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.

Last updated: February 2002

Email: style.guide@guardian.co.uk

(Collins English Dictionary-Millennium Edition) to which you should refer for 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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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 cliche-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.

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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**

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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**

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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**

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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;

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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 in14 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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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)

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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")

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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"

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

communique
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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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)

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

dependence

depositary 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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

dressing 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**

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

eerie 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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

enthral, enthralling

entr'acte

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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?)

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

firstly
prefer first, second, third

first aid

first-hand

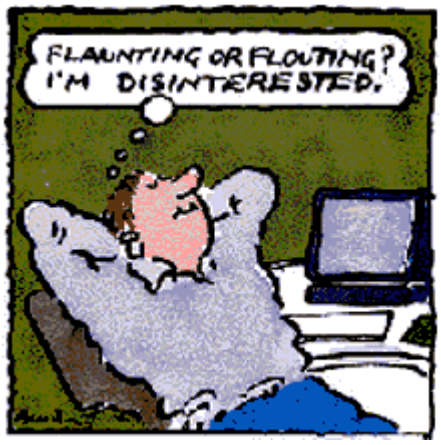
first minister
(Scottish parliament, Welsh assembly, Northern Ireland assembly)

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

flyer
not flier

fo'c'sle
abbreviation of forecastle

focus, focused, focusing

foetid
not fetid

foetus
not fetus

fogey
not fogy

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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**

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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")

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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**

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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"

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

Gulf war

gun battle
not "gunbattle"

Gypsy

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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"

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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 indispensible

individual savings account (Isa)
no need to spell out

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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 innoculate

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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**)

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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 Cöte D'Ivoire

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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 Mtensk, 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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

lordships, their

lottery, national lottery

lovable
not loveable

loyalists
Northern Ireland

lumpenproletariat

luvvies
a silly cliche; do not use

luxury noun, **luxurious** adjective

lying in state
no hyphens

Lynyrd Skynyrd
US rock band

Lyon
not Lyons

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

massive
massively overused; avoid

masthead

masterful imperious

masterly skilful

Mathews, Meg

matinee
no accent

matins

matt
(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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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 ministerJohn 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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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**

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

nosy
not nosey

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"

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

OAPs, old age pensioners
do not use; they are **pensioners** or old **people**

obbligato
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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

OK
is OK; "okay" is not

O-levels
hyphen

omelette

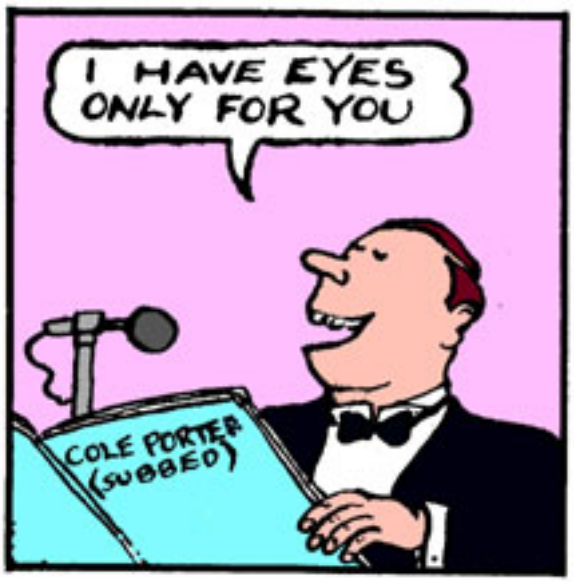
on board
for ship or plane, not aboard

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**

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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"

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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, **prophesy** verb

pros and cons

protege
masculine, **protegee** feminine; no accents

protester
not protestor

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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**

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

raft
something you float on; do not say "a raft of measures". which has very rapidly become a cliche (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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

reveille

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

RSPB, RSPCA
do not normally need to be spelt out

rugby league, rugby union

russian roulette

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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;

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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 exhange

storey
plural **storeys** (buildings)

straightforward

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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**

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

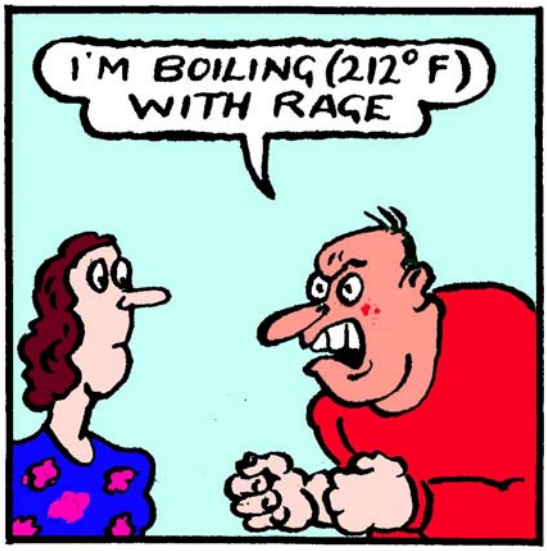
telephone numbers
like this: 020-7278 2332, 01892 456789

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

television shows
chatshow, gameshow, quizshow, talkshow

Temazepam

© Guardian Newspapers Limited



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"

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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)

theatregoer

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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**

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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**

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

vortex
plural **vortexes**

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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"

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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, sancerre, 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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

xenophobe, xenophobia, xenophobic

Xerox TM use photocopy

Xhosa
South African ethnic group and language

x-ray

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited

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

© Guardian Newspapers Limited