

Please write in British English only. The following style guide has been adapted from the Oxford University Press (OUP) [house style webpage](#).

Serial or Oxford comma

Description	Examples
The serial or Oxford comma must be used.	red, white, and blue
In a list of three or more items, insert a comma before the 'and' or 'or'.	feminine, masculine, or neuter
Note that no comma is used when there are only two items in a list.	convex and concave

Ellipsis

An ellipsis (three points '...') is used to indicate content omitted from a quotation.

Description	Examples
You should use three full points, spaced equally from each other and from the words either side.	Political language . . . is designed to make lies sound truthful.
Where the preceding sentence ends immediately before the ellipsis, retain the punctuation.	A nightingale began to sing. . . . It was a strange sound to hear. Where was Godfrey? . . . They said he was murdered yesterday.

If the sentence continues after the quote, use the ellipsis. Exclude any original punctuation.

E.g. 'The unexamined life is not worth living, but the examined one isn't either.' would be 'The unexamined life is not worth living . . .'

If you are quoting after the beginning of the sentence, use ellipsis or edit as necessary using square brackets (which should also be used for any other of your interventions in the quoted text).

E.g. '. . . the examined one isn't either.' Or: '[T]he examined one isn't either.'

-ize, -yse, and -yze endings

Description	Examples
OUP house style for British style also takes -ize, -ization, -izing endings; however, a 'z' may not be substituted for 's' in words ending -yse.	materialize analyse paralyse

Hyphens

Description	Examples
Used to join words together to form compound terms and expressions.	short-lived
There are often no hard-and-fast rules, so consult your dictionary to determine whether two elements should be hyphenated, run together, or set as single words, and apply one form consistently.	airstream, air stream, or air-stream
There are particular rules governing placement of hyphens in compound terms and expressions	a well-known story (meaning the story is well known)

depending on how the terms and expressions are made up.

Words with prefixes are usually written without hyphens unless there is a collision of vowels or consonants.

predetermine
multinational
but
anti-intellectual
pre-eminent

Note that 'cooperate' and 'coordinate' should be spelt without a hyphen.

En rules –

Description	Examples
Longer than a hyphen.*	
Used to close up elements that form a range.	pp. 23–36 1939–45
Used to express a connection or relation between words; roughly meaning 'to' or 'and'.	Monday–Saturday Dover–Calais
Sometimes used instead of a solidus (/).	editor–author relationship on–off relationship

Em rules —

Description	Examples
Twice the length of an en rule.*	
Can be used as a parenthetical dash or to set off additional information/clauses. In the former case, no space is required either side of the em rule.	There is nothing—absolutely nothing—half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats. There is nothing worth drinking except wine—unless you prefer beer, of course.

*Tip: To insert a rule or dash in MS Word, go to Insert > Symbol > More Symbols > Special Characters, then select and insert.

Quotations

Quotation marks are not used around displayed (or block) quotations (as opposed to those run on in the main text). Generally, quotations of less than fifty words are run on; those more than fifty words, displayed.

Description	Examples
Use single quotation marks first.	Weber saw it as embodying ‘the typical power of the “non-economic”
Use double quotation marks for quoted matter within a quotation.	‘Have you any idea what “red mercury” is?’
When quoting a complete sentence, place punctuation within the quotation marks.	Rather than mince words she told them: ‘You have forced this move upon me.’

When quoting a word or incomplete sentence, place punctuation outside the quotation.

Why does he use the word 'poison'?

No one should 'follow a multitude to do evil', as the Scripture says.

Capitalization

Description	Examples
Keep the use of capitalized letters to a minimum.	
Use capital letters only for proper nouns, and for the initial letters of the full formal names of institutions, organizations, buildings, and the like.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• British Museum• United Nations• Bridge of Sighs
Do not use capital letters for common nouns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oxford University• their university

Use of italics and Roman text

Non-italicized font is known as 'Roman'. Consistent application of italics throughout the text is crucial. Note: bold text is discouraged.

Use of italics

Description	Examples
For foreign words.	the <i>catenaccio</i> defensive system employed by the Italians
For binomial nomenclature.	<i>Homo sapiens</i>

For titles of books, journals, works of art, films, and other self-contained works.

A Christmas Carol
Journal of Infectious Diseases
Mona Lisa
The Times
West Side Story

Use of Roman

Description	Examples
For the names of places and institutions.	Pont du Gard Österreichische Nationalbibliothek
For commonly used Latin abbreviations.	i.e. e.g. viz.
For foreign or Latin words that have become naturalized into English; sometimes this will be obvious but not always; it is wise to check a current dictionary will advise. A list of the most common terms and their presentation is provided below.	It was a delicious croissant.

Roman

a posteriori
a priori
ad hoc
ad infinitum
ad nauseam
de facto
en route
et al.
fait accompli
id.
inter alia
laissez-faire
par excellence
per se
prima facie

vis-à-vis

Italics

c. (circa)

de novo

ex parte

ex post facto

in situ

joie de vivre

passim

raison d'être

stare decisis

Abbreviations – format

Abbreviations fall into three categories.

Description	Examples
<i>Abbreviations</i> omit the end of a word or words. In general, include a full point at the end.	Lieut. cent. assoc.
<i>Contractions</i> omit the middle of a word or words.	Dr Jr Mrs St
<i>Acronyms</i> are formed from the initial letters of words. Do not include any full points.	AWOL NATO

Abbreviations – usage

Description	Examples
Place abbreviation in parentheses after the first occurrence of the full term. Thereafter, an abbreviation may be used without explanation.	The research was carried out by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) in July 2007.

Numbers

Description	Examples
Spell out numbers up to and including nine and use figures from 10.	four 25
Exceptions are as follows: units of measurement (figures) dates (figures) people's ages (figures) approximate numbers (words) at the beginning of a sentence (words) round numbers of a million or more (figures and words) percentages	30 kilometres 9 September 2001 She was 58 years old. At least a thousand people came. Two hundred and fifty gold bars were stolen. £8.5 million 42%

Formatting figures

Description	Examples
Separate using commas, not space, in numbers of four digits or more.	1,000 250,000

Use an en rule (–) between the numbers in a range (pp. 23–36, 1939–45, or 9.30–5.30)

Dates

Description	Examples
Formulate as: day, month, year.	11 November 1918
Omit as many digits as possible in date ranges, except where dates cross centuries.	1866–1901, not 1866–901

Units of measure

Description	Examples
When an abbreviated unit is used with a number, the number should be followed by a space.	10 g 1.423 km