

## Abbreviations

Unless an abbreviation or acronym is so familiar that it is used more often than the full form (eg, **AIDS, BBC, CIA, FBI, HIV, IMF, NATO, NGO, OECD, UNESCO**), or unless the full form would provide little illumination (eg, **AWACS, DNA**) write the words in full on first appearance: thus, Trades Union Congress (not **TUC**). If in doubt about its familiarity, explain what the organization is or does. After the first mention, try not to repeat the abbreviation too often; so write **the agency** rather than **the IAEA**, **the party** rather than **the KMT**, to avoid spattering the page with capital letters.

**There is no need to give the initials of an organization if it is not referred to again.**

## Acronyms

Define acronyms the first time they appear, written out as part of the sentence, followed by the acronym in parentheses. **If the acronym is not repeated, do not include the acronym in parentheses.** Coined plurals or plurals of acronyms do not take the apostrophe (e.g., FETs). Possessive forms of the acronym do take the apostrophe (e.g., CPU's speed).

In addition, plurals of acronyms get a lower-case "s"—UAVs, FAQs. Keep an eye out for this in headings when the type style is often all caps. You need to highlight the "S" and click on the all caps to make it lower case.

Indefinite articles are assigned to abbreviations to fit the sound of the first letter (e.g., an FCC regulation; a BRI).

## Apostrophes

Use the normal possessive ending 's after singular words or names that end in s: **boss's, caucus's, Delors's, St James's, Jones's, Shanks's**. Use it, too, after plurals that do not end in s: **children's, Frenchmen's, media's**.

Use the ending s' on plurals that end in s—**Danes', bosses', Joneses'**—including plural names that take a singular verb, eg, **Reuters', Barclays', Stewarts & Lloyds', Salomon Brothers'**.

Although singular in other respects, the United States, the United Nations, the Philippines, etc, have a plural possessive apostrophe: eg, **Who will be the United States' next president?**

Do not put apostrophes into decades: the **1990s**.

Remember, too, that phrases like **two weeks' time, four days' march, six months' leave**, etc, also need apostrophes.

## Captions

Photo captions should be complete sentences ending in a period.

## Cities, States, Countries

AP style for US city, state (San Mateo, Calif.; Elgin, Ill). Use commas if it's in the middle of a sentence (The company is based in San Mateo, Calif., but plans to move to San Francisco.)

Use AP list for those US and international cities that do not require further distinction (i.e., New York, Los Angeles, London, Tokyo).

City and country for lesser recognized locations (Dusseldorf, Germany; Birmingham, England).

United States (use U.S. as adjective). "The company is based in the United States. It is one of the first U.S. companies to join." This includes U.S. Army, U.S. Dept. of Defense, etc.

### **Commas**

Use of serial comma (The charger comes in 40-, 50-, and 60-volt systems.)

### **Degrees**

When it's an angle (90 deg.), we write it out.

When it's a temperature, it should always be the degree sign.

### **Figure vs. Fig.**

The word Figure is spelled out in full at the start of a sentence or when used outside parentheses in any sentence.

Use the abbreviation Fig. or Figs. followed by the number inside parentheses in the body of the text. For example: (Figs. 1,2), (Figs. 1-4). Figures (photos and diagrams) are noted within text as follows: (*Fig. 12*). In captions, they are referred to by number only, followed by a period. If there is only one photo for an article, reference it in the copy as follows: (*see photo*)

### **Headline styles**

Our general rule now is the traditional upper/lower case format (i.e., Superconductors Speed to Higher Levels of Integration). This should always be the case online where consistency of style is critical because the headlines often end up in a list together (on the home page, for example), and headlines of varying styles stand out and look sloppy.

In print, however, sometimes the headline style is dictated by design over grammar or style (as in *H&P* where only the first word has an initial cap, or a headline appears in ALL CAPS, etc). That's acceptable in the the actual layout of the article for design purposes, but in all other places where headlines appear (cover, table of contents), the upper-lower rule should be followed.

As for decks, they should be written as grammatically correct sentences, followed by a period.

### **Hyphens**

URLs: try to break after periods if at all possible; if not, break between words without using a hyphen. Never insert a hyphen into a URL to designate a line break.

Try to avoid more than two consecutive lines ending in hyphens.

Try to avoid multiple hyphens in a line break. Break the line after the first hyphen whenever possible.

## **Inclusive Language**

Writing without bias may feel stiff or unnatural at first, but usually results in greater precision and consideration for your readers. Therefore, avoid language that arbitrarily assigns roles or characteristics or excludes people on the basis of gender; racial, ethnic, or religious background; physical or mental capabilities; sexual orientation; or other sorts of stereotypes.

- Avoid using man or men to refer to groups containing both sexes. Substitute words and phrases such as humankind, humanity, people, employees, workers, workforce, staff, and staff hours.
- Avoid the use of masculine pronouns to refer to both sexes. Use plural pronouns, a locution that carries no bias, imperative verb forms, or second-person pronouns.

*Instead of:* When an engineer begins to design an overpass, he should consider...

*Try:* When engineers begin to design overpasses, they should consider...

*Or:* When beginning to design an overpass, an engineer should consider...

*Instead of:* A manager should not assume that his staff will alert him to potential problems.

*Try:* As a manager, do not assume that staff will alert you to potential problems.

*Or:* As a manager, you should not assume that your staff will alert you to potential problems.

## **Italics**

Italicize titles of books and periodicals; titles of articles should be in quotes with no italics. (see “New Modulation Technology” in the May issue of *Electronic Design*)

## **Numbers**

Use digits for all numbers in formulas, measurements, percentages and tech references (4 mm, 36 volts, .025%)

Follow AP rules for numbers in text, i.e., spell out numbers below 10 in a sentence such as “there are four variations” or “it has been eight years since the last model.”

Use of hyphens with numbers: “The correct size is 10 mm. The 10-mm size is correct.”

## **Parentheses**

Parenthetical notes or references should be included within a sentence and before the period. If it is a stand-alone parenthetical statement, it should end with a period before the closing parenthesis.

## **Percent**

Use symbol (%)

**Plurals**

Plurals of units of measure usually do not take the “s”. For example, the plural form of 3 mil is 3 mil, but 3 bits/s instead of 3 bit/s. Plural forms of calendar years do not take the apostrophe (e.g., 1990s). To avoid confusion, plural forms of variables in math do take the apostrophe (e.g.,  $x^2$ s).

**Trademarks**

The trademark symbol, TM, C, R, is not used.

**URL formatting and punctuation**

Verify URLs by copying and pasting them into your browser. Some addresses don't start with http://—other protocols are also legitimate, for example, ftp:—and some addresses don't need or even won't work with www. Omit the http:// if the URL starts with www.

Be sure to include all punctuation exactly as supplied (hyphens and tildes, in particular, are very common in Web addresses).

If a URL must run across more than one line, follow these guidelines:

- Break only after a forward slash or a “dot” (period).
- Do not split the double slash.
- Do not introduce hyphens to break words (be very careful about this as Word may try to hyphenate automatically).
- Separating the extension (for example, the html at the end) is discouraged.

**Commonly misspelled/misused words**

impedance

X-ray (uppercase X)

smartphone (1 word, also use this style for similar emerging technologies, like smartwatch)

usable (not useable)

versus

gauge

World Wide Web (rarely used anymore)

Web is capitalized, but not in compound words: website, webcam

Internet of Things (IoT)