minister Joaquim Levy** *has begun an unpopular programme of fiscal reform.*

- **Lists:** use a comma to list items, as in *Measures to curb pollution include traffic restrictions, plant inspections and seasonal shutdowns*. If there are several items or thoughts to list, use bullet points instead. See '**Bullet points**'.

- **Say no to the Oxford (or Harvard) comma:** don't use a comma between the penultimate item and the last. Here's how it should look: *This expansion will be driven by investment in the super-giant Kashagan, Tengiz and Karachaganak fields.*

  » **Exception:** keep it in if it would be confusing without (particularly with unfamiliar names, terms or titles), as in *Various companies, including Freeport Canadian Exploration Company, Noranda Mining and Exploration Inc**, and** Homestake Mineral Development Company have conducted exploration programmes.*

- Don't insert a comma in a sentence with a **compound predicate** (two or more verbs or verb phrases that share the same subject and are joined by a conjunction). As in *The company closed its London office and downsized its New York operation.*

- Never insert commas between a verb and its object or a subject and its verb.

Find more guidance on how to use commas **here**.

Ellipsis (…)

Show that text has been omitted from a quotation using ellipsis: three dots (no parentheses or brackets). However, don't replace words with an ellipsis if it changes the meaning of a sentence.

En dash (–)

Use instead of a comma when you want a slightly longer pause, with a hint of drama – but use sparingly. These can also replace the colon (which introduces items or thoughts, as in a headline, and is more formal) and brackets (which define terms or include an aside). Use a space either side.

- **What it is:** the 'en' refers to its width, as wide as the letter 'n', making it longer than the traditional hyphen (- vs –).

- **Dash of drama:** to add a significant pause before 'the big reveal', as in *Despite a reputation for being conservative, Surgutneftegas is doing what it knows best – drilling and doing it well.*

- **Dash of inclusion:** to include further detail that won't fit elsewhere or is too long to be enclosed in brackets, as in *Management expects cost reductions – rather than oil-price improvements – to define when Apache ramps activity back up.*

- **Keep it short:** don't cram too much information within your en dashes – the longer the aside, the more of an interruption it is.

- **Keyboard shortcut:** use ALT +0150 to create an en dash in PowerPoint and Umbraco.

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Full stop, period (.)

Use just one space after a full stop. Using two spaces leads to jagged formatting on the portal when one space falls at the end of one line and the next at the start of a new line. The result looks unprofessional.

Hyphen (-)

Use to connect two words or more that work as a single adjective to describe another word or phrase, such as 'long-term impact', as in *We anticipated further cuts, given the low-margin, high-breakeven nature of Apache's North American portfolio.*

- **Don't hyphenate words that don't need it:** such as 'long term' when the phrase isn't describing a third word, as in *'in the long term, we plan…'* or other simple adjective-noun combinations.

- **Hyphenate compound nouns – not verbs:** if you have been 'set up' there is no need to hyphenate because the verb *('set')* and the preposition *('up')* have distinct functions. But if you are referring to a situation as a 'set-up', hyphenate because the two words are being used as a single noun.

- **Don't hyphenate a range of figures unless they are used excessively throughout a report:** write 'from 30% to 35%' or 'between 30% and 35%' rather than 'from 30-35%' or 'between 30-35%'. See '**Ranges**'.

- **Fractions:** hyphenate fractions, such as *one-half* and *three-quarters*, as in *Gunvor is to acquire a* **one-third** *interest in the Bull Mountain mine.*

- **Don't hyphenate words ending in -ly:** such as *practically speaking, politically motivated* and *highly rated.*

- **Other hyphenation examples:** *better-than-expected earnings, best-case scenario, coal-to-gas switching, cost-cutting measures, four-day rally, gas-supply option, gold-producing countries, high-cost operations, high-profile well, price-related closures, state-owned company, 13th Five-Year Plan, 30-day grace period.*

Question mark (?)

It's fine to pose a question as a report title, and it's certainly a good idea to vary your style so headlines don't always follow one formula. So grab your readers' attention on occasion with a question, as here *Might Petrobras' dominance of Brazilian LNG wane?* It's also a useful device for narrative.

- Be aware of when you're asking a question or offering an explanation, as here:

  » *Why US consumption growth will remain low* (explanation)

  » *Why will US consumption growth remain low?* (question)

Quote marks

If you quote someone or a document, use double quote marks, as in *Indeed China's Hanking Group referred to one of the key challenges to its own smelter developments in southeast Sulawesi as a* **"complex bureaucracy of smelter permit application"** *Or, with an external document name (for our own reports you'd simply link to the name of the report): China's NDRC released a revised draft of the* **"Catalogue of Central Government Pricing"** *for public consultation.*

- Use single quotes when introducing a word or phrase readers may not be familiar with, but not in subsequent use.

Quote punctuation

- If quoting a full sentence, put quote marks after the punctuation. *He said: "Shell is pleased to be involved in the project."*

- If quoting part of a sentence or a title, put quotation marks inside the punctuation. *A spokesman said the company was "pleased to be involved in the project".*

- If the entire sentence is a question, but the quoted words aren't, put the question mark outside the quotation marks. *Did he really say, "the oil price will return to around US$100 by the end of the year"?*

- If only the quoted words are a question, put the question mark inside the quotation marks. *He asked, "will the oil price return to around US$100 by the end of the year?"*

- When both the quoted words and the sentence are questions, put the question mark inside the quotation marks. *Did he really ask, "will the oil price return to around US$100 by the end of the year?"*

- The rules for exclamation marks are the same as for question marks.

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Quote style

You have several options, should you need to quote a person or document:

- *Neil Armstrong famously said: "That's one small step for man; one giant leap for mankind."*

- *"That's one small step for man," said Neil Armstrong, "one giant leap for mankind."*

Semi-colon (;)

Use to signify that there is more to come. It's a pause that is longer than a comma but not as emphatic as a full stop, as in *Unproven unconventional plays will also fall out of favour; Chevron's exit from Poland is the most recent example.*

- Remember: a colon introduces; a semi-colon separates, as here.

Slash (/)

This should only be used with measurements. In text, a slash leaves the door open to different interpretations, which is ambiguous for the reader and lazy on the writer's part, as here: *Russia's ability to withstand the low oil price/sanctions regime does allow the country a certain degree of headroom.* If you mean 'low oil price and sanctions' (or even 'or') just write it out, it's only a few more characters

- Likewise, don't write *'Strategy/Investments'* as a header – just write 'Strategy and investments' (or 'Strategy or investments' if that's the case) whether in body text or headlines.

- A slash is fine to use in charts and tables but when you do use, don't put spaces either side of the slash.

- If you use a slash with 'and/or', for instance, and you mean to say both 'and' and 'or', then lose the slash and write 'either X or Y, or both'.

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Units of measurement

When presenting a measurement in writing, there should always be a space between the number and the unit. For example, *5 mmboe* rather than *5mmboe*. Pay particular attention to this rule when using °C and °API. The correct approach is 25 °C, rather than 25°C or 25° C. The exception to the rule is for an angle which may be 180° with no space between the number and unit.

Use the appropriate currency indicator when using a unit of measurement that includes dollars, as in US$/t.

ac acres

bcm bank cubic metres (mining)

bbl barrels

boe barrels of oil equivalent

boe/d barrels of oil equivalent per day

b/d barrels per day

bar bars

bnbbl billion barrels

bnboe billion barrels of oil equivalent

bcf billion cubic feet

bcfd billion cubic feet per day

bcfed billion cubic feet equivalent per day

bcm billion cubic metres (gas)

Bt billion tonnes

btu British thermal units

btu/lb British thermal units per pound

btu/scf British thermal units per standard cubic feet

cm centimetres

c/gal cents per gallon

c/kWh cents per kilowatt-hour

c/lb cents per pound

cf cubic feet (gas)

ft³ cubic feet (volume)

in³ cubic inches

m³ cubic metres

yd³ cubic yards

°C degrees Celsius

°F degrees Fahrenheit

$/lb dollars per pound

$/t dollars per metric ton

$/st dollars per short ton

ft feet

GJ gigajoules

Gt gigatonnes

GW gigawatt

GWh gigawatt-hours

g grams

g/t grams per tonne

ha hectares

in inches

kcal kilocalories

kcal/kg kilocalories per kilogram

kg kilograms

km kilometres

kt kilotonnes

ktoe kilotonnes of oil equivalent

kV kilovolts

kW kilowatt

kWh kilowatt-hour

l (dm³) litres (cubic decimetres)

lt long tons (British ton, 2,240 pounds)

MJ/m³ megajoules per cubic metre

MJ/kg megajoules per kilogram

MPa megapascals

MW megawatt

MWh megawatt-hour

m metres

mi miles

Mbcm million bank cubic metres

mmbbl million barrels

mmboe million barrels of oil equivalent

Mb/d million barrels per day

Use Mb/d for tables, but write out as *'xxx million b/d'* in sentences

mmbtu million British thermal units

mmcfd million cubic feet per day

mmcfed million cubic feet of gas equivalent per day

A
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X
Y
Z

Mcm million cubic metres

Mcmd million cubic metres per day

Mlbs million pounds weight

Mst million short tons

Mstce million short tons of coal equivalent

Mstpa million short tons per annum

mmscfd million standard cubic feet per day

Mt million tonnes

Mtce million tonnes of coal equivalent

Mtoe million tonnes of oil equivalent

mmtpa million tonnes per annum (LNG)

Mtpa million tonnes per annum (mass)

oz ounces

ppm parts per million

Pa pascals

lbs pounds

psi pounds per square inch

st short tons (US ton, 2,000 pounds)

stpa short tons per annum

ft² square feet

km² square kilometres

m² square metres

mi² square miles

atm standard atmosphere

scf/bbl standard cubic feet per barrel

TW terawatt

TWh terawatt-hour

kboe/d thousand barrels of oil equivalent per day

Use kboe/d in tables but write out as numerals in sentences. So '84,000 boe/d' rather than '84 kboe/d'

kb/d thousand barrels per day

Use kb/d in tables but write out as numerals in sentences. So '84,000 b/d' rather than '84 kb/d'

mcfe thousand cubic feet of gas equivalent

ktpa thousand tonnes per annum

kt/d thousand tonnes per day

t tonnes (metric ton, 1,000 kg or 2,204.6 pounds)

t/btu tonnes per British thermal unit

t/d tonnes per day

tcf trillion cubic feet

troy oz troy ounces

UK gal UK gallons

US gal US gallons

V volts

xxx-inch xxx-inch (pipeline)

yd yards

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The following resources are also available from the editorial microsite.

PowerPoint style guide

Guidelines on using PowerPoint

Writing style guide at a glance

10 of our main style rules to remember

Writing manual

Guidelines on everything from parts of speech and our tone of voice to how to write an alert

5 metrics of good writing

Use this traffic-light system to understand how we define good writing, illustrated with WoodMac examples

A guide to article use

When to use the, a or an

A guide to comma use

Your comma questions answered

A guide to verb tenses

How to construct them and when to use them

Deconstructed Insight

An annotated Insight so you can see our writing principles and tone of voice in action

Headlines the WoodMac way

How to construct the right headline for your report, with tips and guidelines

How to check readability

Access Microsoft Word's spelling and grammar proofer, including readability metrics

Insights process toolkit

Tools and guidance to help you publish Insights:

- **5-day insight process map**
- **10-day insight process map**
- **Approvers' protocol**
- **Insights briefing template**
- **Insights idea worksheet**
- **Internal report feedback form instructions**
- **Lead author role checklist**

Methodology document guidelines

General guidelines on what a Wood Mackenzie research methodology document should include and how it should be presented

Proofing checklist

What to look for when you review, for meaning (analysis and arguments) and style (grammar, punctuation and syntax)

Quality checklist

A reminder of the key questions to ask when putting together reports.