

reference guide for writing guidelines





| | | Do not write like this |
|---------------|---|--|
| Headline | One line 5-10 words – clear, simple and | |
| | compelling | |
| Place/Date | Capital cities: NAIROBI, 1 October 2018 | • Not: 'NAIROBI, KENYA, 1 October 2018 -' |
| – at start of | • Joint capitals: GENEVA/PARIS, 1 May 2018 | • Not: 'Geneva / Dakar, 1 May 2018 - ' |
| webstories | Non-capital cities: LIVERPOOL, UK, 31 | • Not: 'LIVERPOOL, 31/10/18 -' |
| | October 2018 | |
| | • Exceptions: NEW YORK (or GENEVA), 1 | |
| _ | October 2018 | |
| Dates | • 1 October 2018 | • Not: 'October 1, 2018' or '1/10/2019' or 1st |
| | - 2017 2010 | October |
| | • 2017-2018 • from 2015 to 2020 | Not: '2017-18' or '2017-8' or '2017/18' Not: 'from 2015-2020' |
| Time | • 9 a.m., 7.05 p.m., 2100 hours | • Not 9.00 a.m., 7.5 p.m., 21.00 hours |
| _ | · · | · · |
| Numbers | Numbers under 10 are written as words: | Numbers under 10 are not written as |
| | Three or five or seven | numbers: |
| | Eventions include: | • Not: '3' or '5' or '7' |
| | Exceptions include:Percentages: only 5 per cent of the total | Not: 'five per cent' or 'five %' |
| | • Ratios: the teacher-student ratio is 1 to 9 | • Not: 'one to nine' or '1 to nine' |
| | • Decimals/Fractions: 3.5 per cent or 1 5/8 | Not: 'three point five per cent' |
| | km | |
| | Series of numbers use the 'rule of the | Not: 'eight trucks and twelve planes' |
| | highest number': 8 trucks and 12 planes | |
| | Sentence beginning with a number: Eight | Not: '8 staff' |
| | staff | |
| Age | Age is always in figures: the child was 8 | Not: 'the child was eight' |
| Percent | • 15 per cent (note space) | • Not: '15 percent' or '15%' |
| Millions | If more than two digits to the right of the | |
| | decimal point, the whole number is in figures | |
| | (including million) | |
| | • 1.32 million or 1,322,000 | N . /0 500 507/ /0 500 507 |
| . | • Use commas 2,632,597 | • Not: '2.632.597' or '2 632 597 |
| Ranges | 3 to 4 per cent, 15-20kg of potatoes2-3 km, 2 to 3 km | • Not: from 2-3 km |
| Ordinals | The fifty-second session, the third/ | Not. Holli 2-3 kill |
| Ofulliais | thirteenth attempt | |
| | But figures for meetings/floors - 13 th | |
| | meeting, 38 th floor | |
| Currency | Use 3 letter code (USD EUR GBP) | • Not: 'US\$ 1.3 million' or 'US \$ 1,322,000' |
| - | • Put amount in dollars first - USD 6.2 million | |
| | (XAF 15,990 (author to convert)) | |
| Titles | Male speakers are Mr. and females Ms. | Forms of address such as "His Excellency" or |
| | No titles (e.g. General, Lieutenant, Colonel, | "Her Royal Highness" are omitted |
| | Captain, Professor) apart from nobility, | |
| | religious, medical doctor | |
| | Hyphens - Under-Secretary-General, | |
| | Secretary-General, Director-General | |

| Countries | The UN member states names are on | |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Countries | http://www.un.org/en/member-states | |
| UN-Habitat | UN-Habitat - not always necessary to spell out on first reference (United Nations Human Settlements programme) United Nations Under-Secretary-General and UN-Habitat Executive Director Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif. Then the UN-Habitat Executive Director or Ms. Sharif United Nations Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director Mr. Victor Kisob | Not Un or UNHabitat Not: Dato/Mme Maimunah Sharif |
| Quotes, ',' & '.' | " sustainable urbanization," said Ms. Brown. " have reached higher levels." Single quotation marks ('') are for quotations within quotations. Publications are in italics, not quotes | Not: " sustainable urbanization", said Ms. Brown. Not: " have reached higher levels". |
| Punctuation | A full stop, comma and colon are followed by one space. | Not followed by two spaces. |
| Capital letters | Headlines/headings - only capitalize the first letter and any other words ordinarily capitalized Specific references are capitalized, generic ones are lower case. governments and local authorities/Indian Government secretary of state/Secretary of State Hillary Clinton ministry of housing/Kenyan Ministry of Housing Member States of the United Nations | Not Urbanization Is Key to Sustainable Development Not Governments And Local Authoritie Not Ministries, Governments Not member states of the UN |
| Hyphens | Used when modifying a preceding word Day-care centres, up-to-date, high-level, multi-stakeholder | |
| Acronyms | Acronyms are formed from the initials of other words. They are written in capitals without full stops and are generally used without the (exceptions the IMF; the G8; the CIA: the WHO) A title should be written in full the first time followed by the acronym in brackets. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)The SDGs | |

| Possessive • Use an apostrophe with it's when it means 'it is': it's a lovely day • Never use it when possessive -the house and its garden • Use full forms of can't, won't, don't etc unless direct speech • Apostrophe not needed for plurals NGOs, MOUs, MPs Keep it simple Use: • Because • Since • Not: In view of the fact that • Not: owing to the fact that • Not: at the present time Italics Italics (or underlining) are for: • Non-English words (exceptions in the Editorial Manual); Title (sleep it simple) Italics (in underlining) are for: • Non-English names of organizations, institutions, firms, ministries and the like |
|--|
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| Titles of books, newspapers, films, plays and television programmes; Names of boats and aeroplances (but not types of aircraft) Emphasis The titles of books in bibliographies |
| Abbreviations Use when the title occurs many times. The full title should be given on first appearance and repeated if needed for clarity. E.g. the Assembly, the Council, the Commission, the Committee Write in full: New Urban Agenda (never abbreviate in official document) United Nations Secretary-General Economic and Social Council General Assembly Security Council Use when the title occurs many times. The full title should be given on first appearance and repeated in which will be given on first appearance and repeated in w |
| Accents Accents, such as those in French and Spanish, can be found in Microsoft Word by: (1) Selecting 'Insert' (2) Selecting 'Symbol' (3) Clicking on and 'inserting' the appropriate symbol. Abraço. |
| Use U.K. Spelling as in Concise Oxford English Dictionary (OED) dictionary www.oxforddictionaries.com For 'English U.K.' Spell-Check: Select Review /Language / Set Proofing Language / Default English U.K. For ize, ise, yse use first spelling in OED z for authorize, organize, urbanize but s for analyse, catalyse |
| Use - accommodation; admitted; benefited; centre; crossfire; diarrhoea; endeavour; enrolled; enrolment; inpatient; interpersonal; landmines; occurred; ongoing; organization; per cent; percentage; programme; referred; suffered; underfunded; under way Don't confuse - compliment/complement - practise/practice - advise/advice |
| Any issues Refer to the UN Editorial Manual: http://dd.dgacm.org/editorialmanual/ |