

The Guardian style guide



Saying it in style

If a writer needs a dictionary he should not write. He should have read the dictionary at least three times from beginning to end and then have loaned it to someone who needs it.

Ernest Hemingway

The Guardian style guide is edited by David Marsh and Nikki Marshall

The word and pdf versions of the Guardian style guide are regularly updated so return often to www.guardian.co.uk/styleguide for the latest additions.

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style n. the particular mode of orthography, punctuation, design, etc, followed in a book, journal, etc, or in a printing house... for the use of **writers, editors** and printers

(Collins English Dictionary-Millennium Edition) to which you should refer for guidance on anything that does not appear in the style guide

Neither pedantic nor wild ...

an introduction by Michael McNay

The Guardian has always been a newspaper for writers, and so a newspaper for readers. All the other skills, copy editing, design, typography, illustration, photography, are there to enhance the writing and to make it more accessible, to make the paper a more desirable journal to read - though illustration and photography each has its separate justification as well.

It should not be necessary to add that Guardian writers and subeditors should all be interested in the language, in its proper use and its development, and that regular trips to books as wide-ranging as Gower's *The Complete Plain Words*, Partridge's *Usage and Abusage*, Orwell's brilliant short essay *Politics and the English Language*, Fowler's *Modern English Usage*, or Kingsley Amis's *The King's English*, are useful in sharpening professional tools as well as for entertainment.

One says it should not be necessary, but it is very obvious all round the Guardian office that uncomfortably many people involved in producing and shaping text for the paper rely more on the casual question, "What's the style for x?" and the casual answer, "I think it's probably y." Journalists who are not sufficiently interested in house style to check the house style guide are not on the face of it very likely to be much interested in style at all.

But our approach to style in its broadest sense is, if anything, more important now than before, first because other newspapers, which may always have had good writing in specialist areas, have caught up fast across a whole range of news and features; second because the Guardian itself employs so many staff on freelance shifts or short contracts who arrive here with no particular idea of what makes this paper different from others, and even staff journalists who are never inducted into what values the Guardian holds particularly close; third, though more obscurely, because of the arrival of the internet: this style guide itself is the first to be published on the world wide web. That makes it accessible in seconds; it cannot get lost or suffer having coffee spilt on it. But though there is no reason in itself why new publishing methods should change the language for the worse, the example of radio and television shows that it can: at the top end, the best correspondents file spoken reports that could grace this newspaper; at the broad base, reporters speak a form of unlovely but infectious journalese destined only for the rubbish

bin.

House style is the means by which a newspaper seeks to ensure that where there are permissible variants in spellings, the use of acronyms and so forth, a unified approach to these matters is adopted to help in disseminating a sense of rationality and authority in the use of language. What it does not mean is imposing a unified writing style on the newspaper. Many of the reporters, columnists, critics and at least one former editor who once ran a highly idiosyncratic gossip column and who have enlivened the pages of the Guardian and helped to build its international reputation could hardly have done so had they been edited from the beginning into a homogenous house style. A subeditor can do no worse disservice to the text before him and thus to the writer, the reader, and the newspaper, than to impose his or her own preferences for words, for the shape of sentences and how they link, for a pedantic insistence on grammar in all cases as it used to be taught in school; in the process destroying nuances and possibly even the flow of a piece. And I write this as a career copy and layout editor with the best part of 40 years' service on the Guardian and who regards the skills involved in copy editing not just as desirable but essential.

Editing involves fine judgment, particularly as the paper has so many sections today serving possibly quite different kinds of readership. But fine judgments mean good editing, blanket judgments mean bad editing. A piece written in the vernacular that would be inappropriate on the analysis page or even (even?) in a sports column might pass muster in the Guide, where the demotic language of an NME review would be closer to the mark than the high style of Macaulay or CP Scott. And dealing sympathetically with quirks of writing style certainly does not preclude tidying up cliché-ridden journalese, verbosity, the latest vogue words and phrases, the words and phrases that flatten out meaning, replace a range of better more finely tuned words and concepts, and anaesthetise writing.

The introduction to the Guardian stylebook of 1960, which itself was a revision to the initial guide published in 1928, was headed "Neither pedantic nor wild".

That much has not changed.

- Michael McNay joined the Guardian in 1963.



a or an before h?

Use an only if the h is silent: an hour, an heir, an honourable man, an honest woman; but a hero, a hotel, a historian

abattoir

abbeys

cap up, eg Rievaulx Abbey, Westminster Abbey

abbreviations

Do not use full points in abbreviations, or spaces between initials: BBC, US, mph, eg, 4am, lbw, No 10, PJ O'Rourke, WH Smith, etc

Spell out less well known abbreviations on first mention; it is not necessary to spell out well known ones, such as EU, UN, US, BBC, CIA, FBI, CD, Aids, Nasa

Use all caps only if the abbreviation is pronounced as the individual letters; otherwise spell the word out: the BBC, ICI, VAT, but Isa, Nato

Beware of overusing less well known acronyms and abbreviations; they can look clunky and clutter up text, especially those explained in brackets but then only referred to once or twice again. It is usually simpler to use another word, or even to write out the name in full a second time

The rash of contractions such as aren't, can't, couldn't, hasn't, don't, I'm, it's, there's and what's has reached epidemic proportions (even the horrific "there've" has appeared in the paper). While they might make a piece more colloquial or easier to read, they can be an irritant and a distraction, and make a serious article sound frivolous. And they look pretty horrible, particularly when the system attempts to hyphenate them

A2, B1463

not the A2 road or the main A2

Aborigines (noun), **Aboriginal** (adjective)

cap up when referring to native Australians

aborigines (noun), **aboriginal** (adjective)

lc when referring to indigenous populations

abscess

absorption

abysmal

abyss

Acas

Acas, the advisory, conciliation and arbitration service, at first mention; thereafter just Acas

accents

include all accents on French words (but not anglicised French words such as cafe; exception: exposé, to avoid confusion with expose), and umlauts on German words. Do not use accents on other languages

Accenture

formerly Andersen Consulting (Arthur Andersen is now called Andersen)

accommodate, accommodation

accordion

achilles heel, achilles tendon

acknowledgment

not acknowledgement

acronyms

take initial cap: Aids, Isa, Mori, Nato

act

uc when using full name, eg Criminal Justice Act 1998, Official Secrets Act; but lc when speaking in more general terms, eg "we need a radical freedom of information act"; bills remain lc until passed into law

acting

always lc: acting prime minister, acting committee chairman

adaptation

not adaption

actor

male and female; avoid actress except when in name of award (eg Oscar for best actress)

AD1066 but **1000BC**

addendum

plural addendums not addenda

addresses

119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER

Adidas

initial cap

administration

the Clinton administration, etc

adrenalin

not adrenaline

adverbs

do not use a hyphen between an adverb and the adjective it modifies: a hotly disputed penalty, a constantly evolving newspaper, genetically modified food etc

adviser

not advisor

aeroplane

not airplane

affinity with or **between**, not to or for

aficionado

plural **aficionados**

Afrikaans language, **Afrikaner** person

ages

Tony Blair, 48, not aged 48; little Johnny, four; the woman was in her 20s, not twenties

ageing

aggravate

to make worse, not to annoy

AGM

ahead of

use **before** or **in advance of**

aide-de-camp

plural **aides-de-camp**

aide-memoire

plural **aides-memoire**

Aids

acquired immune deficiency syndrome, but normally no need to spell out

aircraft-carrier

aircrew, airdrop, airlift, airmail

one word

air raid, air strike

two words

Air Vice-Marshal

Alastair or Alistair?

Alastair Campbell, Alastair Hetherington
Alistair Cooke, Alistair Darling, Alistair Maclean
Aleister Crowley

Albright, Madeleine

former US secretary of state; Mrs Albright, not Ms, after first mention

Alcott, Louisa May

(1832-88) American author of Little Women
www.alcottweb.com

A-levels

hyphen

Ali, Muhammad

alibi

being somewhere else; not synonymous with excuse

Allahu Akbar

"God is most great"

Allende, Isabel

Chilean author, niece of Salvador
www.isabelallende.com

Allende, Salvador

Chilean president, overthrown and killed in 1973

allies

lc, second world war allies, Gulf war allies, etc

allot, allotted

all right

is right; alright is not all right

All Souls College

Oxford: no apostrophe

alsatian

dog

AltaVista

alternative

strictly, a choice between two courses of action; if there are more than two, option or choice may be preferred

alumnus

plural **alumni**

Alzheimer's disease

AM

member of the Welsh assembly, eg Rhodri Morgan AM

ambassador

lc, eg the British ambassador to Washington

American civil liberties union

not American civil rights union

America's Cup

Amicus

trade union formed on January 1 2002 by a merger between the AEEU and MSF

amid

not amidst

amok

not amuck

among

not amongst

among or between?

contrary to popular myth, between is not limited to two parties. It is appropriate when the relationship is essentially reciprocal: fighting between the many peoples of Yugoslavia, treaties between European countries. Among belongs to distributive relationships: shared among, etc

ampersand

use in company names when the company does: Marks & Spencer, P&O

anaesthetic

analysis

plural analyses

Andersen

formerly Arthur Andersen (Andersen Consulting is now called Accenture)

annex verb, **annexe** noun

Ansaphone TM

use answering machine

anticipate

take action in expectation of; not synonymous with expect

anticlimax

antipodes

anti-semitic

apex



apostrophes

Plural nouns take a singular apostrophe (children's games, gentlemen's outfitter, old folk's home)

The possessive in words and names ending in s also takes the singular (Jones's, James's), but be guided by pronunciation and use the plural apostrophe where it helps: Mephistopheles' rather than Mephistopheles's

Use apostrophes in phrases such as 12 years' imprisonment, 200 hours' community service

appal, appalling

appendix
plural **appendices**

appraise
to estimate worth

apprise
to inform

aquarium
plural **aquariums**

Arafat, Yasser

archbishop
the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, at first mention; thereafter Dr Carey or the archbishop. Archbishop of York, etc: same rules apply

archdeacon
the Ven Paul Olive, Archdeacon of Farringdon, at first mention; then Mr Olive (unless he is a Dr), or the archdeacon

archipelago, plural **archipelagos**

Argentinian
noun and adjective

armed forces, armed services

the army
the British army, the navy, but Royal Navy, Royal Air Force (RAF is OK)

Arthur Andersen

artist
not artiste

art movements
lc: art deco, art nouveau, cubism, dadaism, gothic, impressionism, pop art, surrealism etc. but **Modern** (in the sense of Modern British) to distinguish it from "modern art", **pre-Raphaelite**

Arts Council

ascendancy, ascendant

aspirin

asylum seeker

no hyphen

Atlantic ocean

or just the Atlantic

attache

no accent

attorney general

lc, no hyphen

auger

used to make holes

augur

predict or presage

Aum Shinrikyo

Supreme Truth sect

au pair

Australian Labor party

not Labour

autism

an incurable neurological disorder, to be used only when referring to the condition, not as a term of abuse, or in producing such witticisms as "mindless moral autism" (sic) and "Star Wars is a form of male autism", both of which have appeared in the paper

autistic

someone with autism, not someone with poor social skills

Autocue TM

autumn

avant garde

no hyphen

axis

plural **axes**

Azerbaijan

adjective **Azerbaijani**



BAA

Do not call it the British Airports Authority, its former name

backbench

newspaper or politics, **backbenches**, **backbenchers**

backwoodsman

BAe Systems

formerly British Aerospace

Baghdad

bail out

a prisoner, a company or person in financial difficulty; the noun is bail-out

bale out

a boat, from an aircraft

balk

obstruct, pull up, stop short; **baulk** area of a snooker table

ballot, balloted

Band-Aid TM

Use plaster or sticking plaster

B&B

Abbreviation for bed and breakfast

B&Q

Bank of England

the Bank (uc) is acceptable on subsequent mentions
www.bankofengland.co.uk

bank holiday

banknote

bar

(legal) she was called to the bar

bar

(political) of the House of Commons

barbecue

Barclays Bank

Barnardo's

children's charity, formerly Dr Barnardo's; it no longer runs orphanages

barolo

wine

barons, baronesses

are lords and ladies, even at first mention: Lady Thatcher, Lady Blackstone, Lady Jay, Lord Healey, etc

baroque

Basle

not Basel

bas-relief

battlebus

BBC1, BBC2

BC/AD

BC goes after the date or century, eg 55BC; AD goes before the figure (AD64) but after the century: second century AD (or BC)

beau

plural **beaux**

bebop, hard bop, post-bop

(jazz)

Becket, Thomas

(1118-1170) Murdered Archbishop of Canterbury; not Thomas à Becket

bedouin

beef wellington

Beeton, Mrs

(Isabella Mary Beeton 1836-65)
Author of the Book of Household Management

befitted

begs the question

a tricky one, best avoided since it is almost invariably misused: it means assuming a proposition that, in reality, involves the conclusion.

An example would be to say that parallel lines will never meet because they are parallel, assuming as a fact the thing you are professing to prove. What it does not mean is "raises the question"

Beijing

Belarus

formerly Byelorussia

believable

Bell's whisky

bellwether

sheep that leads the herd; customarily misspelt, misused, or both

benefited, benefiting

benefits agency

Benetton

Berchtesgaden

Bergkamp, Dennis

Arsenal footballer, Dutch international

Bernabeu stadium

Madrid

Betaferon TM

generic term for drug is interferon-beta 1b

bete noire

no accent

betting odds

Take care about using the phrase "odds on": if Labour is quoted by bookmakers at 3-1 to win a byelection, and the odds are cut to 2-1, it is wrong to say "the odds on

Labour to win were cut last night" — in fact, the odds against Labour to win have been cut (the shorter the price, the more likely something is expected to happen)

It gets more complicated when something is genuinely odds on, ie bookmakers quote a price of "2-1 on" (sometimes expressed as 1-2): in this case, if the Labour candidate is quoted at 2-1 on and becomes an even hotter favourite, at 3-1 on, the odds have shortened; if Labour loses popularity, and 2-1 on becomes, say, 7-4 on or evens, the odds have lengthened.

We frequently get this wrong. If in doubt, consult the racing desk

Beverly Hills

biannual

twice a year; **biennial** every two years. Alternatives: twice-yearly or two-yearly

bias, biased

Bible

cap up if referring to Old or New Testament; lc in phrases such as Wisden, the cricketers' bible; **biblical** lc

biblical quotations

use a modern translation, not the Authorised Version

biblical references

Genesis 1:1; II Corinthians 2:13; Revelation 3:16 (please, please not "Revelations")

bicentenary

a 200th anniversary; **bicentennial** is its adjective

biceps

singular and plural: there is no such thing as a bicep

bid

Use only in a financial sense, eg Manchester United have made a bid for Bergkamp, or auction room

big

often preferable to large

bigot, bigoted

bill

lc, even when giving full name; cap up only if it becomes an act

billion

one thousand million, not one million million
use **bn** in headlines;

in copy use **bn** for sums of money, quantities or inanimate objects: £10bn, 1bn gallons of water; otherwise **billion**: 6 billion people, etc

Bin Laden

Osama bin Laden, Bin Laden on second reference. Note: Bin Laden has been stripped of his Saudi citizenship, so can be described as Saudi-born but not as a Saudi. His organisation is known as **al-Qaida** ("the Base")

Birds Eye TM

no apostrophe

birdwatchers

also know as **birders**, not "twitchers"; they go **birdwatching** or **birding**, not "twitching"

Biro TM

use ballpoint pen

birthplace, birthrate, birthright

one word

Birtwistle, Sir Harrison

(born 1934) British composer

bishops

the Right Rev Clifford Richard, Bishop of Wimbledon, at first mention; thereafter the bishop or Bishop Richard

black

(race) lc noun and adjective

Black Country

black economy

prefer hidden or parallel economy

blackout

blase

no accent

blastfurnace

bleeper

not beeper; synonym for pager

blitz, blitzkrieg

blond

adjective, male noun

blonde female noun

The woman is a blonde, because she has blond hair; the man has blond hair too and is, if you insist, a blond

Bloody Sunday

take care when writing about the death toll: 13 died in Derry on January 30 1972, but a 14th victim died from a brain tumour several months later, so we should use a phrase such as "which resulted in 14 deaths"

Bluffer's Guide

Beware of using phrases such as "A bluffer's guide to crime writing", a headline that led to a complaint from the copyright holder

Blu-Tack TM

Boat Race

Oxford v Cambridge

Boddingtons

bogey golf

bogie trolley, truck

bogy ghost, menace

Bombay

not Mumbai

bona fide, bona fides

bookcase, bookkeeper, bookseller, bookshelf

one word

book titles

roman, with initial caps except for words such as a, an, and, of, on, the: A Tale of Two Cities, The Pride and the Passion, etc

bon vivant

not bon viveur

bordeaux

wine

bored with or by

not bored of

both

unnecessary in most sentences that contain "and"; "both men and women" says no more than "men and women", and takes longer

both is plural: "both women have reached the tops of their professions"

bottleneck

boundary commission

bourgeois adjective

bourgeoisie noun

Boutros Boutros-Ghali

former UN secretary general; Mr Boutros-Ghali at second mention

bovine somatotrophin

(BST)

bovine spongiform encephalopathy

(BSE) no need to spell it out

box office

boy

male under 18

boyfriend

Brands Hatch

no apostrophe

Brasilia

capital of Brazil

breastfed, breastfeeding

one word

briar

bush, pipe

bric-a-brac

brickbat

cliche; do not use

Brink's-Mat

Britain/UK

These terms are synonymous. Britain is the official short form of United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Used as adjectives, therefore, British and UK mean the same. Great Britain, however, refers only to the mainland of England, Wales and Scotland

British Council

British Film Institute

BFI on second mention

British Library

British Medical Association

(doctors' trade union) BMA on second mention

British Museum

www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk

Britvic TM

broadcasting standards commission

Brueghel

family of Flemish painters

Brum, Brummie

brussels sprouts

Brylcreem TM

BSE

bovine spongiform encephalopathy; no need to spell out

BST

British Summer Time

Buckingham Palace

the palace on second mention

buckminsterfullerene

a form of carbon, named after the US engineer Buckminster Fuller (1895-1983)

Budget, the

but budget talks, budget measures, etc

buffaloes

not buffalos

Bulger, James

not Jamie

Burberry TM

bureau

plural **bureaus** (furniture) or **bureaux** (organisations)

burgomaster
not burgomeister

burka
not burqa

Burma
not Myanmar

burned
not burnt

Bush, George
Not George W

businesslike, businessman, businesswoman
one word

businessmen
say business people or the business community if that is what you mean

bussed, bussing

Bussell, Darcey
British ballet dancer

buyout
but **buy-in**

buzz words and phrases
quickly become bore words and phrases, so use with care: recent ubiquitous examples include "drop-dead gorgeous", "the new black", "the usual suspects" and "but, hey..." (see also cliches)
www.westegg.com/cliche

byelection, bylaw, bypass, bystander

bylines like this:
Stephen Bates
Religious affairs correspondent



cabin attendant, flight attendant, cabin crew, cabin staff
not air hostess, air stewardesses

cabinet, shadow cabinet

caesarean section

Caesars Palace
no apostrophe

cafe
no accent

Calor TM

Campari TM

Canary Wharf
the whole development, not the main tower, which is No 1 Canada Square

canvas
tent, painting

canvass solicit votes



capitals

Times have changed since the days of medieval manuscripts with elaborate hand-illuminated capital letters, or Victorian documents in which not just proper names, but virtually all nouns, were given initial caps (a tradition valiantly maintained to this day by Estate Agents). A glance at the Guardian of, say, 1990, 1970 and 1950 would show greater use of capitals the farther back you go. The tendency towards lower case, which in part reflects a less formal, less deferential society, has been accelerated by the explosion of the internet: some net companies, and many email users, have dispensed with capitals altogether.

Our style reflects these developments. We aim for coherence and consistency, but not at the expense of clarity. As with any aspect of style, it is impossible to be wholly consistent — there are almost always exceptions, so if you are unsure check for an individual entry in this guide. But here are the main principles

jobs: all lc eg prime minister, US secretary of state, editor of the Guardian, readers' editor

titles: differentiate between title and job description eg President Clinton (but the US president, Bill Clinton, and Mr Clinton on subsequent mention); the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey (Dr Carey, or the archbishop, on subsequent mentions); the Duke of Westminster (the duke at second mention); the Pope, the Queen

British government departments of state: initial caps eg Home Office, Foreign Office, Ministry of Defence (MoD on second mention); see under **departments of state** entry for a full list. Other countries: lc eg US state department, Russian foreign ministry

government agencies, commissions, public bodies, quangos etc: mostly lc eg benefits agency, crown prosecution service (CPS at second mention), customs and excise, parole board; there are exceptions, so check individual entries

acts of parliament: initial caps (but bills lc)
eg Official Secrets Act, Criminal Justice Act 1992

parliamentary committees, reports and inquiries: all lc eg trade and industry select committee, Lawrence report, royal commission on electoral reform

artistic and cultural: initial caps for names of institutions eg Museum of the Moving Image (Momi on second mention), Royal Court, Tate Modern

churches, hospitals and schools: cap up the proper or placename, lc the rest eg Great Ormond Street children's hospital, Vernon county primary school, Ripon grammar school, St Peter's church, Pembury

universities and colleges of further and higher education:
caps for institution, lc for departments
eg Sheffield University department of medieval and modern history, Oregon State University, Free University of Berlin, University of Queensland school of journalism, London College of Printing

words and phrases based on proper names that have lost connection with their origins (alsatian, cardigan, champagne, french windows, yorkshire pudding and numerous others) are usually lc; many are listed individually in this guide, as are the few exceptions (eg Long Island iced tea)

capitalism

cappuccino

carcass
plural **carcasses**

career girl, career woman
banned

Caribbean

carer
An unpaid family member, partner or friend who helps a disabled or frail person with the activities of daily living. Not someone who works in a caring job or profession

The term is important because carers are entitled to range of benefits and services which depend on them recognising themselves as carers

Caribbean

carmaker

cashmere fabric
Kashmir region disputed between India and Pakistan

castoff

one word (noun, adjective); **cast off** two words (verb)

casual (journalist)

prefer freelance; casual labour evokes an image of the docks in around 1953

catch-22

lc unless specifically referring to Joseph Heller's novel **Catch-22**

cathedrals

cap up, eg Canterbury Cathedral

Catholic

does not always mean Roman Catholic. If Roman Catholic is meant, say so at first mention

caviar

not caviare

CD, CD-rom

ceasefire

Ceausescu, Nicolae

former president of Romania, deposed and executed in 1989

celibate, celibacy

strictly refer to being unmarried (especially for religious reasons), but it is now acceptable to use them to mean abstaining from sexual intercourse

cello, cellist

celsius/centigrade

synonymous; we use the former, invented by a man named Celsius, but with fahrenheit equivalent in brackets 23C, -3C etc

Celtic

not Glasgow Celtic

central rail users' consultative committee

centre on or in; **revolve** around

century

6th century, 21st century, etc

chairman, chairwoman

are better than chair or chairperson; if in doubt, use a different construction ("the meeting was chaired by Alan" or "Georgina was in the chair")

champagne

chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster

chancellor of the exchequer

Channel 4

Channel tunnel

never Chunnel

chargé d'affaires

charity commission

chassis

singular and plural

chateau, chateaux

no accent

chatroom

one word

chatshow

checkout noun; **check out** verb

cheddar, cheshire

cheese

chief

("planning chiefs" etc): try to use proper titles; officers or officials may be preferable

chief constable

a job, not a title — John Smith, chief constable of Greater Manchester; Mr Smith at second mention

CFC

chlorofluorocarbon

Chechnya (not Chechenia), inhabited by **Chechens**

Chicken tikka masala

Britain's favourite dish

chief secretary to the Treasury

chief whip

childcare

childminder

Chinese names

mainland China: in two parts, eg Mao Zedong, Chou Enlai, Jiang Zemin
Hong Kong, Taiwan, the Koreas: in two parts with hyphen, eg Tung Chee-hwa, Chiang Kai-shek, King Il-sung (exception: when a building, park or the like is named after a person it becomes three parts, eg Chiang Kai Shek cultural centre)
Singapore, Malaysia: in three parts, eg Lee Kuan Yew
for people with Chinese names elsewhere in the world, follow their preference - but make sure you know which is the surname

choc-a-bloc

chock-a-block

Chomsky, Noam

US linguist, born 1928

Christian, Christianity

but unchristian

Christian name

use **first name** or **forename**

Christie's

Christmas Day

Chumbawamba

not Chumbawumba

church

lc for the established church: eg "the church is no longer relevant today"

City

capped when used as shorthand for the City of London. A city is a town that has been granted a charter by the crown; it usually has a cathedral

civil servant, civil service

CJD

Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease; not normally necessary to spell it out

It is now acceptable to refer to variant CJD as the human form of BSE, but not "the human form of mad cow disease"

classical music

Mozart's 41st Symphony (or Symphony No 41) in C, K551; Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No 2; Schubert's Sonata in A Minor for Piano, D845

clearcut

cliches

overused words and phrases to avoid include: back burner, boost (massive or otherwise), bouquets and brickbats, but hey..., drop-dead gorgeous, insisted, luvvies, major, massive, political correctness, politically correct, PC, special, to die for, upsurge (surge will do)

Verbs overused in headlines include: bid, boost, fuel, hike, signal, target, set to (see also buzz words and phrases)

www.westegg.com/cliche

cliffhanger

climbdown noun, **climb down** verb

coalfield, coalmine, coalminer

one word

Coalite TM

coastguard

Coca-Cola, Coke TM

cockney

coconut

cold war

Coliseum theatre; **Colosseum** Rome

College of Arms

colleges

take initial caps, eg Fire Service College; but not when college forms part of the name of a school

Colonel

Colonel Napoleon Bogey, subsequently Col Bogey

comedian

male and female; do not use comedienne

commas

The news production editor, David Marsh, is an expert on style —
correct: there is only one

The subeditor David Marsh is a little short on style —
correct: there are more than one

commission for racial equality

CRE on second mention

Commons, House of Commons

but the house, not the House

Commons committees

lc: home affairs select committee, public accounts committee, etc

common sense noun, **commonsense** adjective

Commonwealth, the

Commonwealth war graves commission

communiqué

no accent

communism, communist

lc, except in name of party: Communist party

company names

Use names the companies use themselves, except in cases where they adopt
typographical or other devices that, in effect, turn them into logos

So: Adidas, not adidas; BhS (no italicised h); Live TV (not L!ve TV); Toys R Us (do
not attempt to turn the R backwards); Yahoo! is OK

compare to liken to, **compare with** make a comparison

The lord chancellor compares himself to Cardinal Wolsey because he believes he is
like Wolsey; I might compare the lord chancellor with Wolsey to assess their relative
merits. In other words, unless specifically likening someone or something to someone
or something else, use compare with

Useful aides-memoire: Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? (Shakespeare) is
correct, as is Nothing Compares 2U (Prince)

compass points

are all lc: north, south, the south-west, north-east England; the same applies to
geopolitical areas: the west, western Europe, far east, south-east Asia, central
America etc.

Exceptions: West End (London), Middle East, Latin America, North America

competition commission

replaced the Monopolies and Mergers Commission

complete, completed

better than finalise, finalised

comprise

to consist of; do not use comprise of

Congress

(US)

conjoined twins

not Siamese twins

connection

not connexion

Conservative central office

Conservative party

consortium

plural **consortiums**

constitution

Consumers' Association

contemporary

Of the same period, though often wrongly used to mean modern; a performance of Shakespeare in contemporary dress would involve Elizabethan costume, not 21st-century clothes

continent, the

mainland Europe

continual

refers to things that happen repeatedly but not constantly; **continuous** indicates an unbroken sequence

contractions

the rash of contractions such as aren't, can't, couldn't, hasn't, don't, I'm, it's, there's and what's has reached epidemic proportions (even the horrific "there've" has appeared in the paper). While they might make a piece more colloquial or easier to read, they can be an irritant and a distraction, and make a serious article sound frivolous. And they look pretty horrible, particularly when the system attempts to hyphenate them

convince or persuade?

You persuade someone to do something, but convince them of the facts

convener

not convenor

cooperate, coordinate

cooperative, cooperation

no hyphen, but the store is the **Co-op**

coordinate

cord vocal; **chord** musical

collective nouns (group, family, cabinet, etc) take singular or plural verb according to meaning: the family was shocked, the family were sitting down, scratching their heads

cornish pasty

corporation of London

corps de ballet

cortege

no accent

coruscating

means sparkling, or emitting flashes of light; people seem to think, wrongly, that it means the same as excoriating, censuring severely eg "a coruscating attack on Hague's advisers "

councils

lc apart from placename: Rochester upon Medway council, London borough of Southwark, Kent county council

counter-attack

coupe

no accent

courts

all lc: court of appeal, high court, supreme court, magistrates court (no apostrophe), European court of human rights

court martial

plural **courts martial**

court of St James's

couscous

crescendo or climax?

a gradual increase in loudness or intensity; musically or figuratively, it is the build-up to a climax, not the climax itself. We frequently get this wrong

Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease

(CJD) no need to spell it out

cricket

leg-side, leg-spinner, off-spin, off-stump, silly mid-on, mid-off hyphenated

cripple, crippled

offensive and outdated; do not use

criterion

plural **criteria**

Crombie TM

Crowley, Aleister

dead satanist

crown, the; crown estate, crown jewels

crown prosecution service

CPS on second mention

cruise missile

cumberland sausage

cummings, ee

(US poet, 1894-1962) lc

cunt

see swearwords

Cup, FA

caps for this event, the Cup subsequently; but other cups are lc on second mention

currencies

When the whole word is used it is lc: euro, franc, mark, sterling, dong etc

Symbols: (euros) — on QPS, it is alt-shift-2

Abbreviations: DM50 (German marks); Fr50 (French francs); BFr50 (Belgian francs); SFr50 (Swiss francs); \$50 (US dollars); A\$50 (Australian dollars); HK\$50 (Hong Kong dollars)

convert all foreign amounts to sterling in brackets at first mention, but use common sense — there is no need to put £660,000 in brackets after the phrase "I feel like a million dollars"

<http://www.xe.net/ucc/>

currently

prefer now

**customs, customs and excise, customs officers, HM
customs**

cyberspace

Czech Republic



dangling participles

beware of constructions such as "having died, they buried him"; the pitfalls are nicely highlighted in Mark Lawson's novel *Going Out Live*, in which a TV critic writes: "Dreary, repetitive and well past the sell-by date, I switched off the new series of *Fleming Faces*."

dash

(QPS) — alt-shift-hyphen in copy; alt-hyphen in headlines

Beware of sentences — such as this one — that dash about all over the place — commas (or even, very occasionally, brackets) are often better; semi-colons also have their uses

data

takes a singular verb; like agenda, strictly a plural, but no one ever uses "agendum" or "datum"

data protection registrar

dates

January 1 2000 (no commas); 21st century; fourth century BC; AD2006 but 1000BC; for decades use figures: the swinging 60s or 1960s

Davison, Emily

Suffragette who dived under king's horse at the Derby

D-day

D notices

Issued by the defence, press and broadcasting advisory committee (current secretary: Rear Admiral Nick Wilkinson), "suggesting" that the media do not publish sensitive information

death row

debacle

no accents

debatable

decades

use figures — the swinging 60s, etc

defensible

deforestation

defuse render harmless; **diffuse** spread about

deja vu

no accents

Deloitte & Touche

accountants

delphic

Dench, Dame Judi

not Judy

denouement

no accent

departments of state

UK government ministries (but not ministers) take initial caps as follows:

Cabinet Office

Department for Culture, Media and Sport

Department for Education and Skills

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Department of Health

Department for International Development

Department of Trade and Industry (DTI, second mention)

Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions

Department for Work and Pensions

Foreign Office

Home Office

Lord Chancellor's Department

Ministry of Defence (MoD, second mention)

Northern Ireland Office

Scotland Office (not Scottish Office)

Wales Office (not Welsh Office)

Treasury

lc when departments are abbreviated, eg environment department, transport department and for ministries of other countries, eg US state department, Iraqi foreign ministry

dependant noun

dependent adjective

dependence

depository person

depository place

de rigueur

Derry

not Londonderry except **Co Londonderry**

deselect

desiccate

despoil, despoliation

dessert

pudding, but **just deserts**

detente

Dettol TM

devil, the

DeVito, Danny

Diabetes UK

formerly the British Diabetic Association

dialects

lc: cockney, estuary English, Geordie, scouse, etc

DiCaprio, Leonardo

Dictaphone TM

diehard

dietician

different from

not different to or than

dignitary, dignitaries

dilapidated

not delapidated

dilettante

dim sum

Dinky Toys TM

diphtheria

diplomatic service

direct speech

People we write about are allowed to speak in their own, not necessarily the Guardian's, style, but be sensitive: do not, for example, expose someone to ridicule for dialect or grammatical errors

disabled people

not "the disabled"

Use positive language about disability, avoiding outdated terms that stereotype or stigmatise. Terms to avoid, with acceptable alternatives in brackets, include victim of, crippled by, suffering from, afflicted by (prefer person who has, person with); wheelchair bound, in a wheelchair (wheelchair user); invalid (disabled person); mental handicap, backward, retarded, slow (person with a learning disability); the disabled, the handicapped, the blind, the deaf (disabled people, blind people, deaf people); deaf and dumb (a person who is deaf and speech-impaired, or a person who is hearing and speech-impaired)

discernible

not discernable

discolour but **discoloration**

discomfit

thwart; do not confuse with discomfort

discreet

circumspect; **discrete** separate

discretionary hyphens

command-hyphen

Use a dishy to fix an awkward break, or place one in front of a word to turn the whole word into the next line. Soft returns (shift-return) are no substitute: if a later change shortens the paragraph ahead of a soft return, a short line is usually the result — and these can be extremely ugly in justified copy. (The soft return is useful in tabulation and other complex bits of setting but it should almost never be used in ordinary running text)

disfranchise

not disenfranchise

disinterested

means free from bias, objective; it does not mean uninterested, not taking an interest

dispatch, dispatch box (Commons), dispatched
not despatch, despatched

Disprin TM

disk
(computers), not disc

Disneyland Paris
formerly Euro Disney

dissociate
not disassociate

divorcee
a divorced person, male or female

Dr
use at second mention for medical and scientific doctors, not, for example, a politician who happens to have a PhD in history

Dog and gramophone picture TM

dogs
lc: alsatian, doberman, rottweiler, yorkshire terrier; but Irish setter, old English sheepdog

Dolby TM

Dome
Millennium Dome at first mention, thereafter the dome

Dominica
lies in the Windward Islands, south-west of the Dominican Republic

Dominican Republic
shares an island with Haiti

Donahue, Phil

dotcom
not dot.com

the double
as in Sheffield United may win the double (FA Cup and Premiership)

dover sole

downmarket

Down's syndrome

dozen

precisely, not approximately 12, (despite what you may have read in earlier versions of this guide)

draftsman

of document, **draughtsman** of drawing

dreamed

not dreamt

dressng room

two words

driving licence

not driver's licence

drug dealer, raid, squad, companies

singular, not drugs raid, etc

drug enforcement administration

(US, not agency); DEA at second mention

drunkenness

dugout

Duke of Westminster

or wherever, first mention; thereafter the duke

Duke of York

first mention; thereafter Prince Andrew or the prince

dumb

do not use; say speech-impaired

DVLA (not DVLC)

driver and vehicle licensing agency; not normally necessary to spell out

dyke

not dike

dynamo

plural **dynamos**

Dynamo

football teams from the former Soviet Union are Dynamo; teams from Romania are Dinamo



Earls Court

no apostrophe

earring

no hyphen

earshot

Earth

in an astronomical context; but moon, sun

East Anglia

East End

inner east London north of the river (the equivalent district south of the Thames is south-east London)

EastEnders

TV soap

Easter Day

not Easter Sunday

eastern Europe, western Europe

East Riding of Yorkshire council

EasyJet

E coli

e-commerce

ecstasy

(drug) lc

ecu

European currency unit, superseded by the euro

educationist

not educationalist

erie weird
Erie North American lake
eyrie of eagles

effectively
not a synonym for in effect

"The Blair campaign was launched effectively in 1992" means the intended effect was achieved; "The Blair campaign was in effect launched in 1992" means this was not the official launch, but the event described did have the effect of launching it, whether intended or not.

The word effectively, usually misused, is also overused, and can often be omitted

eg
no full points

Eire
no — use **Republic of Ireland** or **Irish Republic**

elan
no accent

elegiac

elite
no accent

ellipsis
... (QPS) alt-space bar/alt-colon/alt-space bar

email
no hyphen (but e-commerce)

emanate
is intransitive; use exude if you need a transitive verb

Embankment, the
London

embargo
plural **embargos**

embarrass, embarrassment

embassy
lc, eg British embassy

emigrate

leave a country; **immigrate** arrive in one

enamoured of

not by or with

emir

not amir

employment service

employment tribunal

not industrial tribunal

EMS

European monetary system

Emu

European monetary union

enclose

not inclose

enervate

to deprive of strength or vitality

enforce, enforceable

England

take care not to offend by saying England or English when you mean Britain or British

English Heritage

English Nature

en masse, en route

do not italicise

enormity

something monstrous or wicked, not synonymous with large

enrol, enrolling, enrolment

ensure make certain; **insure** against risk, **assure** life

enthrall, enthralling

entr'acte

epicentre

the point on the earth's surface directly above the focus of an earthquake or underground explosion; frequently misused to mean the centre or focus itself

EPO

erythropoietin, a performance-enhancing drug

equator, the

Eriksson, Sven-Goran

England football coach

ERM

exchange rate mechanism

Ernie

electronic random number indicator equipment: the computer that picks winning premium bond numbers

Eskimos

Inuit in Canada and Greenland

Inuit is plural; an individual is an **Inuk**

establishment, the

estuary English

Eta

not ETA

EU

European Union (no need to spell out at first mention); formerly EC (European Community); before that EEC (European Economic Community)

Euro

do not use as a prefix to everything European, but Euro-MP is an acceptable alternative to MEP

euro

currency; plural **euros** and **cents**

euroland, eurozone

Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, the Irish Republic, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands

Euro Disney

now called Disneyland Paris

European commission

the commission after first mention

European convention on human rights

European court of human rights

nothing to do with the EU; it is a Council of Europe body

Eurosceptic

one word, capped: they are sceptics about the European Union, not just the euro

Eurovision song contest

evangelical

fundamentalist wing of Christianity

evangelist one who spreads the gospel

every day

noun and adverb: it happens every day

everyday adjective: an everyday mistake

Exchange & Mart

exchequer, the

execution

the carrying out of a death sentence by lawful authority; so a terrorist, for example, does not "execute" someone

ex officio

by right of position or office

ex parte

on behalf of one party only

expatriate, expat

not expatriot or ex-pat

export credit guarantee department

ECGD at second mention

extraterritorial

extrovert

not extravert

eye level

no hyphen

eyewitness

one word, but prefer witness (what else would they use?)



facade

no cedilla

FA Cup

the Cup (the cap C is hallowed by convention); all other cups lc at second mention

fahrenheit

68F etc; use in brackets after celsius

fallout

far, farther, farthest

of distances; otherwise further, furthest

far east

but Middle East

fascism, fascist

fatality

use death

fatwa

an edict, not necessarily a death sentence

Fayed

Mohamed Al Fayed, owner of Harrods; Mr Fayed after first mention

faze intimidate or overwhelm; **phase** a stage

FBI

Federal Bureau of Investigation; no need to spell out

Federal Reserve Board

first reference, the Fed thereafter

fed up with

not fed up of

fellow

lc, eg a fellow of All Souls

fellow

artists, fellow members, etc: do not hyphenate

ferris wheel

fete

no accent

Ffestiniog

but Festiniog railway

fiance (male), **fiancee** (female), no accents; note divorcee is both male and female

Field Marshal

figures

spell out from one to nine; integers from 10 to 999,999; thereafter 1m, 3.2bn etc: "the population had grown from three to 3bn in 2.5m years"

film-maker

Filofax TM

Use personal organiser unless you are sure

finalise, finalised

avoid; use complete, completed

financial services authority

FSA on second mention

financial years

2001-02, etc

fine-tooth comb

Finnegans Wake

firebomb

firefighter

not fireman

firm

strictly a partnership without limited liability, such as solicitors, but may be used to mean company in headlines

first

second, third spell out up to ninth, then 10th, 21st, millionth

firstly

prefer first, second, third

first aid

first-hand

first minister

(Scottish parliament, Welsh assembly, Northern Ireland assembly)

first name

not Christian name

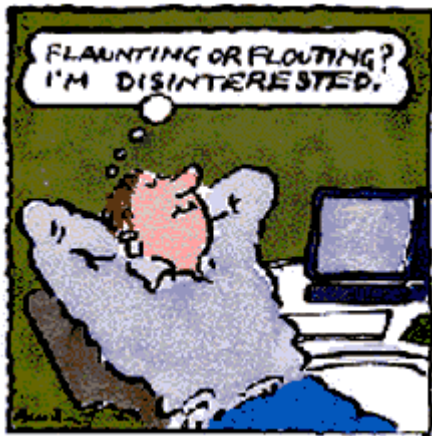
first world war

flak

not flack

flammable

means the same as inflammable; the negative is non-flammable



flaunt/flout

to flaunt is to make a display of something, as in flaunting wealth; to flout is to show contempt for something, as in flouting the seatbelt law

fledgling

not fledgeling

flu

fluky

not flukey

flyer

not flier

fo'c'sle

abbreviation of forecastle

focus, focused, focusing

foetid

not fetid

foetus

not fetus

fogey

not foggy

following

prefer after, eg Mansfield Town went to pieces after their Cup exit

foot and mouth disease

forbear abstain; **forebear** ancestor

forever

continually: he is forever changing his mind

for ever

for always: I will love you for ever

foreign names

The French le or de, the Italian di and the Dutch van are all lc when the name is full out: eg Graeme le Saux, Roberto di Matteo, Pierre van Hooijdonk; but Le Saux, Di Matteo, Van Hooijdonk.

English names with le, de (Nigel de Gruchy, etc): same rules

foreign words and phrases

Italicise, with roman translation in brackets, if it really is a foreign word or phrase and not an anglicised one, in which case it is roman with no accents (exception: *exposé*)

Remember Orwell: do not use a foreign word where a suitable English equivalent exists

<http://www.k-1.com/Orwell/index.htm>

forensic

belonging to the courts; it does not mean scientific

forego go before; **forgo** go without

former Soviet republics

These are: **Armenia**, adjective Armenian; **Azerbaijan**, adj Azerbaijani; **Belarus**, adj Belarussian; **Estonia**, adj **Estonian** (Estonia did not join the Commonwealth of Independent States); **Georgia**, adj Georgian; **Kazakhstan**, adj Kazakh; **Kyrgyzstan**, adj Kyrgyz; **Latvia**, adj Latvian (not in the commonwealth); **Lithuania**, adj Lithuanian (not in the commonwealth); **Moldova**, adj Moldovan; **Russia**, adj Russian; **Tajikistan**, adj Tajik; **Turkmenistan**, adj Turkmen; **Ukraine**, adj Ukrainian (NOT "the Ukraine"); **Uzbekistan**, adj Uzbek

Formica TM

formula

plural **formulas**, but **formulae** in scientific contexts

formula one

motor racing

forthcoming

not upcoming

fortuitous

by chance, accidental; not by good fortune, lucky. A word that is almost always misused

fosbury flop

fractions

two-and-a-half, three-quarters etc

french kiss, french leave, french letter, french polish, french window

fresco

plural **frescoes**

Freud, Lucian

British artist, (born 1922); not Lucien

freudian slip

frontbench, frontline, frontrunner

FTSE-100

fuck

see swearwords

fuel

overused as a verb

fulfil, fulfilling, fulfilment

fulsome

means "cloying, excessive, disgusting by excess"; so "fulsome praise" should not be used in a complimentary sense

fundraiser, fundraising

no hyphen

fungus

plural **fungi**



Gadafy, Muammar

Libyan president; Col Gadafy on second mention

gambit

an opening strategy that involves some sacrifice or concession; so to talk of an opening gambit is tautologous — an opening ploy might be better

gameplan

gameshow

Gandhi

not Ghandi

Garda

Irish police force

garda (plural **gardai**) Irish police officer

garotte

not garrotte or garrote (Collins lists all three)

Garryowen

Irish rugby club

garryowen

up-and-under (rugby union)

gases

plural of gas; not gasses

Gauguin, Paul

(1848-1903) French painter, often misspelt as Gaugin

gay

synonymous with homosexual, and on the whole preferable

Gaza Strip

not strip

gender issues

Our use of language should reflect not only changes in society but the newspaper's values. Phrases such as career girl or career woman, for example, are outdated (more women have careers than men) and patronising (there is no male equivalent): never use them

actor, comedian: covers men and women; not actress, comedienne (but **waiter** and **waitress** are acceptable — at least for the moment)

firefighter, not fireman; **PC**, not WPC (most police forces have abandoned the distinction)

businessmen, housewives, "male nurse", "woman pilot", "woman (lady!) doctor": do not use terms such as these, which reinforce outdated stereotypes

Use **humankind** or **humanity** rather than mankind, a word that, as one of our readers points out, "alienates half the population from their own history"

Never say "his" to cover men and women: use his or her, or a different construction; in sentences such as "a teacher who beats his/her pupils is not fit to do the job", there is usually a way round the problem — in this case, "teachers who beat their pupils..."

General

at first mention; then Gen: General Wesley Clark, Nato's supreme commander; subsequently Gen Clark

general election

General Medical Council

(GMC) doctors' disciplinary body

genetically modified food

GM food on second mention

Geneva convention

geography

distinct areas are capped up: Black Country, East Anglia, Lake District, Midlands, Peak District, West Country; but areas defined by compass points are lc: north, south-east, the south-west, etc

german measles

ghetto

plural **ghettoes**

gift

not a verb (unless, perhaps, directly quoting a football manager or player: "We gifted Spurs their second goal")

girl

female under 18

girlfriend

Glasgow kiss

glasnost

goalline, goalpost

gobsmacked

only when directly quoting someone

God

Goldsmiths College

no apostrophe

golf

the Open

For holes, use numbers: 1st, 2nd, 18th, etc

matchplay: one word, except World Match Play Championship

Good Friday agreement

Northern Ireland

goodness, for goodness sake

goodnight

go-slow noun; **go slow** verb

government

lc in all contexts and all countries

government departments

see departments of state

government purchasing agency

graffiti

are plural; **graffito** is the singular

grandad

but **granddaughter**

grand prix

lc: the British grand prix; plural **grands prix**

grassroots

one word

Great Britain

England, Wales and Scotland – if you want to include Northern Ireland, use Britain or UK

Greater London authority

GLA on second mention

great-grandfather, great-great-grandfather

green belt

lc: designated areas around cities subject to strict planning controls, not open countryside in general

greenfield site

One that has not been built on before; one that has been built on before is a

brownfield site

greenhouse effect

Energy from the earth's surface is trapped in the lower atmosphere by gases that prevent it leaking into space, a natural phenomenon that makes life possible, whose enhancement by natural or manmade means may make life impossible. Not the result of the hole in the ozone layer, whose thinning in the upper atmosphere is due to CFCs; the connection is that CFCs are also greenhouse gases

Greens

uc when referring to so-named political parties, eg the German Greens; but a green activist, the green movement

green paper

grisly gruesome, **grizzly** bear

G7

Group of Seven leading industrial countries, but no need to spell out

G8

the G7, plus Russia

Guardian, the

guerrilla

Guevara, Che

(1928-67) Argentine-born revolutionary

Guildhall

(City of London), not "the Guildhall"

Gulf war

gun battle
not "gunbattle"

Gypsy



habeas corpus

the Hague

Hair, Darrell

Australian cricket umpire

half a dozen; half past; half-price; halfway

Halloween

no apostrophe

halo

plural **haloes**

Hambros Bank

no apostrophe

Hamed, Prince Naseem

boxer; Hamed at second mention

Hamilton Academical

not Academicals; nickname the Accies

handbill, handbook, handout

handicapped

Do not use to refer to disabled people or people with learning difficulties

hanging participles

hanging participles beware of constructions such as "having died, they buried him"; the pitfalls are nicely highlighted in Mark Lawson's novel *Going Out Live*, in which a TV critic writes: "Dreary, repetitive and well past the sell-by date, I switched off the new series of *Fleming Faces*."

Hanukah

harass, harassment

hardline adjective

hardliner noun

but take a hard line

harebrained

not hairbrained

Harland and Wolff

Harrods

hat-trick

headdress

headteacher

one word; but Association of Head Teachers

not headmaster, headmistress

headquarters, HQ

singular and plural

health and safety executive

HSE on second mention

healthcare

Heathrow airport

or simply Heathrow; not London's Heathrow

heaven

hectares

not abbreviated; convert to acres in brackets (multiply by 2.471)

height

in metres with imperial conversion, eg 1.68m (5ft 7in)

hell, hades

hello

not hallo (and certainly not "hullo", unless quoting the Rev ARP Blair)

help

takes "to" with another verb: eg help to decide, not help and decide

herculean

Her Majesty

The Queen is HM, never HRH

hiccup

not hiccough

highfalutin

Highlands and Islands Enterprise

highland fling

high street

lc in retail spending stories: the recession is making an impact in the high street;
capped only in proper name: I went shopping in Walthamstow High Street

highways agency

hijack

of movable objects only, not of schools, embassies, etc

hike

a walk, not a rise in interest rates

hip-hop

hippopotamus

plural hippopotamuses, not hippopotami

hippy

plural hippies

historian, hotel

use a, not an before these

historic, a

not an

hi-tech

HIV positive

no hyphen

Hizbullah

not Hezbollah

hoi polloi

common people, the masses; "the hoi polloi" is nowadays acceptable

Holocaust

Holy Land

home counties

homepage

homeowner, homebuyer

honeybee

Hong Kong names

Like Taiwanese and Korean names, Hong Kong names are written in two parts with a hyphen, eg Tung Chee-hwa

hon members

of parliament

honorarium

plural **honorariums**

honorifics

On news and comment pages: Tony Blair or Sir Bobby Charlton at first mention, thereafter Mr Blair, Sir Bobby, etc

Lord Irvine, the lord chancellor (first time), Lord Irvine (subsequent mentions)

Use surnames only after first mention on all sport stories, in arts-related news stories (actors, authors, musicians, etc), for those convicted of criminal offences, and for those who are dead

in a big feature or news focus piece on a news page, it may be appropriate to drop honorifics

in other sections: surnames are acceptable after first mention, but use your judgment: for parents of a child who has drowned, say, surnames only may sound crude or heartless

Hoover TM



hopefully

like many other adverbs, such as frankly, happily, honestly, and mercifully, hopefully can be used as a "sentence adverb" indicating the writer's view of events - "hopefully, we will reach the summit" - or as a "manner adverb" modifying a verb - "we set off hopefully for the summit". Why this upsets some people is unclear

horrendous

sounds like a rather ugly combination of horrific and tremendous, but is in fact from the Latin for fearful; horrific is generally preferable, however

hospital, a

not an

hospitalised

use taken (never "rushed") to hospital

hospitals

cap the placename, eg Derby district general hospital, Great Ormond Street children's hospital, Royal London hospital; but London Clinic

hotdog

one word

hotel, a

not an

housebreaker, housebuyer, householder, housekeeper, houseboat

one word

housewife

avoid

hovercraft

Hudson Bay, Hudson's Bay Company

humankind, humanity

preferable to mankind

humour, humorist, humorous

hunky dory

hyphens

Our style is to use one word wherever possible, including some instances where a word might be hyphenated by other publications. Hyphens tend to clutter up text (particularly when the system breaks already hyphenated words at the end of lines)

Inventions, ideas and new concepts often begin life as two words, then become hyphenated, before finally becoming accepted as one word. Why wait? "Wire-less" and "down-stairs" were once hyphenated. In pursuit of this it is preferable to go further than Collins does in many cases: eg trenchcoat is two words in Collins but one under our style

Never use hyphens after adverbs, eg genetically modified, politically naive. But do use them to form compound adjectives, eg two-tonne vessel, three-year deal
Do use hyphens where not using one would be ambiguous, eg to distinguish "black-cab drivers come under attack" from "black cab-drivers come under attack"



icon, iconoclast

ie

no full points

illegitimate

do not use to refer to children born outside marriage

immune to

not immune from

impinge, impinging

impostor

not imposter

impractical

possible in theory but not in reality

impracticable

not workable; a plan that has been put into practice and has failed

inchoate

just beginning or undeveloped, not chaotic or disorderly

income support

income tax

independent television commission

ITC on second mention

index

plural **indexes**, except for scientific and economic: **indices**

indispensable

not indispensable

individual savings account (Isa)

no need to spell out

infer or imply?

to infer is to deduce something from evidence; to imply is to hint at something (and wait for someone to infer it)

infinite

without limit; does not mean very large



infinitives, split

"The English-speaking world may be divided into (1) those who neither know nor care what a split infinitive is; (2) those who do not know, but care very much; (3) those who know and condemn; (4) those who know and distinguish. Those who neither know nor care are the vast majority, and are happy folk, to be envied" HW Fowler, Modern English Usage, 1926

It is perfectly acceptable to sensibly split infinitives, though to always do so may sound inelegant — so use common sense. And remember George Bernard Shaw's reaction after an editor tinkered with his infinitives: "I don't care if he is made to go quickly, or to quickly go — but go he must!"

inflammable

means the same as **flammable**; the negative is **non-flammable**

initials

no spaces or points, whether businesses or individuals eg WH Smith, PCR Tufnell

inner city

noun two words; adjectivally hyphen: "Inner-city blues make me wanna holler", as the great Marvin Gaye put it

innocuous

innuendo

plural **innuendoes**

inoculate

not inoculate

inquiry
not enquiry

insignia
are plural

insisted
overused, especially in political stories

install, instalment

instil, instilled, instilling
followed by into

international date line

Interpol

internet, net, website, web, world wide web
all lc

intifada

into
but **on to**

Inuit
not Eskimos; an individual is an Inuk

invalid
means not valid or of no worth; do not use to refer to disabled or ill people

invariably
unchanging, not "hardly ever changing"

Ireland, Irish Republic
not Eire

ironfounder, ironmonger, ironworks

iron curtain

ironically
Avoid when what you mean is strangely, coincidentally or amusingly. There are times when ironically is right but too often it is misused. The idiotic "post-ironic" is banned

ise
not ize at end of word (except **capsize**)

Islamist

An advocate or supporter of Islamic fundamentalism; the likes of Osama bin Laden and his followers should be described as **Islamist terrorists** rather than Islamic terrorists.

ITV Digital

formerly Ondigital

ITV1, ITV2

Ivory Coast

not "the Ivory Coast" or Côte D'Ivoire

ivy league universities

Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth College, Harvard, Princeton, University of Pennsylvania, Yale



jail

not gaol

jejune

naive, unsophisticated (not necessarily anything to do with being young)

jerry-builder

jewellery

jibe

not gibe

jobcentre

jobseeker's allowance

job titles

lc: editor of the Guardian, governor of the Bank of England, prime minister

jodhpurs

Joe Public, John Doe

Johns Hopkins University

not John Hopkins

Johnson Matthey plc

metal specialist, not to be confused with Johnson Matthey Bank

jokey

not joky

judgment

not judgement

junior

abbreviate to **Jr** not Jun or Jnr, eg Frank Sinatra Jr

just deserts

not just desserts, unless you are saying you only want pudding



kapok

Kashmir

adjective **Kashmiri**; but **cashmere** fabric

Kathmandu

capital of Nepal

Kazakhstan

adjective **Kazakh**

K-For

Nato peacekeeping force in Kosovo

khaki

kibbutz

plural **kibbutzim**

kibosh

kick-off

kilogram, kilometre, kilowatt

abbreviate as follows: kg, km, kW

King Edward potatoes

King's Cross

with apostrophe

King's Road (Chelsea)

with apostrophe; not "the King's Road"

Kirkcaldy, not Kirkaldy, a town in **Fife**, not Fyfe

Kitemark TM

knockout

one word

knots

measure of nautical miles per hour; do not say “knots an hour”

Korean names

Like Hong Kong and Taiwanese names, Korean names are written in two parts with a hyphen, eg Kim Jong-il, Kim Dae-jung

Kosovo, Kosovan, Kosovans

adjective not Kosovar

kowtow

krugerrands

kukri

Gurkha knife

Kyrgyztan

Adjective **Kyrgyz**

Kyrie Eleison



laager

South African encampment

lager

beer

Osama bin Laden

Bin Laden on second reference. Note: Bin Laden has been stripped of his Saudi citizenship, so can be described as Saudi-born but not as a Saudi

Lady Blackstone, Jay, Thatcher

not Baroness

Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk

Shostakovich opera, usually misspelt in the Guardian as Mtsenk, with occasional variations such as Mtsenk

laissez-faire

not italicised

Lake District

lamb's wool

lamp-post

lance-corporal

Land

state of Federal German Republic: use state, eg Hesse, the German state

landmine

one word

land registry

Land Rover

no hyphen

lang, kd

(Canadian singer-songwriter and lesbian icon) lc

largesse

note final e

La's

defunct Liverpool rock band; keep apostrophe (abbreviation for Lads)

lasso

plural **lassoes**

last post

law lords

lawsuit

layby

plural **laybys**

lay off

does not mean to sack or make redundant, but to send workers home on part pay because of a temporary lack of demand for their product

lbw

leap year

left

lc for the left; **leftwing** (one word); **leftwinger** (one word); but on the left wing of the party; broad, soft, hard, old, cuddly left, all lc

legal aid board

legal terms

in camera is now known as **in secret**; in chambers is now as **in private**. Since the Children Act 1989, access has been known as **contact** and custody is known as **residence**; do not use the older terms

legionnaire's disease

lepers

Avoid: these days the term is regarded as inappropriate and stigmatising; prefer people affected by, people with, or people suffering from leprosy

lese-majeste

less or fewer?

less means less in quantity, eg less money; fewer means smaller in number, eg fewer coins

letdown, letup

leukaemia

level crossing

liaison

libretto

plural **librettos**

licence noun, **license** verb

lied singular, **lieder** plural

lieutenant, lieutenant-colonel

abbreviate on second mention to Col: Lieutenant-Colonel Christopher Mackay, subsequently Col Mackay

lifelong

one word

light year

a measure of distance, not time

like/as if

never use the former to mean the latter: "it looks as if he's finished" not "it looks like he's finished"

like/such as

like excludes; such as includes: "Cities like Manchester are wonderful" suggests the writer has in mind, say, Sheffield or Birmingham; she actually means "cities such as Manchester"

likely

takes the infinitive (he is likely to win) or a qualifier (he will very likely win), not "he will likely win" — if you want to use that form, say "he will probably win"

lilliputian

liquefy

not liquify

linchpin

not lynchpin

lineup, lineout

Live TV

not L!ve TV

Lloyds Bank

Lloyd's

of London; **names** lc

Lloyd-Webber, Lord

but **Andrew Lloyd Webber**

strange, but true

loan

noun; the verb is **to lend**

loathe detest; **loth** unwilling, not loath

Lockerbie bombing

the two Libyans put on trial were Abdel Baset al-Megrahi and Al-Amin Khalifah Fhimah. Mr Fhimah was acquitted, Megrahi was convicted

lockout

noun, **lock out** verb

Londonderry

no: use **Derry** but note the county is **Co Londonderry**

London Eye

official name of the millennium wheel

Long Island iced tea

longitude

eg 13 deg 17 min E

looking-glass

lord chancellor

currently Lord Irvine of Lairg

lord chief justice

currently Lord Woolf

lord lieutenant

no hyphen; plural **lords lieutenant**

Lords, House of Lords

but the house, not the House

Lord's

cricket ground

lordships, their

lottery, national lottery

lovable

not loveable

loyalists

Northern Ireland

lumpenproletariat

luvviess

a silly cliché; do not use

luxury noun, **luxurious** adjective

lying in state

no hyphens

Lynyrd Skynyrd

US rock band

Lyon

not Lyons



mace, the
(parliament)

Mace
riot control spray

MacDonald, Ramsay
(1866-1937) first Labour prime minister

McDonald's
hamburgers

machine gun noun; **machine-gun** verb; **submachine gun**

machiavellian
after Nicolo Machiavelli (1469-1527)

MacLaine, Shirley
actor

McLaren, Malcolm
Former manager of the Sex Pistols

McLuhan, Marshall
(1911-80) Canadian author who coined the phrase "the medium is the message"

Macmillan, Harold
(1894-1986) Tory prime minister

MacMillan, Kenneth
(1929-92) Choreographer

MacNeice, Louis
(1907-63) Belfast-born poet

madeira
wine and cake

maharajah

mailbag, mailvan, mail train

mainmast, mainsail

magistrates court

no apostrophe

major

overused; avoid except in military context

Major-General

abbreviate on second mention to Gen: Major-General Nikki Marshall, subsequently Gen Marshall

Malaysian names

generally the surname comes first, so Mahathir Mohamad becomes Mr Mahathir on second ref. Chinese Malaysian names, like Singaporean names, are in three parts: eg Ling Liong Sik (Mr Ling)

Mamma Mia!

musical show featuring Abba songs
<http://www.abbasite.com/>

manifesto

plural **manifestos**

mankind

prefer humankind or humanity

manoeuvre, manoeuvring

Mao Zedong

Mao on second mention

Marks & Spencer

at first mention, then M&S

Marquez, Gabriel Garcia

(1928-) Colombian novelist
no accents

marquis

not marquess, except where it is the correct formal title, eg Marquess of Blandford

Marseille

not Marseilles

Marshall Aid

martial law

massive

massively overused; avoid

masthead

masterful imperious

masterly skilful

Mathews, Meg

matinee

no accent

matins

mat

(paint) not mat

mayor of London

or anywhere else: lc

MCC

the MCC, not "MCC"

meat and livestock commission

meat hygiene service

media

plural of medium: the media are sex-obsessed etc; but **medium** spiritualist; plural

mediums

medieval

not mediaeval

meet, met

not meet with, met with someone

mega

horrible; do not use

memento

plural **mementoes**

memorandum

plural **memorandums**

menage

no accent

mental handicap, mentally handicapped

Do not use; say person with learning disabilities

mentally ill people

not "the mentally ill"

Take care using language about mental health issues. In addition to such clearly offensive, and hence unacceptable, expressions as loony, maniac, nutter, psycho and schizo, terms to avoid — because they stereotype and stigmatise — include victim of, suffering from, and afflicted by; "a person with" is clear, accurate and preferable to "a person suffering from"

Messiaen, Olivier

(1908-92) French composer

meteorological office

met office is acceptable

metric system

The Guardian uses the metric system for weights and measures; exceptions are the mile and the pint

Since understanding of the two systems is a matter of generations, conversions (in brackets) to imperial units should be provided wherever this seems useful. Imperial units in quoted matter should be retained, and converted to metric [in square brackets]

It is not necessary to convert moderate distances between metres and yards, which are close enough for rough and ready purposes, or small domestic quantities: two litres of wine, a kilogram of sugar, a couple of pounds of apples, a few inches of string. Small units should be converted when precision is required: 44mm (1.7in) of rain fell in two hours. Tons and tonnes (metric) are also close enough for most purposes to do without conversion

Body weights and heights should always be converted in brackets: metres to feet and inches, kg to stones and pounds. Geographical heights and depths, of people, buildings, monuments etc, should be converted, metres to feet

In square measurement, land is given in sq metres, hectares and sq km; with sq yards, acres or sq miles in brackets. The floor areas of buildings are conventionally expressed in sq metres or sq ft

Metropolitan police

the Met at second mention; commissioner of the Metropolitan police (currently Sir John Stevens), Met commissioner is acceptable

mexican wave

mic

abbreviation for microphone

mid-Atlantic

but transatlantic

midday

middle ages

middle America

Middle East

never Mid, even in headlines

Middlesbrough

not Middlesborough

Midlands

midweek

midwest, the

US

militate/mitigate

to militate against something is to influence it (his record militated against his early release); to mitigate means to lessen an offence (in mitigation, her counsel argued that she came from a broken home)

mileage

millenary, millennium, millennia

Millennium Dome

at first mention; then just the dome

millennium wheel

its official name is London Eye

million

use **m** in headlines;

in copy use **m** for sums of money, quantities or inanimate objects: £10m, 45m tonnes of coal, 30m doses of vaccine;

but **million** for people or animals: 1 million people, 23 million rabbits, etc

mimic, mimicked, mimicking

min

contraction of minute/minutes, no full point

mineworker

minibus, minicab, miniskirt, minivan

minimum

plural **minima**

ministers

minuscule

not miniscule

mistakable, unmistakable

mistakes

Correct versions of some of our most common mistakes include:

linchpin, not lynchpin

no one, not no-one

rebut or deny, not refute

seize, not sieze

siege, not seige

supersede, not supercede

targeted, targeting, not targetted, targetting

under way, not underway

misuse, misused

no hyphen

Mlitt

master of letters, not master of literature

Moby-Dick

Herman Melville's classic is, believe it or not, hyphenated

Mohamed Al Fayed

second reference: Mr Fayed

Mohammed

the prophet

mojahedin

Islamist guerrillas who overthrew the Afghan government in 1992

moneys

not monies; **moneyed**, not monied

Mongol

one of the peoples of Mongolia

Monk, Thelonious

(1920-82) American jazz pianist and composer, generally but erroneously referred to in the Guardian and elsewhere as "Thelonius"

Montenegro

inhabited by **Montenegrins**

Morissette, Alanis

morning-after pill

morris dance

morning after-pill

mortgage borrower, lender

The person borrowing the money is the mortgagor, the lender is both the mortgagee and the mortgage holder. To avoid confusion, call the mortgagor the mortgage borrower and the mortgagee the mortgage lender

mosquito

plural **mosquitoes**

motorcar, motorcycle

motorways

use M1, not M1 motorway

motor vehicle

mottoes

movable

mph

no points

MPs

Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms

Use after first mention on news (but not sport) pages, unless you are writing about an artist, author, journalist, musician, criminal or dead person

Mrs, Miss or Ms?

We use whichever the woman in question prefers: with most women in public life (Ms Booth, Mrs Gorman, Miss Widdecombe) that preference is well known; if you don't know, try to find out; if that proves impossible, use Ms

MSP

member of the Scottish parliament, plural MSPs

Muhammad Ali

multicultural, multimedia, multimillion

but **multi-ethnic**

Murphy's law

museums

initial caps, eg British Museum, Natural History Museum, Museum of the Moving Image (Momi at second mention), Victoria and Albert Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art, etc

Muslim

not Moslem

MW megawatts

mW milliwatts



Nabokov, Vladimir

(1899-1977) Russian-born author of *Lolita*; not Nabakov

nailbomb

naive, naively, naivety

no accent

names

Avoid the "chancellor Gordon Brown" syndrome: do not use constructions, beloved of the tabloids, such as "chancellor Gordon Brown said". The chancellor refers to his job, not his title. Prominent figures can just be named, with their function at second mention: "Gordon Brown said last night" (first mention); "the chancellor said" (subsequent mentions)

Where it is thought necessary to explain who someone is, write "Neil Warnock, the Sheffield United manager, said" or "the Sheffield United manager, Neil Warnock, said". In such cases the commas around the name indicate there is only one person in the position, so write "the Tory leader, William Hague, said" (only one person in the job), but "the former Tory prime minister John Major said" (there have been several)

Nasa

National Aeronautics and Space Administration, but no need to spell out

National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers

(NASUWT) We are stuck with these horrible initials unless the organisation changes its name to something more sensible; call it "the union" after first mention

national audit office

national consumer council

national grid

no definite article

national insurance

nationalists

(Northern Ireland)

national lottery

national savings

native Americans

not American Indians (and especially not Red Indians)

Nato

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, but no need to spell out

naught nothing; **nought** the figure 0

navy

but **Royal Navy**

Nazi

but **nazism**

nearby

one word, whether adjective or adverb: the pub nearby; the nearby pub

nearsighted, nearsightedness

nerve-racking

nevertheless

but **none the less**

new, now

often redundant

Newcastle-under-Lyme

hyphens

Newcastle upon Tyne

no hyphens

New Labour

but **old Labour**

news agency

newsagent, newsprint, newsreel

newspaper titles

the Guardian, the New York Times etc

new year

lc; but **New Year's Day, New Year's Eve**

New York City, New York state

next week

Use "on Tuesday, on Saturday" etc up to the end of the week you are writing in; for the following week, say "next Tuesday" etc; if necessary to clarify, include the date

next of kin

NHS

national health service, but not necessary to spell out; health service is also OK

nightcap, nightdress, nightfall, nightgown, nightshade, nightshirt

all one word

Nobel Prize

Nobel Peace Prize, but Nobel Prize for literature, etc

No 1

in the charts, the world tennis No 1, etc — with thin space before the number (on QPS: apple-shift-alt-space bar)

No 10

(Downing Street) — with thin space before the 10

no

plural **noes**

no man's land

no hyphens

no one

not no-one

noncommissioned officer

nonconformist

none

takes singular verb: none is, not none are

none the less

north

north London, north-east England, the north-west: all lc

northern hemisphere

north pole

North York Moors national park

but **North Yorkshire Moors railway**

nosy

not nose-y

notebook, notepaper

Nottingham Forest, Notts County

numbers

spell out from one to nine; integers from 10 to 999,999; thereafter 1m, 3.2bn etc: "the population had grown from three to 3bn in 2.5m years"



OAPs, old age pensioners

do not use; they are **pensioners** or old **people**

obligato

not obligato

obscenities

see swearwords

obtuse

"mentally slow or emotionally insensitive" (Collins); often confused with abstruse (hard to understand) or obscure

obtuse

"mentally slow or emotionally insensitive" (Collins); often confused with abstruse (hard to understand) or obscure

oceans, seas

lc, eg Atlantic ocean, Red sea

occupied territories

OECD

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development at first mention

offhand, off-licence, offside

office for national statistics

office of fair trading

OFT on second mention

Oh!

not O!

oilfield

oil painting

oil production platform

for production of oil; **oil rig** for exploration and drilling

OK

is OK; "okay" is not

O-levels

hyphen

omelette

on board

for ship or plane, not aboard

ONdigital

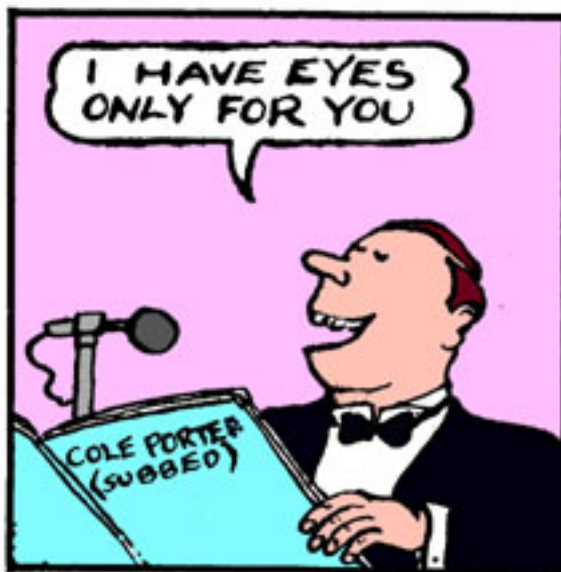
ongoing

prefer continuous or continual

ongoing

prefer continuous or continual

online



only

should stand next to the word(s) qualified: I have only one ambition, not I only have one ambition

on to

but into

Op 58, No 2

music style

opencast

ophthalmic

opossum

opposition, the

or

Do not use "or" when explaining or amplifying — rather than "the NUT, or National Union of Teachers" say "The NUT (National Union of Teachers)" or, even better, "The National Union of Teachers" at first mention and then just "the NUT" or "the union"

ordinance

direction, decree

ordnance survey

maps (originally undertaken by army)

outgrow, outgun, outmanoeuvre, outpatient

one word

outward bound

We have been sued twice by the Outward Bound Trust when we have reported that people have died on "outward bound" courses that were nothing to do with the trust. Use a safer term such as outdoor adventure or adventure training

over

not "overly"

over or more than?

Over and under answer the question "how much?"; more than and fewer than answer the question "how many?": she is over 18, there were more than 20,000 at the game, etc



Pacific ocean

paean

Palestinian Authority

Palme d'Or

Cannes film festival

Palmer-Tomkinson, Tara

papier-mache

hyphen, no accent

Pandora's box

panel, panelled, panelling

paparazzo

plural **paparazzi**

papier-mache

hyphen, no accent

paralleled

Parker-Bowles, Camilla

Parker Bowles, Camilla

no hyphen

Parkinson's disease

Parkinson's law

parliament, parliamentary

Parthenon marbles

official name, recognised by both Britain and Greece, for the Elgin marbles

party

lc in name of organisation, eg Labour party

passerby

plural **passersby**

passport agency

password

pasteurise

patent office

patients

are discharged from hospital, not released

payback, payday, payout

P Diddy

the artist formerly known as Puff Daddy, aka Sean "Puffy" Combs

peacetime

Peak District

Pearl Harbor

use American English spellings for US placenames

pedaller cyclist

peddler drug dealer

pedlar hawker

peewit

peking duck

pendant noun

pendent adjective

peninsula, noun

peninsular adjective

penknife

one word

pensioners

do not call them "old age pensioners" or "OAPs"

peony

per

avoid. Use English! "She earns £30,000 a year" is better than "per year". If you must use it, the Latin preposition is followed by another Latin word, eg per capita, not per head. Exception: miles per hour, abbreviation mph

per cent

% in headlines and copy

percentage rises

an increase from 3% to 5% is a 2 percentage point increase or a 2-point increase, not a 2% increase

Performing Right Society

not rights

permissible

personal equity plan

Pep

persons

No! They are people (can you imagine Barbra Streisand singing "Persons who need persons"?)

phenomenon

plural **phenomena**

Philippines

inhabited by **Filipinos** (male) and **Filipinas** (female); adjective **Filipino** for both sexes, but **Philippine** for, say, a Philippine island or the Philippine president

philistine

phone

no apostrophe

phone numbers

like this: 020-7278 2332, 01892 456789

phosphorous adjective, **phosphorus** noun

photocopy

not Photostat or Xerox (trade names)

picketed, picketing

picket

noun (one who pickets); not picketer

piecework

pigeonhole
verb or noun

pigsty
plural **pigsties**

pill, the

pillbox

Pimm's

Pin number
not PIN number

pipebomb

pipeline

Pissarro, Camille
(1830-1903) French impressionist painter; his son **Lucien** (1863-1944) was also an artist

placename

planning inspectorate



plaster of paris

plateau
plural **plateaux**

plateglass

playbill, playgoer, playwright

playing the race card

this phrase is rapidly becoming overused

play-off

plc

not PLC

P&O

pocketbook, pocketknife

poet laureate

lc, currently Andrew Motion

pointe

(ballet): on pointe, not on point or en pointe

Pokemon

no accents

police forces

Metropolitan police (the Met after first mention), West Midlands police, New York police department (NYPD at second mention), etc

police ranks

PC on all references to police constable (never WPC), other ranks full out and initial cap at first reference; thereafter abbreviation plus surname: Sgt Campbell, DC, Insp, Ch Insp, Det Supt, Ch Supt, etc

politburo

political correctness

a term to be avoided on the grounds that it is, in Polly Toynbee's words, "an empty rightwing smear designed only to elevate its user"

political parties

Abbreviate in parliamentary reporting as C, Lab, Lib Dem, SNP, Plaid Cymru, UUP (Ulster Unionist party), DUP (Democratic Unionist party); PUP (Progressive Unionist party); SDLP (Social Democratic and Labour party); SF (Sinn Fein); UDP (Ulster Democratic party)

Pope, the

poppadoms

portland cement, portland stone

port of London authority

PLA on second mention

Post-it TM

postcode

postgraduate

postmodern, postmodernist

postmortem

means after death; use **postmortem examination** or **autopsy**

Post Office

cap up the organisation, but buy stamps in a **post office** or **sub-post office**

postwar, prewar

PoW

abbreviation for prisoner of war

practice noun, **practise** verb

practising homosexual

do not use this grotesque expression, which appeared in a court report in the Guardian as recently as 2001

precis

singular and plural

pre-eminent

prefabricated

premier

Use only when constitutionally correct (eg leaders of Australian states or Canadian provinces), therefore not for Britain — do not use in headlines for British prime minister.

Exception: the Chinese traditionally give their PMs the title of Premier, eg Premier Zhu Rongji

premiere

no accent

Premiership

Use for English football (FA Premier League is the governing body, not the competition); in Scotland, however, it is the Premier League

premises

of buildings and logic

presently

means soon, not at present

president

lc except in title: President Clinton, but Bill Clinton, the US president

press, the

press complaints commission

PCC on second mention

Press Gazette

formerly UK Press Gazette

pressurised

use pressured, put pressure on or pressed to mean apply pressure, ie not "they pressurised the Wolves defence"

prestigious

having prestige: nothing wrong with this, despite what wise old subeditors used to tell us

prevaricate

"to speak or act falsely with intent to deceive" (Collins); often confused with procrastinate, to put something off

prevaricate

"to speak or act falsely with intent to deceive" (Collins); often confused with procrastinate, to put something off

preventive

not preventative

PricewaterhouseCoopers

one word

prima donna

plural **prima donnas**

prima facie

not italicised

Primate

another word for archbishop

Primate of All England: Archbishop of Canterbury

Primate of England: Archbishop of York

primate

higher mammals of the order Primates, essentially apes and humans

prime minister

Prince of Wales

first mention; thereafter Prince Charles or the prince

principal

first in importance; **principle** standard of conduct

principality

lc (Wales, Monaco)

prison officer

not warder

privy council

but **privy counsellor**

probe

a dental implement, not an inquiry or investigation

procrastinate

to delay or defer; often confused with prevaricate

procurator fiscal

prodigal

wasteful or extravagant, not a returned wanderer; the confusion arises from the biblical parable of the prodigal son

profile

a noun, not a verb

program (computer); otherwise **programme**

prohibition

lc for US prohibition

propeller

prophecy noun, **prophecy** verb

pros and cons

protege

masculine, **protegee** feminine; no accents

protester

not protestor

proviso
plural **provisos**

Ps and Qs

publication note
at end of story: round blob (QPS: alt-8), then title; author; publisher or source; price, all in roman

publicly
not publically

public record office

pundit
self-appointed expert

purchase
as a noun, perhaps, but use buy as a verb

putt golf; **put** athletics

pygmy
plural **pygmies**: lc except for members of Equatorial African ethnic group

pyjamas

pyrrhic



al-Qaida

Osama bin Laden's organisation; it means "the Base"

Qantas

QC

use without comma, eg Cherie Booth QC

quarterdeck, quartermaster

Queen, the

if it is necessary to say so, she is HM, never HRH

Queen Mother, the

Queen's College Oxford

Queens' College Cambridge

queueing

not queuing

quicklime, quicksand, quicksilver

one word

quixotic

quiz

a suspect is questioned, never quizzed (however tempting for headline purposes)

quizshow

Quorn TM

vegetable substitute for meat

quotation marks

Use double quotes at start and end of 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 point comes outside.

"Mary said, 'Your style guide needs updating,' and I said, 'I agree.' "

but: "Mary said updating the guide was 'a difficult and time consuming task'."

Headlines and standfirsts (sparingly), captions and pullout quotes all take single quotes



racecourse, racehorse

racial terminology

Do not use "ethnic" to mean black or Asian people. In a UK sense, they are an ethnic minority; in a world sense, of course, white people are an ethnic minority

Just as in the Balkans or anywhere else, internal African peoples should be called ethnic groups rather than "tribes", a term that carries the baggage of years of negative racial stereotyping

Avoid the word "immigrant", which is very offensive to many black and Asian people, not only because it is often incorrectly used to describe people who were born here, but also because it has been used negatively for so many years that it carries imagery of "flooding", "swamping", "bogus", "scroungers" etc

The words black and Asian should not be used as nouns, but adjectives: black people rather than "blacks", an Asian woman rather than "an Asian", etc

rack and ruin

racked

with pain, not wracked

rackets

not racquets, except in club titles

Rada

Royal Academy of Dramatic Art; normally no need to spell out

radio authority

Radio 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Live

radiographer

takes x-rays

radiologist

reads x-rays

radius

plural **radii**

raft

something you float on; do not say "a raft of measures". which has very rapidly become a cliché (particularly in political reporting)

railway, railway station

not the American English versions railroad, train station

raincoat, rainfall, rainproof

Range Rover

no hyphen

Rangers

not Glasgow Rangers

rarefy, rarefied

rateable

Rawlplug TM

Ray-Ban TM

realpolitik

lc, no italics

Rear Admiral Horatio Hornblower

at first mention; thereafter Admiral Hornblower

re/re-

Use re- (with hyphen) when followed by the vowels e or u (not pronounced as "yu"): eg re-entry, re-examine, re-urge

Use re (no hyphen) when followed by the vowels a, i, o or u (pronounced as "yu"), or any consonant: eg rearm, rearrange, reassemble, reiterate, reorder, reuse, rebuild, reconsider

Exceptions: re-read; or where confusion with another word would arise: re-cover/recover, re-form/reform, re-creation/recreation, re-sign/resign

reafforestation

not reforestation

recent

avoid; if the date is relevant, use it

Red Cross

referendum, referendums

re-form

to form again

reform

to change for the better; we should not take initiators' use of the word at its face value, particularly in cases where the paper believes no improvement is likely

refute

Use this much-abused word only when an argument is disproved; otherwise, contest, deny, rebut

regalia

plural, of royalty; "royal regalia" is tautologous

regime

no accent

register office

not registry office

registrar general

regrettable

reinstate

reopen

repellent adjective

repellant noun

you fight repellent insects with an insect repellant

repertoire

an individual's range of skills or roles

repertory

a selection of works that a theatre or ballet company might perform

replaceable

report

lc in titles, eg Lawrence report

reported speech

goes in the past tense: "she said that it was" not "she said that it is"

republicans

lc

restaurateur
not restauranteur

retail price index
(RPI); normally no need to spell it out

Reuters

the Rev
not Reverend, the Reverend or Rev (first mention); then courtesy title: eg the Rev Joan Smith, subsequently Ms Smith



Revelation
last book in the New Testament: not Revelations, a very common error; its full name is The Revelation of St John the Divine

veille

rickety

ricochet, ricocheted, ricocheting

right
the right; rightwinger, noun; rightwing, adjective (but on the right wing of the party)

rivers
lc, eg river Thames, Amazon river

riveted, riveting

roadside

Rock

cap R if referring to Gibraltar

rock'n'roll

one word

role

no accent

rollerblade TM

use inline skates or rollerskates

rollercoaster

one word

Rolls-Royce

hyphen

Rorschach test

psychological test based on the interpretation of inkblots

roughshod

Rovers Return, the

Coronation Street (no apostrophe)

Royal Academy of Arts

usually known as the Royal Academy

Royal Ballet

Royal Botanic Garden

(Edinburgh)

Royal Botanic Gardens

(London) also known as **Kew Gardens** or simply **Kew**

Royal College of Surgeons

the college or the royal college is preferable to the RCS on later mention

royal commission

royal family

Royal London hospital

Royal Mail

Royal Opera, Royal Opera House

royal parks

RSPB, RSPCA

do not normally need to be spelt out

rugby league, rugby union

russian roulette



Saatchi

Sadler's Wells

Sainsbury's

for the stores; the company's name is J Sainsbury plc

Saint

in running text should be spelt in full: Saint John, Saint Paul. For names of towns, churches, etc, abbreviate St (no point) eg St Mirren, St Stephen's Church. In French placenames a hyphen is needed, eg St-Nazaire, Ste-Suzanne, Stes-Maries-de-la-Mer

St Andrews University

no apostrophe

St James' Park, home of Newcastle United

St James Park, home of Exeter City

St John Ambulance

not St John's and no need for Brigade

St Paul's Cathedral

St Thomas' hospital, London

not St Thomas's

saleable

Salonika

not Thessaloniki

Salvation Army

never the Sally Army

salvo

plural **salvoes**

Sana'a

capital of Yemen

sanatorium

not sanitorium, plural **sanatoriums**

San Siro stadium

Milan

Sats

(UK) standard assessment tasks

SATs

(US) scholastic aptitude tests

Scandinavia

Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Iceland; does not include Finland

scare

unfounded, not genuine, fear

scherzo

plural **scherzos**

schizophrenia, schizophrenic

Use only in a medical context, never to mean "in two minds", which is wrong, as well as offensive to people diagnosed with this illness

schoolboy, girl, children, master, mistress, room, teacher

all one word

schools

Alfred Salter primary school, Rotherhithe; King's school, Macclesfield, etc

Schwarzenegger, Arnold

scientific terms

no need to italicise — E coli (*Escherichia coli*) etc. The first name (the genus) is capped, the second (the species) is lc – eg *Quercus robur* (oak tree)

Scotch Tape TM

scotch whisky, mist

Scotland Office

not Scottish Office

Scott, Sir George Gilbert

(1811-78) architect who designed the Albert Memorial and Midland Grand Hotel at St Pancras station

www.britannica.com/seo/s/sir-george-gilbert-scott

Scott, Sir Giles Gilbert

(1880-1960) grandson of the above, responsible for red telephone boxes, Bankside power station (now Tate Modern), Waterloo bridge and the Anglican cathedral in Liverpool

www.britannica.com/s/sir-giles-gilbert-scott

Scottish Enterprise

Scottish parliament

members are MSPs

scottish terrier

not scotch; once known as Aberdeen terrier

scouse, scouser

seas, oceans

lc, Red sea, Caspian sea, Pacific ocean

seacoast, seaplane, seaport, seashore, seaside, seaweed

one word

sea change, sea level, sea serpent, sea sickness

two words

seasons

spring, summer, autumn, winter all lc

section 28

seize

not sieze

Sellotape TM

senior

abbreviate to **Sr** not Sen or Snr, eg Frank Sinatra Sr

sentence structure

Beware of incongruous ordering of phrases: "Joe Bloggs was arrested for riding his bicycle naked by a traffic warden"

Sergeant-Major

Sergeant-Major Trevor Prescott, subsequently Sgt-Maj (not RSM or CSM) Prescott

serious fraud office

SFO on second mention

serjeant at arms

services, the
armed forces

shadow strategic rail authority
SSRA on second mention

shakeout, shakeup

Shankill Road
Belfast

shareholder

sheepdog

sheikh

ships
not feminine: it ran aground, not she ran aground

shipbuilding, shipbuilder, shipmate, shipowner, shipyard

shoo-in
not shoe-in

shopkeeper

Shoreham-by-Sea
not on Sea

Siamese twins
do not use: they are conjoined twins

siege
not seige

Siena
not Sienna

Singaporean names
in three parts: eg Lee Kuan Yew

Singin' in the Rain
not Singing

single quotes
in headlines (but sparingly), standfirsts and captions

siphon

not syphon

ski, skis, skier, skied, skiing

skipper

usually only of a trawler

smallholding

Smith & Wesson

Smithsonian Institution

not Institute

snowplough

socialism, socialist

lc unless name of a party, eg Socialist Workers party

social security agency

social security benefits

all lc: income support, working families tax credit, etc

sod's law

soiree

sources

The editor has issued guidelines on the identification of sources. This followed his article, No more ghostly voices, and a subsequent column by the readers' editor

guidelines: www.guardian.co.uk/styleguide/article/0,5817,354123,00.html

no more ghostly voices: www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,343575,00.html

Readers' editor: www.guardian.co.uk/Columnists/Column/0,5673,345935,00.html

south

south London, south-west England, the south-east: all lc

South Bank

southern hemisphere

south pole

(former) Soviet republics

These are: **Armenia**, adjective Armenian; **Azerbaijan**, adj Azerbaijani; **Belarus**, adj Belarussian; **Estonia**, adj Estonian (Estonia did not join the Commonwealth of Independent States); **Georgia**, adj Georgian; **Kazakhstan**, adj Kazakh; **Kyrgyzstan**, adj Kyrgyz; **Latvia**, adj Latvian (not in the commonwealth); **Lithuania**, adj Lithuanian (not in the commonwealth); **Moldova**, adj Moldovan; **Russia**, adj Russian;

Tajikistan, adj Tajik; **Turkmenistan**, adj Turkmen; **Ukraine**, adj Ukrainian (NOT "the Ukraine"); **Uzbekistan**, adj Uzbek

span of years

1995-99; but between 1995 and 1999, not between 1995-99

spastic

Do not use. The former Spastics Society, a charity that works with people with cerebral palsy, has been renamed Scope

Speaker, the (Commons), but **deputy speaker** (of whom there are several)

special

usually redundant

Spice Girls

Baby Spice, Emma Bunton; Scary Spice, Mel B, aka Melanie Brown (has a daughter, Phoenix Chi, with her estranged husband Jimmy Gulzar, was briefly Mel G but is now very definitely Mel B again.); Sporty Spice, Mel C, aka Melanie Chisholm; Posh Spice, Victoria Beckham (has a son, Brooklyn, with her husband David Beckham); former member: Geri Halliwell (Ginger Spice)

spicy

not spicey

split infinitives

"The English-speaking world may be divided into (1) those who neither know nor care what a split infinitive is; (2) those who do not know, but care very much; (3) those who know and condemn; (4) those who know and distinguish. Those who neither know nor care are the vast majority, and are happy folk, to be envied" HW Fowler, *Modern English Usage*, 1926

It is perfectly acceptable to sensibly split infinitives, though to always do so may sound inelegant — so use common sense. And remember George Bernard Shaw's reaction after an editor tinkered with his infinitives: "I don't care if he is made to go quickly, or to quickly go — but go he must!"

spokesman, spokeswoman, spokesperson

If possible, attribute quote to the organisation eg "The AA said..."

sponsorship

try to avoid: we are under no obligation to carry sponsors' names. So London Marathon, not Flora London Marathon; the Oval, not the Fosters Oval, etc. When a competition is named after a sponsor, it is unavoidable: Nationwide League, AXA League (cricket)

spoonful

plural **spoonfuls** not spoonsful

square brackets

use for interpolated words in quotations, eg Mr Portillo said: "William [Hague] has my full support"

stadium

plural **stadiums**

stalactites

hang from the roof; **stalagmites** rise from the floor

stalemate

Do not use to mean deadlock or impasse: a stalemate is the end of the game, and cannot be broken or resolved

stamp

not stomp

state of the union message

US

stationary not moving; **stationery** writing materials

steadfast

steamboat, steamship; steam engine; steamhammer

sten gun

stepfather, stepmother

sterling

(the pound)

stiletto

plural **stilettos**

stilton

cheese

stimulus

plural **stimuli**

stock in trade

stock market, stock exchange

storey

plural **storeys** (buildings)

straightforward

straitjacket

strait-laced

strait of Dover, strait of Hormuz

strategic rail authority

SRA on second mention

stratum

plural **strata**

Street-Porter, Janet

streetwise

stretchered off

do not use; say carried off on a stretcher

stumbling block

subcommittee, subcontinent, subeditor, sublet, sublieutenant, subplot,

subsection

one word

submachine gun

submarines

are boats, not ships

subpoena, subpoenaed

suchlike

summer

supersede

not supercede

Super Bowl

supermodels

every new face who makes a name for herself these days is labelled a supermodel;
model is sufficient

supply, supply days

(parliament)

surge

prefer rise or increase, if that is the meaning

surrealism

swap

not swop

swath, swaths

broad strip, eg cut a wide swath

swathe, swathes baby clothes, bandage, wrappings



swearwords

We are more liberal than any other newspaper, using words such as cunt and fuck that most of our competitors would not use, even in direct quotes

The editor's guidelines are straightforward:

First, remember the reader, and respect demands that we should not casually use words that are likely to offend

Second, use such words only when absolutely necessary to the facts of a piece, or to portray a character in an article; there is almost never a case in which we need to use a swearword outside direct quotes

Third, the stronger the swearword, the harder we ought to think about using it

Finally, never use asterisks, which are just a copout

swingeing

synopsis

plural **synopses**



tableau
plural **tableaux**

table d'hote

tactics
singular and plural

Taiwanese names
like Hong Kong and Korean names, these are in two parts with a hyphen, eg Lee Teng-hui

Tajikistan
adjective **Tajik**

takeoff noun
take off verb

takeover
one word

takeover panel

talkshow

talk to
not talk with

tam o'shanter
woollen cap

Tampax TM
Use tampon, sanitary towel

Tannoy TM

targeted, targeting

tariff

taskforce

Tate Gallery

The original London gallery in Millbank, now known as **Tate Britain**, houses British art from the 16th century; **Tate Modern**, at Southwark, south London, **Tate Liverpool** and **Tate St Ives** all house modern art

tax avoidance is legal; **tax evasion** is illegal

taxi, taxiing

of aircraft

Tbilisi

capital of Georgia

teacup, teapot, teaspoon, teabag

team-mate

teams

plural, on news as well as sport pages — Sheffield Wednesday are deeply in debt, England were forced to follow on, etc

teargas

Teasmade TM

use teamaker

Technicolor TM

Teesside

Teflon TM

use non-stick pan

telephone numbers

like this: 020-7278 2332, 01892 456789

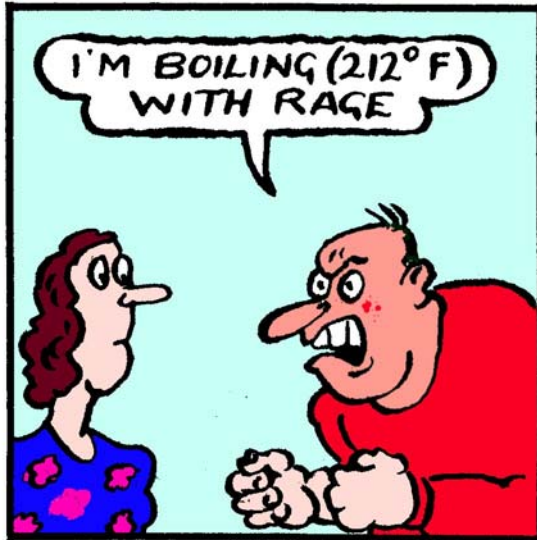
Teletubbies

Tinky Winky (purple), Laa-Laa (yellow), Dipsy (green), Po (red)

television shows

chatshow, gameshow, quizshow, talkshow

Temazepam



temperatures

thus: 30C (85F) — ie celsius, with fahrenheit in brackets

tendinitis

not tendonitis

terrace houses

not terraced

Tessa

tax-exempt special savings account, now replaced by Isas

Tesco

not Tesco's

Test

(cricket) the third Test etc

textbook

that

do not use automatically after the word "said", but take care to use it in clauses where without it the meaning would be ambiguous

that or which?

that defines, which informs: this is the house that Jack built, but this house, which Jack built, is now falling down

(Thanks to Guy Keleny for this superb definition)

the

Leaving "the" out often reads like jargon: say the conference agreed to do something, not "conference agreed"; the government has to do, not "government has to"; the Super League (rugby), not "Super League"

Avoid the "chancellor Gordon Brown" syndrome: do not use constructions, beloved of the tabloids, such as "chancellor Gordon Brown said". Prominent figures can just be named, with their function at second mention: "Gordon Brown said last night" (first mention); "the chancellor said" (subsequent mentions). Where it is thought necessary to explain who someone is, use "Neil Warnock, the Sheffield United manager, said" or "the Sheffield United manager, Neil Warnock, said" etc

lc for newspapers (the Guardian), magazines (the New Statesman), pubs (the Coach and Horses), rock bands (the Beatles, the Verve, the The, but Los Lobos), sports grounds (the Oval)

theatre-goer

theirs

no apostrophe

thermonuclear

Thermos TM

use vacuum flask

thinktank

one word

Third Reich

third way

third world

developing countries is preferable

thoroughbred, thoroughgoing

threefold, threescore

three-line whip

thunderstorm

Tiananmen Square

in Beijing

tidal wave

is just what it says it is; a **tsunami** is a massive wave caused by an underwater earthquake

tidewater

tikka masala

times

1am, 6.30pm etc; 10 o'clock last night but 10pm yesterday; half past two, a quarter to three, etc; for 24-hour clock, 00.47, 23.59

tinfoil

titbit

not tidbit

titles

do not italicise or put in quotes titles of books, films, TV programmes, paintings, songs, albums or anything else. Words in titles take initial caps except for a, and, for, from, in, of, the, to: Shakespeare in Love, A Tale of Two Cities, War and Peace, Happy End of the World, The God of Small Things, etc

T-junction

to-do

(commotion)

Tokyo

Tolkien, JRR

(1892-1973) British author and philologist, notable for writing The Lord of the Rings and not spelling his name "Tolkein"

tomato

plural **tomatoes**

tonne

not ton: the metric tonne is 1,000 kilograms (2,204.62lb), the British ton is 2,240lb, and the US ton is 2,000lb; usually there is no need to convert

top hat

tornado

plural **tornadoes** (storm)

Tornado

plural **Tornados** (aircraft)

tortuous a tortuous road — one that winds or twists

torturous a torturous experience — one that involves pain or suffering

Tory party

totalisator, the tote

totalled

touchdown

town councillor, town hall

Townshend, Pete

Member of the Who who didn't die before he got old

trademarks (TM)

Take great care: use a generic alternative unless there is a very good reason not to: eg ballpoint pen, not biro (unless it really is a Biro, in which case it takes a cap B); say photocopy rather than Xerox, etc

trades council, trade unionist, trade union, Trades Union Congress (TUC)

tragic

use with care, especially avoiding cliches such as "tragic accident"

transatlantic

Trans-siberian railway

Treasury, the

Trekkers

how to refer to Star Trek fans unless you want to make fun of them, in which case they are **Trekkies**

trenchcoat

tricolour

French and Irish

trip-hop

Trips

trade-related intellectual property rights

trooping the colour

tropic of cancer, tropic of capricorn

the Troubles

(Northern Ireland)

try

to, never try and: eg I will try to do something about this misuse of language

tsar

not czar

tsetse fly

T-shirt

not tee-shirt

tsunami

wave caused by an undersea earthquake — not a tidal wave

tube, the

(London Underground) lc; individual lines thus: Jubilee line, Northern line, etc; the underground

TUC

Trades Union Congress, so TUC Congress is tautological; the reference should be to the TUC conference

turkish delight

Turkmenistan

adjective **Turkmen**

turnover noun, **turn over** verb

20th century

twofold

tying



Ukraine

no "the"; adjective Ukrainian

Ulster

acceptable in headlines to mean Northern Ireland

Umist

University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology

UN

no need to spell out United Nations, even at first mention

Unesco

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation; no need to spell out

UN general assembly

UNHCR

United Nations high commissioner for refugees; not commission

Unicef

United Nations Children's Fund; no need to spell it out

UN secretary general

currently Kofi Annan

UN security council

unbiased

unchristian

uncooperative

underground

but London Underground for name of company

under way

not underway

uninterested

means not taking an interest; not synonymous with disinterested, which means unbiased, objective

union flag

not union jack

unionists

(Northern Ireland) lc except in the name of a party, eg Ulster Unionist party

United Kingdom

England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. UK is generally preferable in copy as well as headlines

universities

cap up, eg Sheffield University, Free University of Berlin

universities

cap up, eg Sheffield University, Johns Hopkins University, Free University of Berlin

University College London

no comma; UCL after first mention

Unknown Soldier

tomb of the

unmistakable

upmarket

up to date

but in an up-to-date fashion

US

for United States, not USA: no need to spell out, even at first mention; America is also acceptable

utopian

u-turn

Uzbekistan

adjective **Uzbek**



v

(roman) for versus, not vs: Manchester United v Arsenal etc

Vallance, Sir Iain

chairman of BT

valuation office

ValuJet

Atlanta-based budget airline now called **AirTran** (after 1996 crash)

Vaseline TM

VAT

value added tax; no need to spell it out

vehicle inspectorate

Velcro TM

veld

not veldt

venetian blind

veranda

not verandah

verdicts

recorded by coroners; returned by inquest juries

vermilion

veterinary

vice-chairman, vice-president

vie, vying

virtuoso

plural **virtuosos**

vortex
plural **vortexes**



wagon

wah-wah pedal

Wales Office
not Welsh Office

walking-stick

Wall's
ice-cream, sausages

Wal-Mart

Wap (wireless application protocol) phones
Include explanation in brackets at first mention until they become more widespread

war
first world war, second world war; Crimean/Boer/Vietnam/Gulf war; hundred years war
Do not say "before/after the war" (which war?)

Was (Not Was)
defunct US rock band

The Waste Land
poem by TS Eliot (not The Wasteland)

watercolour, course, mark, proof, works
one word

web, website

Weight Watchers TM

welch
to fail to honour an obligation, NOT welsh

Welch Regiment, Royal Welch Fusiliers

Welsh assembly
members are AMs

welfare state

wellnigh

welsh rarebit

west, western, the west, western Europe

Westminster Abbey

Weyerhaeuser

US pulp and paper company

wheelchair

Say (if relevant) that someone uses a wheelchair, not that they are "in a wheelchair" or "wheelchair-bound" — stigmatising and offensive, as well as inaccurate

whereabouts

singular: her whereabouts is not known

Which?

magazine

whisky

plural **whiskies**; but Irish and US **whiskey**

white

lc in racial context

white paper

Whitsuntide

not Whitsun

who or whom?

From a Guardian report: "The US kept up the pressure by naming nine Yugoslav military leaders operating in Kosovo whom it said were committing war crimes"

The "whom" should have been "who". That one was caught by the sub, but it is a common mistake

If in doubt, ask yourself how the clause beginning who/whom would read in the form of a sentence giving he, him, she, her, they or them instead: if the who/whom person turns into he/she/they, then "who" is right; if it becomes him/her/them, then it should be "whom"

In the story above, "they" were allegedly committing the crimes, so it should be "who"

In this example: "Blair was attacked for criticising Hague, whom he despised" — "whom" is correct because he despised "him"

But in "Blair criticised Hague, who he thought was wrong" — "who" is correct, because it is "he" not "him" who is considered wrong

wicketkeeper

wide awake

Wimpey

houses; **Wimpy** burgers

Windermere

not Lake Windermere; note that Windermere is also the name of the town

wines

lc: barolo, beaujolais, bordeaux, burgundy, champagne, côtes du rhone, dao, saucerre, etc

Wing Commander

at first mention; thereafter Wing Co plus surname

winter

wipeout noun, **wipe out** verb

withhold

wits' end

woeful

working families tax credit

World Bank

world championship

World Cup

(football, cricket, rugby)

World Health Organisation

WHO (caps) on second mention

world heritage site

World Series

(baseball) got its name from the New York World, the newspaper that originally

sponsored it; so to use it as an example of American arrogance is as inaccurate as it is tedious

worldwide

but **world wide web**

wrack

seaweed; racked with guilt, not wracked; rack and ruin

WWF

the organisation that used to be known as the World Wide Fund for Nature (or in the US World Wildlife Fund) now wishes to be known simply by its initials; however, at first mention say WWF (formerly the World Wide Fund for Nature)

WWF

World Wrestling Federation, not to be confused with the above



xenophobe, xenophobia, xenophobic

Xerox TM use photocopy

Xhosa

South African ethnic group and language

x-ray



Yahoo!
(the company)

year
say 2000, not "the year 2000"

yearbook

Yellow Pages TM

yo-yo

Yo-Yo Ma
cellist

Yorkshire
North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire but **east Yorkshire**

yorkshire pudding, yorkshire terrier

Young, Lady
there are two, both baronesses - be careful not to confuse them
Lady Young (Tory): former leader of the Lords, staunch defender of section 28
Lady Young of Old Scone (Labour): chairman of English Nature; always use her full title on first mention

yours
no apostrophe



ze

endings: use *se*, eg *emphasise*, *realise*, but *capsize*

zeitgeist

Zephaniah, Benjamin

zero

plural **zeros**

Zeta-Jones, Catherine

Zhu Rongji

Chinese prime minister

Premier Zhu Rongji (the Chinese traditionally give their PMs the title of Premier); Mr Zhu at second mention

zigzag

no hyphen

zloty

Polish unit of currency

