

2 Abbreviations

1. DEFINITION

An abbreviation is a shortened form of a word or phrase and is generally followed by a period. Although many abbreviations appear in technical writing, your writing for courses should be relatively free of abbreviations. Only the rules for the most commonly used forms appear here.

2. WHEN TO USE ABBREVIATIONS

• Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms. (used for either a single or married woman), Messr., Messrs., St. (for Saint) are abbreviated before people's names:

- (1) Dr. Jekyll treated Ms. Hyde.
- (2) Messrs. Reed and Wright wrote a book about St. Francis.

Do not abbreviate doctor or saint in the body of a sentence without the last name: He wanted a doctor to see him.

Do not abbreviate words like Professor, Governor, Captain before last names alone. If the person's first name or initial is used, abbreviations are acceptable: Senator Kennedy *or* Sen. Edward Kennedy, *not* Sen. Kennedy; Professor Higgins *or* Prof. Henry Higgins, *not* Prof. Higgins.

• Use letters to abbreviate titles or academic degrees: John Smith, Jr.; David Cooper, Esq.; Harris Stevenson, M.A.; Daniel Boone, Ph.D.

• Use letters to abbreviate well-known corporations, companies, governmental agencies. Do *not* use a period after the letters: work for IBM, join the USAF, the SALT treaty, before the UN, on ABC television, reviewed by the FBI.

• Use letters to abbreviate words that appear with numbers: at 12:01 A.M. (a.m.); after 10:00 P.M. (p.m.); in 1230 B.C., in 1492 A.D.; your order No. (or no.) 15.

Hint: Do not use # for no. or No.

• Use letters to abbreviate certain Latin expressions in business and legal writing. In formal writing, however, write out these terms:

i.e.—that is	viz.—namely
et al.—and others	CF.—compare
e.g.—for example	etc.—and so on
C.—about, approximately	

3. WHEN TO AVOID ABBREVIATIONS

Avoid abbreviations in these instances:

- *No* for people's names: George Smith, *not* Geo. Smith.
- *No* for words as part of a name (Street, Boulevard, Avenue, Road, Mountain, Company): Blue Ridge Mountains *not* Blue Ridge Mts., Merriwell and Company *not* Merriwell and Co., Manhattan Avenue *not* Manhattan Av.

• *No* for the symbols &, #: my father and his boss (*not* my father & his boss); at No. 15 (*not* at #15).

Hint: Abbreviations like Inc., & Co., Bros., Ltd., are acceptable when you write official names and titles: A&P, Glencoe Publishing Co., Inc.

• *No* for parts of a book: Part I, Chapter 4, page 9 (*not* Pt. 1, Ch. 4, p. 9).

• *No* for school subjects: Study psychology (*not* study psych.); learn biology (*not* learn bio.).

• *No* for direction words if they come before street names: 18 East Hawaii Boulevard (*not* 18 E. Hawaii Boulevard). You may abbreviate direction words if they follow a street name to indicate the section of a city: 1203 Jonquil Street, N.W.

• *No* for months of the year, states, countries: in February (*not* in Feb.); on April 15 (*not* on Apr. 15); from Alabama (*not* from Ala.).

EXERCISES

A. Some of the following abbreviations are used incorrectly. Write the correct forms on the blank lines. If an abbreviation is correct, mark it C.

1. _____ Gov. Brown went
_____ to N.Y. to appear
_____ on N.B.C. news.
2. _____ The dr. visited
_____ Wm. at about
_____ 11:00 A.M.
3. _____ The Merriam Co.
_____ is at #4 A St.
_____ in Rabb, Pa.
4. _____ I took chem.
_____ last Jan.
_____ with Prof. Day.
5. _____ Ms. Fitzpatrick,
_____ turn to Ch. 3,
_____ p. 229.
6. _____ Sen. Wilson
_____ went to N.J., Fl.,
_____ etc. last Dec.
7. _____ The I.R.S. office
_____ is at 10 W. Elm,
_____ Rye, W. Va.

Abbreviations

B. The following sentences contain errors in abbreviation. Some words are abbreviated when they should not be, and others need to be abbreviated. Rewrite each sentence in the space provided, making the changes you think necessary. Numbers in parentheses indicate how many changes you must make.

1. The art critic, David Grant, paid \$857.32 for painting #672. (1)

2. I have read three books of fiction, five books of poetry, etc. (1)

3. Mister Marsh sent for Doctor O'Day at 10:00 in the morning. (3)

4. The doctor spoke on CBS; he told the listeners to write to 157 W. End Avenue for a prompt reply. (1)

5. Prof. Albert stressed the importance of learning bio. (2)

6. David Ross, Ph.D., worked as a translator in the UN from Feb. 7 to Aug. 25. (2)

7. Did Saint Augustine ever visit Fl.? (2)

8. Last Nov. I went to the A.B.C. studios to try to get a better job. (2)

9. Mr. Hall said he would meet me at the corner of Main Street and Fifth Ave. (1)

10. The Mitchell Company bought out Black, Brown, and Green, Inc., last year.
