

IA style guide

Abbreviations are generally not acceptable, unless a particular term is used continually throughout a piece. For example, for **distances** "kilometre" is correct, not "km", unless measurements are used repeatedly in a piece.

When **abbreviating using capitals**, if the resulting word has an alternate meaning, the letters must be separated by full stops. For example, the correct method for abbreviating United States is U.S. and not US. If the resultant word does not have an alternate meaning then full stops are not needed, so Australia's big miner would be BHP not B.H.P.

Acts of Parliament and legislation is to be *italicised*. Such as the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 2012*.

Animal names are not capitalised, so for example it would be koala NOT Koala.

Attribution is done in bold italics with a link to the original piece and a link to the website as a whole, as follows: ***This article was [originally published on \[nofibs.com.au\]\(#\)](#)***.

Blockquotes longer than five lines do not need quotation marks.

Sentences **introducing block quotes** should always be on their own line. That is, a new paragraph.

So, for instance, this is WRONG:

Evidence provided by Wilson Security to the Senate inquiry was shown to be intentionally misleading when it initially denied the existence of video footage. It was later [revealed](#) that the footage:

'Appeared to show security personnel planning to use unreasonable force against asylum seekers, and those visible in the footage used derogatory language to refer to asylum seekers. The footage revealed a workplace culture which is inconsistent with Wilson Security's role to provide safety and security to asylum seekers within the facility.'

Only **capitalise** proper nouns (names). Do not capitalise job titles, unless it is a formal, official, title used just before a name. Therefore "Prime Minister Julia Gillard" would be capitalised but "Rio Tinto chief executive Tom Albanese" would not. However, even if it is a formal title, if the name of the person is not mentioned, the title would not be capitalised, therefore "the prime minister said" is correct and NOT "the Prime Minister said". If you are referring to a specific government is capitalised. Thus, "the Abbott Government" or the "Federal Government", NOT "Abbott government" or "federal government".

Do not capitalise all the words in headings on IA, except the first word after a semicolon, if one appears.

So it is: *'The hero of Australia: Big business'* NOT *'The Hero of Australia: Big Business'*.

Similarly, it is **Sammy Davis Jnr**, NOT **Sammy Davis, Jnr** (or Jr)

The **conjunction** “and” is regarded as a comma and so should not have a comma before it. IA does not use the [Oxford comma](#) for lists.

Always convert foreign **currency** to Australia dollars, like so: US\$10,000 (AU\$12,249).

Dashes: Dashes are used extensively on IA to aid comprehension and to add intrigue. Hanging statements at the end of a sentence are joined by a long EM dash (—). For example:

"Like most keys, it's a key to a door — a revolving door."

Clauses within sentences – interruptions – are separated by en dashes (–):

I will use short dashes for distinct clauses within a sentence – like this one – as I feel it adds clarity. I will add long dashes for a distinct clause that comes at the end of a sentence — like this one.

Always use a space before and after dashes of all types.

Dates are always in this format dd-mm-yyyy. That is 26 November 1970. Only if dates are used repeatedly throughout a piece is the abbreviated format acceptable. The abbreviated format is dd/mm/yyyy: that is, 26/11/1970.

It is “**defence**” NOT “defense”, even when writing about U.S. legal actions.

Always use an **ellipsis** when a blockquote starts with an incomplete sentence

So,

ABC News recently [reported](#) that “ScoMo” is undergoing an image transformation,

‘from tough guy of immigration to a politician with broader appeal and economic prowess.’

Is INCORRECT and SHOULD INSTEAD BE:

ABC News recently [reported](#) that “ScoMo” is undergoing an image transformation

‘...from tough guy of immigration to a politician with broader appeal and economic prowess.’

When placing **emphasis** in quotes, the correct form is a square bracket just before the beginning of the quote with the form of emphasis demonstrated on the term "IA emphasis". To demonstrate:

....passing of the Bill [**IA emphasis**]:

Today the Commons will vote on the Bill to allow same-sex marriage.

*Marriage has evolved over time. We believe that opening it up to same-sex couples will strengthen, not weaken, the institution. As David Cameron has said, we should support gay marriage not **in spite of being Conservatives, but because we are Conservatives.***

Do not use **et cetera** or etc., instead use "and so on".

When an individual is first mentioned, remember to always introduce their **formal position**. For example, Environment minister Tony Burke, or Rio Tinto chief executive Tom Albanese.

Gaol NOT jail: People going into criminal detention are NOT going to "jail" on IA, they are instead going to "gaol".

Government or government: When referring to specific governments, the G in government is capitalised, so it would be the Abbott Government NOT the Abbott government. However, when referring to government in general, such as government debt, there is no need to capitalise.

When doing **headings** on IA, always capitalise after the semi colon. So, 'Where the political becomes personal: inside immigration detention' becomes 'Where the political becomes personal: Inside immigration detention'.

Hyperlinks: For fact checking and verification purposes and provide links for readers to pursue topics and identities further, IA provides a hyperlink on the **name and the claim**. That is, each new name of person or institution is linked to a bio or Wikipedia article where possible.

Each factual claim is linked to a supporting article or document. Where no information about the issue is online, a reference to a printed work should be provided. The only exception to providing a link (or reference) to a claim is where the information comes from original sources. These, of course, must be verified by the editor in the usual way.

When linking on claims, the highlighted link should be no longer than five words (preferably two or three) and should never be placed on quotes.

Indigenous and (the less preferred) **Aboriginal** is always capitalised. Therefore "Indigenous Australian" is correct, while "indigenous Australian" (or aboriginal Australian) is incorrect.

The **initial teaser** is a short summary of the piece which includes the name and a link to the author's bio and is an essential part of the IA style. The first two to four words after the **teaser** are capitalised (but not in bold), unless there is a heading immediately after the initial teaser.

No full stop in the abbreviation of **mister**, so it is "Mr Ferguson" and NOT "Mr. Ferguson". Generally, titles such as Miss, Mrs, Ms, Mr etc are avoided on IA.

Non-English words (including French and Latin phrases and words) are *italicised*. For example: *per se*.

Numbers from zero to ten are always written in words, from 11 onwards and all negatives as numerals. (Except for money.) The only exceptions here are when a number starts a sentence, in which case it is written out in words. Always spell out million, billion and trillion.

And "**OK**" is NOT AOK on IA — always use "okay". Okay?

Per cent signs are always spelled out, unless the piece includes 3 or more % signs, in which case the symbol is to be used throughout. Note: "per cent" not "percent".

Press Releases: when someone says something in a press release, it is a written quote so use singles.

The sentence introducing the blockquote quote should be on its own line.

Publication names are italicised, with one exception. Therefore, it is "*Sydney Morning Herald*" NOT "Sydney Morning Herald". The exception is Independent Australia and its abbreviation, IA, which only has the A in italics.

Also, **television and radio programmes** are italicised, so it would be "*Q&A*" not "Q&A". Broadcast outlets, however, are not italicised. So it would be "ABC" not "*ABC*". The names of books are also italicised.

Queens Counsel or **Senior Counsel** honorifics are written without a comma, so it would be **Ron Merkel QC** and NOT **Ron Merkel, QC** as is written in some places.

Quotes: For written quotes 'use single quotes' for spoken quotes "use double quotes".

All quotes, written or spoken, are *italicised*.

Newspaper headlines are included in single quotes, but without a full stop.

You can also double quotes to indicate sarcasm or some other unique form of emphasis. Sarcasm etc in quote marks should not to be italicised.

Multi paragraph, or longer than five line, block quotes do not need quote marks, but are identified through indent and italicisation.

For a quote within a quote, just reverse it. So if a written quote, outside would be ‘single’ and inside quote would be “double”. If a spoken quote, reverse it – “double” first and then ‘single’ inside.

References: Where possible references are included where mentioned in the text and not as footnotes, preferable as embedded hyperlinks, but where this is not possible, in brackets near the reference. In blockquotes, put the reference and page number in the text leading up to the quote, not after.

For example:

Thus, we read (p.336):

'The Whitlam Government wanted to maintain close ties with Indonesia and acquiesced in the Suharto regime's forcible incorporation of East Timor. The de facto recognition afforded by the Whitlam Government was consolidated with the de jure recognition decided upon by Fraser.'

This is **CORRECT:**

Evidence provided by Wilson Security to the Senate inquiry was shown to be intentionally misleading when it initially denied the existence of video footage.

It was later [revealed](#) that the footage:

'Appeared to show security personnel planning to use unreasonable force against asylum seekers, and those visible in the footage used derogatory language to refer to asylum seekers. The footage revealed a workplace culture which is inconsistent with Wilson Security's role to provide safety and security to asylum seekers within the facility.'

Spacing. Only one space after a full stop. Also one space after a comma, colon, semi-colon, exclamation mark. No spaces between the last word in a clause and a punctuation mark, so "Why did he do that?" is correct. NOT "Why did he do that ?"

Also use square brackets to insert clarifying text into blockquotes. This clarifying text is not to be italicised to make clear it is an insert:

For instance:

It was a request that Mitchell was happy to accede to — for the good of the paper, not the good of the nation:

'Obviously I discussed it with [then political editor] Dennis Shanahan and we worked out the pros and cons of doing it, because we had to work with the Opposition team that was there at the time," he said.'

Separate paragraphs in MS Word with spacing, **not full line breaks**, as these are automatically added in the IA content management system at the end of each paragraph.

Terrorist groups: The correct spelling is **al Qaeda**; the **Islamic State of Syria and Levant (ISIL)**.

Test cricket NOT test cricket (neither “test” nor “cricket” capitalized; same for other sports).

Twitter and Facebook are always capitalised, as is derivations, such as Twittersphere. (The word blogosphere does not need to be capitalised.)