

# Language Style Sheet

Utilising a consistent language style throughout a publication improves a publication's readability. The NBA Language Style Sheet is a guideline, for NBA staff and external agencies editing NBA publications, on the preferred language style of the NBA. The style sheet has been adapted in part from the Australian Government's *Style manual for authors, editors and printers* and covers the essential elements of language, grammar, spelling and punctuation expected of NBA publications. For more comprehensive information please refer to the Style manual.

The spelling of words in the style sheet is as per the accepted dictionary of the Australian Government and NBA, the *Macquarie Dictionary*. A hard copy of the dictionary is available from Corporate Services or alternatively can be accessed online by NBA staff. The spelling of brand names is as stipulated by the manufacture.

## Abbreviations:

- For days: *Sun. Mon. Tues. Wed. Thurs. Fri. Sat.*
- For days when space is limited: *Su M Tu W Th F Sa*
- For months:
  - May, June and July not abbreviated
  - Other months: *Jan. Feb. Mar. Apr. Aug. Sept. Oct. Nov. Dec.*
- For states: *NSW Vic. Qld WA SA Tas. ACT NT*
- e.g. (not *eg*)
- etc. (not *etc.*).

## Brackets:

- (definitions, comments, clarifications, additional information or asides)
- [editorial insertions] e.g. [sic]
- <email and web addresses> e.g.<<http://www.ag.gov.au/cca>>

## Bulleted Lists:

- no 'and' at end of each bullet point
- no semicolons between bullet points
- full stops at the last bullet point only (except when the list is a series of sentences then full stops at the end of each sentence)
- initial capitals if dot-points are full sentences.

## Capitals:

- Capitalise full titles. However when titles are abbreviated to just the generic element for subsequent references, leave them uncapitalised:

Initial reference	Subsequent references that retain generic elements only
the National Hepatitis C Action Plan...	...the action plan
the Department of Finance and Administration...	...the department
the Australian National University...	...the university
the National Blood Authority...	...the authority
the Australian Government...	...the government

- If the title is abbreviated but retains some non-generic elements, keep the capitals:

Initial reference	Subsequent references that retain non-generic elements
the <i>Department of Finance and Administration</i> ...	...a matter for Finance
the <i>National Gallery of Australia</i> ...	...the National Gallery
the Commonwealth of Australia...	...the Commonwealth

- Capitalisation of the generic element of a title is still used in legal writing such as contracts. For example:

Initial reference	Subsequent references in legal writing
the <i>Criteria for the Clinical Use of Intravenous Immunoglobulin in Australia</i> ('the Criteria')...	...the Criteria

- There are some words used in connection with government and legislation that are always capitalised to distinguish them from their generic meaning. These are:

Generic words that remain capitalised when government context applies	Generic words that remain capitalised when legislative context applies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Cabinet</li> <li>the Treasury</li> <li>the Crown</li> <li>the House (meaning either parliamentary chamber)</li> <li>the Budget (but not as an adjective or when plural – <i>budget provisions, the budgetary process, successive federal budgets</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Act (s)</li> <li>Ordinance(s)</li> <li>Regulation(s)</li> <li>Bill(s)</li> </ul>

**Currency:** \$4, \$4.40, 60c

**Dates:**

- 5 September 1996 (not *5<sup>th</sup> September 1996*)
- condensed form when date span in same decade (*1997–9*; but *1990–2000*)
- En dash\* not hyphen between year ranges (*1997–9* not *1997-9*).

**Grammar:**

- 'An' versus 'a' rule:
  - 'an' is used when the first sound of the following word is a vowel sound (whether the first letter is a vowel or not) e.g. *an elephant, an hour, an honour*, etc.
  - 'a' is used when the first sound of the following word is a consonant sound e.g. *a helicopter, a hotel, a union, a university*, etc.

**Italicise:**

- titles of:
  - books and periodicals (*The Australian*)
  - reports (*The Initial Australian Haemovigilance Report 2008*)
  - films, videos, and television and radio programs (*Four Corners*)
  - legislation and legal cases (the Western Australian *Young Offenders Act 1994* – in this example only the actual title name is italicised)
- scientific names of animals and plants
- technical terms and terms being defined
- letters, words and phrases being cited

**Numbers:**

- Numbers over 999:
  - commas if for non-European audience (*20,000*)
  - no commas for European audience (*20 000*).
- Use words for one to nine (*one dog*) and digits for numbers ten and above (*365 days*) except:
  - when there is a series use digits consistently (*3 cats, 6 dogs and 14 sheep*)
  - when the number is the first word of a sentence use words consistently (*Twenty-three people accessed...*).
- En dash\* not hyphen for number ranges e.g. page numbers (*p102–8* not *p102-8*).

**Punctuation:**

- Single quotation marks are recommended for all Australian Government publications.
- Double quotation marks are then used only for quotes within quotes.
- No full stops or spaces with initials.

**Tables & Figures:**

- Initial capital for each item in each column.
- Column headings aligned to the left.
- Table titles are displayed above the table and figure titles are displayed below the figure.

**Time:** 6pm, 6.45pm.

\* The shortcut on the keyboard for an en dash is CTRL + NUMLOCK + - (minus key)

**A**

Aboriginal and Torres Islander peoples (noun - collective)  
 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (noun – individual)  
 aboriginal – refers to the original inhabitants of other countries (in Australia must be capitalised)  
 abridgement (not *abridgment*)  
 acknowledgement (not *acknowledgment*)  
 admitted (not *admitted*)  
 ageing (not *aging*)  
 albumin  
 Albumex 4 (brand name)  
 Albumex 20 (brand name)  
 anaesthetics (not *anesthetics*)  
 anaesthetist (not *anesthetist*)  
 analogue (*analog* only used in technical writing)  
 anaemia (not *anemia*)  
 apheresis  
 appal (not *appall*)  
 Appendixes (not *Appendices*)  
 Attorney General (singular)  
 Attorneys General (plural)  
 Australian Red Cross Blood Service (ARCBS)  
 Australian Red Cross Society (ARCS)  
 autologous

**B**

benefited (not *benefitted*)  
 Biostate (brand name)  
 bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE)  
 (the) Budget (not *the budget*)  
 budgeted (not *budgetted*)  
 buffy coat

**C**

cancelled (not *canceled*)  
 catalogue (*catalog* is used only by librarians)  
 Captopril  
 CMV immunoglobulin  
 CMV immunoglobulin-VF (brand name)  
 Cytomegalovirus (CMV)  
 colour (not *color*)  
 Commonwealth (not *commonwealth*)  
 cooperate (not *co-operate*)  
 coordinate (not *co-ordinate*)  
 criteria (singular)  
 criteria (plural – used only in scientific writing)  
 criterion (singular – used only in scientific writing)  
 cryo-depleted  
 cryoprecipitate  
 CSL Limited (CSL)

**D**

data (singular)  
 data (plural – used only in scientific writing)  
 datum (singular – used only in scientific writing)  
 (the) Deaf community – refers to people with no hearing (*see hearing impairment*)  
 Democrats (not *democrats*)  
 (people with a) disability (not *the disabled*)  
 dispel (not *dispell*)

**E**

elderly (not *older*)  
 e-book (not *ebook*)  
 e-business (not *ebusiness*)  
 email (not *e-mail*)  
 encyclopedia (not *encyclopaedia*)

enrol (not *enroll*)  
 enthrall (not *enthrall*)  
 expel (not *expell*)

**F**

federal government (capitalised in full formal titles only)  
 FEIBA (brand name)  
 Fibrogammin P (brand name)  
 fire-fighter (not *fireman*)  
 foetus (not *fetus*)  
 fresh frozen plasma (FFP)  
 fulfil (not *fulfill*)

**G**

government (capitalised in full formal titles only)  
 Governor-General (singular)  
 Governors-General (plural)  
 granulocytes  
 Greens (not *greens* when referring to the political party)  
 gynaecologist (not *gynecologist*)  
 gynaecology (not *gynecology*)

**H**

haemophilia (not *hemophilia* or *hemophillia*)  
 haematology (not *hematology*)  
 haematologist (not *hematologist*)  
 haemovigilance (not *hemovigilance*)  
 (*people with a* hearing impairment – refers to a range of people, from those with limited hearing to those with no hearing at all.)  
 Hepatitis B Immunoglobulin-VF (brand name)  
 hepatitis B immunoglobulin (HBIG)  
 hyper immune globulins

**I**

Independents (not *independents* when referring to the political party)  
 Indigenous – broad term covering all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples  
 indigenous - refers to the original inhabitants of other countries (in Australia it must be capitalised)  
 install (not *instal*)  
 instil (not *instill*)  
 Intragam P (brand name)  
 intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIg)  
 IVIg (not *IVIG* or *IVig*)

**J**

Jehovah's Witnesses  
 Jehovah Witness patient  
 judgement (not *judgment*)

**L**

Labor (not *labor*, *Labour* or *labour* when referring to the political party)  
 Leucodepletion  
 Liberals (not *liberals* when referring to the political party)

**M**

marketed (not *marketted*)  
 media (singular)  
 MonoFIX-VF

**N**

nucleic acid testing (NAT)  
 NAT (not *NAT testing*)  
 NEXGEN (brand name)  
 none (plural e.g. *none of them are prepared...* not *none of them is prepared...*)  
 normal immunoglobulin  
 Normal Immunoglobulin-VF (brand name)

NovoSeven

## O

Octagam (brand name)

## P

paediatrics (not *pediatrics*)

paediatrician (not *pediatrician*)

paralleled (not *parallelled*)

parliament (capitalised in full formal titles only)

Parliament House (not *parliament house*)

per cent (not *percent*)

plasma derived factor VII (Pd FVII)

plasma derived factor VIII (Pd FVIII)

plasma derived factor XI (Pd FXI)

police officer (not *policeman*)

protein C

protein S

Prothrombinex-HT (brand name)

## R

recombinant factor VII a (rVIIa)

recombinant factor VIII (rVIII)

recombinant factor IX (rIX)

Recombinate (brand name)

regretted (not *regreted*)

Rh (D) (brand name)

Rh (D) immunoglobulin

Rhesus (Rh)

## S

Sandoglobulin (brand name)

(the) Senate (not *the senate*)

spokesperson (not *spokesman*)

state government (capitalised in full formal titles only)

## T

targeted (not *targetted*)

tetanus immunoglobulin

Thrombotol-VF (brand name)

(the) Treasury (not *the treasury*)

## U

up-to-date (when describing a verb e.g. up-to-date account)

up to date (when describing a noun e.g. the document was up to date)

## V

variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD)

venesections

von Willebrand's disease

## W

well-known (not *well known*)

WinRho (brand name)

## Y

young people (not *youths*)

## Z

zoster immunoglobulin (ZIG)

Zoster Immunoglobulin-VF (brand name)

## Tips for writing in plain English

- Use everyday words that readers will understand.
- Be precise – avoid unnecessary words that distract from the main points.
- Vary sentence length, but keep to an average of about twenty two words.
- Active voice where possible:

Active voice	Passive voice
The chairman signed the contract this morning.	The contract was signed this morning by the chairman.
Our maintenance section will investigate the cause of the electrical failure.	Further investigation will be required to determine the cause of the electrical failure.

- Engage with the audience by using personal pronouns such as 'we' and 'you'.
- Use verbs instead of constructions based on nouns derived from verbs e.g. use 'explain' rather than 'provide an explanation' or 'apply' rather than 'make an application'.
- Avoid double negatives e.g. not unlikely.