

Get it Write!

Kim Epton

Revised and Updated 2024



February 2024

Hesperian Press
PO Box 317
Victoria Park
Western Australia 6979

65 Oats Street Carlisle
Western Australia 6101

Copyright © Kim Epton 2001-2024

Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
GOOD WRITING	2
SENTENCES	2
BASIC SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION	2
SENTENCE FRAGMENTS	2
PARAGRAPHS	2
SPLIT INFINITIVES	3
DOUBLE NEGATIVES	3
USING 'THEY' AS A PERSONAL PRONOUN	3
ACTIVE VOICE/PASSIVE VOICE	4
BEGINNING A SENTENCE WITH A CONJUNCTION	4
ENDING A SENTENCE WITH A PREPOSITION	4
THAT AND WHICH	5
CLICHÉS AND FIGURES OF SPEECH	5
JARGON	5
NOUN STRINGS	6
TRENDY, VOGUE OR FASHIONABLE WORDS AND PHRASES	6
WASTED WORDS	7
MODIFIERS	7
TAUTOLOGIES/PLEONASMS	7
'MORE UNIQUE' AND OTHER ABSOLUTES	9
PLAIN ENGLISH	9
SPELLING	11
PREFERRED USAGES	11
COMMONLY MISSPELLED WORDS	15
COLLECTIVE NOUNS	15
EMPHASIS	16

CAPITALS	16
ITALICS	16
PUNCTUATION	18
APOSTROPHES	18
POSSESSIVE APOSTROPHE	18
BRACKETS	19
SEMICOLONS	19
BULLETS/DOT POINTS	19
HYPHENS AND DASHES	20
QUOTATIONS	20
SHORTENED FORMS	22
ABBREVIATIONS	22
CONTRACTIONS	22
CLIPPED WORDS	23
SYMBOLS	23
ACRONYMS	23
PERSONAL INITIALS	24
NUMBERS AND MEASUREMENT	25
NUMBERS	25
YEARS, DATES AND TIMES	26
CURRENCY	26
MEASUREMENT	27
MILITARY HISTORY	28
APPENDIX ONE	29
MISUSED WORDS	29
APPENDIX TWO	33
WORD CONFUSION	33
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	41

INTRODUCTION

This guide was originally produced to assist amateur writers prepare their non fiction manuscript, generally historical, for publishing with Hesperian Press.

It has been modified and expanded from that original format.

The following references have been used extensively in the preparation of this guide:

- *Style Manual For Authors, Editors and Printers*, 5th Edition, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1995. ISBN 0 64429 770 0;
- *The Australian Oxford Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, 1999. ISBN 0 19 5550 793 2;
- *Modern Australian Usage*, Revised Edition, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1997. ISBN 0 19 554131 6.

This is a guide only and it is recognised that other styles are equally valid. It is not claimed to be the definitive text on spelling, grammar or style.

GOOD WRITING

The Australian Oxford Dictionary, the Style Manual For Authors, Editors and Printers, and Modern Australian Usage are highly recommended.

The English language is dynamic. The aim of this work is **consistency rather than pedantry**.

Sentences

A sentence is a group of words that contain one idea. When you introduce another idea, start another sentence. If your writing lacks clarity, review it to see if a lengthy, bad sentence might make two short, good ones.

This is not to say that all sentences should be short. Long sentences add variety, and some ideas are too complicated to fit into just a few words. Remember, one idea, one sentence.

Basic Sentence Construction

Try to keep language simple. Think of full stops as when you stop for breath and commas when you pause. Do not use too many 'ands'. Instead, start a new sentence.

Sentence Fragments

A sentence fragment is a group of words masquerading as a sentence but without a true subject and a verb. Like this. Which is bad writing.

Paragraphs

A paragraph is a collection of related sentences dealing with a single topic.

The paragraph should start with the topic sentence. The rest of the sentences in the paragraph amplify, clarify or explore the topic. When you change topics, start a new paragraph.

A paragraph may be as short as one sentence or as long as it has to be. Remember, each paragraph should contain only one developed idea.

Split Infinitives

The vast majority of the world do not know what a split infinitive is and if they did they would not care whether it remained whole or was split asunder.

Use this simple guide - if it sounds right, it is. Use your ear to judge the correct positioning of the infinitive. For instance, 'to quickly bring' is a split infinitive. However, if it sounds better to the ear than 'to bring quickly' then it is perfectly acceptable to use it.

Double Negatives

It should hardly be necessary to warn against the common double negative, such as, 'I can't get no satisfaction'. Deliberate double negatives need more care and are best avoided.

For example, saying that something is 'not infrequent' is not the same as saying that it is frequent.

Using 'they' as a personal pronoun

The use of 'they' to avoid using language that may be perceived as sexist (for instance, to avoid the use of 'he' when both 'he' and 'she' is meant) is noted by *The Australian Oxford Dictionary* as 'particularly useful'.

Active Voice/Passive Voice

Sentences in active voice are more concise and usually easier to understand than those in passive voice. In sentences written in active voice, the subject performs the action expressed in the verb and the subject acts. Use active voice unless you have good reason to use the passive.

ACTIVE

Captain Currie sailed the cutter into the bay.

The early settlers made slow progress.

PASSIVE

The boat was sailed into the bay by Captain Currie.

Slow progress was made by the early settlers.

Do not to start a sentence in the active voice and finish in the passive voice.

Beginning a sentence with a conjunction

A conjunction is a 'joining word'– a word used to join phrases or clauses, for example, and, but, or, so.

Beginning a sentence with a conjunction is not necessarily incorrect in contemporary usage but it should not be overdone. Consider whether the sentence would suffer if the conjunction was moved.

Ending a sentence with a preposition

The most common prepositions are 'at', 'by', 'during', 'for', 'from', 'of', 'on', 'out', 'to', 'with', and 'up'.

Ending a sentence with a preposition is not necessarily incorrect in contemporary usage, however, it should not be overdone.

That and Which

Use 'that' for defining clauses and 'which' for non-defining clauses. These are often referred to as restrictive or non-restrictive clauses.

A defining clause limits or restricts the meaning of the word or words it applies to, for example:

'It is gold nuggets that are causing the excitement.'

A non-defining clause gives further information about the word or words it applies to but does not limit or restrict the words.

'The nugget, which was ninety per cent pure, was found by the side of the road.'

The words 'which was ninety per cent pure' could be removed from the sentence without changing its meaning.

Clichés and Figures of Speech

As they are evidence of literary laziness, clichés and figures of speech are best avoided. Do not excuse the use of clichés by prefacing it with 'the proverbial', for example, 'he was caught by the proverbial long arm of the law'.

Jargon

Your task is to convey a message or story to your readers, not to demonstrate how clever you are about your subject. Do not use jargon.

Noun Strings

Nouns combined into strings so that one noun modifies another in the string may be difficult to understand. Short strings are no problem, however, longer strings (three or four consecutive nouns) should be avoided.

Trendy, Vogue or Fashionable Words and Phrases

Such is the dynamism of the English language that the meaning of today's vogue words and phrases may become defunct in just a few years. Equally, the passage of time may confer them with cliché status. Or they may enter the mainstream language (teenager was once a trendy word).

The following is just a very small list of some words and phrases that will definitely disappear and others that will prevail. But to what word or phrase lies what fate? If you are writing a book or article that you expect to endure it is best to avoid these (and other) trendy words and phrases unless you are confident in their application.

About 4000 new words enter the *Oxford English Dictionary* per year.

at the end of the day	backlash
ball is in your court	ballistic
bonanza	bottom line
brainchild	cancel culture
charisma	consensus
cryptocurrency	de-platform
emotional roller coaster	face off
fake news	grow
influencer	jury is still out
lifestyle	mother of all ...
no brainer	onboarding
outcome	quantum leap
rationale	sandboxing

side hustle
the ... from hell
woke

zero tolerance

steep learning curve
whole nine yards
you don't have to be a rocket
scientist ...

Wasted Words

These clichéd phrases rarely add anything to your writing. Be cautious in using them.

as it were
at the present time
moreover
it has been indicated that
it should be noted that

at the present moment in time
it can be seen that
it is imperative that
it should be remembered that
therefore, thus

Modifiers

The following 'modifiers' are often incorrectly used or fail to achieve the desired effect. Review your use of them.

basically
essentially
fundamentally
very

completely
extremely
totally
virtually

Tautologies/Pleonasms

A tautology is saying the same thing twice in different words. A pleonasm is the use of more words than is needed to give the meaning. Avoid repetitions and superfluous words, such as:

absolute guarantee
acute crisis
annoying pest
attach together

actual fact
advance planning
ATM machine
basic fundamentals

centred around
completely full
consensus of opinion
dead body
different options
endorse on the back
expedite quickly
finally ended
fishing trawler
hoist up
join together
mix together
necessary prerequisite
new innovation
original source
pitch black
protrude out
rate of knots
repeat again
returned back
serious danger
small in size
temporary reprieve
unite together
very unique
white in colour
young infant
4.00 p.m. in the afternoon

close proximity
completely surrounded
cooperate together
definite conclusion
end result
exact replica
falsely fabricated
first priority
free gift
huddle together
little bit
my personal choice
new initiative
new recruit
PIN number
present incumbent
radical transformation
raze to the ground
results so far achieved
revert back
skirt around
strangled to death
two twins
usual customs
vitaly necessary
whole life
young tyro
7.30 a.m. in the morning

'More Unique' and Other Absolutes

Certain words do not admit comparison. These 'incomparables' include:

Absolute	Equal
Eternal	Fatal
Final	Perfect
Supreme	Unanimous
Total	Unique

Observing the inviolability of absolutes is a demonstration of critical thinking as much as it is good grammar.

As an example, consider 'unique' and its meaning as 'one of a kind'. There are no degrees of uniqueness. Something is unique or it is not. It cannot be very unique or really unique. To indicate degrees, use special or unusual.

Plain English

Avoid convoluted, flowery and pompous language, and cut down superfluous words.

AVOID	PREFERRED
absence of	no, none
in the event of	if
advantageous	useful
in the direction of	towards
a large proportion of	many
in the event of	if
a total of twelve people	twelve people
in the majority of cases	usually
ahead of schedule	early
in view of the fact that	because
approximately	about
is of the opinion	believes
at an early date	soon
not too distant future	later, eventually

as a consequence
occasioned by
at your convenience
on account of the fact that
currently
provided that
discontinue
prior to
despite the fact that
remuneration
during
rendered assistance
draw the attention of
sustained injuries
expeditiously
take action on
facilitate
take into consideration
filled to capacity
under the circumstances
gainfully employed
utilisation
give consideration to
with a view to
imperative
was of the opinion
in conjunction with
was suffering from
in spite of the fact that
with the exception of
in the course of
with the result that

so
caused
when you can
because
now
if
stop
before
although
pay
in
helped
remind / show
was hurt
quickly
act
help
consider
full
in this case
working
use
consider
to
must
believed
and/or
had
despite / although
except
in / during / while
so, so that

SPELLING

Use of *The Australian Oxford Dictionary* and the *Australian Writers' Dictionary* is recommended.

Do not rely on the spell checker in your word processing program. After reading this guide you should realise that there are enough homonyms, homophones, homographs and other complications to confuse your spell checker.

If you are writing a book or article, consider developing your own customised, project specific dictionary as an aide-memoire.

Preferred Usages

Aborigine/Aboriginal

Aborigine is the noun and aboriginal is the adjective. Although aboriginal is now widely accepted as a noun it is preferable that the distinction be maintained.

The preferred way to describe specific groups of Australian Aboriginal people is by their language groups, for example, Nyoongar, Yammatji, and Wongi.

Among/Amongst

Though both words are of the same meaning, among is preferred.

& (Ampersand)

Do not use it. Spell out the word 'and'.

Celsius/Centigrade

Celsius is preferred. Note that it always used with a capital 'C'.

Cheque/Check

Check is an Americanism. Cheque is preferred.

e.g. and i.e.

The abbreviation for the Latin 'exempli gratia' meaning 'for example' is 'e.g.'. The abbreviation for 'id est' meaning 'that is' is 'i.e.'. Use the words in full except in tables where space is limited.

etc

Et cetera and its abbreviation 'etc' means 'and other things of the same kind'. Should you use etc it gives the impression that you are too lazy to supply the missing items or unsure what they are. Do not use et cetera or etc.

Gray/Grey

The only acceptable word is grey. Gray is an Americanism.

ise/ize

The reason for insisting on ise rather than ize is that there are no exceptions with ise, however, with the American/UK style ize one is continually making exceptions.

Its/It's

It's means 'it is' whereas 'its' is possessive.

As this may be seen as the opposite of normal possessive cases, use this simple rule – never use it's. Should you wish to write 'it is' then write it in full as it is. Do not contract it to it's.

Therefore, the only time 'its' should appear is in the possessive case and it will be correct.

Should you be tempted to insert an apostrophe remember this rule and stay the hand.

Jail/Gaol

Both words are acceptable, however, jail is preferred if for no other reason than to avoid confusion with gaol. Jail is not an Americanism.

Names of Places and Features

Names of places and features of Australia are spelled to accord with the Gazetteer of the Geoscience Australia, the national mapping agency's toponymy database.

The Geoscience Australia name search is at <http://www.ga.gov.au/place-name/>

Names of Ships

The name of a ship is italicised but not rendered bold. The designation or type of a ship is not italicised.

Some preferred descriptions of ship types are:

His Majesty's Ship	HMS
His Majesty's Australian Ship	HMAS
Motor Ship	MS
Motor Vessel	MV
Steamship	SS
United States Ship	USS

Our/Or

The trend is for words like ardour, armour, candour, colour, endeavour, favour, glamour, honour, labour, neighbour, odour, rigour, rumour, splendour, vapour and valour to be spelled without the u (in the American style).

Note that the Australian Labor Party eschews the letter 'u' in its title.

Plough/Plow

Plow is an Americanism.

Program/Programme

Program was the original spelling for the word (from the Greek programma). Programme is an affectation introduced from the French in the 19th century. Program is the preferred usage. It is not an Americanism.

Try and/Try to

Try means 'attempt'. You do not say 'attempt and do it'. No, you say 'attempt to do it'.

When a statement is considered like this you'll see what a nonsense 'try and do it' is – or, for that matter, any use of the words 'try and'.

Try is the present tense. Tried is the past, trying is the future. You do not say 'He tried and did it'. No, you say 'He tried to do it'. Similarly, you do not say 'He is trying and do it'. No, you say 'He is trying to do it'. Use 'try to'.

viz.

Viz is the abbreviation for the Latin 'videlice' meaning 'namely'. Do not use.

While/Whilst

Though of the same meaning, while is preferred.

Commonly Misspelled Words

Accidentally	Accommodation	All Right
Alleged	Auxiliary	Battalion
Buoy	Calendar	Category
Collectible	Colonel	Colossal
Committee	Continuous	Definitely
Embarrass	February	Forty
Gauge	Harass	Irresistible
Independent	Liaise	Necessary
Occasionally	Occurrence	Parallel
Perseverance	Pigeon	Prevalent
Privilege	Receive	Recommend
Relevant	Separate	Siege
Souvenir	Supersede	Tomorrow

Collective Nouns

A collective noun generally takes a singular verb.

Police (the individual members) **were** poorly paid. The Police Force (the entire organisation) **was** understaffed.

None of us **is** perfect.

The key is consistency. Do not mix in the one sentence.

EMPHASIS

Capitals

Use a capital for the initial letter of:

- personal names, nicknames, and epithets
- geographic areas, for example, North West of Australia
- names of countries and towns
- brands, for example, Toyota
- names of ships, aircraft and other vehicles
- formal titles and status designations
- acts of parliament;
- days of the week and names of months
- time zones
- compass points only when abbreviated
- organisations, agencies, committees and similar entities
- nationalities and race, for example, American, English, Thai
- publications

Italics

Italics are used for titles of books, films, newspapers and periodicals. They are also used for the names of ships, aircraft and other vehicles. The abbreviations preceding these names, such as 'HMAS', 'USS' or 'SS', are not italicised.

Scientific names, Latin and other foreign words and phrases (unless regarded as anglicised) should be italicised.

Words or letters cited as such are italicised or may be enclosed in single quotation marks:

The term *ultimo* means last month. The term *instant* means the current month.

The term 'ultimo' means 'last month'. The term 'instant' means 'the current month'.

Brand names are not italicised.

The use of italics to add emphasis should not be overdone.

PUNCTUATION

Apostrophes

Note that there is a difference between a possessive apostrophe and an apostrophe used to indicate the joining of two words where part of the second word is omitted (can't, don't, you're, they're, and others).

If these omissions are not used the only place an apostrophe should appear is in the possessive case.

The employment of the redundant possessive apostrophe is proliferating, generally after a vowel (video's, sofa's, area's, spa's, gazebo's). Do not fall into the trap. It is illiterate.

Possessive Apostrophe

Singular form of a word - add an apostrophe and an 's' ('s):
the earth's circumference.

Singular form of a word ending in 's' - add an apostrophe and an s ('s):

James's house.

Plural forms of words that do not end in 's' (examples are, men, women, children, people, geese, mice) - add an apostrophe and an 's' ('s):

people's choice.

Plural nouns that end in 's' - add an apostrophe ('):

deserts' secrets.

Compound words - add an apostrophe and an 's' ('s):

his father-in-law's property.

Joint possession of an object - add an apostrophe and an 's' ('s) to the last noun:

Bayley and Ford's discovery.

Brackets

() = parentheses or round brackets. Used to indicate a parenthetical statement – one that is not essential to the meaning of the sentence but amplifies or clarifies, or may be considered to be an aside. Do not include material in parenthesis that is irrelevant to the sentence.

[] = square brackets. Used to indicate author input.
{ } = braces or curly brackets. Generally used only in mathematical formulae.

The hierarchy of brackets is normally parentheses within square brackets within braces:{{()}}.

Semicolons

Semicolons perform the same role as commas, but are used when a stronger break is needed, such as breaking up phrases, or in a list.

Bullets/Dot Points

The essence of a bullet point is brevity.

Long, complex bullet points would defeat the strategy of using bullet points.

If your points need to take place in a specific order, use a numbered list rather than bullets.

Don't mix sentence structures - either all sentences or all fragments.

Start each bullet with the same part of speech. If you start one point with an adjective, start them all with an adjective.

When bulleted items are full sentences or paragraphs, they should start with a capital letter and end with a full stop.

Bullet points not structured as proper sentences do not start with a capital letter nor end with punctuation.

Hyphens and Dashes

Hyphens are used in complex words, compound words and for dividing words and, in more technical matters, en rules (short dash) and em rules (long dash) are used.

In 2007 the sixth edition of the two volume *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* removed the hyphen from 16,000 words. These words are now variously rendered as one word or two separate words. The *Australian Oxford Dictionary* (2004) will follow suit in its next edition.

Regardless of Oxford's wholesale eschewing of the hyphen, certain words need a hyphen to avoid ambiguity or provide clarity.

The use of hyphens and dashes (n rules and em rules) can be complicated. Refer to the *Style Manual For Authors, Editors and Printers*, Chapter 6 for guidance.

Quotations

Quotations of more than fifty words should be indented from the left margin, with an extra line of space above and below. Indented quotes do not require opening and closing quotation marks.

Short extracts of less than fifty words may appear within the text, enclosed in single quotation marks.

Use double quotation marks only for quotes within quotes.

A historical quotation should be reproduced verbatim. Words or phrases that may be perceived as pejorative or offensive by current standards should not be deleted, altered or edited in any way. The words most commonly encountered are 'nigger', and variations of it, 'chink', 'chow' and 'celestial'. While unacceptable today they should be retained if used in the context of a historical quotation.

Do not alter spellings and punctuation within quotations. If the spelling is incorrect or the meaning seems strange or nonsensical, and the original has been copied correctly, place the word '*sic*' in italics and within square brackets after the doubtful material, thus [sic].

Any comments that need to be placed into the quotation should also be enclosed within square brackets.

For example, if you use italics to emphasise part of the quote, at the end of the quote add [author's emphasis].

Indicate any omission from the quotation by the use of an ellipsis. An ellipsis is three full stops . . . with a single space before and after.

Do not insert an additional full stop if the ellipsis occurs at the end of a sentence. An ellipsis may be used at the beginning of a sentence.

If a whole sentence is a quotation, the full stop should be placed inside the closing quotation mark.

If any part of the sentence contains words not quoted then the full stop is placed outside the closing quotation mark.

This will avoid two full stops separated by a quotation mark.

SHORTENED FORMS

As a general rule it is preferred that words are presented in their full form. In other words, do not shorten words. Repeat that to yourself often.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations consist of the initial letter and other letters of the word shortened but not the last letter. They are followed by a full stop. They include:

ed. (editor, edited)	pp. (pages)
p. (page)	vol. (volume)

The names of the Australian States and Territories should be spelled out in full. Should an abbreviation be needed use the following shortened forms:

ACT	NSW
NT	Qld
SA	Tas
Vic	WA

Do not italicise the abbreviations of the States.

When referring to the 'State' of Western Australia use a capital 'S'. The 'state' of Western Australia refers to its condition not its political status.

The description of a type of ship may be abbreviated.

Contractions

A contraction includes at least the first and last letters of a word and is not given a full stop, for example:

Dr (Doctor)	Jr (Junior)
Mr (Mister)	St (Saint)

Clipped Words

Some common clipped words are 'ad' for 'advertisement', 'phone' for 'telephone', 'photo' for 'photograph', and 'gym' for 'gymnasium'.

Use the full word.

Symbols

The representation of a unit of measurement is a symbol and is written without a full stop.

kilometre	km
metre	m
kilogram	kg
gram	g
millimetre	mm
Litre	L
millilitre	mL

The symbol is the same for both singular and plural forms of the word. Do not use, for example, 'kms' or 'kgs'.

Include a space between the value and the symbol, for example, 25 km, not 25km.

Acronyms

An acronym is a pronounceable word formed (mostly) from the initial letters of a descriptive name or title.

As a general rule, you should not use acronyms, particularly if your work is going to be read internationally. Rarely does an acronym translate well into another language.

Should you choose to use an acronym, spell out completely the meaning of the abbreviation or acronym when you first use it, including the acronym itself in parentheses.

Personal Initials

Include a full stop after each of the initials and insert a space between the initials and the last name, for example, P.P. King.

NUMBERS and MEASUREMENT

Numbers

Follow the *Style Manual For Authors, Editors and Printers*, Chapter 10, except in a few cases. *Modern Australian Usage* is very helpful in dealing with numbers.

For clarity use commas rather than spaces in five digit or greater numbers (for example, 10,500, 1,250,000).

Numbers up to ninety-nine should be spelled out in the text, except where figures will aid clarity (if several numbers are presented comparatively, for example). Numbers over ninety-nine should be spelled out when approximations are involved (about two thousand sheep, nearly five hundred cattle). If a figure seems inappropriate to a narrative text it should be spelled out.

Where a number begins a sentence always use words, including dates or percentages but avoid this construction if possible.

Spell out a person's age, for example, 'He was in his sixties'. However, use figures in the hyphenated form, for example 'a 65-year-old man'.

The modern convention is that 1,000,000 is a million, 1,000,000,000 is one billion and 1,000,000,000,000 is one trillion.

Use figures for temperature with a superscript 'o' and a capital C to indicate degrees Celsius, for example, 23°C.

For percentages use figures followed by 'per cent' in text and '%' in notes, tables and illustrations.

When decimal numbers are less than unity, a zero should be placed before the decimal point. For example, '0.75' not '.75'.

Years, Dates and Times

YES	NO
1880s	1880's '80's eighties
1856-59	1856-9
1890-1892 (in chapter titles, captions, contents)	1890-92
23 February 1854	23 February, 1854 23.2.1854 or 23.2.54 23/2/1854 or 23/2/54
12.30 p.m.	12.30pm; 12,30 p.m. 12.30PM; 12.30P.M.; 12.30 P.M. Do not write 'at about 12.30 p.m.' (see Misused Words, Appendix One)

Do not change years, dates or times into this format if used in the form of a quotation from an original source.

Currency

Use figures for sums of money. Use the form \$65 not \$65.00 unless cents need to be indicated.

Should you need to indicate pre-decimal currency use the form £5 2s 9d.

Do not convert amounts to decimal currency. It is preferred to use comparisons such as 'The weekly wage was 15s and a loaf of bread cost 3d' and not 'a loaf of bread cost 5c'.

Measurement

Australia converted to the metric system in 1976. The majority of Australia's population was educated under this system and to them feet and inches, yards and miles, and pounds and shillings are incomprehensible.

It is interesting to note that the USA officially converted to metric in 1986, however, they are still using 'freedom units'. To be fair, the US scientific community is in step with the rest of the world.

Measurements should be stated using current terms, unless a pre-metric measurement is stated in a quotation in which case it should be left as is. Conversion may cause confusion. Do not convert unless it will add clarity in which case insert the conversion in [].

Use kilometres not miles, kph not mph. Use metres and millimetres not feet and inches.

Use kilograms and grams not pounds and ounces. Use hectares not acres, square kilometres not square miles.

The shortened forms for length, weight and capacity are symbols, not abbreviations, and therefore are never shown as plurals. See Symbols.

Nautical miles and knots are acceptable non-metric terms.

MILITARY HISTORY

Do not use full stops with the shortened forms RAN, AIF, RAAF or RAF.

The names of RAN ships are preceded by HMAS, without full stops and not italicised.

The name of the ship is italicised. Do not write 'the HMAS Perth' or 'HMAS Perth'. It is HMAS *Perth*.

The plural of 'HMAS' is 'HMAS'; for example, HMAS *Melbourne* and *Voyager*.

ANZAC is always written in all capitals.

Place names are spelled as they are in the relevant official history of the campaign not as they might appear in an atlas.

Italicise the names of enemy formations.

APPENDIX ONE

Misused Words

Aggravate	The use of 'aggravate' to mean 'irritate' in the sense of 'annoy' is informal and the word should be reserved for the meaning 'to make worse'.
Agreeance	Agreeance is not a word. Use agreement.
All of the	Can usually be rewritten as ... 'All the ...'
Alright	Please use all right.
Also	Also is an over-used word and usually superfluous.
At about	It cannot be both. 'At about' is tautological.
Bring to a head	This phrase is rather repulsive. It means 'to cause pus to form' and is generally not what the writer meant.
Catholic	The meaning of catholic is 'universal'. In religious contexts use Roman Catholic.
Comprise	Comprise means 'to consist of'. 'The exploration party comprised seven people' not 'comprised of'.
Contemporary	Contemporary does not mean 'modern' or 'present day'. It means 'existing at the same time'.
Criterion/criteria	You can have one criterion or many criteria.
Data	Although plural it is commonly treated as singular. However media, criteria and phenomena are plural only.
Decimate	Decimate is derived from the Roman word (decem) when one in ten soldiers in a rebellious group were killed as an example to the others. They were decimated. Its use is indefensible when used to mean 'utterly wipe out'.
Dilemma	The etymology of the word indicates that it means 'a situation that requires a choice between two alternatives'. Although current usage is giving it the meaning 'to choose between any number of mutually exclusive options' it is preferred that the original meaning be retained. Note the spelling – not 'dilemma'.

Either/neither	These words should be used only when there is a choice between two.
Equally As	Something can be 'equally important' or it can be 'as important' but it cannot be 'equally as important'.
Feasible	Feasible means 'practicable' or 'possible'. It does not mean 'likely'. Use probable.
Foul Swoop	It is fell swoop. It means 'all at once suddenly'. Fell means 'fierce ruthless'.
For Free	Free is not synonymous with 'nothing' but with 'for nothing' therefore 'for free' is semi-literate.
Fulsome	Fulsome means 'excessive, gross or insincere to the point of being offensive to good taste'. If used in the context of 'lavish' it has disparaging connotations.
Harbinger	A harbinger is a 'precursor or an omen'. It is not a 'messenger'.
Hopefully	Hopefully means 'in a hopeful manner', not 'I hope'. Avoid hopefully.
Irregardless	Irregardless is not a word. It is somewhere between irrespective and regardless. Use one of these.
Intriguing	Intriguing means 'underhand plotting'. It does not mean 'puzzling, enigmatic or ambiguous'.
Knots per Hour	A knot is a unit of speed that means 'one nautical mile per hour'. Therefore an hour or per hour should never follow knot.
Last/Past	The last person out the door. The past (not last) year has been busy.
Latter	Latter refers to the second of two things, not the last of a number of things. Former is the first of two things.
Liable	Liable means 'legally bound' or 'subject to'. It does not mean 'likely'
Listing	Do not use 'listing' as a noun where list will do. A phone book is a list of names and numbers, each of which is a listing.
Litany	The word is misused if a list or history is meant. A litany is a 'form of prayer or a repetitive recitation'.

Literally	Use the word literally with care and only where what you are saying is literally true. In most cases 'figuratively' is meant, which is just about the opposite of literally. 'We were literally flooded with work' is wrong because the flood is a metaphorical one, not an actual deluge. Do not use literally where really or extremely will do.
Livid/Vivid/Lurid	Livid means 'black and blue'. It does not mean 'red', a meaning it has erroneously acquired perhaps by association with vivid or lurid. Vivid (in relation to a colour) means 'intensely deep or bright', while lurid (in relation to colour) means 'vivid'.
Majority	Use 'majority' only with countable nouns, for example, 'a majority of people' and not with mass nouns, for example, 'a majority of the work'.
Marginal	Marginal is not a synonym for small.
Maximise	Maximise means to 'increase to the utmost'. It should not be used to mean 'make the most of'.
Media	Media is plural only. The singular is medium.
More than/Over	They are not interchangeable. 'More than' refers to a quantity. 'Over' refers to spatial relationships.
Nature	Decisions of a delicate nature would be better if they were just delicate decisions. Movies of a violent nature would be better described as 'violent movies'.
Necessitate	If 'require' is meant, write require or rework the sentence so that necessitate is not needed.
Noisome	Noisome does not mean 'noisy'. It means 'offensive or evil smelling'.
Only	Put 'only' next to the word or phrase it modifies. The following phrase has eight different meanings depending on where the word only is placed: 'I hit him in the eye yesterday.'
Orientate	Although this variant form has been in use since the mid 19th century, orient is preferred.
Percentage	A percentage of something is not necessarily a small part.

Perogative	There is no such word. The word required is prerogative meaning 'right' or 'privilege'.
Plus	Try to limit 'plus' to mathematics, and use 'and' or 'with' where they are appropriate.
Prone	Prone means 'face down'. A person lying face up is supine.
Proportion	Proportion means 'comparative share or part'; it should not be used as a synonym for part.
Quality	'Quality' is a noun and means 'a characteristic or a degree of excellence'. Do not use 'quality' as an adjective, as in 'a quality product'. Use well made, good or useful. Never use 'quality' as an adverb, as in 'a quality-built product'.
Quite	'Quite' is almost always a space-waster. It usually softens sentences that should not be softened.
Re	Avoid using 're' when you mean 'concerning', 'regarding' or 'about'. 'Re your letter of 23 February' imparts a feeling of jargon to your writing.
Straitjacket	A 'straitjacket' is not a jacket without curves or angles – it is not a 'straightjacket'.
Suffer	The suggestion that inanimate objects cannot suffer smacks of pedantry.
Thanks to	Do not use 'thanks to' when no thankfulness is meant. 'Thanks to dysentery the population of Coolgardie was greatly reduced' should be recast to indicate blame not thanks.
Who/Which/That	'Who' is used for people. 'Which' and 'that' are used for things and organisations.

APPENDIX TWO

Word Confusion

Ability/ Capacity	Ability can be acquired, capacity cannot. Ability is a more positive quality than capacity.
Advice/ Advise	Advice is the noun. Advise is the verb.
Aerial/ Antenna	An aerial is a device to send or receive radio transmissions. An antenna is the sensory organ on the head of an insect - also used to mean an aerial. Use either. Be consistent.
Affect/ Effect	Affect is to influence something. Effect is the result (effects of change), but note that changes can be effected. When you affect something, you have an effect on it.
Afflict/ Inflict	One is afflicted by or with something. One inflicts something on someone. Altogether means 'in total'. All together means 'in the one place'.
Altogether/ All Together	Altogether means 'in total'. All together means 'in the one place'.
Allude/Elude	Allude means 'to refer to indirectly'. Elude means 'to avoid or slip away'.
Already/ All Ready	Already means 'by this time'. All ready means 'prepared'.
Altar/ Alter	An altar is a table for worship. Alter means 'to change'.
Alternately/ Alternatively	Alternately means 'every second one'. Alternatively means 'to find another way of doing something'.
Always/ All ways	Always means 'at all times'. All ways means 'every respect or course'.
Anticipate/ Expect	To anticipate is to be aware in advance of the possibility of something happening and taking steps to deal with it. Expect means 'to regard as likely'.
Ascent/ Assent	An ascent is an upward slope. Assent means 'consent'.

Assume/ Presume	Assume is to pose a hypothesis, to take something for granted. Presume is to suppose something to be true, to believe it to be a fact.
Assure/ Ensure/ Insure	You assure a person by making them confident. Do not use assure in the sense of 'Assure that the wording is correct'; you can only assure somebody that it is correct. Ensure means make sure, as in 'Ensure that the wording is correct'. Insuring is the business of an insurance company. It sets aside resources in case of a loss.
Auspicious/ Propitious	These words are synonyms.
Avenge/ Revenge	Avenge implies that the retribution is justified whereas revenge implies that the aim is to satisfy the resentment of the person taking the action.
Avert/ Avoid	Avert means 'prevent' or 'ward off'. Avoid means 'keep clear'.
Bated/ Baited	A person waiting with bated breath waits anxiously not with a breath smelling of worms.
Between/ Among	Use between for two things, use among for more than two.
Biennial/ Biannual	Biennial means 'every two years'. Biannual means 'twice a year'.
Boarder/ Border	A boarder is a lodger who receives meals regularly at a fixed price. A border is a boundary.
Born/ Borne	Born means 'existing as a result of birth'. Borne means 'carried or transported by'.
Bought/ Brought	Bought means 'purchased'. Brought means 'conveyed'.
Break/ Brake	If there is a break in your brake line your car will not stop properly.
Can/ May	Use 'can' for ability and 'may' for permission to do it.
Chord/ Cord	A chord is a combination of musical tones played simultaneously. A cord is a small rope.
Cite/ Sight/ Site	To cite is to quote. Sight is the faculty of vision. A site is a position or place.

Classic/ Classical	Classic is the pinnacle. Classical means pertaining to the ancient Greek or Romans.
Collaboration/ Collusion	Collaboration is working jointly or co-operating. Collusion has a notion of fraud or underhand dealing.
Complacent/ Complaisant	Complacent means 'smugly self-satisfied'. Complaisant means 'deferential' or 'acquiescent'.
Compliment/ Complement	A compliment is when you say something nice about a person. Complement means 'to complete'.
Conscience/ Conscious	Conscience is a moral sense of right or wrong. Conscious means to be aware or awake.
Continual/ Continuous	Continual means 'very frequent'. Continuous means 'without interruption'.
Convince/ Persuade	Although there are slight, technical differences in meanings between these words they may be used as synonyms.
Council/ Counsel	A council is a group that consults or advises. To counsel is to advise.
Definite/ Definitive	Definite means 'precise' or 'exactly delimited'. Definitive means 'beyond argument'. A definite statement is one that is explicit; a definitive statement is one that is not challengeable.
Delusion/ Illusion	A delusion is a false belief. An illusion is a false perception.
Despatch/ Dispatch	Use either. Be consistent.
Device/ Devise	A device is a noun meaning 'apparatus' or 'machine'. Devise is a verb meaning 'to create' or 'invent'.
Differ/ Vary	Differ means to be unlike. Vary means to change.
Different from/ Different to	Despite what the pedants may say either is acceptable although different from is generally regarded as the most acceptable. Different to is less formal. Different than is acceptable when followed by a clause.
Disassemble/ Dissemble	Disassemble means to take apart. Dissemble means to disguise or conceal.

Discomfort/ Discomfit	The meanings of these words have nothing in common. Discomfort means 'a lack of comfort'. Discomfit means 'disconcert or baffle'.
Discreet/ Discrete	Discrete means 'individual or separate things'. Discreet means 'unobtrusive'.
Distinctive/ Distinguished	Distinctive means 'noticeably different'. Distinguished means 'outstanding or eminent'.
Disinterested/ Uninterested	You are a disinterested (as in neutral or not involved) party to discussions but uninterested (you do not care) in soccer.
Dual/ Duel	Dual is an adjective describing the duality of something - dual nationality, for instance. A duel is a formal battle intended to settle a dispute.
Eclectic/ Esoteric	Eclectic means selecting from various sources. Esoteric means 'understood by a select few; recondite'.
Elder/ Older	Elder is restricted to persons and is an indication of seniority. Older is used in a comparison of old things.
Elicit/ Illicit	Elicit means to 'draw out'. Illicit means 'illegal or forbidden'.
Eminent /Imminent	Eminent means 'prominent or famous'. Imminent, in phrases like 'facing imminent disaster', means 'threatening or about to happen'.
Empathy/ Sympathy	Empathy means 'to have an understanding of a person's feelings to the extent of participation in them'. Sympathy is 'an understanding or sharing of one's emotions'.
Enquire/ Inquire	Though not wrong to use interchangeably, a useful distinction is that inquire means 'investigate' and enquire means 'ask'.
Every day/ Everyday	Every day means 'each day without exception'. Everyday means 'ordinary'.
Faint/ Feint	Faint means 'to lose consciousness'. Feint means 'a sham attack'. Note that either word can mean 'inconspicuous lines to guide writing'.
Farther/ Further	Farther applies to physical distance. Further refers to degree or extent. You travel farther, but pursue a topic further.

Faze/ Phase	The news that the procedure was to be phased out didn't faze him'.
Fewer/ Less	There were fewer (not less) immigrants and less money to house them – fewer refers to numbers while less refers to quantity.
Flammable/ Inflammable	Both these words mean the same thing but use flammable because inflammable can be mistaken for a negative.
Flaunt/ Flout	To flaunt is to show off. Flout means 'to treat with contempt' some rule or standard. The cliché is 'to flout convention'. Flaunting may be in bad taste because it is ostentatious but it is not necessarily a violation of standards.
Foreword/ Forward	One writes a Foreword to a book. One moves forward.
Forego/ Forgo	Forego means to 'go before'. Forgo means to 'give up'.
Formally/ Formerly	Formally means 'conforming to rules or propriety'. Formerly means 'in the past'.
Fortuitous/ Fortunate	Fortuitous means 'happening by chance'. Fortunate means 'marked by good luck'.
Grate/ Great	A grate is a framework of iron bars. Great means 'extraordinary' or 'outstanding'.
Historic/ Historical	Something that is historic figures in history; it is worthwhile recording, it is famous. Something historical is part of history.
Hoard/ Horde	Hoard means to stow away for future use. A horde is a multitude.
Imaginary /Imaginery	The confusion with imaginery possibly results from 'imagery'.
Imminent/ Impending	These words are interchangeable despite what the pedants may say.
Impedance/ Impediment	Impedance is the total electrical resistance of a circuit. Impediment is a hindrance or obstruction.
Imply/ Infer	A speaker implies something by hinting at it; a listener infers something from what he or she hears. Do not use them interchangeably.
Incidents/ Incidence	Incidents are things that happen; incidence is how often they occur.

Incredible/ Incredulous	Incredible means 'unbelievable'; incredulous means 'unbelieving, sceptical'.
Ingenious/ Ingenuous	Ingenious means 'clever at inventing'. Ingenuous means 'innocent'.
Interment /Internment	Interment means 'burial'. Internment means 'confinement'.
Lessee/ Lessor	The lessee is the person to whom a lease is granted. The lessor is the person granting the lease.
Licence/ License	Licence is the noun. License is the verb.
Loose/ Lose	The pronunciation of loose (to rhyme with goose) tempts some to spell it as lose. Loose means 'not tight' and lose means 'to mislay something' or 'not win'.
Luxuriant/ Luxurious	Luxuriant means 'growing profusely' whereas luxurious is the adjective of luxury.
Maybe/ May be	Maybe is an adverb meaning 'perhaps' or 'possibly'. May be is a verb phrase meaning 'might be' or 'could be'.
Mean/ Median/ Average	In a series the mean is the middle value. The median is the point at which half is to one side of it and half on the other side. The average is the sum of the series divided by the number in the series.
Medium/ Median	Medium has numerous meanings but the one that gets confused with median is that of middle quality or degree. Median means situated in the middle. The division in the middle of a road, sometimes paved or landscaped, is a median strip.
Militate/ Mitigate	Militate means to have effect against (or for). Mitigate means to moderate or soften.
Moot/ Mute	Moot means 'debatable or undecided'. Mute means 'silent'.
Ordinance/ Ordnance	An ordinance is an authoritative decree. Ordnance means military weapons.
Practical/ Practicable	Practical means 'suited to action rather than theory'. Practicable means 'possible or feasible'.
Practice/ Practise	Practice is the noun. Practise is the verb.

Prescribe/ Proscribe	Prescribe means to advise, recommend'. Proscribe means 'to forbid'.
Prevaricate/ Procrastinate	Prevaricate means to 'speak or act evasively or misleadingly'. Procrastinate means 'to defer or put off'.
Principal/ Principle	Principal means 'the first or foremost'. A principle is 'a fundamental truth' or 'something by which we live'.
Radio/ Wireless	Radio has superseded the old-fashioned wireless.
Railroad/ Railway	Both mean the same thing. Railroad is chiefly a US term. Railway is preferred. It follows that railway station and not train station is preferred.
Rapt/ Wrapped	Rapt means 'deeply engrossed; enraptured'. Wrapped means 'enclosed by something that is wound or folded about'. Oddly, wrapped may also mean rapt.
Recur/ Reoccur	Both these words mean 'occur again', although reoccur has a sense of one-time repetition. Generally, use recur.
Refute/ Repudiate	Refute means 'to prove the falsity or error of a statement'. Repudiate means 'disown; disavow; reject'.
Rend/ Render	Rend means 'to tear or wrench forcibly'. Render means to 'cause to be; make'. A separation may be described as heart-rending not heart-rendering.
Repel/ Repulse	These words are synonyms.
Role/ Roll	A role is an actor's part. A roll is something you eat or a document listing names.
Scot/ Scotch	Scotch has many adjectival meanings but the description of a native of Scotland is not one of them. It is considered offensive by Scots, and others.
Seasonable/ Seasonal	Seasonable means 'appropriate to the season' or 'timely'. Seasonal means 'of or relating to the seasons'.
Sewage/ Sewerage	Sewage flows through the sewerage system.

Stationary/ Stationery	You need to stand still to write on paper.
There/ Their	There are four people in their crew.
Tortuous/ Torturous	Tortuous means 'winding or twisting'. Torturous involves torture.
Turbid/ Turgid	Turbid means 'muddy or clouded'. Turgid means 'inflated, pompous'.
Valuable /Invaluable	Invaluable means 'of such high value that it is beyond price'. The antonym of 'valuable' is valueless.
Venal/ Venial	Venal means 'able to be bribed; corrupt'. Venial means 'pardonable'.
Venomous/ Poisonous	Snakes are venomous but not poisonous, toadstools are poisonous but not venomous.
Waive/ Wave	We waive our rights but wave flags.
Wether/ Whether	A wether is a castrated sheep. Whether expresses doubt or choice.
Whose/ Who's	Who's is a contraction of 'who is'. Do not use. Write 'who is' in full. Adhere to this rule and you will never make a mistake with whose.
Who/ Whom	A simple test to see which is proper is to replace who/whom with he/him. If he sounds right, use who; if him is right, use whom. For example: since 'he did it' and not 'him did it', use 'who did it'; since we give something 'to him' and not 'to he', use 'to whom'.
Your/ You're	You're is always a contraction of 'you are'. Do not use. Write 'you are' in full. Adhere to this rule and you will never make a mistake with your.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Flann, Elizabeth & Hill, Beryl, *The Australian Editing Handbook*, Common Ground Publishing, Victoria, 2001. ISBN 1 86335 040 3.

Fowler, H.W., *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage*, Second Edition, Revised by Sir Ernest Gowers, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1966.

Hudson, Nicholas, *Modern Australian Usage*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1993. ISBN 0 19554131 6.

The Australian National Dictionary, ed. W.S. Ramson, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1988. ISBN 0 19 554736 5.

The Australian Oxford Dictionary, Oxford University Press, 1999. ISBN 0 19 5550793 2
Orwell, George, 'Politics and the English Language', from *Collected Essays*, Secker and Warburg, London 1961.

Purchase, Shirley (Ed), *Australian Writers' Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1997. ISBN 0 19554 080 8.

Strunk, W., Jr & White, E.B., *The Elements of Style*, Macmillan, New York, 1979. ISBN 0 02418 230 3.

Style Manual For Authors, Editors and Printers, 5th Edition, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1995. ISBN 0 64429 770 0.