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Office of the Director of National Intelligence
Information Management Division
Washington, DC 20511

JUL 15 2014

Reference: ODNI Case # DF-2014-00245

This is in response to your email dated 20 June 2014 (Enclosure 1), received in the Information Management Division of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) on 23 June 2014. Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), you requested a copy of the ODNI Style Manual.

Your request was processed in accordance with the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552, as amended. We are providing you with copies of the ODNI Official Style Book (Enclosure 2) and the ODNI Writing Guide (Enclosure 3). Material was withheld pursuant to FOIA Exemption (b)(6), which applies to records which, if released, would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of the personal privacy of individuals.

If you consider this to be a denial of your request, you have the right to appeal this determination. Should you decide to file an appeal, please explain the basis of your appeal and forward to the address below within 45 days of the date of this letter.

Office of the Director of National Intelligence
Information Management Office
Washington D.C. 20511

Sincerely,



Jennifer Hudson
Director, Information Management Division

Enclosures

Enclosure 2



OFFICE OF THE
DIRECTOR OF
NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

OFFICIAL STYLE BOOK

2011

INTRODUCTION

This *Official Style Book* explains how to apply ODNI branding to all ODNI products.

This guidance is mandatory because it is integral to our mission.

Establishing consistent branding is efficient and fiscally responsible.
It also ensures that our work – including our ideas, value, and expertise
– is associated with and credited to ODNI.



For questions about the ODNI *Official Style Book*,
please contact the ODNI Public Affairs Office at [redacted] or email DNI-PAO.

(b)(6)

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APPEARANCE

The ODNi seal is our organization's primary visual element. **The seal must appear on all printed and electronic materials.**

For precision and consistency, it must be reproduced from the approved digital files located on the Executive Secretariat website.

No alterations may be made to the seal – including proportion, size relationships, and placement of elements.

For further guidance on use of the ODNi seal, see ODNi Instruction 2005.8, *Official Use of the Name, Initials, or Seal of the ODNi*.



PLACEMENT

The ODNi seal must appear prominently on the front of all ODNi materials.

When used with all other official seals or logos, the ODNi seal always appears to the **left** or on **top** of those elements. The ODNi seal is always equal to or larger than other seals or logos in size.

Component Seals

The only ODNi components with official seals of their own are ODNi's congressionally-authorized mission centers – National Counterterrorism Center, National Counterproliferation Center, National Intelligence Council, and Office of the National Counterintelligence Executive.

Mission centers must include the ODNi seal with their own seals to ensure a clear association with the ODNi.



The IC Seal

The IC seal that should be used on all printed and electronic ODNi products is the gold, monochrome version, available on the Executive Secretariat website.



Logos

A logo is a graphic symbol for an office, project, or program. ODNi components may develop logos as long as they do not incorporate aspects of the ODNi seal or closely resemble a seal.



OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

When "Office of the Director of National Intelligence" is spelled out and used as a design element, it should appear in **Sylfaen** font. It should not be used in place of the ODNI seal.

LEADING INTELLIGENCE INTEGRATION

The tagline, "Leading Intelligence Integration," is ODNI's guiding principle.

It may be used on any printed or electronic materials in which the ODNI seal also appears. It should not be used in place of the ODNI seal.

When the tagline is used as a design element, it should appear centered in **Verdana** font, small caps, with 1.2 point character spacing.

Helvetica Arial Times New Roman

The preferred fonts for the body text of ODNI materials - Helvetica, Arial, and Times New Roman - have been carefully selected for readability.

Note that when you access any of the ODNI templates on the Executive Secretariat website, the text will automatically appear in one of the preferred fonts.

COLORS

This palette includes the colors that appear in the official ODNI seal.

To replicate them in your materials, printing industry professionals should refer to the Pantone Matching System®, and those working in Microsoft Word® or PowerPoint® should select the RGB values shown here (open the Microsoft color palette, click "more colors," and click "custom").



PANTONE® 282

RGB Values:
Red: 0
Green: 33
Blue: 71



PANTONE® 124

RGB Values:
Red: 237
Green: 172
Blue: 0



PANTONE® 5545

RGB Values:
Red: 72
Green: 107
Blue: 96



PANTONE® 188

RGB Values:
Red: 122
Green: 37
Blue: 29



PANTONE® 4635

RGB Values:
Red: 148
Green: 94
Blue: 58



PANTONE® 1595

RGB Values:
Red: 218
Green: 94
Blue: 23

One-seal and two-seal versions of required and recommended templates are available on the **Executive Secretariat** website on the ODN Connection.

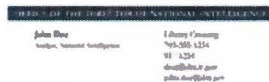
PRODUCT TEMPLATES - REQUIRED



Certificates



Biographies



Business Cards

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE
WASHINGTON, DC 20511

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE
CHIEF STENOGRAPHIC OFFICER
WASHINGTON, DC 20511

Name and Address

Dear:

Body 1

Body 2

Secretary,

Enclosures (if applicable)

cc: if applicable

Official Stationery



Fax Covers

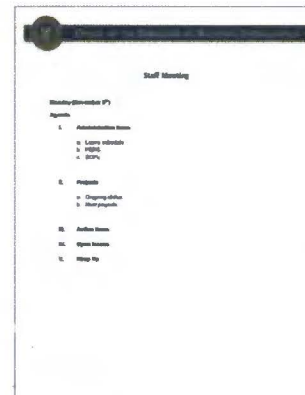
One-seal and two-seal versions of required and recommended templates are available on the **Executive Secretariat** website on the ODNI Connection. For custom designed material, contact **Publishing and Creative Services**.



Reports



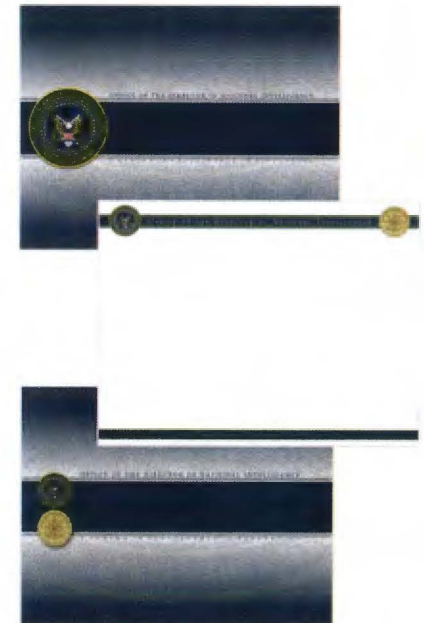
Folders



Memo/Agenda



Signage



PowerPoint Presentations

AWARDS

ODNI awards are managed by Human Resources under the guidance of Instruction 72.02, *ODNI Awards and Recognition Program*.

Intelligence Community awards are managed by the Chief Human Capital Office under the guidance of ICD 655, *National Intelligence Awards Program*.

ODNI component offices may not create additional official awards.

For certificate options, contact Publishing and Creative Services.

WEBSITES

The creation of official public websites is governed by ODNI Instruction 85.03, *Management of Domain Names and Content on ODNI Public Websites*.

The guidance contained in this *Official Style Book* applies equally online. Internal and external websites must reflect the same ODNI identity as all other visual products.

For questions, please contact the ODNI Public Affairs Office at [REDACTED]

(b)(6)

COINS

Officials authorized to purchase coins with representational funds are limited to those listed in ODNI Instruction 80.01, Appendix B, *Official Representational Funding and Expense Policy*.

All ODNI coins must contain the ODNI seal on one side (as shown); the reverse side may contain the title or seal of a congressionally-mandated mission center – National Counterterrorism Center, National Counterproliferation Center, National Intelligence Council, and Office of the National Counterintelligence Executive. The title or logo of an ODNI office, program, or project may not appear on a coin.

All coin designs must be submitted to the ODNI Public Affairs Office for review prior to purchase. For further guidance on funding the purchase of coins, please contact the Office of the General Counsel.



Thank you for your support of this important effort.

ODNI stands to gain invaluable cost savings and unity from this initiative.

One team. One vision.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions about these guidelines contact:

ODNI Public Affairs Office

Lotus Notes: DNI-PAO

Secure: [REDACTED]

Publishing and Creative Services

Lotus Notes: CRI_IPS_Creative Services

Secure: [REDACTED]

(b)(6)

For an electronic version of this *Official Style Book*
and all ODNI templates and official seals,
see the Executive Secretariat website.



OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE



WRITING GUIDE

2013

Enclosure
3



ODNI WRITING GUIDE

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PREFACE

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) has designed the *ODNI Writing Guide* to help you prepare professional, executive-level correspondence. This guide addresses conventional writing, style, grammar, and punctuation topics that are the basis for standardizing ODNI materials.

Our goal is to provide an intuitive, on-line, desktop guide containing helpful hints, useful format examples, and guidance to improve the quality and consistency of written products. We intend for this guide to be an evolving resource; additional topics and updates will be incorporated as needed.

If you have questions or comments, please contact:

(b)(6)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (secure)

[REDACTED] (commercial)

E-mail: DNI-Editors on Lotus Notes

NOTE:

This guide should be used in conjunction with the *ODNI Task and Correspondence Handbook*. The handbook provides detailed guidance on the mandated processes and procedures related to correspondence. It includes formats and templates specific to ODNI executive offices.

When writing press releases, refer to the *Associated Press Stylebook* guidelines if a conflict occurs with the *ODNI Writing Guide*.

THE MECHANICS OF WRITING



We have compiled writing, style, format, grammar, and punctuation guidelines to assist in developing consistent and professional ODNI executive correspondence. By instituting standard practices, the process will become easier and more efficient.

All professional communication requires preparation. Taking the time to carefully plan and prepare your communication will help you meet your objective and avoid confusion.

1. Analyze your purpose. What is the purpose of the communication? Is your goal to direct, inform, persuade, or inspire?
2. Determine your audience. Who will read the communication? Depending on the type of communication and coordination, you may deal with one or more individuals in the following categories:
 - Primary Receiver – Those who are intended to receive your communication.
 - Secondary Receiver – Those you indirectly communicate with through the primary receiver.
 - Coordinators/Facilitators – Those who staff and review communications and follow procedures for tasking, tracking, processing, and disseminating communications.
3. Decide the form of communication to use (e.g., letter or memorandum).
4. Research and assemble other information (new, background, etc.) to support your communication.

Once you have laid the groundwork, make your message clear:

1. Get to the point quickly. State your purpose up front. Make sure to include any information necessary to understand the context of the communication.
2. Organize the paragraphs logically. Use transitions to make sure that your audience knows where you are leading them.
3. Keep sentences clear and direct.
4. Conclude your message by summarizing the purpose and stating the desired result.¹

Write with nouns and verbs. Though adjectives and adverbs are important, nouns and verbs are the key to concise, powerful writing. Avoid using power-draining qualifiers such as *rather*, *very*, *little*, or *pretty*.

TIP:

When in Doubt, Respond in Kind

1. If you receive a letter, respond with a letter.
2. If you receive a memo, respond with a memo.
3. Although the ODNI prefers the military sequence of day-month-year for dates (1 January 2008), if the incoming uses the month-day-year sequence (January 1, 2008), then respond in kind.

Use plain, simple language, short words, and brief sentences. That is the way to write English — it is the modern way and the best way. Stick to it; don't let fluff and flowers and verbosity creep in. When you catch an adjective, kill it. No, I don't mean all, but kill most of them — then the rest will be valuable. They weaken when they are close together. They give strength when they are wide apart.

— Mark Twain

Active Voice vs. Passive Voice

Active voice, which is usually stronger and direct, should be the rule. Passive voice should be the exception. Passive voice in long, complex sentences can confuse readers or lose their attention. When the verb is in the active voice, the subject acts; when it is in the passive voice, the subject is acted upon.²

ACTIVE The ODNI approved the new policy.

PASSIVE The new policy was approved by the ODNI.

Sentences should always include an actor, whether it is an organization, an individual, or an idea. Who is the actor in the following sentence?

“A new policy regarding Internet security has been established.”

The sentence does not clearly identify the actor. *Who* established the new policy?

“The ODNI has established a new policy regarding Internet security.”

By identifying the actor, ODNI, it is clear who established a new policy.

Strong, Active Words

Avoid using empty actors such as *it is*, *there are*, and all their variations because they interfere with clarity.

VAGUE It is recommended that the Deputy Director of National Security implement the system.

The preceding sentence does not tell the reader *who* recommended implementing the system. Write clear messages by using actors that add substance to your meaning:

CLEAR The Director of National Security recommended that the Deputy Director of National Security implement the system.

Adverbs

Adverbs are words that answer the question *when*, *where*, *why*, *in what manner*, or *to what extent*. An adverb may be a single word (e.g., *speak clearly*), a phrase (e.g., *speak in a clear voice*), or a clause (e.g., *speak as clearly as you can*). An adverb modifies the meaning of a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. Place adverbs near the words they modify.

John closed the deal *quickly*. (*Quickly* modifies the verb *closed*.)

Jessica seemed *genuinely* pleased. (*Genuinely* modifies the adjective *pleased*.)

My presentation went *surprisingly* well. (*Surprisingly* modifies the adverb *well*.)³

Use Clear Verbs Instead of Hidden Verbs

Avoid hidden verbs such as *implementation*, *performance*, and *determination*; although these words refer to actions, they are disguised as nouns. The following sentence does not clarify *who* is doing the implementing.

VAGUE Implementation of new building security procedures is currently underway.

TIP:

USE

Must – to convey requirements

Must not – to convey prohibitions

May – for permission

Should – for preference

Will – to convey future action

Could – to convey capability

Clarify the meaning by including the appropriate actors and recasting the hidden verb as the action it actually represents.

CLEAR The *Defense Intelligence Agency* is currently implementing new building security procedures.

Concise Word Use

Avoid unnecessary words. Writers sometimes inadvertently increase the complexity of a sentence and decrease reader comprehension by including words or phrases that add no value to the meaning. Sentences filled with such “fluff” often convey passive, poorly structured messages.

ORIGINAL It has been determined that a review of the new protocol must be made in order to determine our best strategy for moving forward. (24 words.)

Cut extra and unnecessary words such as “it has been . . .,” “. . . a review of . . .,” and “. . . must be made in order to . . .,” to create a tighter, more direct message.

REVISED The ODNI has determined that we must review the new protocol to determine our best strategy for moving forward. (19 words.)

The following table shows examples of concise word use:

CONCISE WORD USE TABLE⁴	
Instead of Using	Use
with regard to, in the matter of, with reference to, in relation to	about
in accordance with	according to
despite the fact that, in spite of the fact	although
a minimum of	at least
as a result of, as a consequence of	because
by means of, by virtue of	by
in advance of, prior to, previous to	before
in favor of, for the period/purpose of	for
in the event that, if for some reason	if
in terms of	in
as a matter of fact	in fact
be cognizant of, be acquainted with	know
at some future time, at a later date	later
in the proximity of	near
at the present time, as of this date, at this point in time	now
on the occasion of	on
in view of the fact that, owing to the fact that	since
at an early date, in the near future, as soon as possible, sometime soon	soon
in order to, for the purpose of, so as to, with a view toward	to
utilize, utilization of	use

I have made this letter longer, because I have not had the time to make it shorter.
 – Blaise Pascal

Repeated Words

Unnecessarily repeated words signal poor structure. They can also bury the message as shown here:

ORIGINAL The policy must be strictly enforced. To ensure the policy is enforced, all ODNI component heads shall (17 words).

The most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do.

– Thomas Jefferson

Cut the repeated words by restructuring the sentence, paragraph, and even an entire document when necessary. You can then highlight the important information:

REVISED To ensure the policy is enforced, all ODNI component heads will (11 words).

Repeated Meaning

Another sign of poor structure is repeating meaning – writing the same message but using different words:

ORIGINAL Thank you for your efforts and energy on behalf of the members of the Military Services. We appreciate the dedication you have shown in representing their interests. We look forward to meeting with you on other issues of concern to the dedicated men and women (45 words).

REVISED We appreciate your dedication and efforts on behalf of the men and women who serve our country. We look forward to discussing additional concerns of interest to you (28 words).⁵

Redundant Combinations

Do not use redundancies that repeat, rather than reinforce, meaning. The following table illustrates some redundant word combinations.

REDUNDANT WORD COMBINATIONS TABLE ⁶		
absolutely complete	completely false	gather together
absolutely essential	contributing factor	important essentials
actual truth	dollar amount	integral part
added bonus	each and every	my own
alter or change	enclosed herewith	old patterns
and then	end result	personal opinion
assemble together	entirely complete	reduce down
basic fundamentals	exactly identical	refer back
cease and desist	final outcome	repeat again
center around	follows after	return back
contributing factor	free and clear	true and correct
close proximity	full and complete	very unique
collect together	future plans	vitaly essential

Reader Focus

Your message will be more effective if you identify your readers, what they know, and what they need to know. When you communicate to meet your readers’ needs, they are more likely to understand what you want, focus on key information, and take appropriate action.

Speak directly to the reader where appropriate. Avoid speaking in the third person. Doing so may obscure your point.

VAGUE The actions taken were most helpful to our objectives.
 CLEAR Your actions helped us meet our objectives.

By using the word *your*, you connect directly to your audience.

Tone

Avoid an overly formal or pretentious tone. Professional, natural language engages your reader. See the following table for alternatives to overly formal language.

TABLE – ALTERNATIVES FOR OVERLY FORMAL LANGUAGE ⁷			
<i>Formal</i>	<i>Professional</i>	<i>Formal</i>	<i>Professional</i>
accompany	go with	in the event that	if
accordingly	therefore/so	investigate	examine/study
aforementioned	these/the	justify	prove
appeared to be	seemed	materialize	appear
append	attach	mitigate	lessen
attributable	due	nebulous	vague
allotment	share of/portion of	negligible	small
antithesis	opposite	prior to	before
by means of	by	procure	get
cognizant of	aware of	provided that	if, when
commence	begin/start	rationale	reason
delineate	describe/outline	recommend	propose/suggest
effectuate	carry out	substantiate	prove/support
ensure	make sure	supersedes	replaces
erroneous	wrong/mistaken	terminate	end
exorbitant	too much	utilize	use
facilitate	ease, help along, further, aid	validate	confirm
foregoing	this/these	whereas	since/while
henceforth	from now on	whether or not	if
inasmuch as	because	with regard to	about
in order to	to		

Structure

Use a clear structure that states the most important information first. Start with the purpose and follow with supporting points in logical order.

Use transitions to help the reader mentally relate the preceding thought to the next idea. Make the information flow smoothly from point to point. See the following table for examples of types of orders and corresponding transitions.

TRANSITIONS TABLE	
<i>Types of Orders</i>	<i>Transitions</i>
Chronological	First, then, next... 9:00, 10:00, 11:00... Monday, Tuesday, Friday... This afternoon, by evening, the next day...
Equal Facts	One, two, three... First, second, third... In addition, also, finally... Bullets...
Least to most important	Significant, more significant, of most significance...
Compare and contrast	On the one hand, on the other hand... However... Similarly, in contrast... Actually...
Cause and effect	As a result... First, then, next...

Numbered or Bulleted Lists

Lists highlight a series of requirements or other information in a visually organized, concise, and clear way. ***There are few rules for creating lists, but the goal is to be stylistically consistent.***

Lists help your reader focus on important material. Use a lead-in to points that follow in a list. Numbered lists are best when the order of the items is significant (for example, assembly instructions). Keep points parallel by leading each one off with the same type of word (e.g., a verb or noun) and leading off with verbs in the same tense and voice. Lists help to achieve the following:

- Highlight levels of importance
- Help the reader understand the order in which things happen
- Make it easy for the reader to identify all the necessary steps in a process
- Make the document visually appealing

TIP:

Whatever format you choose, the important thing is to maintain consistency.

It is best not to use bullets if you only have one or two points. While lists are useful, their overuse can also chop up a document too much and make it hard to read. The key is balance and consistency.

Punctuating Lists

Use periods after independent clauses, dependent clauses, or long phrases that are displayed on separate lines in a list. Also, use periods after short phrases that are essential to the grammatical completeness of the statement introducing the list. (In each of the following examples, the three listed items are all objects of the preposition *on* in the introductory state.)

Please get me last year's figures *on*:

- Total job applicants.
- Number of applicants interviewed.
- Number of new hires.

OR: Please get me last year's figures *on*:

- a. Total job applicants.
- b. Number of applicants interviewed.
- c. Number of new hires.

Lists punctuated as a sentence. In a list that completes a sentence begun with an introductory element and consisting of phrases or sentences with internal punctuation, semicolons may be used between the items; a period should follow the final item.

In order to begin work, you will need to furnish:

1. A certified copy of your birth certificate;
2. Your social security card; and
3. Evidence of citizenship.

However, when these items are incorporated in a sentence, treat them as a series (with *and* inserted before the last item.) Separate the items in the series with commas or with semicolons as appropriate.

EXAMPLE:

In order to begin work, you will need to furnish (1) a certified copy of your birth certificate; (2) your social security card; and (3) evidence of citizenship.

No periods are needed after short phrases in a list if the introductory statement is grammatically complete or if the listed items are like those on an inventory sheet or a shopping list. (First word is capitalized, bullets can be used.)

The handheld computers in this price range offer the following features:

- 6-Inch LCD screen
- Rechargeable battery pack
- Leather carrying case

When you next order office supplies, please include:

- 12 Binders
- 24 padded mailing envelopes
- 1 package of mailing labels
- 2 toner cartridges

Tense

Use present tense whenever possible. Writing in present tense is more direct and less complicated.

INSTEAD OF THIS	TRY THIS
These instructions describe the types of information that would satisfy the application requirements as it would apply to a position in this office.	These instructions tell you how to meet the requirements to apply for a position in this office.

Even if you are writing about a past event, you can clarify the message by writing as much as possible in the present tense.

INSTEAD OF THIS	TRY THIS
Applicants who were federal employees at the time that the injury was sustained should have filed a compensation request at that time. Failure to do so could have an effect on the degree to which the applicant can be covered under this part.	You may not be covered under this part if: You were a federal employee at the time of the injury and You did not file a report with us at that time.

Abbreviations

An abbreviation is any shortened form of a word or phrase. Use only common abbreviations, and only those that you are certain your readers will understand. Conversely, spelling out some abbreviations might actually cause confusion. For example, the initials *p.m.* are more familiar than the formal term *post meridiem*. Use an abbreviation only if it will simplify the material.

Common Abbreviations

- e.g.** (*exempli gratia* means “for example.”) A good way to remember its use is to use the mnemonic, “example given.” [Note: Do not use *etc.*, with *e.g.*, because *e.g.*, implies an indefinite list.]
- etc.** (*et cetera* means “and so forth.”) Use it only in parenthetical references, lists, or tables, and set it off with commas. *Etc.* implies that there are other things.
- i.e.** (*id est* means “that is” or “in other words”.) A good mnemonic is “in explanation.” The *i.e.* generally indicates additional information, a clarification, or a rephrasing of the original statement in an effort to increase the reader’s understanding.
- et al.** (*et alii* means “and other people.”)

Common Abbreviations within Correspondence

State Names

Write state names out in full within correspondence. Do not use abbreviations.

Inside Addresses on Correspondence

Mr. John A. Doe

1201 New York Avenue, NW (spell out *Avenue, Street, Drive, Boulevard, etc.*) (NW, SW, etc., can be abbreviated.)

Arlington, VA 20005 (Use U.S. Postal Service (USPS) state abbreviations in address only.)

Outside Addresses

Formats for addresses on outside envelopes, labels, packages, etc., should follow the USPS standard format.

Name/Business

Apt. #, Suite

Street Address or PO Box Number

City/USPS state abbreviation/Zip

Post office equipment reads addresses from the bottom up.

U.S. Postal Service State Abbreviations

See [ExecSec Website](#)

Military Abbreviations

When a military title must be abbreviated, generally use the abbreviations shown in [ExecSec website link](#).

Military Abbreviations

See [ExecSec Website](#)

Abbreviations, Initialisms, and Acronyms

An *abbreviation* is a group of initial letters used for a name or expression with each letter pronounced separately. You may have also heard the term *initialism*, a relatively new expression, to describe this type of abbreviation.

ODNI – Office of the Director of National Intelligence

FBI – Federal Bureau of Investigation

U.S. – United States (preferred) – but again, consistency is the key.

An *acronym* is also a type of abbreviation, but *acronyms* are *abbreviations* pronounced as actual words.

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

MADD – Mothers Against Drunk Drivers

Nevertheless, of the three terms, *acronym* is probably the most widely known and used to describe any *abbreviation* formed from letters. Others differentiate between the two terms, restricting *acronyms* to pronounceable words formed by initials, and *initialisms* to *abbreviations* where each individual letter is pronounced.

Use abbreviations/initialisms or acronyms if a term is used more than once within a document. When the

TIPS:

1. "If in doubt, spell it out."

2. Avoid contractions:

USE

NOT

You are

you're

We will

we'll

term is first used, write it out completely and follow with the abbreviated form in parentheses.

Though the following guidelines use the term *acronym*, they apply to all three terms.

- Use an acronym if a term will be used more than once within a document. When the term is first used, write it out completely and follow with the abbreviated form in parentheses. For example, Director of National Intelligence (DNI).
- Do not use an acronym if the term is used only once.
- Write acronyms in capital letters without periods.
- Make acronyms plural by adding a lower case s – unless the last letter of the acronym is an S, in which case add an 's.
- Repeat the full term at regular intervals if you are preparing a long document.

However, consider this...is it really necessary to include the abbreviated form in parentheses when you are referring to the organization you are writing to?

ODNI Office Symbols

The ODNI has standardized office symbols for individuals as well as for offices and their components. Do not confuse office symbols with an individual.

Some examples:

DNI	Director of National Intelligence (person)
ODNI	Office of the Director of National Intelligence (office)
PDDNI	Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence (person)

Gender-Specific Language

We should be sensitive to the implied **gender bias** of words such as "chairman" and "mailman," as well to the possible bias in sentences using *he*, *she*, *his*, or *hers*. Within reason, it's best to use gender-neutral terms. But this doesn't mean we need to clutter things with terms like "his or her" or monstrosities such as "(s)he" and "s/he."

Example: Each manager should submit his or her report by COB today.

Four Ways to Avoid Using "His or Her"

- 1.) Use an article (a, an, the)
 - Each manager should submit a report by COB today.
- 2.) Use "you"
 - You should submit your report by COB today.
- 3.) Make the first term plural, and then use "their"
 - Managers_s should submit their reports by COB today.
- 4.) Write a passive construction.
 - Managers' reports should be submitted by COB today.

CAPITALIZATION GUIDELINES

Capitalization

Capitalization lends distinction, importance, and emphasis to certain words or phrases. It is no wonder, then, that the opinions of authoritative sources differ more often over capitalization than any other aspect of style. Although few firm and fixed rules exist for capitalization, consistency is the best policy. In fact, probably the most common error is to overcapitalize – especially in business, military, and government writing.

The following guidelines are presented with ordinary situations in mind. They should provide enough exposure to capitalization to enable you to make appropriate choices.

Basic Rules:

Capitalize the first word of:

- Every sentence.
- Expressions used as a sentence.
 - Congratulations!
 - Well done!
- Each item displayed in a list or outline.

EXAMPLE

Before you begin writing, you must do the following:

- Determine purpose and audience.
- Research the topic.
- Organize and outline.

Capitalize the following:

The first, last, and all other important words in titles of documents, publications, papers, and acts, including short or popular titles, and laws.*

Studies in Intelligence	National Security Strategy
National Intelligence Estimates	The Patriot Act
500 Day Plan	Executive Order
National Strategy for Homeland Security	Protect America Act of 2007
	Annual Report of the Congress

*Usually articles (*the, a, an*), prepositions (*at, by, for, in, of*), and short conjunctions (*and, as, but, if, or, nor*) in titles are not capitalized, unless it is the first word of the title (for example, The Patriot Act).

Proper names (the name of a person, place, or thing)

President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board	U.S. Marine Corps
National Security Council	Internet (do not capitalize intranet)
	Taliban

Titles preceding names

Director of National Intelligence, James R. Clapper; the Director
Secretary of Defense, Charles Hagel; the Secretary

Note: Do not capitalize the word *former* or the prefix *ex-* in front of a title e.g., former President Jimmy Carter.]

A common noun or adjective that forms an essential part of a proper name, but not a common noun used alone as a substitute for the name of a place or thing

Berlin Wall; the wall
the Potomac River; the river

the Washington Monument; the monument
Statue of Liberty; the statue

Names of regions, localities, and geographic features

the Midwest
the Gulf States
the Western Hemisphere

the Middle East
the Far East
the Eastern Shore

[However, do not capitalize a descriptive term that refers to direction or position unless it is part of a proper name (for example, West Virginia)]

north, south, east, west
southern Maryland

northern Iraq
northern Italy

Names of existing or proposed organized bodies and their shortened names

Central Intelligence Agency; the Agency

Walter Reed Army Medical Center; Walter Reed
World Wide Web; the Web

Names of military exercises, operations, concepts, etc.

Desert Storm
Operation Homecoming

Operation Enduring Freedom
Operation Red Dawn

Days of the week, months, holidays, and historic events

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, etc.
January, February, March, etc.
Veterans Day

World War II
Ramadan
Fourth of July

Full names of organizations

Federal Emergency Management Agency
National Intelligence Agency
the Federal* Government

National Intelligence Coordination Center
Department of Homeland Security
the United States Government

*Capitalize *federal* and *government* only when it is part of the official name of a federal government agency, act, or some other proper noun.

- the *Federal Government*; the federal government of the United States
- the *Federal Communications Commission*

Capitalize *State* only when it follows the name of a state.

- *Washington State*
 - Next year we plan to return to the *States* (meaning the *United States*).
- But Do not capitalize
- The contest is subject to *federal, state, and local laws*.

- We capitalize United States of America, but not the word *nation* or *country* or similar words.⁸
 - Capitalize *Congress*, (legislature), if referring to national congress
 - The *Congress* of the United States; the *Congress*; *82nd Congress*
- But Do not capitalize congressional action; congressional committee, etc.⁹

When should you use capital *Federal* or lowercase *federal*? Many people think the word always warrants a capital F. Although using capital or lowercase can be subjective, here are some guidelines.

Capitalize *Federal* when it is part of an official, proper noun.

- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- Federal Insurance Contributions Act

When writing about the *Federal Government* in its official capacity, you should capitalize both *Federal* and *Government*. In this instance, think of Federal as a replacement for U.S.

- The ODNI is a part of the Federal Government.
- This directive governs all Federal Government information systems.

Most of the time, however, we use *federal* simply as a form of general classification, which does NOT require capitalization.

- Once a year, federal employees have an opportunity to choose a health care provider.
- This issue is subject to federal, state, and local laws.
- This is a federal program using federal funds.

So, the next time you are writing about federal programs or issues, think twice about capitalization. More often than not, the correct answer to this question is *federal* not *Federal*.

Full proper names of a military entity, whether U.S. or foreign

the U.S. Air Force	the Air Force; but, the air forces (indirect, often plural)
the U.S. Army	the Army; but the army (indirect or general)
the U.S. Marine Corps	the Marines (the Corps); but marines (individuals)
the U.S. Navy	the Navy; but, the navy or the navies (indirect or general)
the Iraqi Army	the Army; but the army (indirect or general)

Lower case when not used as proper names for indirect or general references.

EXAMPLE: An army of ants moved in on the campsite.

NUMBERS

Numbers can be expressed as numerals or words. According to The Gregg Reference Manual:

Spell out numbers 1 through 10; use figures for numbers above 10. This rule applies to both exact and approximate numbers. However, use figures for 1 through 10 (as in the statement of this rule) when these numbers need to stand out for quick comprehension.

However,

Use all figures—even for the numbers 1 through 10 (as in this sentence) —when they have technical significance or need to stand out for quick comprehension. This all-figure style is used in tables, in statistical material, and in expressions of dates (May 3), money (\$6), clock time (4 p.m.), proportions and ratios (a 5-to-1 shot), sports scores (3 to 1), votes (a 6-3 decision), academic grades (95), and percentages (8 percent).¹⁰,

Cardinal Numbers

Numbers that indicate quantity, but not order (1, 2, 3, etc.).

Do not use cardinal numbers side by side.

NOT In 2013, 12 new bridges were built.

USE Twelve new bridges were built in 2013.

Numbers Expressed in Figures and Words

Spell out numbers one through nine except in street numbers and when defining time, distance, and measurement.

- We will meet five people at the restaurant.
- 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC.
- We were parked at least 5 feet from the no parking sign for 6 hours.
- At least 3 inches of snow accumulated.

Use figures for numbers 10 and over.

- The conference room can hold 50 people.

Spell out numbers that begin sentences.

- Ten people attended the meeting.

Combinations of Numbers

In sentences with combinations of numbers below or above 10, use figures for all the numbers.

- The parade included 300 children, 10 floats, and 6 horses.
OR The parade included one Boy Scout troop, six floats, and eight horses.

However, use the same style to express related numbers above and below 10.

- The *six* men consumed a total of *12* steaks, *6* large bottles of soda, *14* ice cream bars, and probably *200* cookies in *one* sitting. (Figures are used for all the related items of food; the other numbers – *six* and *one* – are spelled out since they are not related and are not over 10).

Numbers for Legal Purposes

Some legal documents may require that numbers be expressed first in words and then, within parentheses, in figures.

- Return the signed document within thirty (30) days.

Ordinal Numbers

Numbers that indicate order in a particular series (first/1st, second/2nd, third/3rd, etc.).

- Technological advances soared in the 20th century.
- The sale runs through the 2nd of August.

Expressing Large Numbers in Abbreviated Form

In technical and informal contexts and in material where space is tight (such as tables), large numbers may be abbreviated.¹¹

- 50K (50,000); K stands for kilo, signifying thousands
- 5.5M (5,500,000); M stands for mega, signifying millions
- 5.75G (5,750,000,000); G stands for giga, signifying billions
- 5.5T (5,500,000,000,000); T stands for *tera*, signifying trillions

Dates

The ODNI uses the military style for dates in memorandums and letters. Write the complete date in day-month-year sequence: 1 January 2013

However, if you are responding to a communication that used the traditional month-day-year sequence, *respond in kind*: January 1, 2013. Always place a comma after the day. If the month-day-year sequence is within a sentence, commas are used both before and after the year.

Examples of commas and other punctuation with expressions of dates:

- January 2013 (comma is not required between the month and the year, nor after).
- Use commas before and after the year in the month-day-year style. (The January 1, 2013, press conference elicited little new information.)
- When the day follows the month, use a cardinal number (1, 2, 3, etc.) (January 1, 2013).
- On January 1 (not January 1st or January first).
- Well-known years may appear in abbreviated form. (*Summer of '42*, the Great Hurricane of '38.)
- The form 1/1/13 (representing the month-day-year sequence) is acceptable on business forms and informal letters and memos. Avoid it, however, if there is any chance the reader may confuse it with the day-month-year sequence.

Fiscal Year

The polls are in and we have not reached a consensus; it appears there are no hard rules on the use of *fiscal year*. Follow the Office of Management and Budget's formats shown below. However, if you have a preference, the other forms are acceptable.

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| 1. fiscal year 2013 | } | The Office of Management and Budget uses these formats |
| 2. FY 2013 | | |
| 3. fiscal year (FY) 2013 | | Use for first entry, thereafter FY 2013 |
| 4. Fiscal Year 2013 | | |
| 5. FY2013 | | |
| 6. FY13 | | Suggest use only on tables where space is limited |

✓ **There is one requirement – you must be consistent within the same material.** For example, do not abbreviate a term in one sentence and spell it out in other sentences. And once you have selected one form of abbreviation (say, FY 2013), do not use a different style (FY13) elsewhere in the same material.

Age

Express age as a number.

- The Governor is 56 (or 56 years old, not 56 years of age).
- Her daughter is 12 years old.
- Many people retire in their 60s. (no apostrophe)
- The 18-year-old car still ran well. (note the hyphens)

Fractions

Typically, spell out fractions if they stand alone without a whole number coming before them.

- More than two-thirds of the runners completed the race.
- Three-fourths of the students live off campus.

However, use figures, if the spelled-out form is long or if the fraction is used in a measurement or calculation.

- 3/4 yard lengths (Better than: three-fourth-yard lengths)

Time

ODNI uses the 24-hour military time system. Do not punctuate between the hours and minutes.

- Employees usually arrive to work between 0730 and 0930.
- The coffee shop is open from 0700–1200 and 1300–1600.

Decades

Express decades as follows:

- The 1980s **OR:** the '80s **OR:** the nineteen-eighties **OR:** the eighties
- The mid-1970s **OR:** the mid seventies **OR:** the mid-70s

Spans and Ranges

In the absence of the word “to” when indicating inclusive numbers, use a hyphen to connect the spans or ranges.

- 1972–1976
- Pages 10-25
- From 1972 to 1976 (not 1972-1976)

Percents

Use numerals for *all* percentages – except when they begin a sentence – and always spell out the word *percent*. However, use the symbol % in a table, chart, or document when space is limited.

- One percent of the population
- 50 percent

PUNCTUATION

Apostrophes

Use apostrophes to show possession according to the following guidelines:

- Although contractions of words (*we're* for *we are*) use apostrophes, do not use contractions in ODNI products – unless it is within a direct quote.
- When a name or title ends in *s*, place the apostrophe at the end.
EXAMPLES
 - The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics' memo provided the written justification you requested.
 - Charles' office is down the hall.
- For plural nouns that end in *s*, place the apostrophe at the end of the word.
EXAMPLE For a list of functional managers' names and telephone numbers, contact the Personnel Office.
- With plural words that do not end in *s*, add an *s* at the end of the word.
EXAMPLE We will announce the people's choice for candidates next year.
- For two subjects, determine whether the parties possess the item separately or together. If the subjects possess the item separately, each subject should have an apostrophe.
EXAMPLE The Department of State's priorities and the business community's priorities often differ.
- Use one apostrophe for all subjects that share the item.
EXAMPLE All staff should adhere to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and related agencies' guidelines.
- For three or more subjects, try to avoid using apostrophes to show possession because the sentence may become cumbersome. Instead, try writing this way:
EXAMPLE We use similar terms as the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of Defense, and all the ODNI components use when editing correspondence.

Arguments over grammar and style are often as fierce as those over IBM versus Mac, and as fruitless as Coke versus Pepsi and boxers versus briefs.

– Jack Lynch
(Rutgers University)

Colons

A colon indicates an introduction. Use colons before a quotation, a list, an explanation, or a complete thought. The conventional view is that the words preceding a colon should always form a complete sentence.

The following examples illustrate this practice:

WRONG Some of the topics this guide covers are: how to write in active voice, when to use a colon... .
(Notice that the introductory clause has a subject, *Some*, and ends with a verb, *are*, but it does not express a complete thought.)

RIGHT Following are some of the topics this guide covers: How to write in active voice, (In this case, the introductory clause is a complete thought; therefore, a colon is acceptable.)

WRONG The set of china includes: 12 plates, 12 bowls, and 12 cups.

RIGHT The set of china includes the following items: 12 plates, 12 bowls, and 12 cups.

HOWEVER A colon may be used after an incomplete introductory clause if the items in the series are listed on separate lines.

The set of china includes:

12 plates

12 bowls

12 cups¹²

Semicolons

Use semicolons to separate items in a series if any of the items already contain commas. Semicolons tie together two closely related thoughts. In long or complex sentences, a semicolon helps the reader's comprehension by showing clear breaks in thought.

EXAMPLE The group is comprised of residents from Baltimore, Maryland; McLean, Virginia; and Charles Town, West Virginia.

Join two related thoughts with transitional words such as *therefore*, *thus*, *indeed*, *hence*, or *however*, by placing a semicolon before the transitional word and a comma immediately after it.

EXAMPLE Our communication has continued to grow; however, we must collaborate even more.

If you are not sure whether to use a semicolon or a colon between two independent clauses, you can always treat each clause as a separate sentence and use a period at the end of each.

TIP:
Use semicolons with caution. It is easy to use them incorrectly. Separate sentences are always appropriate.

Commas

Nothing quite matches the comma in its wide use and abuse. Commas separate various parts of a sentence so that the message is smooth and clear. Use them in the following ways:

- After introductory phrases.

EXAMPLE After considering all the options, they decided to move the office.

- To separate two main clauses when they are joined by *and, or, nor, for, but, yet, or so*.
EXAMPLE We need to stay on task, but we must also keep our eyes open for opportunities.
- To separate items in a series.
EXAMPLE We need to remain enthusiastic, loyal, dedicated, and fearless.
- To add secondary information or afterthoughts.
EXAMPLE The meeting, in my opinion, ran too long.
- Before a direct quotation of only a few words following an introductory phrase.
EXAMPLE At the end of the meeting the director stated, "I want your input by Monday."
- Use commas in the following situations:
 - Before and after the year in the month-day-year style. (The January 1, 2013, press conference elicited little new information.)
 - Between cities and states: Alexandria, Virginia
 - To clarify large numbers: 100,000 or 2,000
 - With Jr. and Sr.: George Williams, Jr.

TIP:
 The ODNI uses a serial comma before the conjunctions *and* or *or* that separate the second to last item from the final one in a series.

Ellipses (. . .)

An ellipsis is made with three spaced periods. Ellipses indicate the omission of a word or words within a quoted passage. To preserve the original quote, the ellipsis may be preceded or followed with the appropriate punctuation – by a comma, semicolon, period, question mark, or exclamation point.

EXAMPLE Many people know that Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address begins with “Four score and seven years ago. . .” but how many people can recite the entire speech?

Exclamation Mark

The exclamation point is an “emotional” mark of punctuation. Exclamation points generally do not appear in DNI executive correspondence.

Hyphen¹³

To hyphenate or not to hyphenate... that is the question... . If you are not sure, the first place to look is in a dictionary.

Hyphens are used primarily to form compound words and phrases. Use a hyphen with words or phrases that are combined to form a unit modifier immediately preceding the word to be modified (except with an adverb ending in *ly*). Do not hyphenate these phrases if they follow the noun.

- An up-to-date report; this report is up to date
- A well-known author; the author is well known

Use hyphens to express numbers 21 through 99 in words or in adjective compound words where the number is the first element.

- Fifty-one people boarded the plane.
- There was a 20-minute delay before take-off.

NOTE: There is a growing trend to spell compound words as one word once it has been widely accepted and used. The evolution is frequently from two words (policy maker) to a hyphenated construction (policy-maker) to one word (policymaker).

EXAMPLES:

- policymaker
- decisionmaker
- website
- email

Use a hyphen when spelling a word containing a prefix that would otherwise create a homonym (spelled the same but with different meaning).

EXAMPLES:

- Re-cover [cover again]; recover [to regain]
- Re-count [count again]; recount [to detail]
- Re-sign [sign again]; resign [to quit]
- Re-treat [treat again]; retreat [withdraw]

Use a hyphen to avoid doubling a vowel when the last letter of the prefix “anti,” “multi,” and “semi” is the same as the first letter of the word. Use a hyphen when the second element is a capitalized word or number.

- anti-inflammatory; anti-Nazi; anti-aircraft
- multi-industry; multimillion
- semi-Americanized
- pre-World War II

Quotation Marks

Quotation marks identify written or spoken statements. Direct quotations are the exact words said or written by someone, or taken from a source. Quotation marks set off special phrases or words to show emphasis. They also indicate titles of parts of literary and artistic works.

- Enclose direct words, phrases, and sentences in double quotation marks.
 - The minister said, “Speak now or forever hold your peace.”
NOTE: Quotes follow the exact wording, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling as the original. If you change *anything* within a quotation, put the changed part in brackets to indicate you have changed the quote. (See section on Brackets.)
- Enclose business jargon, slang, or coined phrases in double quotations.
 - Our contract was a “gentleman's agreement.”
 - He is selling the car “as is.”
- Enclose titles that are part of a complete published work.
 - There was an article in the *Communiqué*, entitled, “DIA and the Global War on Terror.”

Quotes versus Italics

Save quotations for actual quotations. Use *italics* for simple words or phrases that require emphasis.

Punctuation with Quotation Marks

Place punctuation marks inside the quotation marks only when they are a part of the material you are quoting.

- She remarked, "I knew that."
- He asked, "Shall we leave early to beat the traffic?"
- Does the meeting always end with the chairman yelling, "Back to the grindstone!"?
- The children shrieked, "It's snowing! It's snowing!"

Block Quotations

If a quotation is five or more typed lines, indent five spaces from each margin. Do not use quotation marks, but either include the reference in the introductory text, or in parentheses after the quoted material.

Parentheses

Use parentheses when material inserted in a sentence is an explanation, an elaboration, or a digression.

EXAMPLES:

- He explains his theory well in the illustration (figure 5).
- She will bring over the tapestry (the green one) from the set you admired.
- We are going to meet him for dinner (you might remember you met him last year) downtown.

If a comma is necessary, place it after the closing parenthesis, not before the first. If the parenthetical is a sentence itself, omit the period but retain a question mark or exclamation point:

- As soon as we realized there was a fire (we could smell the smoke), we ran out.
- As soon as we realized there was a fire (do you think I was terrified?), we ran.

If parentheses enclose a separate sentence, place the punctuation inside the second parenthesis.

- My parents gave me wise advice. (If only I'd listened sooner!)

Brackets

Use brackets to clarify or correct material written by others.

- His note said, "I did not see her [Jane] before the meeting."

NOTE: The italicized word *sic* is "used to indicate that a quoted passage, especially one containing an error or unconventional spelling, has been retained in its original form."¹⁴

Use brackets as parentheses within parentheses.

EXAMPLE (For more information see Stewart's thesis [2006] and Schaaf's survey [2005].)

Brackets follow the same punctuation principles as parentheses when used with other punctuation.

NOTE:

Three punctuation marks indicate interruptions:

1. Commas set off the interrupting material by providing emphasis.
2. Parentheses can set off explanatory words or phrases that are independent of the main thought.
3. Dashes add emphasis by interjecting an obvious interruption.

Italics

Use italics when referring to the titles of whole publications such as books, pamphlets, bulletins, magazines, newspapers, plays, movies, essays, and legal cases.

- *The Chicago Manual of Style* is a renowned reference tool.
- The Central Intelligence Agency's *World Factbook* is recognized worldwide.

Italicize unfamiliar phrases, whether foreign, unusual, or direct quotes. For example, "This does not reflect a *de facto* concern for the Intelligence Community."

WORD USAGE

Following is helpful guidance on word usage:

A – an. The choice between *a* and *an* depends on the *initial sound* of the next word or abbreviation, not on whether its initial letter is a vowel or consonant.

Use *a* before a word beginning with a consonant or initial consonant sound (including *y* or *w* sounds).¹⁵

EXAMPLES

- We have written a guide on facility security.
- We have summarized the committee’s activities in a one-page report. (Case in point, although the *o* in *one* is a vowel, the first sound is a *w*, a consonant sound. Therefore, the *a* precedes the word.)

Use *an* before words beginning with a vowel sound or a silent *h* (such as *honest, hour, honor.*)

EXAMPLES

- The report is an overview on facility security.
- The team arrived an hour early to practice. (Although the *h* in *hour* is a consonant, the first sound is a vowel sound. Therefore, *an* precedes the word.)
- It was *an* honor to work with the team.¹⁶

*The Gregg Reference Manual*¹⁷ includes the following information on the use of *a* and *an*:

When dealing with an abbreviation, the choice of *a* or *an* will depend on whether you pronounce the expression letter by letter or as a word. Abbreviations are pronounced letter by letter or as a word. Abbreviations pronounced letter by letter are sometimes called *initialisms*; abbreviations pronounced as words are called *acronyms*.

In the following examples, note that when the consonants *F, H, L, M, N, R,* and *S* are pronounced as letters at the start of an abbreviation, they are preceded by *an*. When these same letters introduce an acronym and are pronounced as part of a word, they are preceded by *a*.

Pronounced Letter by Letter

an FBI agent
an HMO Physician
an MBA degree
an NAACP member
an RSVP

Pronounced as a Word

a FICA tax increase
a HUD Project
a MADD fund-raising drive
a NATO strategy
a SWAT team

When other consonants appear at the start of an abbreviation or an acronym, they are always preceded by *a*.

a CEO’s compensation package
a DUI conviction

a CARE Package
a WATS line

Affect – Effect.

Affect is almost always used as a verb meaning “to influence, change, or assume.”

- The judge’s decision will not *affect* (influence) the long-standing law.
- Paralysis *affected* (changed) his limbs.
- She *affects* (assumes) a sophisticated manner.

The term *affect* has specialized meaning in psychology; i.e., an emotion or mood. Except when your topic is psychology, you will seldom need the noun *affect*.¹⁸

Effect is usually a noun meaning “an outcome, impression, or result.” It can also be a verb meaning “to bring about.”

- It is essential that this task force *effects* (brings about) safety for our borders.
- The *effect* (impression) of his speech incited anger.
- It will be months before we can assess the full *effect* (outcome) of the summer storms.
- His face showed the *effect* (result) of years of hard work.

➤

More examples of *affect* and *effect*.

- When you *affect* (influence) a situation, you have an *effect* (outcome) on it.
- The dynamite did not just *affect* (influence) demolition of the wall, the *effect* (result) was that it was demolished.

Already – All ready.

- The package had *already* (previously) been mailed.
- The package is *all ready* (all prepared) to be mailed.

Altogether – All together.

- He is *altogether* (entirely) too rude to act as host.
- The sections are *all together* in the notebook.

Always – All ways.

- He has *always* (at all times) produced excellent work.
- She has tried in *all ways* (by all methods) to make the client happy.

Ambivalence – Indifference

Ambivalence is having mutually conflicting emotions or thoughts about something. The word implies that a person has strong feelings about an issue, but the feelings are opposed to each other. *Indifference* is having no marked feelings or preference about something; the word implies a lack of desire. Someone is indifferent to a decision that does not matter to them.

- Possessing little interest in politics, Mark had never voted in a local school board election and was *indifferent* to the candidates this year.
- Don, on the other hand, had voted in every election but felt *ambivalence* toward the candidates, thinking both would do an equal amount of good for the district.

Among – Between. Generally, use *between* when referring to two persons or things and *among* when referring to more than two persons or things.

- The tasks are divided evenly *between* the two computer analysts.
- The tasks are divided evenly *among* the three analysts.

However, use *between* with more than two persons or things when they are considered in pairs as well as in a group.

- There are distinct differences *between* Washington, D.C., Virginia, and Maryland.

Amount – Number. Use *Amount* with something that can be *measured*. Use *Number* with something that can be *counted*.

CORRECT: The report generated a large amount of interest

CORRECT: The report generated a large *number* of requests for follow-up

INCORRECT: The report generated a large *amount* of phone calls

Or another way to think about it is, use *amount* for things in bulk, as in “a large *amount* of traffic.” Use *number* for individual items, as in “a large *number* of accidents.”

And – Etc. Never use *and* before *etc.* (see Etc.)

And/or. Avoid this legalistic term in normal writing.

Anxious – Eager. *Anxious* and *eager* have similar meanings, but often have different connotations. *Eager* means showing an intense desire. *Anxious* also means showing earnest wishing, but it is often characterized by added worry or anxiety.

- She was *eager* to start her new job.
- She was *anxious* to receive her test scores.

Appreciate. When used to mean “to be thankful for,” the verb *appreciate* requires an object.

NOT: We would *appreciate* if you could start working on January 1.

BUT: We would *appreciate it* if you could start working on January 1 (*it* being the object.)

As. Do not use *as* for *that* or *whether*.

- He does not know *whether* [not: *as*] he can go.

Use *because*, *since*, or *for* rather than *as* in clauses of reason.

- I cannot go on vacation then *because* [not: *as*] we have a big meeting to plan.

As far as. *As far as* may be used as a preposition or subordinating conjunction.

EXAMPLE: You can ride your bike *as far as* Washington, D.C.

INCORRECT: I would recommend this paper *as far as* content.

CORRECT: I would recommend this paper *as far as* content is concerned

Attachment – Enclosure

Should you refer to supporting documents as *attachments* or *enclosures*? The ODNI uses the following convention:

- Supporting documents in memos are referred to as *attachments*.
- Supporting documents in letters are referred to as *enclosures*.

EXAMPLES:

- You will find the referenced report *enclosed* with this letter.
Do not forget to *attach* the necessary background documents with the director’s memo.

Awhile – A while. *Awhile* is an adverb. *A while* is a noun.

- He may need to wait *awhile* before moving. (Adverb.)
- He may need to wait for *a while* before moving. (*A while* being the noun and the object of the preposition *for*.)

Bad – Badly. Use the adjective *bad* (not the adverb *badly*) after the verb *feel* or *look*.

- I feel *bad* that I hurt your feelings.
- She was hurt *badly*.

NOTE: According to *The Gregg Reference Manual*, “the only way you can “feel badly” is to have your fingertips removed first.”¹⁹

Because. *Because* is a conjunction that explains the reason for a situation.

- I stayed home from work *because* I do not feel well.

Due to – Because of – On account of. *Due to* introduces an adjective phrase and should modify nouns. It is normally used only after some form of the verb *to be* (is, are, was, were, etc.).

CORRECT: Her success is *due to* talent and hard work (*due to* modifies the noun *success*)

INCORRECT: She succeeded *due to* talent and hard work

Because of – On account of. *Because of* and *on account of* introduce adverbial phrases and should modify verbs.

CORRECT: He resigned *because of* ill health. He resigned *on account of* ill health. (*Because of* modifies the verb *resigned*.)

INCORRECT: His resignation is *because of* ill health.

Between – Among. Generally, use *between* when referring to two persons or things and *among* when referring to *more than* two persons or things.

- The land was divided evenly *between* the two brothers.
- The proceeds are divided evenly *among* the five owners.

Use *between* with more than two persons or things when they are being considered in pairs as well as in a group.

- There are distinct differences *between* New York, Chicago, and London.
- When packing china, be sure to place bubble sheets *between* the plates.

Between you and me. (not I).

EXAMPLE: *Between you and me* we can complete the assignment.

Both – Each. *Both* means “the two considered together.” *Each* refers to the individual members of a group considered separately.

- *Both* dresses are beautiful.
- The dresses are *each* beautiful.

Center. Things have their center at a particular point and not around it; therefore your point should always *center on* something, **not** *center around* it.

CORRECT: Discussion at the meeting *centered on* ways to cut costs while increasing output.

INCORRECT: Discussion at the meeting centered around ways to cut costs while increasing output.

Complement – Compliment. Complement is to complete, and compliment is to praise.

- The jacket was the perfect *complement* to the dress.
- I received several *compliments* for my outstanding work.

Complementary – Complimentary. *Complementary* means serving to complete or mutually supplying what each other lacks. *Complimentary* means flattering or given free.

- My writing abilities are *complementary* to your presentation skills.
- The hotel reservation includes a *complimentary* breakfast.

Could – May. Limit using *could* to discussions of capability. Use *may* for judgments or predictions.

- The missile *could* reach that city (the city is within the missile's range).
- The missile *may* be able to reach the city.

NOTE: Both terms – *could* and *may* – include the idea of possibility and should not be accompanied by modifiers such as *possibly* or *conceivably*.

Comprise – Compose. *Comprise* means “to contain, consist of.” *Compose* means “to make up.” The parts *compose* (make up) the whole; the whole *comprises* (contains) the parts.

- The IC *comprises* [consists of] 16 intelligence agencies.
- Sixteen intelligence agencies *compose* [make up] the IC.

Do not use *comprise* in the passive.

INCORRECT: The IC is *comprised of* 16 intelligence agencies.

CORRECT: The IC is *composed of* [is made up] 16 intelligence agencies.

Different – Differently. *Different* is used after linking verbs and verbs of the senses. *Differently* is used as an adverb when the meaning is “in a different manner.”

- The food tasted *different* today.
- She acted *differently* than I expected.

Different from – Different than.

- This food is *different from* the food I usually eat.
- The director feels *different than* the deputy director on this issue.

Disburse – Disperse. Careful – these words are spelled and pronounced similarly, but have very different meanings! *Disburse* means “to pay out.” *Disperse* means “to disseminate,” “to break up; scatter.”

- The scholarship committee will *disburse* monies from the fund quarterly.
- Police could use tear gas to *disperse* rioters at the summit.

Doubt that – Doubt whether. Use *doubt that* in negative statements and questions. Use *doubt whether* in all other cases.

- Is there *doubt that* we will be able to complete this project on time?
- The manager *doubts whether* his team can work any harder.

e.g. (exempla gratia means “for example.”) A good way to remember its use is to use the mnemonic, “example given.” [Note: Do not use *etc.*, with *e.g.*, because *e.g.*, implies an indefinite list.]

Ensure – Insure – Assure. *Ensure* means “to make certain.” *Insure* means “to protect against loss.” *Assure* means “to give someone confidence.”

- I will *ensure* that this project is completed on time.
- My house is *insured* against flooding.
- I *assure* you I will give my best effort.

et al. *et alii* means “and other people.”

Etc. *et cetera* means “and other things” or “and so forth.” Use it only in parenthetical references, lists, or tables, and set it off with commas. It does not follow a colon or *and, such as, for example, or e.g.*

Equally as good. Use either *equally* or *as* but not both words together.

- Coke Zero is a newer version, but Diet Coke is *equally good*.
- Coke Zero is a newer version, but Diet Coke is just *as good*.

Farther – Further. *Farther* refers to physical distance; *further* refers to figurative distance and means “to a great degree or extent.”

- I traveled *farther* for the meeting than I had originally anticipated.
- The police need to delve *further* into the evidence to solve the crime.

Fewer – Less. *Fewer* refers to numbers and is used with plural nouns. *Less* refers to degree or amount and is used with singular nouns.

- Airlines are hoping to announce *fewer* delays this holiday season.
- *Less* work is required to drive an automatic car than a manual car.

From – Off. Use *from* when referring to people.

- I fell *off* the bus yesterday.
- The request came *from* the director.

Good – Well. *Good* is an adjective. *Well* is typically an adverb but may also be used as an adjective to refer to the state of someone’s health.

- I received *good* scores at the competition.
- I am feeling *well* today.

Hardly. *Hardly* is negative in meaning. To preserve the negative meaning, do not use another negative with it.

- After the accident, I could hardly move.
INCORRECT: After the accident, I couldn’t hardly move.

Home – Hone. One *homes* in (not: *hones* in) on a target. *Hone* means “to sharpen something” – for example, to *hone* an axe or one’s professional skills

Hopefully. *Hopefully* is an adverb that expresses the writers’ attitude and modifies the meaning of the sentence instead of a particular word.

- *Hopefully*, the work is completed soon so that we can launch it on time.

i.e. *id est* means “that is” or “in other words”. A good mnemonic is “in explanation.” The *i.e.* generally indicates additional information, a clarification, or a rephrasing of the original statement in an effort to increase the reader’s understanding.

If – Whether. *Whether* should be used in place of *if* in formal writing.
The Director wants to know *whether* the project is complete.

Imply – Infer. *Imply* means “to suggest.” You *imply* something by your own words or actions. *Infer* means “to assume, to deduce, or to arrive at a conclusion. You *infer* something from another person’s words or actions.

- During the meeting, the boss *implied* (suggested) that we needed to work more hours.
- I *inferred* (assumed) from his remarks that we would need to join him at the meeting.

In – Into – In to.

- The fruit is *in* the refrigerator.
- I flew *into* Athens for the Olympics.
- The children turn their work *in to* their teacher at the end of the day.

In regard to. [NOT *in regards to*]. Use *in regard to*, *with regard to*, *regarding*, or, *as regards*.

- I am calling in regard to the ad placed in the newspaper.
- INCORRECT: I am calling *in regards to* the ad placed in the newspaper.

Irregardless. An error. Use *regardless*.

Irrespective. *Irrespective* means regardless of, or not taking into account.

Kind of – Sort of. Do not use in formal writing, instead use *rather* or *somewhat*.

- She was *somewhat* nervous about her presentation.

Lay – Lie. *Lay* means to put or to place. *Lie* means to recline, rest or stay.

- *Lay* the books on the desk when you leave.
- I am going to *lie* down for a nap.

TIP: Try the “rest/place” test. Substitute a form of the word *lie* or *lay* with a form of *rest* or *place*. If a form of *rest* makes more sense, use a form of *lie*. If a form of *place* makes more sense, use a form of *lay*.

REST (rested, resting) = lie (lay, lain, lying)

PLACE (placed, placing) = lay (laid, laid, laying)

- I will (*lie* or *lay*?) down now. You would not say, “I will *place down* now,” but you could say, I will *rest down* now.” Therefore, “I will *lie* down now,” is correct.
- He (*laid* or *lay*?) the coat on the bed. Ask yourself which sounds better – *place* or *rest*, “He *placed/rested* the coat on the bed.” *Placed* sounds better, therefore, “He *laid [placed]* the coat on the bed,” is correct.
- I (*laid* or *lay*?) awake all night. You would not say, “I *placed* awake all night,” and although “I *rested* awake all night” sounds awkward, “I *rested* all night,” does not. Therefore, a form of *lie* does work, so you would say, “I *lay* awake all night.”
- These files have (*laid* or *lain*?) untouched for some time. “These books have *placed* unread for some time,” does not work, but, “these books have *lain [rested]* unread for some time,” does.
- He has been (*laying* or *lying*?) down on the job. “He has been *placing* down on the job” does not work, but, “He has been *lying [resting] down* on the job,” does.²⁰

Leave – Let. *Leave* means “to move away, abandon or depart.” *Let* means “to permit or to allow.”

TIP: If “permit” fits, use *let*, if not, use *leave*.

- He prepared to *leave* the office.
- The director *let* the staff leave early.

Like – As, As if. *Like* is used as a preposition. Use *as* or *as if* as a conjunction.

- The building looks *like* new.
- As I said before, we cannot leave until this task is finished.

INCORRECT: *Like* I said before, we cannot leave until this task is finished.

May – Can (might-could). *May* and *might* imply permission or possibility. *Can* and *could* imply ability or power.

- You *may* send them copies of the report. (Permission.)
- The report *may* (OR: *might*) be true. (Possibility.)
- *Can* he put together the final report? (Does he have the ability?)
- The President *could* change this policy. (Power.)
- Please call me if I *can* be of assistance. (Emphasizes the ability to help.)
- Please call me if I *may* be of assistance. (Emphasizes the possibility of helping.)

NOTE: When it is important to maintain sequence of tenses, use *may* to express the present and *might* to express the past.

- I *think* (present) that I *may go* skiing next winter.
- I *thought* (past) that I *might go* skiing next winter.²¹

More Important – More Importantly. *More important* is used as a short form of “what is more important.” *More importantly* means “in a more important manner.”

- This meeting is *more important* than a lunch break.
- Her opinion was treated *more importantly* than his opinion.

Only. The adverb *only* should be placed as close as possible to the word it is modifying – usually directly before it. Putting the adverb in the wrong position may change the entire meaning of the sentence. The Department of Defense Intelligence writing guide provides the following examples:

- *Only* the soldier fired the gun. (No one else fired it.)
- The *only* soldier fired the gun. (There were no other soldiers.)
- The soldier *only* fired the gun. (He did nothing else with it.)
- The soldier fired *only* the gun. (He fired nothing else.)
- The soldier fired the *only* gun. (There was no other gun.)
- The soldier fired the gun *only*. (He fired nothing else.)²²

Percent – Percentage. In ordinary usage, *percent* should always be accompanied by a number. In all other cases, use the term *percentage*.

- A large *percentage* of the report has to be redone due to errors. [NOT: a large *percent* of the report]
- About 25 *percent* of the report has to be redone due to errors.

Presently – Currently. Many writers use these terms synonymously. However, *Presently* means “in a little while,” or “very soon.”

- “He will arrive *presently*.” or “I will get to it *presently*.”

Currently means “now.” Or, you could leave it out altogether.

- “She is *currently* not available” is the same as “She is not available.”
- “We are *currently* revising the report” can be simply stated, “we are revising the report.”

Principle – Principal. The word *principle* can only be used as a noun. It can mean a fundamental truth; rule; code of conduct; or adherence to a code of ethics. The derivative adjective *principled* also refers to adherence to an ethical code.

- A key *principle* of economics is supply and demand.
- John is a man of *principle* and integrity.

The word *principal* can serve as a noun or adjective. As a noun it can mean chief official, owner, or partner; or a sum of invested money. As an adjective it can mean first in rank or importance; chief, leading.

- He is a *principal* in the firm.
- Our *principal* reason for writing these tips is to inform the workforce of common grammar mistakes.

Real – Really. *Real* is an adjective; *really* is an adverb. Do not use *real* to modify another adjective. Instead, use *really* or *very*.

- My daughter wants a *real* pony for her birthday.
- I *really* like this coffee.

Regardless, Irregardless, Irrespective. The words *regardless* and *irrespective* both mean *without regard; heedless; in spite of everything; paying no attention to*. *Irregardless* is a word many mistakenly believe to be correct usage in formal style, when in fact it is chiefly used in nonstandard speech and informal writing. It is best practice to **avoid the use of *irregardless*, and instead use *regardless* or *irrespective***.

CORRECT: IT went ahead with the DARTS update regardless of potential bugs.

INCORRECT: IT went ahead with the DARTS update irregardless of potential bugs.

Set – Sit. *Set* means “to place something somewhere;” *sit* means “to be in a position of rest” or “to be seated.”

- I *set* my keys on the coffee table.
- I usually *sit* beside John.

Shall – Will. In formal writing, the future tense requires *shall* for the first person and *will* for the second and third. The idea being that the speaker is referring to a future action or state. *Will* expresses determination or consent.

- I *shall* visit him after the holidays.
- I *will* get the report to you tomorrow.

Since. The word *since*, when used as a conjunction, has two meanings – one related to *time* and the other to *cause*. *Since* can be correctly used in either sense, as long as you are careful that the intended meaning of the sentence is clear.

- Meaning 1 (from the time in the past when): He had wanted to be a biologist *since* he was 12 years old.
- Meaning 2 (because): *Since* the data were incomplete, the paper could not be published.

In Meaning 2 above, *since* clearly means "because." Be aware, however, that the word can be ambiguous, as seen below:

- Confusing: The study could not be performed *since* the equipment malfunctioned.
- Clear: The study could not be performed *because* the equipment malfunctioned.
- Clear: The study could not be performed *since the time* the equipment malfunctioned.

TIP: If there is **any chance** that the reader could think that the word *since* refers to time, when it actually refers to cause, then use the word *because*.

Stationary – Stationery. *Stationary* means not moving; unchanging. *Stationery* refers to writing papers and envelopes.

- Please remain *stationary* while the police frisk you for weapons.
- Please use executive *stationery* for the memo to the workforce.

TIP: You will never get confused again if you imagine that the "e" in stationery stands for "envelopes."

Sure – Surely. *Sure* is used as an adjective; *surely* is used as an adverb.

- I am *sure* the presentation is thorough.
- I *surely* hope you are prepared for the meeting.

Than – Then. *Than* is a conjunction introducing a dependent clause of comparison. *Then* is an adverb meaning "at that time" or "next."

- The green cover is more attractive *than* the blue cover.
- I am going to lunch, *then* to the meeting.

That. Use *that* when a word or phrase could be misread as the object of the verb in the main clause. Use *that* when it introduces two or more parallel clauses. Use *that* when an introductory or interrupting element comes between *that* and the subject of the dependent clause.

- She found out *that* she would be receiving an award on Thursday.
- The agency announced *that* they had chosen the nominees for the *Galileo Awards* and *that* the winner would be notified before the award ceremony.
- Henry requested *that* if you have time, he would like you to stop by his office.

That–Which.

Which is used to introduce nonessential clauses. *Which* is preferred when there are two or more parallel essential clauses in the same sentence when *that* has already been used in the sentence, or when the essential clause is introduced by expressions such as *this...which*, *that...which*, *these...which*, or *those...which*.

That is used to introduce essential clauses and can also introduce a nonessential clause when it serves as a subordinating conjunction rather than as a relative pronoun. *Which* and *that* are also used to refer to places, objects, and animals.

- The policy document, *which* arrived yesterday, should be incorporated in the presentation.
- The document *that* arrived yesterday should be incorporated in the presentation.
- Jack needs to bring those files, *which* are necessary to finish the report.

- Carrie's new idea, *that* the team should receive a bonus, was well received by management.

RULE OF THUMB: If the phrase needs a comma, you probably need to use *which*.

Toward – Towards. Both forms are correct, but *toward* is more common in U.S. usage.

- The plane was heading *toward* the runway.

Ways. Do not use *ways* for *way* in referring to distance.

- The restaurant is a long *way* from my house.

Where – That. Do not use *where* in place of *that*.

- In the Black Friday ads I saw *that* there was a 50 percent discount at the department store.

INCORRECT: In the Black Friday ads I saw *where* there was a 50 percent discount at the department store.

Would – Have. *Would have* is the correct verb phrase for the commonly used *would of*. In a clause beginning with *if*, do not use *would have* in place of *had*.

- The last manager *would have* approached the situation differently.
- If the child had finished dinner, she could *have had* dessert.

Who – That. *Who* and *that* are used when referring to persons. Use *who* when the individual person or group is meant. Use *that* when a class or type is meant.

- She is the only one of my managers *who* can speak Japanese.
- He is the kind of student *that* should take advanced math.

Who – Whom. The decision to use *who* or *whom* can be determined by testing the sentence in the following ways:

Use *who* whenever *he, she, they, I, or we* can replace the word *who*.

TRY: *Who* is arranging the meeting?

TEST: *She* is arranging the meeting. (You would not say, "Her is arranging the meeting.")

TRY: *Whoever* has the right qualifications will get the job.

TEST: *He* has the right qualifications.

Use *whom* whenever *him, her, them, me, or us* can replace *whom*.

TRY: Hire a person *whom* you can trust.

TEST: I can trust *her*. (You would not say, "I can trust *she*.")

TRY: With *whom* do you want to speak?

TEST: I want to speak with *him*.

Commonly Confused Words

The following table lists words that are often confused and misused because they sound similar or look alike.

COMMONLY CONFUSED WORDS TABLE	
Word	Sometimes Confused With
Accept (to take; to receive)	Except (to exclude; other than)
Advice (an opinion)	Advise (to give advice)
Affect – usually a verb (to influence, change, or assume)	Effect - usually a noun (an outcome, result, or impression). As a verb – (to bring about)
All ready (prepared)	Already (by this time)
Allude (to refer to indirectly)	Elude (to avoid)
Allusion (indirect reference)	Illusion (erroneous belief or conception)
Among (more than two alternatives)	Between (only two alternatives)
Ascent (a rise)	Assent (agreement)
Beside (next to or near)	Besides (in addition to)
Capital (the seat of government)	Capitol (a building in which a legislature meets)
Cite (to quote an authority)	Site (a place)
Complement (something that completes)	Compliment (a flattering remark; praise)
Continually (closely recurrent intervals)	Continuously (without pause or break)
Council (a group)	Counsel (to give advice)
Descent (a movement down)	Dissent (disagreement)
Discreet (reserved, respectful)	Discrete (individual or distinct)
Elicit (to bring out)	Illicit (unlawful)
Farther (expresses distance)	Further (expresses degree)
Formally (conventionally)	Formerly (in the past)
Imply (to hint at or suggest)	Infer (to draw a conclusion)
Insure (to procure insurance on)	Ensure (to make certain)
Lay (to place)	Lie (to recline, stretch out)
Lessen (to make less)	Lesson (something learned)
Morale (a mood)	Moral (right conduct)
Principal (most important)	Principle (basic truth or law)
Raise (to build up)	Raze (to tear down)
Stationary (unmoving)	Stationery (envelope; writing paper) Remember “e” for envelope.
Their (belonging to them)	There (the opposite of here)
To (toward)	Too (also)
Waver (to hesitate; to be undecided)	Waiver (the giving up of a claim)
Who (refers to people)	Which (refers to things)

PLEASE CONTACT US

If you have any questions or comments about this guide

Lotus Notes: [DNI-Editors](#)

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²² Department of Defense Intelligence Document. *Office for Research and Assessments. Intelligence Production Guide, Volume 2 – Writing Style Guide*. June 1992. (5-14.)