

The
Allied Command Operations
and
Allied Command Transformation

Style Guide

For continuity across the numerous language-writing styles, use the following when writing in English for official ACO/ACT publications. These are adapted from the Reuters Handbook of Journalism at http://handbook.reuters.com/index.php/Main_Page

Abbreviations

Abbreviations and acronyms should usually be spelled out on first reference.

Abbreviations in parentheses, after the spelled-out first reference, where you plan to use the abbreviation on second reference, are acceptable.

CAPS, PERIODS/FULLSTOPS: Generally, omit full stops or periods in acronyms unless the result would spell an unrelated word. Most abbreviations of more than two letters do not take periods. But use periods in most two-letter abbreviations: U.S., U.N. (Exceptions include: EU, UK)

PLURALS: Form the plural of abbreviations by adding a lower-case “s” without an apostrophe: ICBMs, not ICBM’s.

WITH DATES OR NUMERALS: Use the abbreviations A.D., B.C., a.m., p.m., No., and abbreviate certain months when used with the day of the month.

Acronyms

Avoid if at all possible. Very few are understandable at first reference. Most are only of use to a specialised audience that has seen them several times before. Where possible replace with a noun such as the committee, the organisation, the inquiry.

Aircraft

- a. Use aircraft rather than plane. Most airliners and military aircraft are jets so there is normally no need to specify that an aircraft is a jet. Warplane – is one word.
 - i. Capitalise but do not put in quotation marks the names of aircraft, e.g. Hercules, Flogger, Raptor. When the number designating an aircraft is preceded by a letter or letters, hyphenate, e.g. Boeing 777 but MD-90, F-117.
 - ii. Use makers’ names in the form given in Jane’s All the World’s Aircraft, e.g. MiG-35. Give numerals for aircraft speeds, e.g. Mach 1 not Mach one.
 - iii. Know what the most common military letters mean when asked. F stands for Fighter (F-35), C stands for Cargo (C-17), KC stands for Kerosine Carrier (KC-135), B stands for bomber (B-

2), CH stands for Cargo Helicopter (CH-47), AH stands for Attack Helicopter (AH-64), T stands for Trainer (T-35 jet trainer).

- b. Air Base. Two words. So also air raid and air strike but airspace.
- c. Airborne Warning And Control System (AWACS). Aircraft equipped with search radar, height-finding radar and communications equipment for controlling weapons, generally other aircraft, surveillance and early warning.
- d. Alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS). A system that will give commanders a comprehensive picture of the situation on the ground.
- e. Stealth. They depend for their safety on carbon-based composite building materials and an unusual shape that absorbs radar signals or reflects them at angles that make the aircraft difficult to detect for useful periods of time. Do not capitalize “stealth.”
- f. STOL. Short take-off and landing.
- g. Strafe. To attack with machine guns or rockets from the air. Do not use in referring to aerial bombing or ground-to-ground attacks.
- h. Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV). The Predator is a U.S.-built UAV that is primarily used to collect intelligence but can act as an offensive weapon, sometimes equipped with two Hellfire missiles. The Global Hawk with a wingspan wider than a Boeing 737’s can loiter high above the area it is monitoring for more than 24 hours while the Dragoneye is a tiny unmanned scout aircraft for reconnaissance by ground troops.
- i. VTOL. Vertical take-off and landing.
- j. Warplane. One word. It is a useful one for the lead paragraph, but it is better in most cases to be specific (fighter, bomber), although some aircraft can carry out a variety of missions, such as the F16. The Fairchild A-10 Thunderbolt is a ground-attack aircraft designed to support ground forces. The Panavia Tornado is a multirole combat aircraft. The B-52 is a long-range bomber. In financial stories and when dealing with contracts, sales and development, put the manufacturer’s name (and company) before the aircraft type.

Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty

ABM Treaty on second reference.

Apostrophes

Use the apostrophe according to the following guidelines:

Singular words and plural words not ending in an "s", form the possessive by adding " 's ", e.g., "Boeing's new airliner", "the children's books".

There is usually no problem with words ending in "s", e.g., "the class's performance", "the princess's return", "Schultz's car". However, some words would look or sound odd, e.g. "Jesus's sermons", or "Tunis's main prison", so try to write around the problem. Recast such examples as, "the sermons of Jesus", or "the main prison in Tunis".

For singular proper names ending in "s," use only an apostrophe: "Gates' tenure"; "Kansas' schools". "Reuters' early decades", but "Reuter's birthplace in Kassel".

Plural words already ending in " s " form the possessive by adding the apostrophe alone, e.g., "the soldiers' weapons".

Add " 's " for plurals of a single letter: "They were all given A's." Do not add for plurals of numbers or multiple letter combinations: "the 1980s", "RBIs".

Note that " it's " is an abbreviation of "it is". The possessive form of the pronoun is " its ".

Approximately

"About" is shorter and simpler. So is "almost" or "nearly."

Arctic Sea, arctic chill

Uppercase when referring to geography (Arctic Circle); lowercase to describe the cold (arctic wind). Also use uppercase when referring to the weather phenomenon that originates within the Arctic Circle (e.g. Arctic vortex).

Armoured Vehicles

If in doubt about the name of any of these just call it an armoured vehicle. An artillery piece such as a gun or howitzer may be mounted on tracks or wheels and be self-propelled.

- k. Armoured Fighting Vehicle (AFV). Neither a tank nor an armoured personnel carrier, but a hybrid evolved in an era of fast-paced warfare in which infantry must keep up with tanks.
 - i. An AFV like the Bradley Fighting Vehicle used by the U.S. military carries a squad of infantry.
 - ii. The Soviet-designed BMP-1 carries infantry and is armed with an antitank missile launcher and a 73mm gun.

- iii. The British GKN Warrior is a 25-tonne tracked armoured vehicle with a 30mm cannon.
- i. Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC). A tracked or wheeled vehicle that carries small groups of infantry into battle. It provides protection against small-arms fire and shell splinters, and may be armed with machineguns.
 - i. Make sure a tank is a tank and not an APC. If in doubt about the name of any of these just call it an armoured vehicle.
 - ii. An artillery piece such as a gun or howitzer may be mounted on tracks or wheels and be self-propelled.

Army

Only capitalise for specific armies: the U.S. Army, the Palestine Liberation Army, the Red Army. Use figures for military units: 1st Army, not First Army. Only used defence force as part of a proper title like Israeli Defence Force, otherwise use army or armed forces.

Battle

- a. Battlefield. One word. Also battlefront and battleground.
- b. Battlegroup. One word.
- c. Bomb Damage Assessment (BDA). Avoid unless in quotes. Spell out BDA in parentheses if used in a quote
- d. Biological Warfare. The use in warfare of microorganisms to cause death or disease.
- e. Ceasefire. One word
- f. Chemical Warfare. The use of chemicals other than explosives, e.g., gas.
- g. Fighting. This is relative. It ranges from hand-to-hand combat to the risk of an exchange of intercontinental ballistic missiles. Avoid “fierce” fighting and “heavy” fighting unless casualties are known to be heavy or the fire intense. Spell out what is meant. “Infantry fighting” is not simply combatants on foot. It implies a set-piece engagement, not, for instance, a few militiamen jumping garden walls and blasting away with rifles.
- h. Gunbattle. One word. So also gunfire, gunman and gunpoint.
- i. Offensive. An offensive is more specific than an attack. It is an extensive attack over days, weeks or months often on a wide front or

an entire theatre of a campaign or war by air, sea or ground forces and sometimes all three.

- j. Raid. Use only when a force attacks and then leaves an objective, as opposed to occupying it.

Benelux

Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. If Benelux is used, explain on first reference that it is an inclusive word for these three nations.

Between, among

“Between” is restricted to two choices or two parties. “Among” is for several options or parties. Use “between” in referring to bilateral contacts, e.g., “relations between France and Germany.” Use “among” for a collective linkage, e.g., “relations among the NATO states.”

Black box

Popular term for aircraft recording equipment. Although the devices are not black, but in fact usually an orange colour, the term can be used if it is made clear that the reference is to a plane’s flight recorder or flight-deck voice recorder.

Book and Film Titles

Books, films, plays, poems, operas, songs and works of art: capitalise every word in the title apart from conjunctions, articles, particles and short prepositions, e.g. “The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich”, “The Merchant of Venice”, “Gone with the Wind”. The same is true of radio and television programmes other than news and current affairs, e.g. “American Idol”.

Bosnia

Bosnia-Herzegovina - The country has been divided into a Bosnian Serb republic and a Muslim-Croat federation since 1995. Both have wide autonomy but share a common presidency, parliament and government. In datelines: SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina. The people are Bosnians.

Capable, capability

Usually verbose. Write that an aircraft can carry 300 passengers, not that the aircraft is capable of carrying 300 passengers. “The United States can launch...,” not “The United States has the capability to launch.”

Capitalisation

academic, aristocratic, military and religious titles: Capitalise when they accompany a personal name, otherwise use lower case, e.g., Professor John Smith, Admiral Horatio Nelson, but “the history professor”, “the admiral”.

armed forces: Normally used lower case for the armed services used generically, e.g., U.S. army, British navy, French air force. Capitalise specific official names though such as Royal Air Force, the Canadian Forces and the Luftwaffe.

corporate, organisational titles: Usually generic titles are not capitalised, e.g. managing director John Smith, chief executive Joe Bloggs, PLO chairman Yasser Arafat.

geographical and geological names: Capitalise, apart from particles, articles and compass references not forming part of the proper name, e.g., North Korea but north London; the Nile Delta but the delta of the Nile, the Upper Pleistocene, the Lower East Side of New York but the lower east bank of the river. However: the Bermuda Triangle, the Triangle.

geopolitical: Capitalise nouns and adjectives with a geographic origin but used politically, such as Western influence, the North-South divide, the West, Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia.

government officials: Capitalise the official title when it immediately precedes a person’s name. When a title is used generically and follows the name or is used alone, use lowercase, e.g.: French Foreign Minister Jean Blanc; Jean Blanc, the French foreign minister; in the US the wife of the president is known as the first lady (no caps).

government bodies: Treat government bodies as proper names and capitalise them when they are an integral part of a specific name. Do not capitalise when unspecific, as in plurals or standing alone: “the Israeli Foreign Ministry” or “the Foreign Ministry said Israel would...,” but “The ministry added ...”; “the Australian Parliament,” but “the Australian and New Zealand parliaments”; “the French Embassy” but “the embassy”.

hyphenated titles: When a hyphenated title is capitalised, capitalise both parts: Lieutenant-General John Smith.

legislative bodies: Capitalise the official names of legislative bodies such as Parliament, Senate, the Diet. When used in the plural, lowercase: the Norwegian and Danish parliaments.

politics: Capitalise the names of political parties and of movements with a specific doctrine, e.g., a Communist official, a Democratic senator. Use

lowercase for nonspecific references: “The communist part of the former Soviet Bloc”; “the settlement was run on communist principles”; “he proposed a democratic vote.” But “the Communist Party of what was then East Germany.”

proper names: Common nouns that normally have no initial capital are capitalised when they are an integral part of the full name of a person, organisation or thing, e.g., Queen Elizabeth, the Sultan of Brunei, the River Thames. These nouns are normally lowercase if they stand alone or in the plural, e.g., the queen, the Malaysian sultan, down the river. But former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, former Managing Director John Brown. Do not risk ambiguity, e.g., “the Speaker told the House of Commons.” Retain the capital also when the person remains specific because there is only one or because he or she is preeminent, e.g., the Dalai Lama, the Pontiff, the Virgin Mary.

proper nouns: Capitalise words that uniquely identify a particular person or thing: Mount Everest, the 7th Fleet. Lowercase articles and particles used as auxiliaries in names like Charles de Gaulle. Keep the capital on words that still derive their meaning from a proper noun, e.g., Marxist, Shakespearean. Do not keep it when the connection with the proper noun is remote, e.g., Arabic numerals, herculean.

publications: No quotation marks around the title. Whatever the masthead says, do not capitalise articles and particles in the names of English-language newspapers and magazines, e.g., the New York Times, the News of the World. Where non-English language newspapers begin with a word meaning “the,” capitalise: O Globo/Le Monde/Die Welt.

quotes: A quote that follows a colon begins with a capital. “Guzhenko said: ‘The conference has ignored the principle of equality.’”

religion: Names of divinities are capitalised, but unspecific plurals are lowercase: Allah, the Almighty, but the gods, the lords of the universe. Capitalise religious titles when they immediately precede a personal name, otherwise lowercase, e.g., Bishop Thaddeus Smith, Dean Robert Jones, but the bishop, the dean, the pope. Use only the simplest and best-known titles on first reference: the Rev. Jesse Jackson rather than the Right Rev. John Smith. Capitalise names of denominations and religious movements, e.g., Baptist, Buddhist, Church of England, Muslim, Orthodox. The pope is head of the Roman Catholic Church, but he would celebrate mass in a Roman Catholic church (that is, a building).

Captions, Cutlines

Cutlines should be simply and clearly written no needless adjectives or verbs

The first sentence contains the who, what, when and where and is always written in the present tense using active voice. A caption describes the

moment the image is captured, not what came before or after, so the first sentence will be written as if from that moment.

Subsequent sentences include the background information (the why?) and should almost always be written in past tense. It explains why the image is significant and provides context. This is where you provide information explaining the significance of the action in the image.

A caption ends with giving credit to the photographer (in person), as apposed to a full (web) story, that ends with giving credit to the PA Office that published it.

Example: Ms. Victoria Tesson, left, a NATO public affairs intern, interviews a Luxembourg soldier during Exercise CORONAT MASK 2018, in Bruchsal, Germany, September 26, 2018. The exercise, which began September 15, is being held throughout the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Italy and Germany and allows NATO Chemical Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Defence units to train for potential future NATO missions, improve specialised CBRN defence capabilities and enhance interoperability between participating nations. (NATO photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Brett Dodge, USN)

chairman, chairwoman

Not chairperson or chair unless requested (Janet Yellen has asked to be called "chair" of the Federal Reserve).

Combat Camera (COMCAM)

Commas

Do not over-punctuate, especially with commas. Any sentence studded with commas could probably benefit from a rewrite.

Use commas as a guide to sense, to break a sentence into logically discrete parts, but do not use them to the extent that they break the flow of the sentence.

Use commas to mark off words and phrases that are in apposition to other words, or to define other words or phrases, e.g., "Rolan Dumas, French foreign minister, said...", "Rudolf Nureyev, most prominent of the defectors from the Bolshoi, has danced..."

Use commas to mark off a clause that is not essential to the meaning of a sentence, e.g., "the airliner, which was seven years old, crashed". But a clause that cannot be removed from a sentence without affecting its meaning is not marked off by commas, e.g., "The airliner that crashed on Thursday was seven years old whereas the plane lost the previous day was new".

Use commas to separate items in a list, e.g., "cheese, fruit, wine and coffee", or "Smith despised ballet, hated the theatre and was bored by opera". Note that there is normally no comma before the final "and" (the so-called serial or Oxford comma). However, a comma should be used in this position if to leave it out would risk ambiguity, e.g., "he admired Irving Berlin, Rodgers and Hart, and Leonard Bernstein".

As in the sentence above, a comma follows an initial "However".

A comma is often needed before "and" or "but" in the middle of a compound sentence to make clear where the new clause begins. "They gave the prize to Jones and his wife, and the family was delighted" is very different from "They gave the prize to Jones, and his wife and family were delighted". But no comma is needed when both or all parts of a compound sentence have the same subject, e.g., "They gave the first prize to Jones and the second prize to his wife".

Use a comma to clarify dates, e.g., "On April 2, 2013, protesters gathered in downtown Lincoln, Nebraska, to protest the ruling."

Use a comma between direct quotations and what introduces or follows them, e.g., "He addressed the matter of intervention by saying, 'We do not intend to make a move now.'" Similarly, before direct but unquoted questions incorporated within sentences: "The unspoken question was, By what criteria did they predict the outcome?"

Crimea

A Black Sea peninsula annexed from Ukraine by Russia in March 2014. The international community has refused to recognize the Russian annexation. The dateline should be Crimea, without reference to Ukraine or Russia: SIMFEROPOL, Crimea.

cyber

Introduced into English in 1948 by the US mathematician, Norbert Wiener, who coined the word cybernetics.

Cyber was originally a stand alone adjective, meaning relating to or involving computers or computer networks.

But when an adjective regularly becomes associated with a particular noun, the English language tends to evolve in favour of a compound noun.

So for example: cyber marketplace, cyber commerce, cyber crime, cyber citizen, cyber cash, cyber terrorism, cyber surfer, cyber bullying, cyber intelligence, cyber warfare.

But the compound noun: cybersecurity, cyberspace, cybercurrency, cyberattack

Dates

Use the sequence month/day/year, e.g. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on Aug. 2., 1990, led to... or the August 2 invasion or the August 1990 invasion. If a specific date is used, put the year inside commas. Spell out months in text but abbreviate them followed by a full stop when they are used with a specific date – Jan. 1, Feb. 14, Aug. 5, Sept. 11, Oct. 24, Nov. 5, Dec. 25.

When spelling out duration, write the tournament runs from May 22 to 24 not runs from May 22-24. Write arrived on Monday not arrived Monday and on Tuesday, on Wednesday, on Thursday rather than yesterday, today, tomorrow.

Write the 1939-45 war but from 1939 to 1945 not from 1939-45. Similarly between 1939 and 1945 and not between 1939-45. Write 9/11, not 9-11.

Defense Visual Information Distribution Service (DVIDS)

A state-of-the-art, 24/7 operation owned by the US Department of Defense DMA (Defense Media Activity) that provides a timely, accurate and reliable connection between the media around the world and the military serving at home and abroad.

Doctors Without Borders, Medecins Sans Frontieres

Reuters uses the official name Medecins Sans Frontieres on first reference which can be abbreviated to MSF on further reference. Doctors Without Borders in parentheses is acceptable after the official name on first reference.

DOD

Department of Defense, the Pentagon (U.S.). Avoid using the acronym.

Effect, affect

Effect is to cause; affect is to produce an effect upon

email

But other compound words prefixed with e- should be hyphenated: "e-commerce," "e-banking."

epidemic, pandemic

An epidemic is the rapid spreading of disease in a certain population or region; a pandemic is an epidemic that has spread worldwide. Use sparingly; follow declarations of public health officials.

EU

If used on first reference, spelling out European Union in next. The Treaty on European Union, commonly known as the Maastricht Treaty, came into effect on Nov. 1, 1993, and formally created a new entity, the EU, with responsibilities expanded beyond the European Community's focus on economic and trade issues.

euro, euro zone

Reuters uses euro zone (two words).

extremist

A person who goes to extremes particularly in terms of political actions, practices or doctrines. Try to avoid as extremist is probably even more vague in meaning than other debatable or emotive words like radical or terrorist. Try to be more specific about what the person does or believes - "gunman", "bomber", "hijacker", "protester" etc.

eyewitness

Prefer "witness."

FAA

The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration. FAA acceptable on second reference.

fighter jets, war planes

Prefer war planes. A fighter jet is different from bomber etc.

Fort

Do not abbreviate in the names of cities or military installations, e.g., Fort Lauderdale, Fort Bragg.

fortnight

Prefer “two weeks.”

GMT – Greenwich Mean Time

As the international standard, it is not spelled out but should be capitalised. Western military forces use Zulu to mean GMT. Given Reuters is usually writing for a global readership, it is often necessary to convert a local time into GMT, e.g., 8:30 a. m. (1330 GMT). The conversion should also be given when previewing important events or statements by major figures, e.g., Smith to hold news conference at 0800 EST (1300 GMT). Also known as UTC from the French “temps universel coordonné” or universal coordinated time which is the same as GMT.

grammar

a, an – Use “a” before a word that begins with the sound of a consonant, e.g., a historian, a hotel, a hysterectomy, a NATO member. Use “an” before a word that begins with the sound of a vowel, e.g., an heir, an honour, an OPEC member.

adjectives – Use sparingly. Avoid adjectives that imply a Reuters judgement, e.g., a hard-line speech, a glowing tribute, a staunch conservative. Some people might consider the speech moderate, the tribute fulsome or the conservative a die-hard reactionary. When using an adjective and a noun together as an adjective, hyphenate them if it prevents the reader from hesitating over a possible ambiguity: “a blue-chip share” is quicker to grasp even though in context one is unlikely to wonder whether a chip share that is blue is meant. Similarly, “high-caste Hindus.” When using an adjective and the past participle of a verb together adjectivally, hyphenate them, e.g. old-fashioned morality, rose-tinted spectacles. Do not hyphenate an adverb and adjective when they stand alone unless your dictionary says otherwise.

adverbs – Put the adverb between the auxiliary verb and the past participle, e.g., France has already refused... not France already has refused ...

as, like – as compares verbs, like compares nouns. He fought as a hero should. But: He acted like a hero.

collective nouns – Most collective nouns and names of countries, governments, organisations and companies are followed by singular verbs and singular neuter pronouns, e.g., The government, which is studying the problem, said it. As a general rule, if the focus is on the collective entity, use a singular verb; if on the individuals, a plural (the couple is suing the state for

negligence. The police, musical groups, and sports teams take plural verbs and pronouns.

split infinitives – The taboo is based on a false analogy with Latin, where infinitives are one word. In English good writers (Samuel Pepys, Abraham Lincoln) have been splitting them since the 14th century. Do what sounds best.

that, which – Use “that” in clauses that mean to restrict the term: the mortgage meltdown that led to the financial crisis (as opposed to another mortgage meltdown). Reserve “which” for non-restrictive clauses: the mortgage meltdown, which began in YEAR TK...” Avoid the unnecessary use of “that,” as in, “He said that he was going to ...,” but make sure you are not setting up the reader for an initial confusion: “I believe the economic forecast was self-fulfilling.”

who, whom – who is the subject, whom the object of a verb. As a rough guide as to which word to use, substitute “he” or “him” for the “who” or “whom” and see which makes sense. In a prepositional phrase, pick the word according to how it functions within the whole clause: “Wordsworth would read his poems to [whoever/whomever would listen].” The subject of the clause must be in the subjective case—so, “whoever would listen.”

Great Britain

Use United Kingdom.

hang, hung

A person is hanged, a picture is hung.

hangar, hanger

A hangar is a building, often for storing aircraft. A hanger is used for clothes.

Holland

Use the Netherlands except in place lines, where it is just Netherlands, e.g. ARNHEM, Netherlands, ...

hospitalise, hospitalisation

Avoid outside the U.S. Prefer “taken to hospital.”

hyphenation

Usage varies widely and many words once hyphenated are now generally written un-hyphenated, e.g. ceasefire, cooperation, gunrunner, machinegun. Refer to The Reuters Handbook of Journalism here: <http://handbook.reuters.com/index.php?title=H>

IED

Military jargon and abbreviation for Improvised explosive device. IED is acceptable on second reference. Roadside bomb is an alternative.

injuries, wounds

Wounds are suffered in combat or are inflicted by weapons or war, injuries by accident or criminal attack. Be as specific as possible, e.g., “His right leg was broken,” not “His leg was broken.” Write “His left arm was broken,” not “He suffered an arm fracture.” Use “suffered” rather than “sustained” or “received.”

internet

internet - no initial capital. The global data communications system comprising hardware and software that connects computers. The World Wide Web consists of content accessed using the internet but is not synonymous with it. The web (no initial capital) is a collection of documents and other resources linked by hyperlinks, or URLs. The internet also carries, for example, email and downloadable software. Also intranet (no initial capital) for a private network inside an organisation.

Interpol

The International Criminal Police Organisation (Lyon, France). Interpol can be used at all references.

Islamic State (IS)

Reuters uses Islamic State on first reference and IS on second reference, and avoids ISIS and ISIL. Islamic State refers to the Islamic militant organization that broke with the al Qaeda network in 2013 and took control of large parts of Iraq and Syria, where in 2014 it declared a caliphate, a traditional form of Islamic rule. It is largely made up of Sunni militants from Iraq and Syria but has drawn jihadi fighters from across the Muslim world and Europe.

The group was originally known as Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), or Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and is sometimes also referred to

by its Arabic acronym Da'ish or Daesh from "ad-Dawlah al-Islamiyah fi'l-Iraq wa-sh-Sham", but on June 29, 2014 the group proclaimed itself a worldwide caliphate and renamed itself "ad-Dawlah al-Islamiyah" or Islamic State (IS).

jihād

An Islamic holy war or struggle. It can also refer to individual's moral struggle. Use with extreme care.

jihādī, jihādīst

Jihadists are Islamists who employ extreme violence to further their stated aims usually including establishing a government based on Islamic principles, for example, al Qaeda. They embrace the global ideology of violent jihad, even if they remain only local actors, like Islamic State in its current guise.

"Jihādī" and "jihādīst" are not "terms of abuse" but expressions that have specific meaning and are widely used in specialist academic literature and counterinsurgency circles. A number of Islamist groups, of course, actively embrace the term themselves.

By contrast "Islamists" are adherents of political Islam, i.e., they believe Islam should guide social, political and personal action but do not necessarily advocate violence. The leaders of some Muslim countries are now Islamists.

Even where Islamists support the use of violence to secure their goals, we should always use the terms "jihādī" and "jihādīst" with caution and in context. We would not ordinarily refer to Hamas or Hezbollah as jihadist organisations, even though they sometimes use violence to pursue their goals, because they have a narrower focus. Should their political foes refer to them as jihadists, that is a different matter. But we should be clear that this is someone else's opinion. If in doubt, always check.

Kilometre

Use km (no full stop, same singular and plural) at all references, except in a phrase such as hundreds of kilometres.

km per hour

First reference, kph on second and subsequent references.

knot

A measure of nautical miles (or 1.15 statute miles) per hour used by ships or aircraft. Do not convert to miles-per-hour. Do not write "knots per hour".

Koran

Use Koran for the Muslim holy book. (AP uses Quran). Use alternate spellings only if preferred by a specific organization as part of a name or title.

Large-scale

Big is shorter and usually better.

leave

As a verb, weak and imprecise. Use a more accurate and active verb. "The attack killed three and wounded more than 20," not "The attack left three killed." "Duffy suffered torn ligaments after two clumsy tackles," not "Two clumsy tackles left Duffy with torn ligaments."

lifestyle

Use as one word

lorry

A large vehicle designed to move heavy loads. British English for what in American English is a "truck".

maintain

Use this word with care. When used as a verb, it can suggest reporters are sceptical about the statement quoted.

Marseille

The second largest city in France, after Paris. Use Marseille, not the alternative Marseilles.

May Day, Mayday

May Day is a May 1 holiday in large parts of the world. Originally a spring fertility festival, involving dancing around a maypole and other rites, it is now often associated with the labour union movement. Mayday is the international radiotelephone distress signal, used by ships and aircraft.

Medal of Honor

The highest U.S. military honor, awarded by Congress. Do not refer to "Congressional Medal of Honor." Note: U.S. spelling of Honor in this case.

medevac

Use medical evacuation.

men

Do not use "men" if referring to a group of persons made up of men and women or a group of individuals whose genders are unknown. Use Sailors or Marines if the group is military or service members if several services are represented.

metric system

When abbreviating metric units use the singular form without a full stop, e.g., kg or km not kgs or kms. The following need not be spelled out on first mention: kg, km, lb, cm, mm and m. The Lynx Editor conversion function will abbreviate most measures automatically. Convert metres to feet for distances up to 10 metres, to yards for longer distances. To convert metres to feet, multiply by 3.28; to convert metres to yards multiply by 1.094. See also conversions, pound and ton/tonne, and <http://www.megaconverter.com/mega2/>

metric ton

We use both tons and tonnes, without having to give a conversion, but you must make clear what kind of ton(ne) is meant, using the terms long and short where appropriate. The three measures are: tonne – 2,204.6 pounds (1,000 kg), formerly called metric ton long ton – 2,240 pounds (or 20 hundredweights, 20 x 112 pounds). short ton – 2,000 pounds, American ton.

Military

Avoid military jargon. However, an attempt should be made to explain the military situation.

Middle East

The term usually included Iran, Iraq, Israel, Kuwait, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Egypt and Sudan. Compare Maghreb.

Military titles

- a. Ranks should never be abbreviated and should be capitalised when referring to a specific individual.
- b. In general, ranks in the armed forces of the main English-speaking countries such as the United States, Britain and Australia are not hyphenated, e.g. Lieutenant Colonel, Rear Admiral, Air Chief Marshal. However, there are exceptions, such as Canada and India, which hyphenate their titles and we should follow the local practice.
- c. At second and subsequent reference, use the surname OR his or her rank, e.g. Major General John Brown becomes either Brown or the general (not the major general).

Ranks in the non-English-speaking world should be translated without hyphens.

mine hunting

Use as two words.

minehunter

Use as one word.

NASA

The U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration. In headlines or on first reference, the abbreviation NASA is acceptable for readability, but spell out in full on second reference.

National names

- a. You need not specify a minister's nationality in the first paragraph of a story that names the country and comes from a dateline in that country. Under a Washington dateline, for example, write: Secretary of State Joan Smith said on Friday the United States would... not U.S. Secretary of State Joan Smith said on Friday the United States would ...
- b. There is likewise no need to specify the nationality of groups that obviously are of the nationality of the country datelined. Under an Athens dateline it is Police arrested not Greek police arrested.

Nationalities

Nationalities are written out in full and not abbreviated in stories and in sports results. The only exception is U.S. for United States. Use Britain and British (not United Kingdom or Great Britain). Use The Netherlands (not Holland) and Taiwan (not Chinese Taipei). Distinguish between North and South Korea.

NATO

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation the Western Military Alliance founded in 1949. The initials may be used by themselves at first reference with the full name given later in the story.

NATO Media Information Centres (NMICS)

Netherlands

In text write the Netherlands, in place lines omit the article, e.g. ARNHEM, Netherlands.

Non-English Language Phrases

Use such phrases or quotes only in exceptional cases, for instance where no generally recognised English equivalent exists. They must always be explained, e.g. dismissing the libel action, the judge said, "De minimis non curat lex" (a Latin phrase meaning "The law does not concern itself with very small matters").

Non-commissioned officers/NCO's

Military personnel from the ranks of OR-4 – OR-9

Nordic countries

Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Scandinavia comprises only Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Because of the danger of confusion, list the countries even if you use Nordic or Scandinavia in a lead for the sake of brevity.

North Atlantic Council (NAC)

The North Atlantic Council is the principal political decision-making body within NATO. It oversees the political and military process relating to security issues affecting the whole Alliance. It brings together representatives of each member country to discuss policy or operational questions requiring collective decisions, providing a forum for wide-ranging consultation between members on all issues affecting their peace and security.

numbers

dates, times

Spell out the digits one to nine in text except for dates and times, when figures should always be used, e.g., “The four foreign ministers will meet at 6 p.m. (1700 GMT) on March 3.” The other exception is for some business and market usages e.g. 2-year note, 3.0 percent etc.

The same applies to ordinal numbers: first, second, third, etc., up to ninth, then 10th 100th 144th, etc. But always use numbers for court and political districts: the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, the 9th Ward, etc.).

ages

Use numerals in ages (a 4-year-old) and before millions and billions (2 million, 5 billion). Use numerals before per cent (6 per cent). Use numerals for dimensions: “He lost 4 cm from the end of his finger.”

10 and above

Write 10 and above as figures, except at the start of a sentence, e.g., “Fourteen people were killed when 20 tons of ice crashed through the roof.” Do not, however, start a sentence with a complex figure, e.g., “Two hundred and forty-three runners finished the Boston marathon ...” Where possible, rewrite the sentence to avoid starting with a number if it is long and clumsy.

rounding

- Round off unwieldy figures, e.g., “Japan produced 1.45 million cars in the six months ended...” not, “Japan produced 1,453,123 cars...” As a rule, round off millions to the nearest 10,000, thousands to the nearest 100, hundreds to the nearest 10.
- Figures are normally rounded to two significant decimals, with halves rounded upward. Thus, 15.564 becomes 15.56, while 15.565 becomes 15.57.
- Where totals do not add up because of rounding, this should be explained.

When reporting decimalized figures, always use a full stop, e.g., 42.5. Do not follow the practice in continental Europe of using a comma instead of a decimal point. When reporting thousands, use a comma, not a full stop: 10,000.

ranges

- Repeat the denominator when describing a range of figures, e.g., “\$22 million to \$30 million,” not “\$22 to \$33 million.”
- When reporting a range of figures, use the style “1.2 billion to 1.4 billion,” not “1.2-1.4 billion” or “between 400 and 500 miles,” not “between 400-500 miles.”

OECD

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (French: Organisation de coopération et de développement économiques, OCDE) is an international economic organisation of 34 countries, based in Paris, and founded in 1961 to stimulate economic progress and world trade. It is a forum of countries describing themselves as committed to democracy and the market economy, providing a platform to compare policy experiences, seeking answers to common problems, identify good practices and coordinate domestic and international policies of its members.

officials

Do not describe government ministers as officials.

over

Use 'more than' with numbers, e.g., more than 100, not over 100. This is often used instead of 'because of' or 'about." Workers are striking over pay. Keep 'over' for place, e.g., over the moon.

percent

When writing about percentages, use %. When spelled out, write percent.

The % symbol should always be paired with a numeral, with no space in between: 1%, 10%, 100%.

For amounts less than 1%, be sure to precede the decimal with a zero: The stock rose 0.2%.

For lack of a numeral, the following sentence should be written: She said he has a zero percent chance of winning.

Beware that in describing a gap in polling for instance, we should spell out percentage: She was leading by 4 percentage points.

pilots

Military aircraft other than strategic bombers and transports normally carry only one pilot. Write the two crewmen, specifying pilot and one co-pilot or navigator, when reporting incidents involving fighter-bombers and the like.

Place lines

Write the city in upper case. The country is in upper and lower case. A dash between spaces separates the place line from the opening paragraph of the text. The names cities that are recognised by an international readership can stand alone, but if there is any doubt then use the name of the country, or in the case of the U.S. the state, as well in lower case.

plane

Use aircraft.

police

Use police officers, not policemen.

Portuguese names

Portuguese and Brazilians, like the Spanish, include the family names both of their father and their mother in their full names. Unlike the Spanish, they put the mother's name before the father's and they normally retain both names at second reference. Where they use one it would always be the patronymic, i.e., the last name. Thus Jose Cabral Nettim could be either Cabral Nettim or Nettim at second reference.

pound

Spell out. The abbreviation lb for weight (with no full stop and the same in the singular and the plural) can cause confusion internationally.

proper names

If proper names are in English, use the style and spelling as it appears on the organisation's nameplate and business cards, e.g., Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Scottish Labour Party, U.S. Department of Defense. If proper names are translated into English, use the spelling convention of that region.

Common nouns are capitalised when they are an integral part of the full name or title of a person, organisation or thing, e.g., the queen but Queen Elizabeth, the sultan but the Sultan of Brunei, the finance ministry but the Ministry of Finance, the river but the River Thames.

quotations

Quotes personalize stories and add colour to other evidence provided by data or logical argument.

Be sure that the quotes you use support the thrust of the story and are not just decoration. Also aim for quotes that are representative of the range of opinion on the subject in question rather than being used to selectively support one party or the other.

Quotes are sacred. Do not alter anything put in quotation marks. Avoid fragmented quotes unless the words are unusual, contentious or colourful. If the words omitted are at the end of a sentence and are followed by another sentence in quotation marks, then the next word is capitalised to show the start of a new sentence. "We will fight and we will win ... We will never surrender." You may drop words in this way only if the deletion does not alter the sense of the quote.

Red Cross

The Red Cross movement comprises: the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (formerly the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies); and more than 160 national societies around the world. Give the ICRC title in full at first reference; do not abbreviate to the "International Red Cross" since such a body does not exist. For the sake of brevity in a lead paragraph you can refer to a Red Cross official or spokesman as long as you make clear lower in the story which organisation he belongs to.

SEAL

Sea, Air, Land. SEAL is acceptable on first reference. If plural, use SEALs.

Security Council

The 15-member United Nations Security Council in New York is the body that takes many of the decisions on U.N. action around the world, often through numbered resolutions, e.g. Resolution 649. It consists of five permanent members with the power of veto over any resolution – Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States. There are also 10 non-permanent members of the Security Council, made up of other U.N. countries that serve in rotation, representing different areas of the world. The Security Council presidency rotates monthly, by English alphabetical listing of its member states.

The U.N. Security Council becomes the council (lower case) at second reference.

Service Components

- a. Service components are never capitalised when referring to the service as a whole, e.g. the U.S. army, the French navy. Exceptions are armies that have a unique name, e.g. the Palestine Liberation Army, the Red Army. Capitalise army when referring to a specific formation, e.g. the U.S. 1st Army, the British 8th Army. Use figures for military units: 1st Army not First Army.
- b. Air force. Two words unless referring to U.S. Air Force One.
- c. Marine. Capitalise when referring to the U.S. Marine Corps or when referring to its members, e.g. Six U.S. Marines, the U.S. Marines, Marine operations. Do not refer to them as "soldiers".

Ships

- a. Warship. A naval vessel, though not necessarily an armed one. The term does imply the ship is a combatant but a fleet auxiliary – a navy ship carrying stores, fuel and ammunition – is a warship. Warships vary in armament and in size, from a few hundred tonnes to tens of thousands. Identify the type – e.g. fast patrol-boat, corvette, frigate, destroyer, cruiser. Never use battleship as a synonym for warship.
- b. Aircraft carrier. A floating airfield, it carries fixed-wing aircraft on its flight deck and/or helicopters. It should not be confused with other classes of warship, such as frigate, destroyer or cruiser. These may also carry helicopters but they are not aircraft carriers.

- c. Assault ship. A warship designed to support amphibious and air operations against a land-based enemy. They carry helicopters, landing craft, commandos or marines, and may carry amphibious armoured vehicles.
- d. Battleship. A specific class of warship, the battleship is obsolete. It is not to be confused with other classes like corvette, minesweeper, patrol boat, frigate, and destroyer. Do not use as a synonym for warship.
- e. Submarine. In naval parlance a boat rather than a ship. A submarine may fight submerged or on the surface, using torpedoes or missiles – the missiles being tactical or strategic. There are two main submarine types depending on the method of propulsion: nuclear and diesel electric.

ship names

Do not use HMS or USS to designate British or American warships if the nationality of the ship is already clear. Write the British frigate Battleaxe not the British frigate HMS Battleaxe. But in place lines write, for instance, ABOARD HMS BATTLEAXE. Routinely check the names of ships in Jane's Fighting Ships, Lloyd's Register or the weekly Lloyd's Shipping Index. Do not put quotation marks round the names of ships. Always use neuter pronouns.

Spelling

The general guide for spelling within Allied Command Operations is the Oxford English Dictionary. Copy originating elsewhere should follow British spelling norms. At all times stick to official spellings for American names and titles, such as U.S. Defense Secretary XXXX. Watch out for regional words that non-English language services and clients will find difficult to understand and translate.

spokesman, spokeswoman

not spokesperson. If the sex of the person is not known, use representative.

team member

Use as two words

Titles

- a. Capitalise an official's title, or a former official's title e.g. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, former U.S. President George Bush, deposed King Constantine, Attorney General-designate Griffin B. Bell, Acting Mayor Peter Barry.
- b. Honorific or courtesy titles such as Professor, Dean, Mayor, Ambassador and the like are capped when used before a name (e.g., Professor Harold Bloom). In the US, the wife of the president is known as the first lady (no caps). Abbreviate Mr, Mrs, Ms, Dr, and only use Mr, Mrs, Ms in quoted material. When necessary to distinguish between two people who use the same last name, as in married couples or brothers or sisters, use the first and last name.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom comprises Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Great Britain comprises England, Wales and Scotland. Use the full or abbreviated form (UK) only to emphasise the inclusion of Northern Ireland with England, Scotland and Wales or if hard-pressed for headline space.

UK

For United Kingdom, no full stops. UK should be avoided as an adjective unless part of a common term or compound noun, e.g. UK gilts.

Ukraine

Not "the Ukraine."

under way

Usually two words. Write "began" or "started" rather than "got under way." One word if the meaning is "occurring, performed, or used while travelling or in motion" (underway replenishment of fuel).

United Nations

Spell it out at first reference when used as a noun. It may be abbreviated to U.N. in a headline. As an adjective it can be also be abbreviated at first reference, e.g. the U.N. General Assembly, U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. Security Council: the 15-member United Nations Security Council in New York is the body that takes many of the decisions on U.N. action around the world, often through numbered resolutions, e.g. Resolution 649. It consists of five permanent members with the power of veto over any resolution – Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States. There are also 10 non-permanent members of the Security Council, made up of other

U.N. countries that serve in rotation, representing different areas of the world. The Security Council presidency rotates monthly, by English alphabetical listing of its member states.

United States

Spell it out at all references in text when used as a noun. It may be abbreviated to U.S. in a headline. As an adjective, it can also be abbreviated at first reference, e.g. the U.S. State Department. Do not use USA except in quoted passages. Do not use the noun America as a synonym for the United States, although you may use American instead of U.S. as an adjective.

Units, Formations

- a. Units, formations, army – Use capitals when you write the title of a specific unit e.g. the 1st Infantry Division but otherwise say division. Also note that there are many national exceptions to these broad definitions.
- b. Squad. The basic building block of an army, equivalent to the British section of eight soldiers. Three squads/sections form a platoon.
- c. Platoon. The essential tactical unit in any army, capable of patrolling, attacking and defending independently. Usually about 30-strong, an infantry platoon typically has three sections or squads. The platoon may be led by a sergeant or a junior commissioned officer. It may have its own light machinegun and mortar units of two or three men each as well as anti-tank weapons and possibly shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles. In a cavalry (armoured) unit the platoon is often called a troop of three or four vehicles. Some armies use troop instead of platoon in their artillery units.
- d. Company. Usually three platoons commanded by a major or captain. In a cavalry unit the term squadron may be used. Artillery may be organised in batteries of six to a dozen guns, rocket-launchers or mortars.
- e. Battalion. A battalion comprises about 500 to 1,000 soldiers, broken down into companies, platoons, squads or sections. It is usually commanded by a lieutenant colonel. Some armies use the term regiment for a tank or artillery battalion.
- f. Brigade. Several battalions or regiments grouped together.
- g. Division. A group of brigades. Usually commanded by a major general, it can contain all elements needed to operate independently and is then effectively a small self-contained army.
- h. Corps. Usually at least two divisions. Often commanded by a lieutenant-general.

- i. Army. At least two corps. Tends to be the command of a full five-star general or, a marshal or field marshal.
- j. Infantry. Soldiers who fight on foot. Mechanised infantry refers to foot soldiers carried to the battlefield in trucks.
- k. Regiment. Be careful with this term. Use varies. Find out precisely what is meant in any particular case. It can be used as a synonym for either a battalion or a brigade. Also, a regiment in the British army may have one or more battalions but these rarely serve together as or in a brigade. The 1st battalion of the Royal Halberdiers may be part of an armoured brigade formed for service in the Middle East while the 2nd battalion of the same regiment is in Scotland.
- l. Special forces. Lower case unless referring to a specific unit title.
- m. Squadron. As with regiment, be careful. Many but not all cavalry (armoured) regiments are broken down into squadrons and troops. Some air forces are organised on the basis of squadrons – each with several flights – and grouped as wings. The term squadron may also refer to a group of ships, a small fleet usually put together for some particular task.
- n. Task force. A force organised for an operation.
- o. Troops. Use in the plural for large, round numbers – scores, hundreds, thousands – of soldiers, not for small specific numbers. France sent 5,000 troops to the Gulf is right.

Weapons

- a. Air-to-ground. Hyphenate. Also anti-aircraft.
- b. Artillery. Avoid saying “big guns” or “heavy artillery” to dramatize events.
- c. SAM. Surface-to-air missile - spell out on all references.
- d. WMD. Weapons of mass destruction. Spell out on first reference. Usually taken to mean biological, chemical and nuclear weapons.

Web, website, webcast

woman, women

Preferred to "female."

World War One/Two

Not First/Second World War. Not WWI / WWII.

Years

Use figures, without commas: 1975. When a phrase refers to a month, day and year, set off the year with a comma: Feb. 14, 1987. Use an 's' without apostrophe to indicate spans of decades or centuries: the 1890s, the 1800s. Years are the lone exception to the general rule in numerals that a figure is not used to start a sentence: 1976 was a very good year.

Yesterday

Use only in direct quotations and in phrases that do not refer to a specific day; otherwise Reuters uses the specific day of the week e.g. Monday for the sake of clarity given the global nature of the readership. The same applies to 'tomorrow'.

ZULU

A term used by Western military forces to mean GMT. Also used to represent the letter Z in the international phonetic alphabet used in military communications. Also, Zulu, a member of an ethnic group living mainly in Natal, Republic of South Africa and whose language is Bantu.