United Nations Editorial Manual
Online

The United Nations Editorial Manual Online is intended to serve as an authoritative statement of the style to be followed in drafting, editing and reproducing United Nations documents, publications and other written material. For topics not yet addressed in the online manual, the *United Nations Editorial Manual* (Sales No. E.83.I.16) remains the primary authority for United Nations editorial policy.

http://69.94.137.26/editorialcontrol/index.htm

Spelling
(see http://69.94.137.26/editorialcontrol/ed-guidelines/style/spelling.htm)

The *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, eleventh edition, is the current authority for spelling in the United Nations.

1. If the Concise Oxford Dictionary lists alternative spellings, use the preferred form (the one that is listed first); for example, judgement (not judgment) and programme (not program).
2. Where there is a choice between using the suffix "-ize" or "-ise," the "-ize" form (derived from the Greek –izo) is the preferred form, as per item 1 above; for example, organization (not organisation) and globalize (not globalise).
3. Item 2 above does not apply to words in which "-ise" is not a suffix but rather a part of the root (such as surprise, advise, comprise) nor to words that use "-yse" (derived from the Greek lusis, such as analyse and catalyse).

Abbreviations
(see http://69.94.137.26/editorialcontrol/ed-guidelines/style/abbreviations.htm)

- In United Nations style, abbreviations and acronyms are written without full stops: UNDP, not U.N.D.P; UNU, not U.N.U.
- Abbreviations and acronyms are normally used without the definite article: the members of UNESCO, the programmes of WHO.
- Abbreviations and acronyms should not be used in the possessive form: the Commander of UNMIL or the UNMIL Commander, not UNMIL's Commander.

Capitalization

(see http://69.94.137.26/editorialcontrol/ed-guidelines/style/capitalization.htm)

Initial capital letters are used for:

- The official titles of persons, councils, commissions, committees, Secretariat units, organizations, institutions, political parties and organized movements
- The titles of specific posts

Some examples of special note:

- cold war
- Earth (in reference to the planet), earth (in reference to soil)
- east, eastern (in reference to a geographical direction or an area within a country; but, East, Eastern in reference to a major region or in a political context: East Africa, East-West dialogue)
- Member (in reference to a State Member of the United Nations: Members of the United Nations, a non-Member State)
- Millennium Development Goals (in plural only, also the Goals; but goal(s) in all other instances)
- Minister, Ministry (the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan; but, a meeting of finance ministers, posts in the principal ministries)
- President (of the General Assembly, of a United Nations council, of a State or of a recognized international or national body)
- section (section 3 of the budget, section V of the report)
- spring, summer, autumn, winter (the seasons; but use with caution, since they relate to different times of the year in the northern and southern hemispheres)
- State (in reference to a country or a specific state in a federation: the State of New York; the State of Uttar Pradesh, India)

Numbers, Dates, Time

(see http://69.94.137.26/editorialcontrol/ed-guidelines/style/numbers-dates-time.htm)

- Numbers under 10 are generally expressed in words (eight, not 8)
- Numbers between 10 and 999,000 are normally written in figures.
- Numbers are always expressed in words, not numerals, at the beginning of a sentence (Sixty staff members received awards.) and in simple fractions (The amendment was adopted by the required two-thirds majority.).
- The term "billion" is used in United Nations documents to mean a thousand million. The term "trillion" is used to mean a million million.

- Percentages are always expressed in figures. (Wages increased by only 1 per cent in 2003, compared with 3 per cent in 2002. Note that "per cent" is normally written out, as two words.)
- When two numbers are used to indicate a range, they should be homogeneous (between 3,430,500 and 4,000,000 housing units, NOT between 3,430,500 and 4 million housing units).
- To reduce the possibility of confusion, numbers in a range should be expressed in full, whether in words or figures (from $2 million to $5 million, NOT from $2 to $5 million).
- Ordinals are written as words to indicate centuries (nineteenth century, NOT 19th century, NOT XIX century).
- Numbers of more than three digits are punctuated with a comma (1,550 or 2,632,597). Decimals are punctuated with a period (3.45 or 26.2).
- For dates, use the form "day month year" (21 April 2004). Note that there is no comma between the month and year.
- Avoid numerical dates such as 1/7/2010 since these can cause confusion. (Americans would read this as January 7, 2010, while British would read it as 1 July 2010.)
- Decades are always expressed as follows: the 1990s (NOT the nineties, NOT the '90s, NOT the 1990's).

Quotations
(see)

- Quoted words, sentences and paragraphs are enclosed within double quotation marks. Single quotation marks are used to enclose quotations within quotations.

  Example: Rule 60 of the rules of procedure of the Council states that "the phrase 'members present and voting' means members casting an affirmative or negative vote".

- If a quotation forms an essential grammatical part of a sentence, it begins with a lower-case letter and the final punctuation is placed outside the quotation marks.

  Example: The representative of Chile orally revised draft resolution by inserting, at the end of operative paragraph 4, the words "or at the highest level possible".

- A quotation consisting of one or more complete sentences is normally introduced by a colon and begins with a capital letter. The final punctuation is placed inside the quotation marks when it coincides with the end of the sentence.

  Example: In his report on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General made the following observation: "When it was created more than half a century ago, in the convulsive aftermath of world war, the United Nations reflected humanity's greatest hopes for a just and peaceful global community. It still embodies that dream."

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Some important items not in the *UN Editorial Manual*

Country/geographical names
(see **Member States of the United Nations –** http://www.un.org/en/members/index.shtml)

Viet Nam (NOT Vietnam)　　　　　　Republic of Korea (NOT Korea or South Korea)

Côte D'Ivoire (NOT Ivory Coast)　　　Timor-Leste (NOT East Timor)

　　　also

Chinese Taipei (NOT Taiwan or Republic of China)

Persian Gulf (the sea area between the Arabian Peninsula and the Islamic Republic of Iran; not Arabian Gulf or Gulf or Basra)

Falkland Islands (Malvinas)

University name and acronym: When to use "the"

- Both "the United Nations University" and "the UN University" are always used with a definite article ("the"). This applies to the names UNU RTC/Ps and other units as well. *For example:*
    - The symposium was organized by the United Nations University.
    - The UN University launched its academic work in September 1975.
    - The project was conducted in cooperation with the UNU Institute of Advanced Studies.

- The acronym UNU is used without a definite article. This applies to the acronyms of its constituent units as well. For example:
    - The symposium was organized by UNU.
    - UNU launched its academic work in September 1975.
    - The project was conducted by in cooperation with UNU-IAS.

- Note: When the UNU acronym is used as a modifier, use or non-use of "the" is dictated by the term being modified. So:
    - The UNU Charter was amended in 2010. (but: The charter of UNU was amended ….)
    - The UNU-WIDER budget … (but: The budget of UNU-WIDER …)
- We use a hyphen to separate the UNU element from the institute element, not a slash or en-dash; e.g., UNU-ISP (not UNU/ISP or UNU–ISP), UNU-CRIS (not UNU/CRIS or UNU–CRIS)
- The UNU element is an essential part of all institute names or acronyms. For example, never write "the Institute of Advanced Studies"; it is "the UNU Institute of Advanced Studies". Never write just WIDER or INRA; it is UNU-WIDER and UNU-INRA.