

Style guide

English Writing



Version 3.0

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Introduction

This style guide provides the basis for writing and editing web content. It contains guidelines relating to punctuation marks, numbers, spellings, names and phrases.

It also provides tips on grammar. Refer to this style guide to ensure consistency and quality in content produced and edited for government websites.



Version

Follow UK English.

You can follow US English in names of entities, departments, organisations etc. if that is how the entities spell it.



Collective nouns

Use singular verb form for collective nouns.



Quotation marks

Use “double quotation marks” for writing direct speech. For unusual terms, use ‘single’ quotation marks.



Parentheses

Use this type (). Do not use [], ←→ and {}.



Ampersand (&)

Do not use ampersand (&) in sentences unless it is part of a proper noun and if this is the way the company/entity writes it.



Numbers

Spell out numbers 0 to 9. For writing numbers from 10 onwards, use figures.



Percent

Spell per cent as two words and percentage as one word. Use the sign (%) in table, illustration, graph, chart etc.



Money

Express money and currency like this: AED 57.4 billion.

Use the singular form - million and billion for money. Use plural in phrases; for example, 'millions of people'.

Write AED 55,000 (if there is no fils value).

If there is a value in fils, write AED 55,000.55.



Dates

Write dates like this: Date Month Year (9 December 2015).

You can use short forms (Jan, Dec) in tables, graphs etc.

When writing 'In the 1950s, the archaeologists discovered....', write without an apostrophe.

Refer to the Gregorian calendar. For explaining Islamic festivals, events, observations refer to the Islamic calendar.

For example, Eid Al Fitr is celebrated on the first day of the Islamic month of Shawwal.



Measurement

Follow International System of Units. (Express in kilometres, not miles).

Do not insert space between the numeral and abbreviated measurement. Write 3,500kg not 3,500 kg. You can abbreviate kilograms to kg. No need to spell it out.

If the measurement is more than one word, such as 'kilometres per hour', then spell it out the first time it is used and mention the abbreviation. From then on, you can use the abbreviation. If it is mentioned only once, do not abbreviate.



Ranges

When talking about ranges in the text, do not use hyphen. Say from x to x or between x and x.



Ages

Use numerals to write ages.



Temperature

When writing temperature, write 55 degrees Celsius. You can write 55°C in tables, graphs etc.



Time

Use the 12-hour clock system. Write HH:MM; 10:10. Use am and pm (Without space after the digits).



Telephone numbers

Write with full code like this:

Telephone: 0097141234567

Mobile: 009715012345677

Writing like this offers convenience to people using portable devices.



Directions/places

When writing north, northeast, etc. do not capitalise the first alphabet.

When using the abbreviated form such as NE, use capital letters.

Similarly, use capital letters when writing South East Asia, Far East, Middle East Asia and West Asia.



Spellings

mGovernment - Write mGovernment and mServices with 'm' in small case, even if the word comes first in sentence.

World Wide Web is spelt with capital Ws. However, all other words like website, webpage are to be spelt with small case.



Contractions

Do not use don't, won't, shouldn't. Write do not, will not, would not, should not etc.



Abbreviations and acronyms

Use only established abbreviations and acronyms.

Write the complete word the first time you use it and then write the acronym/abbreviation in brackets.



Abbreviations and acronyms

Do this:

- on every page
- even if it is an established and widely known acronym.

Do not write the acronym/abbreviation in brackets if you are not going to use them again in the article.

When writing the plural form, use 's' in small: Members of Parliament or MPs.



Confusing spellings

- Sheikh – maintain this spelling for Sheikh
- Username is one word
- Log on – to log on; it is a verb. So say: log on to the portal.
- Log in – to log in; it is a verb. So say: log in with your username and password.
- Login – noun; use this word to say: enter your login details.
- Write homepage, webpage, website as one word
- Wi-Fi
- Write Undersecretary as one word



Referring to government entities

While referring to government entities the first time, write their full name. Later, you can say the entity, the body, the authority or the ministry (lower case) or 'it'; not they (use third person, singular).

You can write the entity's name in short forms. Stick to the short forms that the entity uses (do not create one).

Similarly, for the emirates. You can say RAK and UAQ, but explain it the first time you use it on every page.



Phrases

- Federal Network to be contracted as FedNet
- Federal Law No. xx of xxxx concerning the xxxx (later, you can write the law/the act)
- Ministry of Economy (later, the ministry)
- Write H. E. Abdullah bin Touq Al Marri, Minister of Economy. When used without the name, write shortened titles in lower case. For example, 'The health minister welcomed the research team'.



Names

General

Capitalise the first alphabet of the names of roads, wadis, beaches, mangroves, oases, deserts, cities, emirates etc.

Do not capitalise the first alphabets of the words roads, wadis, beaches, mangroves, oases, deserts, cities, emirates etc. For example, write the Liwa oasis; not Liwa Oasis.

When talking about them later in the text, you can write: the road/s, wadi/s, beach/es, mangrove/s, oasis/es, desert/s, city/ies, emirate/s etc.



Names of emirates and their order

- Abu Dhabi
- Dubai
- Sharjah
- Ajman
- Umm Al Quwain
- Ras Al Khaimah
- Fujairah



Rulers' names

Maintain format as shown below:

- **H. H. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan**, President of the UAE and Ruler of Abu Dhabi
- **H. H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum**, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai



Books, documents, magazines and TV programmes

Write names of books, documents, magazines and TV programmes within single quotation marks.



Use of the article 'the'

Use the definite article with:

- Countries whose names include words like kingdom or states
- Countries that have plural nouns in their names (The Netherlands and The Philippines)



And

Avoid starting a sentence with 'and'.



Colon

Use it when something follows it (list).



Lists

Write either sentences or phrases in the list; not both. If you are writing sentences use full stop.

Begin sentences with capital letter and phrases with small.



Cases

While writing the names of the laws, use title case.



General tips

- Address the reader as you.
- Use you/your. Avoid using third person.
- Use active voice; place subject first.
- Use keywords in the beginning of a sentence.
- Use plain language.
- Write 'people of determination' for those with special needs; not handicapped, disabled, differently abled, challenged etc.
- Write positive sentences.
- Write residents or expatriate residents; not expatriates.
- Write UAE nationals or Emiratis; not locals.



References:

- WAM
- The official website of the UAE Cabinet
- The official portal of the UK Government
- The Guardian

