



STYLE GUIDE

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 are 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 **fives lines** do not need quotation marks.

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

For example:

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.'

Is **INCORRECT** and **SHOULD INSTEAD BE:**

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

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'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.'

British English not American English on IA. So “nationalise” NOT “nationalize”.

Capitalisation: Only (but always) **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 it 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 colon, if one appears.

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

Do not use all capitals for **emphasis**, unless citing another source. Use italics and bold words or underline instead.

Conjunctions: 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. Only use a comma before an “and” when there is more than one “and” in a sentence.

Currency: 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.

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

Ellipsis: 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.’

Emphasis: 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 with the term "IA emphasis".

...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 all capitals for **emphasis**, unless citing another source. Use *italics* and **bold** words or underline instead.

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

Formal positions: 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.

Fourth Estate is a proper noun.

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

Global Financial Crisis is a proper noun as it refers to a particular historical event but general terminology such as “trickle-down theory” or “efficient markets hypothesis” would not be capitalised.

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.

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

Emphasis in headings is in single quotes only.

There are no full stops after headings (or **image captions**) on IA.

Hyperlinks: For fact checking and verification purposes and to 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.

Hyperlinks for currently serving politicians should be linked to the federal or state parliamentary register and not to their political party website. For example, [Josh Frydenberg](#).

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.

Initial teaser: 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. This is italicised and shown in bold.

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.

If the first paragraph of an article is used as the teaser, then it is still shown in bold but not italicised. The first few words are also not capitalised.

Isms: "Communism" is a movement and is thus capitalised but "neoliberalism" is a general term and so it is not capitalised.

Mr, Ms, Dr and other titles: 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 and so on 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.

Okay: And “**OK**” is NOT AOK on IA — always use “okay”. Okay?

Per cent signs are always spelled out, unless the piece includes three 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 (including website names) are to be 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 programs** are italicised, so it would be "*Q&A*" not "Q&A".

However, **broadcast outlets**, are not italicised. So, it would be "ABC" not "*ABC*".

The names of **books, music albums, movies** and so on are also italicised. Articles, songs and chapters are italicised and shown in single quotation marks. So, the song, ‘*When Doves Cry*’, appears on the album, *Purple Rain*.

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.

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

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 use **double quotes** to indicate sarcasm or some other unique form of emphasis. Sarcasm and so on 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, preferably 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.'

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.'

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" capitalised; same for other sports).

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