

## The Guardian and Observer style guide

# Guardian and Observer style guide: Q

‘The uniqueness of each person’s language is as unalienable as DNA and far more easily recognised and publicly asserted.’ **Randolph Quirk**

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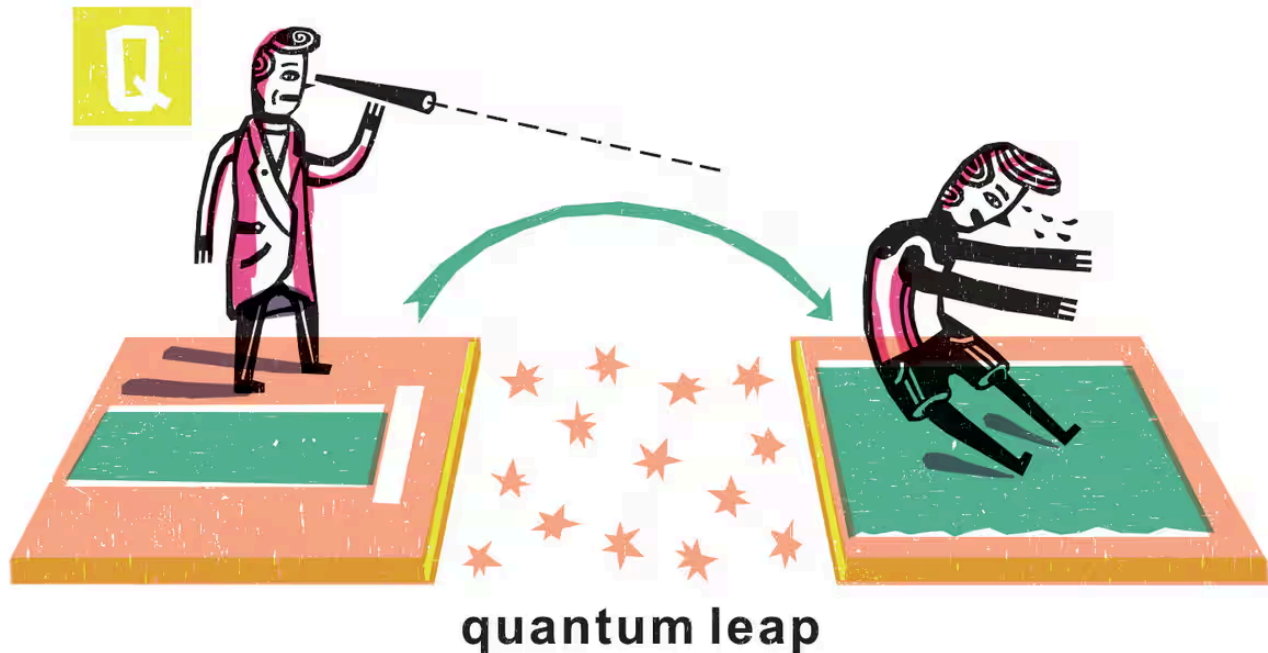


Illustration: Jakob Hinrichs

### **Qantas**

Australian airline

### **QC**

is now KC

### **QinetiQ**

arms company

### **Qom**

city in Iran; it is not compulsory to call it “the holy city of Qom”

### **quaaludes**

### **Qualifications and Curriculum Authority**

QCA after first mention

### **quango**

plural quangos; short for quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation, but no need to spell out

**quantum jump, quantum leap**

cliches best avoided in any area other than physics (unless you are referring to the cult 70s band Quantum Jump or the cult 90s TV series Quantum Leap)

**quarterdeck, quartermaster****Quebecers**

not Quebeckers or Québécois

**the queen**

but Queen Camilla, Queen Elizabeth II

**Queen's Club**

in London

**Queens' College, Cambridge****Queen's College, Oxford**

its official name is The Queen's College (named in honour of Queen Philippa in 1341)

**Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother**

to give her full title, otherwise the queen mother

**Queen Mary 2**

succeeded Queen Elizabeth 2 as Cunard's flagship in 2004; QM2, QE2 after first mention

**Queen Mary University of London**

no comma

**Queen's Park**

the London tube station has an apostrophe

**Queen's Park**

Scotland's oldest football club, winners of the Scottish Cup 10 times in the 19th century and twice runners-up in the FA Cup

**Queens Park Rangers**

(no apostrophe) English football club

**Queen's University Belfast****queueing**

not queuing

**quiche lorraine****quicklime, quicksand, quicksilver****quite**

"I'm quite tired" means "I'm fairly tired."

"Have you quite finished?" means "have you completely finished?" and comes with

a built-in note of irritation.

“Quite!” means “I agree!”

## **quixotic**

## **quiz**

a suspect is questioned, not quizzed (however tempting for headline purposes)

## **quizshow**

## **Quorn**

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## **quotation marks**

Use double quotes at the start and end of a quoted section, with single quotes for quoted words within that section. Place full points and commas inside the quotes for a complete quoted sentence; otherwise the point comes outside – “Anna said: ‘Your style guide needs updating,’ and I said: ‘I agree.’” but: “Anna said updating the guide was ‘a difficult and time-consuming task’.”

When beginning a quote with a sentence fragment that is followed by a full sentence, punctuate according to the final part of the quote, eg The minister called the allegations “blatant lies. But in a position such as mine, it is only to be expected.”

Use double quotation marks for words that aren’t actually quotations, for example: These are the people who put the “style” in style guide.

Headlines and standfirsts (where absolutely necessary), captions and display quotes all take single quote marks.

For parentheses in direct quotes, which should be employed very sparingly, use square brackets

## **quotes**

From the editor:

If a reader reads something in direct quotation marks in the Guardian he/she is entitled to believe that the reporter can vouch directly for the accuracy of the quote.

Copying quotes out of other newspapers without any form of attribution is simply bad journalism, never mind legally risky. If, where there are no libel issues, you’re going to repeat quotes, then always say where they came from. It won’t be much help in a legal action, but at least the reader can evaluate the reliability of the source. A quote in the Sunday Sport may – who knows – count for less than one from the Wall Street Journal.

If we’re taking quotes from the radio or television it is our general policy to include an attribution. This matters less if it is a pooled interview or news conference that

happens to be covered by, say, the BBC or Sky. If the quote comes from an exclusive interview on a radio or TV programme (eg, Today, Channel 4 News or Newsnight) we should always include an attribution.

Some further guidelines:

Take care with direct speech: our readers should be confident that words appearing in quotation marks accurately represent the actual words uttered by the speaker, although ums and ahems can be removed and bad grammar improved. If you aren't sure of the exact wording, use indirect speech.

Where a lot of material has been left out, start off a new quote with: "He added: ...", or signify this with an ellipsis.

Take particular care when extracting from printed material, for example a minister's resignation letter.

Avoid "that" quotes, ie The prosecutors maintained that "this was not a trial about freedom of the internet. Instead, a serious issue has been raised about the rights of the individual." There is no reason to introduce a complete direct quote of this kind with "that". It should be The prosecutors maintained: "This was not a trial ..." etc.

...

Colons, rather than commas, should be used to introduce quotes, ie Guardian Style says: "Please use colons, not commas;" not Guardian Style says, "Please use ..." etc. We are writing a newspaper, not a novel.

Think about where the attribution goes, and avoid this kind of thing:  
"Gordon Brown is a bully and a liar. I have had numerous complaints about his aggressive behaviour," said Mrs Pratt.

"The prime minister is completely out of control, and everyone inside No 10 knows it," added Andrew Rawnsley.

It's extremely annoying to get to the end of the second par and find out it is a different speaker, because it reads as a continuation of the words of Mrs Pratt.

As a general rule, and particularly with lengthy quotations, it is better to start with the attribution, so the reader does not have to engage in a series of mental double-takes trying to find out who is supposed to be saying what. It should be:

Mrs Pratt said: "Gordon Brown is a bully and a liar. I have had numerous complaints about his aggressive behaviour."

Andrew Rawnsley added: "The prime minister is completely out of control, and everyone inside No 10 knows it."

Avoid quoting words when it is unnecessary to do so, like this: Benítez said he was "angry" that Liverpool were being written out of the title race. Yes, maybe, quotation marks if he was "incandescent", or "spitting with rage" - but it is completely unnecessary to use quotation marks for mundane words and

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unexceptional quotes. They are even finding their way into headlines, which looks awful.

Similarly: MPs said they had not seen any evidence that Andy Coulson “knew that phone hacking was taking place”. There is no need for the quotation marks, which are splattered like confetti across the paper and website every day but should be used only when it is necessary, in both copy and headlines

### **Qur'an**

holy book of Islam (not Koran); regarded as the word of God, having been recited by the prophet Muhammad, so in the eyes of Muslims it is wrong to suggest that the prophet “wrote” the Qur'an

### **Qureia, Ahmed**

Palestinian politician, popularly known as Abu Ala (which means “father of Ala” - it is not a nom de guerre); he was prime minister of the Palestinian Authority until Fatah was defeated by Hamas in the parliamentary elections

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