

# General Style—Edition 38

12/05/21 - updated for session 6

A B C D E F G H I J K L M  
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

## A

A to B; going from A to B

**A and E:** use accident and emergency the first time

**As,** straight As

**accents:** see **foreign words**

Achilles' heel, Achilles' tendon

acquiesce in

**acronyms** should, as a rule, be set out in full the first time. If it would help the reader, the acronym may be put in em dashes afterwards.

There are three groups of EXCEPTIONS.

1. those that have become words—eg, laser; radar; quango

2. those that are in a foreign language and would probably not be recognised—eg, UNITA; SNCF; KGB; FIFA (UEFA should be out in full first time if the organisation is referred to, though we would always say "the UEFA cup".)

3. those listed below (which might not be as recognisable any other way or which it is unnecessary to put out in full)

**NB** A word's inclusion on this list does not mean that it must never go out in full.

ADSL	ISSN
AIDS	ITV
AM/FM	LED
ANZAC	LSD
ATM	ME
BBC	MOT
	MRI
BSE	MRSA
BCG	NASA
CD-ROM	NATO
CJD	OBE (and other honours)

COBRA or  
COBR (follow  
speaker's usage)

CT

CV	PVC
DAB	QED
DNA	QR
DVD	RAM
DOS	ROM
FTSE	TARDIS
GPS	TLC
HIV	TNT
HIV/AIDS	uPVC
HTML	VAT
IBM	VIP
ISBN	YMCA
ISDN	YWCA
ISO	

**acts** are **uc** only if the full title is used—eg, Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006; the 2006 act; the act. No nicknames—they lead to confusion.

**EXCEPTIONS**—Defence of the Realm Acts; Official Secrets Acts; Single European Act; Trade Descriptions Act; Scotland Acts the Admiralty

**Administration** follows the same rules as **Government**

**advance notice:** TRY notice

**adverbs:** in a decisive way = decisively

adviser (NOT advisor)

**advisory committees:** full and proper titles are **uc**—eg, Scottish Science Advisory Committee; the committee

advocate deposes

aeroplane BUT airplane mode (on a device)

aftercare

ageism; ageing; ageist

**ages:** nine-year-olds; 10-year-olds; seven to 10-year-olds; from the ages of five to 18; aged eight, nine, 14 and 16; those aged 16 to 18; 16 to 19-year-olds; over-50s; under-fives; in their 30s and 40s; she is six years old

**agri:** agrifood, agritourism, agrimoney; agrimonetary without a hyphen; BUT agri-environment (due to the vowel)

aide/s-de-camp

aide-memoire

**aims and objectives:** TRY one or the other, not both

**airports:** Sumburgh airport; Manchester international airport; Heathrow terminal 4

al-Qa'ida

all corners

**all of:** TRY omitting "of"—eg, all the civil servants (NOT all of the civil servants)

all right

amen; we say amen to that

**amendments** are lodged in Edinburgh and tabled in Westminster

amok; run amok

among (NOT amongst)

**ampersands** may be used only in company names (follow Companies House)—eg, B&Q; BUT Marks and Spencer

ancillary (NOT ancilliary)

**and/or** is acceptable, if that's really what they mean

annexe [n] (part of a building); annex [n] (part of a document); annex [vb]

**anti** [prefix]; follow "Chambers"—eg, Antichrist; antisocial. If not there, use a hyphen. NB antisemitic, antisemitism, anti-racism

**anticipate** is often used when "expect" would be more appropriate

**any** [sing]: Does any of us have the right to complain?

**any more:** two words, even as an adverb

apex; apex return

**apostrophe on s:** only plurals end with 's' for the possessive—eg, ministers' cars. Where the s is part of the word, the possessive must be s's. This is usually a problem only with names—eg, Prince of Wales's consent; St James's park; Sir Roy Griffiths's report; the princess's car.

United States is a plural, so—eg, United States' view. Also, Forth Ports' facilities.

**EXCEPTIONS**—for goodness' sake; Achilles' heel

**apostrophe:** do not use in names of organisations—eg, National Farmers Union; Ramblers Association; residents associations; magistrates courts

Use an apostrophe when the word would not exist without it—eg, children's; fishermen's

See also **contractions**.

**applause:** see **stage directions**

arm's length; arm's-length principle

**armed forces:** the Army (BUT the German army), the Royal Navy (BUT the navy, royal naval), the Royal Air Force (BUT the air force). Use common sense, as always—eg, in a sentence in which all three branches are referred to by their short names, we will put the A in Army down: "They called out the army, navy and air force."

**army:** see armed forces

**article titles:** "The Changing Face of Scotland"

artefact

**as being:** TRY as

**ascriptions**—quotations of five words or more from any UK Official Report take an ascription in square brackets after an em dash immediately after the text of the quotation. Quotation and ascription take quotation style.

Use a hyphen to denote consecutive columns and elide the span to the fewest digits necessary for clarity, eg c 23-4 for columns 23 to 24.

Don't elide digits from 10 to 19 eg c 10-11, not 10-1 for columns 10 to 11. Use commas and full column numbers to denote quotes from non-consecutive columns.

In Edinburgh

**Plenary meetings:** —[Official Report, 13 April 2000; c 9.]

**Committee meetings:** —[Official Report, Finance Committee, 13 April 2000; c 9-11.]  
**Scottish Commission for Public Audit meetings:** —[Official Report, Scottish Commission for Public Audit, 25 October 2012; c 110-11.]  
**Written answers:** —[Official Report, Justice Committee and Justice 2 Committee (joint meeting), 10 May 2001; c 96.]  
**Written answers:** —[Written Answers, 12 January 2004; S2W-5413.]  
**NB** The date of the written answer is when the question was answered, not when it was lodged. If a question has no written answer yet, no ascription is necessary.  
**NB** If a speaker quotes the same official report two or more times, it may be possible to manage with one ascription.  
**Example:** —[Official Report, 13 April 2000; c 9, 8-12, 35.]

#### In Westminster

**Plenary meetings:** —[Official Report, House of Commons/Lords, 1 April 2000; Vol 90, c 23-4.] (NB - col numbers in online Hansards are beside the text column, but are visible only if you expand the screen)  
**Committee meetings:** evidence sessions —[Official Report, House of Commons, Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Public Bill Committee, 18 June 2013; c 53, Q106;]  
committee stage —[Official Report, House of Commons, Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Public Bill Committee, 18 June 2013; c 53.]  
**Westminster Hall debates:** —[Official Report, House of Commons, 30 November 2000; Vol 4, c 56WH.]  
**Written answers** — we no longer do ascriptions for Westminster written answers  
**Written ministerial statements:** we no longer do ascriptions for Westminster written statements  
**NB** There is no need to ascribe quotations from select committee evidence-taking sessions as they are not from the Official Report.

#### In Wales

—[Record of Proceedings, Senedd Cymru/Welsh Parliament, 26 January 2022.]

#### In Northern Ireland

—[Official Report, Northern Ireland Assembly, 9 May 2007.]

#### In the Isle of Man

—[Official Report, Tynwald Court/House of Keys/Legislative Council, 17 February 2004; Vol 121, pp 729-38.]

**assemblies:** Northern Ireland Assembly; the Assembly; National Assembly for Wales; the Assembly. Other assemblies are uc if the correct name is used—eg, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe; the assembly. Use lc for proposed or imagined assemblies.

**associations:** full and proper titles are uc

**Auditor General:** use full title first time (Auditor General for Scotland); thereafter Auditor General is fine

Aunt Sally; Aunt Sallies

away day

## B

**B and B:** use bed and breakfast the first time

**back bench:** from the back benches; back benches; back-bench member

back-up [n]; back up [vb]

backdate

**back** [prefix]: follow Chambers—eg, backlog; backroom; backtrack; backwoods; BUT back yard

bagsy

Bahá'í

bail out a boat; bale out of an aeroplane; bail an accused person, bank bailout

balk, not bauk

balkanise; balkanisation; BUT the Balkans

**ball:** ball game [n]; ball park [n]; ballpark [adj]

ballyhoo

**banks:** organisation uc, branch lc—eg "Clydesdale Bank has announced a restructuring."

"I went to my personal adviser at Clydesdale bank."

"The bank has announced a restructuring."

World Bank; the bank; Bank of England; the bank; the monetary policy committee

bank holiday

Barnardo's

Barnett formula

baseline

**basis:** TRY to AVOID

on a daily basis = daily

on a day-to-day basis = day to day

on a much wider basis = much more widely

on a national basis = nationally

on a part-time basis = part-time

on a permanent basis = permanently

on a piecemeal basis = piecemeal

on a regular basis = regularly

testing on a universal basis = universal testing

Basque Country (autonomous region); Basque country (the wider Basque-speaking area)

**be helpful to:** TRY help

**be of benefit to:** TRY benefit

**be of [give] assistance to:** TRY assist, help

be-all and end-all

bedblocking

bedrock

**begs the question:** follow the speaker's usage

benefited; benefiting

**benefits** are lc—eg, child benefit; housing benefit; disability living allowance; all-work test

better-off people; the better-off; BUT those who are better off

biannual means twice a year; biennial means every two years

biased

**Bible:** the Bible; Genesis, chapter 2, verses 8 to 10; Psalm 96

**bills** are uc only for the full title of a published bill (check the "current bills" and "previous bills" pages of the Parliament website)—eg, Scotland Bill; the bill; a bill of rights.

Use lc for draft bills.

Except in the most unusual circumstances, always give the correct and full name of a published bill. Nicknames lead only to confusion.

There are public, private and hybrid bills. Proceedings on different types of bill are governed by separate rules under standing orders.

#### Public bills

Broadly speaking, there are two types of public bill—Government and non-Government. A committee bill and a member's bill are examples of public non-Government bills. Other manifestations of public bill are listed at rule 9.1.1.

A bill promoted by a Scottish minister is a Government bill.

A **member's bill** is introduced by a member who may be supported or "sponsored" by other members. Plural: members' bills.

A **committee bill** is introduced by the convener, who also instructs the drafting. They are referred to as the member in charge.

Public bills have **stages** (stage 1, stage 2, stage 3).

#### Private bills

Private bills are "promoted" by a private interest to give them "particular powers or benefits in excess of or in conflict with the general law".

Private bills have different **stages** (preliminary stage, consideration stage, final stage).

Bills (and acts) generally have sections (at the front) and schedules (at the back). Groups of **sections** on a theme are often organised into **parts** (part 1, part 2, etc). BUT be aware that, until the end of 2000, Westminster used roman numerals (part III, etc).

A **section** may be divided into **subsections**, which may be divided into **paragraphs**, which may be divided into **subparagraphs**. The style for each component is as follows—section 5; subsection (1); paragraph (a); subparagraph (i).

If the debate is about subparagraph (ii), you need refer only to "subparagraph (ii)" or, even, "the subparagraph". To identify subparagraph (ii) from scratch, however, you need the entire root, which would appear thus—section 5(1)(a)(ii).

A **schedule** may be divided into **paragraphs**, which may be divided into **subparagraphs**. Unfortunately, the paragraph numbers are not wrapped in brackets, so we have to say "paragraph 1 of schedule 5", or "subparagraph 1(2) of schedule 5".

#### BE AWARE

1. That **Westminster bills** have "clauses" rather than "sections"—the subdivisions remain the same—and that clauses in bills become sections in acts. A member's bill there is called a **private member's bill**. Westminster also has **private bills**, and they too are governed by separate standing orders.

2. Commons stages are called—presentation and first reading, second reading, committee stage, report, third reading

biggie

**bio** [prefix]: no hyphen—eg, biosecurity

bird life (see also, plant life, wildlife)

birth rate  
 birthday honours; birthday honours list  
 black spot  
 black and white corridor/television/film  
 Black Isle  
 BlackBerry; BlackBerrys  
 blacklist  
 blitzkrieg  
 Bluetooth  
**boards**: full and proper titles are uc—eg, Scottish Legal Aid Board; the board  
 See also **health boards**.

body-swerve [vb]; body swerve [n]  
 bogey (special object of dread); bogeyman; bogie (railway wagon)  
**border**s: Borders (in Scotland); Welsh borders; a borderer  
**born(e)**: babies are born, burdens are borne  
**both**: sentences with "both" are often wrongly constructed. Whatever follows "both" should be duplicated after "and".  
**Examples**:  
 RIGHT:  
 • He should both come to Manchester and end this campaign. (A verb follows each.)  
 • He should go both to Manchester and to my constituency. (A preposition follows each.)  
 • He should go to both Manchester and my constituency. (A noun or noun phrase follows each.)  
 WRONG:  
 • He should go both to Manchester and my constituency. (A preposition follows "both", but a noun phrase follows "and".)  
 • He should both go to Manchester and my constituency. (A verb follows "both", but a noun phrase follows "and".)  
 If in doubt, drop "both"; none of the sentences above would suffer. This is harder to see in a long sentence, but it is a very common mistake.  
 See also **either**.

bottleneck  
 boxing day  
 brainchild; brainwave  
 breakdown [n]; break down [vb]  
 break-in [n]; break in [vb]  
 break-up [n]; break up [vb]  
 breakneck speed  
**bridge** is uc only when used as a street name—eg, George IV Bridge  
 Use lc elsewhere—eg, the bridges; Forth road bridge  
 See also **built environment**.

brimful  
**bring/brought forward**: AVOID  
 See **amendments** and **put forward** for alternatives

British empire  
 British-Irish Council  
 British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly (formerly the British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body)  
 British isles  
 British Sign Language  
 brownfield (and greenfield)  
 brownie points  
 brownies (children's organisation)  
 buckshee (free)  
**budget**: the budget; budgeting; the Budget (Scotland) Bill; the budget statement  
**buildings** are lc—eg, Hailes castle, Saughton house; palace of Holyroodhouse; Hampton court palace; Crinan hotel; Waverley station; St Andrew Square bus station  
 See also **churches** and **schools**.

**built environment**: lc—eg, Craigmillar roundabout; Humber bridge; Prestwick airport; terminal 5; Leith docks  
 bumf  
**bureau**: the Parliamentary Bureau; the bureau (the Scottish Parliament business managers committee)  
 buroo (the dole)  
 the *Business Bulletin*  
 businessman; businesswoman; small businessman; businessperson; businesspeople  
**but**s: ifs and buts  
 buyout [n]; buy out [vb]  
 buzzword  
**by** [prefix]: follow "Chambers"—eg, by-election; by-product; bygone; bypass; byway; byword  
 EXCEPTIONS—by the by; byelaw  
 byzantine (but Byzantine empire)

## C

ca cannie

**cabinet**: the Cabinet (Edinburgh and Whitehall); cabinet system of government; in local government, cabinet; Cabinet Office (it is, in effect, a Government department); Cabinet committees are lc.

caesarean

cafe (no accent)

**campaign names**: lower case, without quotes, unless the campaign has its own URL (not a page on an organisation's website, in which case it takes initial caps).

candy floss [n]; candy-floss [adj]; a candy-floss economy

canon

capercallie (as in the bird, not the band)

car park

cardholder

carcasses

carryover [n]; carry over [vb]

case law, case load, BUT casework; caseworker

case-by-case programming

**cases** is overused  
 in many cases = often, or many  
 In many cases, ratepayers do not agree = Ratepayers often do not agree / Many ratepayers do not agree  
 in some cases = sometimes, or some

catch-up [n]; catch up [vb]  
 catchword, catchphrase  
 Catholic (as in Roman Catholic ); BUT catholic tastes  
**CCT**: compulsory competitive tendering; closed-circuit television  
 (CCTV is also, but not always, used for the latter.)

**century**: the 18th century; 19th century houses

chalkface

chamber

**chambers of commerce**: as an idea lc, but names of individual chambers are uc—eg, Glasgow Chamber of Commerce

**chancellor**: Chancellor of the Exchequer; the chancellor; BUT Exchequer is uc on its own; Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster/Cornwall; the chancellor

changeover [n]; change over [vb]; BUT, TRY change

**channel** is uc if the meaning is the English Channel; Channel tunnel; North Channel (between Scotland and Northern Ireland); munitions were dumped in the channel between Scotland and Ireland

**character**: see **nature**

chargé d'affaires

**charities** are uc if the name is full and correct -- the brand name or the registered name are acceptable

cheapjack

**chemical formulas**: follow what is said—eg, CO<sub>2</sub>; carbon dioxide; H<sub>2</sub>O

cheque book [n]; cheque-book [adj]; cheque-book journalism

cherry pick; cherry picking is bad; cherry-picking policy

chickenfeed

childcare

Christmas day

**churches**: the institution in full is uc—eg, the Church of Scotland/England; the Roman Catholic Church. Otherwise use lc—eg, the church/churches; St Michael's parish church; Melrose abbey; Glasgow cathedral  
 Cinderella; a Cinderella service

Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS); citizens advice bureaux (CABx, but if people say CABs, go with that); many individual CABs are charities and therefore upper case  
citizens assembly  
City of London (corporation); the City; City editor; City news  
clawback [n]; claw back [vb]  
climbdow[n]; climb down [vb]  
cloud-cuckoo-land  
CO<sub>2</sub>  
**co**: acceptable in hypothetical company names—eg, Blah, Blah and co  
**NB** Do not use an ampersand.  
**co** [prefix]: follow "Chambers"—eg, coexistence; co-operate; co-ordinate, **co-locate**  
coal mine/mining; opencast mining; opencasting  
coalface  
cockney  
cognisance  
cold war  
combated/ing  
come-uppance  
commend for  
**commissions**:  
**domestic**: full and proper titles are uc—eg, Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland; Equality and Human Rights Commission; the commission  
**royal**: check full proper name—eg, the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution  
If you cannot verify it, or it clearly does not exist, do not give it the authority of capital letters—eg, "There should be a royal commission on flatworms."  
**Europe**: the European Commission; the Commission  
**commissioners**:  
Use uc for the full title of a European commissioner—eg, the European Commissioner for Enterprise and Information Society—or the full title of a commissioner appointed by Parliament—the Auditor General for Scotland; the Commissioner for Public Appointments in Scotland; the Scottish Information Commissioner; the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman; Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland  
Use uc for a person's title—eg, Commissioner Bonino  
Use lc for generic titles—eg, the fisheries commissioner.  
**committees**:  
Use uc for full and proper name—eg, the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee; the committee  
If the speaker says e.g. "RACCE Committee" or "DPLR Committee", that is acceptable, provided it's not the first mention of the committee's name.  
AVOID abbreviated forms such as "the enterprise committee"; they cause confusion. However, "the justice committee(s)" is acceptable if members are referring to the former Justice 1 and Justice 2 committees or it is absolutely impossible to tell which one they mean.  
Use lc for Cabinet and local government committees  
common law [n]; common-law [adj]; common-law wife  
Common Market  
the Commons; House of Commons  
common sense [n]; commonsense [adj]  
Commonwealth (echo of empire); commonwealth (16<sup>th</sup> century political theory)  
communism; Communist party  
**Community**: European Community; the Community  
**community councils** are lc  
**companies** are [sing] unless absolutely necessary. Check the name. Co, Ltd, inc and plc are accepted abbreviations but use only where necessary  
**compare**: "compare to" is to liken; "compare with" is to contrast  
**compass points**: south; north-east; the south-west; the west; the middle east; the far east; eastern bloc  
Use uc and no hyphen if referring to constituencies or electoral regions—eg, North East Fife  
**compose/comprise**: a group comprises its members, or it is composed of them  
Comptroller and Auditor General (UK)  
**computer programs/applications/games** do not take quotation marks—eg, Microsoft Word; Tomb Raider  
concertina-ed; concertina-ing  
**conferences**: Labour Party conference; Commonwealth conference; conference of heads of Government. For a conference title (eg, "Beyond Foot and Mouth—The Way Forward") try to introduce it with "the conference entitled" or something similar.  
**congratulate** on - "I congratulate the member on securing the debate" (NB "congratulate for" is not necessarily wrong, but you may as well avoid it.)  
consensus (NOT general consensus, or consensus of opinion)  
**constituencies and electoral regions** are uc—eg, Edinburgh Eastern, Central Scotland  
consult (NOT consult with)  
consumer prices (NOT price) index; CPI  
continental  
**continents**: Africa; Antarctica; Asia; Europe; North America; South America; Australia/Australasia/Oceania (follow usage). Regions are lc—eg, south-east Asia.  
**contractions**: do not use except in quotations—eg, "do not" rather than "don't"; "will not" rather than "won't"; "cannot" rather than "can't"  
Contractions are acceptable in question tags, if there is a good reason for not editing them out: He would say that, wouldn't he?  
contracting out [n] and [vb]; contracting-out [adj]  
**contribution** is often used to mean speech—eg, "I shall make a brief ~~contribution~~ speech."  
convener  
Conveners Group  
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities; COSLA  
**conventions** are lc unless given their full and proper title—eg, the European convention on human rights (actually the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, but we don't need to expand to this); the convention  
cop-out [n]; cop out [vb]  
cost benefit analysis  
cost-effective policy; the policy is cost effective  
cost of living crisis (no hyphens)  
**councils**  
**local government**: uc if full title—eg, Aberdeen City Council; the council.  
**List of councils**:  
Aberdeen City; Aberdeenshire; Angus; Argyll and Bute; City of Edinburgh; Clackmannanshire; Dumfries and Galloway;  
Dundee City; East Ayrshire; East Dunbartonshire; East Lothian; East Renfrewshire; Falkirk; Fife; Glasgow City; Highland;  
Inverclyde; Midlothian; Moray; North Ayrshire; North Lanarkshire; Orkney Islands; Perth and Kinross; Renfrewshire;  
Scottish Borders; Shetland Islands; South Ayrshire; South Lanarkshire; Stirling; West Dunbartonshire; Western Isles (also known as Comhairle nan Eilean Siar); West Lothian  
Sub-units of councils are lc—eg, Moray direct labour organisation; Renfrewshire trading standards office  
**Metropolitan counties** (England) are uc, eg, Greater Manchester, South Yorkshire, West Midlands,  
**Metropolitan boroughs** (England) are uc, eg City of Liverpool, North Tyneside (list in Wikipedia)  
**non-local government**: full and proper title, uc—eg, the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations; the council  
**community councils** are lc  
**Europe**: Council of Europe, the council (not an EU institution); Council of the European Union, the Council, agriculture and fisheries council; environment council; the council  
**councillor** is lc, unless part of a title—eg, Councillor Stewart  
counter-argument  
counter-fraud  
counter-intelligence  
counter-measures  
**county** is lc, unless *immediately* before name—eg, County Down  
coursework  
court martial; courts martial [n]; court-martial [vb]  
**courts**: uc if appeal or high court—eg, the Court of Session; the High Court of Judiciary; the High Court; sheriff court; county court; magistrates court; district court  
Court of Appeal (England and Wales)  
**European**: European Court of Human Rights (Strasbourg); European Court of Justice (Luxembourg); International Court of Justice (The Hague); the Court  
crew [pl]  
criterion [sing]; criteria [pl]  
cross-check  
cross cutting is good; cross-cutting approach  
cross-party issue  
**cross-party groups** are lc, but check the title

cross-sample  
crowdfund, crowdfunding  
**Crown** (as an institution): the Crown, the Spanish Crown  
Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service  
the crusades

**Crown Estate Commissioners, Crown Estate, Crown estate:** The Crown Estate Commissioners are the body corporate; the Crown Estate is how they brand themselves as an organisation; and the Crown estate is the land and property that they manage. Therefore, we will do, "We seek to devolve the Crown estate" (not "Crown Estate") and "We are in discussions with the Crown Estate".

Crown Prosecution Service (England and Wales)

**crypto:** cryptocurrency, crypto assets

crystal clear

**cubic measurements:** for cubic centimetres/feet/yards, use—eg, 300cm<sup>3</sup> / 3 cubic feet / 2 cubic yards  
See also **square measurements**.

cubs (children's organisation)

cup final

curricular; extra-curricular [adj]

cutback [n]; cut back [vb]; BUT, TRY cut in both cases

**CV:** no need to put out in full first time

**cyber** cyberbullying, cyberpunk,

cycle path

**czar:** use tsar instead

## D

D day

dare say

**dash:** use the em dash and no space on either side—like this

**data:** follow members' usage with regard to whether it takes a singular verb (the data is inconclusive/the data are inconclusive)

database

**dates:** Monday 12 November 1978; the sixth/10th of this month; BUT 10 March

See also **years**.

**day:** St David's day; boxing day; new year's day; Christmas day; international women's day; tartan day; remembrance day

**day 1:** "We have supported the measures since day 1."

day care

day in, day out

dead weight [n]; deadweight [adj]

death knell

death bed [n]; deathbed [adj]

**decades:** 1980s; 1990s (NOT '80s, '90s)

decision making [n]; decision-making [adj]; decision-making powers

decision time

decommission

decriminalise

deep water [n]; deepwater [adj]; deepwater fishing

deflator

**degree of:** TRY to AVOID

a considerable degree of protection = considerable protection

some degree of assistance = some assistance, or just assistance

a high degree of risk = a high risk

subsidised to a massive degree = massively subsidised

give a degree of encouragement to = encourage

**degrees** (educational): do not need to go out in full—eg, BA, MSc, PhD

**degrees** (temperature): centigrade; Celsius; Fahrenheit;

5°C; 40°F; -10°;

"The temperature was 5° above average."

20° proof; 25° on the Gay-Lussac scale

Temperatures in Kelvin do not use the ° sign

**degrees** (latitude or longitude):

20° north, 15° west

delphic

de minimis

**demonstrate:** if the member means "show", use "show"

**departments** are used for the full and proper title of central Government departments

As of session 3, the Scottish Government has no departments, so references to departments and directorates are to, unless the reference is to a department prior to May 2007.

department of state

Department of Bread and Circuses

See also **executive agencies**.

council departments are to—eg, Dundee social services department

dependent [adj]; dependant [n] (Remember: "a dependant")

the depression; the great depression

devil

d'Hondt

diarrhoea

**dictionaries:** "Oxford English Dictionary"; "Black's Veterinary Dictionary"

diktat

dilly-dally

**directives** are used only if given their full and proper title

director general; BUT directorate-general

**disfranchise/disenfranchise:** follow members' usage

disks (computer); discs (records, tax, etc)

dispatch (NOT despatch)

**dissociate/disassociate:** follow members' usage

**dissolution** of the Parliament (or the Westminster Parliament) before a general election

**division:** taking a vote; decision time

divisive

do-gooders

do-it-yourself; DIY is acceptable

doctor; Dr Jones

dollars; \$30 million

See also **money**.

domesday book

doomsday

domiciliary

dos and don'ts

dotcom firms

doozie

dotting the i's and crossing the t's

double-Dutch

double-talk

Downing Street; 10 Downing Street; number 10

downstream

downturn

draconian

**draftsman, draughtsman:** a draftsman writes, a draughtsman draws; parliamentary draftsman/men

drawing board

drop-out [n] (a person)

drugs courts (NOT drug courts)

drug pedlar; drug pusher; peddle drugs; pedal a bicycle

dwelling-house

dyke (NOT dike)

## E

E coli

email; e-commerce

**each other** refers to two people; **one another** to more than two - eg Romeo and Juliet loved each other; the committee members texted one another  
**east** is generally lc, including in political references—eg, east-west relations; the east (former communist world); far east; eastern Europe; BUT it is uc in proper names—eg, East Kilbride. EXCEPTION—East Anglia.

Easter

echo; echoes

**ECHR** references should take the form "section III, article 52" (you don't need to mention the section if the speaker doesn't), or "article 6 of protocol 1".

**NB** It's important to distinguish between articles of the ECHR and articles of protocols of the ECHR.

economic and monetary union; EMU

economics [sing]

educationist (NOT educationalist)

8-ball (NOT eight-ball)

**either** [sing]: is either party concerned about that?

Sentences are often wrongly constructed. Whatever follows "either" should be duplicated after "or".

RIGHT:

- Either he should give the evidence or he should shut up. (A pronoun follows both "either" and "or".)
- He should either give the evidence or shut up. (A verb follows both.)

WRONG:

- Either he should give the evidence or shut up. (A pronoun follows "either", but a verb follows "or".)

The same principle applies to "neither" and "nor".

See also **both**.

**electorate** [pl]

11<sup>th</sup> hour

**ellipses** ... (NOT ...)

Omit punctuation before ellipses.

11-plus; 16-plus

embargo; embargoes

EMU, economic and monetary union

**endeavour** [vb]; TRY try

English Channel; the Channel; Channel tunnel

**engrain**: use ingrain instead

**enormity** is to do with badness, not bigness - the enormity of his crimes, not the enormity of the cake

entente cordiale

**enterprise companies**: see enterprise style sheet

**et cetera** is usually unnecessary in reported speech, as is "and so on"; use sparingly. If the abbreviation "etc" is used for any reason, it should not take a full stop (even if in the title of a bill).

ethos [s] and [pl]

**euros**: € (Alt Gr-4); €6 billion; eurozone; euroland

See also **money**.

**Europe**: see **commissions, commissioners, community, councils, courts**

European Community (EC); the Community

European monetary union is WRONG (see EMU)

European Union; the Union

Euro-sceptic

**eve**: Christmas eve; new year's eve

even steven

even-handedly

ever-present danger; the danger is ever present

everyday [adj]; every day [adv phrase] - an everyday event; she did it every day

evildoer

**exams and qualifications**: O-grade; O-level; A-level; standard grade; national 4; national 5; higher; advanced higher

Exchequer

**executive agencies**: the Scottish Government has executive agencies, as do all UK departments of state.

The full name is uc—eg, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education; Scottish Prison Service

So, "The Scottish Prison Service is an executive agency of the Scottish Government."

expatriate [n] and [adj]

extra-curricular

eye-witness

**e-zines** and **blogs** are italicised—eg, *Salon*, the *Onion*

## F

Facebook

**facéd with** (to be) TRY face—eg, "That is why we face (NOT 'are faced with') problems."

fag end

fair dos

fallback [n]; a fallback position [adj];

fall back [vb]

fallout [n]

**family** is usually [pl] but can be [sing]—eg, "The family is the basic unit of society."

**family members**: Grandpa Joe; my grandpa

far be it from

far east

the Faroes (NOT the Faeroes)

fascist; fascism

feather-bed [vb]; feather bed [n]

feedstuffs; feeding stuffs (for animals); foodstuffs (for humans)

feet; 100 feet; 5 feet

fens; fenlands

fetus

**fewer** and **less**: fewer is number, less is amount—eg, less bread; fewer slices

field marshal; Field Marshal Robertson

**figures**:

**cardinal numbers**: use words for nine and under EXCEPT with distances, percentages and weights and measures: four mountains; under-fives; two years; 3 miles; 1 km; 8 kg; 3 m (metres); 5m2; 8m3 (BUT 3 square miles); 5mg (for milligrams BUT 5 micrograms); 90kV; 90kW; 2 litres; mark 1; 8 per cent

For **10** and **over** write as figures—eg, 27 years ago; post-16 education; over-60s

For unusual measurements such as terawatts, refer to the International System of Units page on Wikipedia. Rule of thumb: if a seldom-used measurement (ie TW/terawatt hours) is mentioned once, do it in full, but if it comes up a lot use the abbreviated

**per**: use a word, not an abbreviation, after per—eg, 250 tonnes per hectare; 250mg per kilogramme; £23 per metre.

EXCEPTIONS—mph; kph

**other numbers**: first; secondly; thirdly; sixty-ninthly; BUT first meeting; 12th meeting

Any numeral that begins a sentence should be written in full—eg, "Seventy-five goats ate my hedge."

**Million** and **billion** are rendered as words rather than zeros—eg, 4 million unemployed people; 8.7 million units; £1.5 billion; £2 billion-worth

The American billion is taken as standard (one thousand million) rather than the British (one million million).

hundreds of thousands; tens of millions

**negative numbers**: -1 (NOT minus 1)

See also **ages, dates, fractions, money, time** and individual entries.

**film titles**: "Casablanca"; "Goodbye, Mr Chips"; BUT some titles have become expressions and need no embellishment—eg, a catch-22 situation; this is my groundhog day

**fine tuning**: fine tune [vb]; fine-tuned [adj]

fine-toothed comb

**fire and rescue services** became the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in 2013

**List of former organisations**:

Central Scotland Fire and Rescue Service; Dumfries and Galloway Fire and Rescue Service; Fire Fire and Rescue Service; Grampian Fire and Rescue Service; Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service; Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service; Strathclyde Fire and Rescue; Tayside Fire and Rescue

firefighter; firefighting; firemaster

firepower

first world war; great war

**firth** is uc when used as part of a proper name—eg, Firth of Forth; Solway Firth.

fish farm

fishmeal

flyer

flim-flam

flipside  
 flood plain  
 floodgates  
 flow country  
 focused; focusing; focuses [pl]  
 fogey  
**fold** is always rendered in words, no hyphens—eg, fourfold; twentyfold; hundredfold  
     BUT if it is simply a plural, recast the sentence—eg, "My reason for saying so is twofold." = "I have two reasons for saying so."  
     manifold (NOT many-fold)  
 foodstuffs (for humans); feedstuffs; feeding stuffs (for animals)  
 foolproof  
 foot-and-mouth disease  
**forebear** (refrain or abstain from) takes no preposition  
 forbear saying (NOT forbear from saying or forbear to say)  
 The word that follows must end in -ing.  
**forebear** (ancestor, predecessor)  
**forego** (go before): foregone conclusion  
     See also **forgo**.  
 the foreshore is the space between high and low water marks  
  
**foreign place names:** the authority for spelling place names is the INDEX of the Philip's world atlas (NOT the maps). Use your judgment if an obvious effort is made to pronounce a name in a certain way—eg, Kosova as opposed to Kosovo.  
     **NB** We do Catalunya NOT Cataluña, and Kyiv NOT Kyyiv. These are EXCEPTIONS.  
**foreign titles:** follow what the member says—eg, Herr/Mr Kohl; Mrs/Mme Cresson  
**foreign words:** no italics—eg, détente; risorgimento  
     Follow "Chambers" for accents—café is an EXCEPTION.  
**Foreign Secretary** is better than Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs  
 foresee/able  
**forever:** to be forever doing something; BUT to do something for ever  
**forgo** (go without): revenue forgone; forgo the pleasure  
     See also **forego**.  
 formulae (BUT follow the speaker if they say "formulas")  
 formula 1 racing  
 forswear/swore  
 fortress Britain/Europe/Falklands, etc  
 fount of wisdom (NOT font)  
 four-by-four (NOT 4x4)  
**fractions** are always expressed as words—eg, one half; one twentieth; two thirty-fifths; (NOT ½, etc)  
     However, with money, use decimals—eg, "Spending has fallen from £1.6 billion to just ~~£1.4~~ £1.25 billion." "This year alone, ~~£1.7 million~~ £500,000 has been wasted." Fractions do not take a hyphen unless used as an adjective—eg, two and a half years ago; one (or "a") third of my constituents; BUT a two-thirds majority  
  
 freeload/er/ing  
 freeports (but green ports)  
 freephone  
 fridge  
 front bench [n]; from the front benches; front-bench [adj]; front-bench member  
 front-line services  
 front load [vb]  
 fulfil; fulfilment  
 full-hearted  
 fullness (NOT fulness)  
**fund** is generally lc—eg, social fund; regional fund; national insurance fund; consolidated fund.  
     Use uc for the full and proper titles of organisations such as the International Monetary Fund and Save the Children Fund  
 fundholder [n]; fundhold [vb]; fundholding  
 fundraise; fundraising  
**future** is often unnecessary, either because the future tense is used or because it is used with a word that implies the future, as in "future prospects"

## G

G8  
 gaffe (mistake); gaff (house/flat); gaff (humbug, nonsense); blow the gaff  
 gatekeeper; to gate-keep; gate keeping  
**gender** (he/she); follow what the member says; "they" is acceptable as a gender-neutral term  
 general (rank); General Eisenhower  
 gentleman's agreement  
 geopolitical  
 ghetto; ghettos  
 ghille  
**give to:** TRY give  
 giveaway [n] and [adj]; give away [vb]  
**go:** from the word go  
 go-ahead [n]; go ahead [vb]  
 goalposts  
 God; gods; God help the country  
 godspeed; we wish him godspeed  
 good samaritan  
 good will [n]; goodwill [adj]  
 Good Friday; Good Friday agreement  
 goodbye; we must say goodbye to full employment  
 goodness' sake  
  
**Government** [sing]: general references to the concept of government, and to local government, are lc—eg, when we were in government; the machinery of government; the responsibilities of government; devolved government; Cabinet government; local government; governmental  
     BUT use uc for central Government (because it means "the Government"), and if using both together—eg, local and central Government  
 graffiti [pl]; graffito [sing]  
 grams; 200g  
 grant aid [n]; grant-aid [vb]; grant-aided work; the work is grant-aided  
 grant in aid  
 grass roots [n]; grass-roots [adj]  
 great war (first world war, or first war)  
 greater Glasgow; greater London; greater Manchester  
**green:** green movement/politics/ministers; green belt; green ports  
     uc is used only for the party and its members  
 greenfield (and brownfield); BUT green belt  
 groundwater  
**group:** use lc if the group is a unit of something larger—eg, consultative steering group  
     EXCEPTION—Conveners Group  
     Use uc for the full and proper name of a lead organisation or plc—eg, Lloyds Banking Group  
  
 guerrilla  
 guesstimate  
 guest house  
 guides or girl guides (children's organisation)  
 Gulf war  
 gung-ho  
 guv (NOT gov) is short for guv'hor

## H

**H:** follow members' usage when deciding whether words beginning with "h" take "a" or "an"  
 ha'penny; tuppenny-ha'penny; ha'p'orth  
 haemorrhage  
 The Hague (capital T)  
 half day  
 half-truth  
 halfway; halfway house  
 hallmark

hand in hand  
handout [n]  
Hanukkah  
hara-kiri (Japanese ritual suicide)  
hard-working  
haver (NOT halver)  
headquarters [sing]  
headteacher  
heads of Government; Commonwealth heads of Government meeting (CHOGM)  
**health boards:** Forth Valley NHS Board; NHS Forth Valley  
Follow the same style for the others, checking the full name in the health style sheet.  
the/a national health service board; the NHS board; the board; health boards

healthcare  
**health service:** see also **hospitals** and **national health service**

heartfelt  
heat wave  
heathland  
heaven; the kingdom of heaven  
hectare  
hell  
hellbent  
hello  
**help and assistance:** TRY one or the other, not both  
helpline  
hero; heroes  
hiccup  
High Court  
**High street** is generally lc—eg, high street shops; the man in the high street  
BUT use uc when the street bears the name—eg, Scottish Gas is digging up (the-) High Street

high tech [n]; high-tech [adj]  
high-falutin'  
Highlands: Highlands and Islands (an EXCEPTION to the rule on capitals); a highlander  
"Highway Code" (the book); highway code (the concept)  
**His Majesty:** upper case.  
NEVER HM when meaning the King.  
HM is, however, acceptable in conjunction with ships and prisons (eg, HMS Hermes; HMP Stirling, HM Prison Stirling).  
Other bodies go out in full first time (eg, His Majesty's Revenue and Customs, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland) but can be reported with an HM (eg HM Revenue and Customs; HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland) *if that is what is said*. Short forms (HMRC; HMICS) are, of course fine after the first time.  
BUT *His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education should be shortened to HMIE, never HM Inspectorate of Education.*

hmm (NOT hem or h'm)  
holidaymaker  
holocaust – a major fire lc; the Holocaust (during WW2)  
Hogmanay  
home counties  
home owner, house owner  
**Home Secretary** is better than Secretary of State for the Home Department  
home workers; home working  
homoeopathy  
homogeneous (having the same nature)—eg, a homogeneous population; homogenous (sharing the same genes)  
hoo-hah  
**hopefully:** "Hopefully, the minister will say yes." This means that the minister will be hopeful when s/he says yes. If the member means, "I hope that the minister will say yes," make him/her say so.  
horticulturist

**hospitals** and **health centres:** for simplicity, treat all hospitals and health centres as if they are branches of a larger organisation, which means the generic term is lc—eg, Durham Road health centre; Garrock day hospital; Armitstead child development centre; Southern general hospital; Royal infirmary of Edinburgh (Edinburgh royal infirmary, the Royal). Check the proper name online  
hotchpotch  
hotline  
**hotspot** Covid hotspot; wi-fi hotspot; the Government is in a hot spot

**the house:** if a member says this, normally substitute "the chamber" (unless they mean the House of Commons/Lords); clarify references to "this side of the house" to indicate the party to which the member is referring

housebreaking  
house building  
hubbub  
hullabaloo  
humungous  
**hyphens** should be used in adjectival phrases that precede the noun—eg, "the cost-effective policy"; BUT "the policy is cost effective". They should NOT be used in conjunction with adverbs—eg, the politically motivated attack.  
This is (another) tricky area. If you cannot find what you are looking for in this document, follow "Chambers", but ignore it if what it offers can be confused with another word (eg, sent again should be re-sent, not resent), or if it instructs you to do something that is contrary to the first sentence of this entry, or if the hyphen seems to be unnecessary.  
**NB** Do not hyphenate 19<sup>th</sup> century novels, 20<sup>th</sup> century, etc.

I is sometimes instinctively regarded as a more genteel version of "me"; the following examples are based on this feeling and they are all WRONG:  
They put it to my dog and I.  
They were seen by the minister and I.  
This feeling was shared by the council and I.  
In each case, "I" should be "me". The test is to try the sentence with "I" on its own—eg, "They put it to I."

I's: dotting the i's and crossing the t's  
**ICT:** information and communications technology  
idiosyncrasy  
if is frequently used when "whether" would be better—eg, "Asked if whether he would ..."  
**illustrate:** use sparingly, and only when it means that a small example gives an idea of something larger.  
Where it means "show" or "draw attention to", use those words; and please AVOID "is illustrative of".  
imperial; imperialism; imperial preference  
**imperial measurements** go out in full—inches, feet, yards, miles, ounces, pounds (weight), tons. (See cubic measurements)  
**imply/infer:** I *imply* something by what I say; you *infer* something from what I say.  
in as much as  
inbox  
**in excess of:** TRY more than  
in-house (adj and adv)  
in-patient  
**in receipt of:** TRY receive/ed/ing  
in so far as  
**in the course of:** TRY in, during  
**in the region of:** TRY about  
**in view of the fact that:** TRY as, since  
inches; 2 inches; 16 inches  
incorporated (in company names); Inc  
incumbent [adj] and [n]  
independents group (of MSPs)  
industrywide  
**infer:** see **imply/infer**  
infrared  
ingrain (NOT engrain)  
**initials:** with numbers—eg, M1; F111; SS20; but BBC One (see also **television/radio channels**)  
Do not mix lc and uc unless both the accepted usage does so and the initial does not stand for a separate word—eg, SPICE: PhD; but COSLA; MOD  
Sets of initials take "the"—eg, the TUC; the ECHR—unless they can be said as a "word"—eg, NATO; GATT; MAFF; NUPE See also **acronyms**.  
the inner city; inner-city problems  
innocuous



inoculate  
inquire/inquiry (NOT enquire/enquiry); Layfield inquiry  
inshallah (if Allah will) (God willing)  
**install, instill:** remember "all" is the long one  
**inter:** "inter" words usually have no hyphen—eg, intercontinental; intergovernmental; interrelate/d/fionship); BUT British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body  
**interruptions:** see **stage directions**  
iron curtain  
Ir-Bru  
**-ise, -isation** as word endings (NOT -ize, -ization)—eg, rationalise, civilise, polarisation  
**islands** - see **place names and natural features**  
item; agenda item 1, 2, etc  
ivy league

## J

jack-in-the-box  
jail, not gaol  
jibe  
job titles - see people (professional titles)  
jobcentre  
jobseeker; jobseekers allowance  
Johnny-come-lately; Johnnys-come-lately / Johnny-come-latelies – follow speaker's usage.  
**join with:** TRY join  
joined-up government  
The *Journal of the Scottish Parliament*, also informally known as the journal of parliamentary proceedings, contains the archive minutes of chamber business.  
judgment  
Judicial Committee of the Privy Council  
**NB** privy counsellor (NOT councillor)  
**judiciary** can be [sing] or [pl], depending on euphony  
junior; Sammy Davis Jnr  
jury [sing] (if possible)

## K

kerb crawler  
kerfuffle  
kick start [n]; kick-start [vb]  
kilograms; 12kg  
kilometres; 20km  
kilometres per hour; 70kph  
kilotonne; kilotonnage  
kilovolt; 300kV  
kilowatts; 300kW  
kilowatt hours; 300kWh  
**kind of:** TRY to AVOID  
  
this kind of organisation = such organisations, such an organisation (even uglier is "these kinds of organisation/s")  
some kind of method = some method  
a kind of attitude = an attitude  
any kind of agreement = any agreement  
The same applies to "sort of" and "type of".

**king:** the King of Norway; King Haakon; the kings and queens of Scotland  
**kingdom** is uc in the full title of an earthly kingdom, but lc otherwise—eg, Kingdom of Denmark; United Kingdom; "throughout this kingdom";  
kingdom of heaven; kingdom of Fife  
**kirks:** same rule as **churches**  
kitemark  
knock-on effect  
knockabout  
knockdown [adj]; knock down [vb]; knockdown price  
know-how

## L

lacklustre  
lambast  
lamp posts  
landholding (n) and (adj)  
landmines  
landmark  
landowner; land ownership  
lapdog  
largesse  
**Latin plural:** Follow speaker where they use an *acceptable* plural, otherwise follow first option in "Chambers".  
**laugher:** see **stage directions**  
  
**law officers:** In Scotland—the Lord Advocate; the Solicitor General for Scotland (both are members of the Government); the Advocate General  
In England and Wales—the Lord Chancellor; the Attorney-General; the Solicitor-General  
  
lawbreaker/ing  
lawmaker/ing  
lay-by  
**leader** is generally lc—eg, leader of the council; leader of the Labour Party  
leapfrog [n] and [vb]  
left wing [n]; the left; left-wing party; left wingers  
legislature (meaning the building or the estate of the realm)  
**less and fewer:** fewer is number, less is amount—eg, less bread; fewer slices  
less favoured areas; LFAs  
less well-off people; the less well-off; BUT those who are less well off  
level crossing  
leukaemia  
level 2 figures; level 3 figures, etc—follow what is written in the document  
LGBT, LGBTQI, LGBT+ etc - don't need to go out in full first time  
liaison  
  
**libraries:** institutions uc, branches lc—eg, the National Library of Scotland; the British Library; Piershill library; Stateford Road library  
Lib Dems  
Lib-Lab pact  
licence holder  
licence [n]; license [vb]  
life and death; a life-and-death situation  
**life** [prefix]: follow "Chambers"—eg, lifestyle; lifeline; lifelong; lifetime  
EXCEPTIONS—life cycle; life-blood  
  
light-hearted/ly  
lightweight  
**like/such as:** towns like Manchester = other towns, excluding Manchester  
towns such as Manchester = a group of towns, including Manchester  
  
limited (in company names); Ltd  
linchpin  
lip service  
**list:** blacklist; checklist; shortlist  
little England; little England tendency; little Englanders  
livestock [pl]  
lo and behold  
**loch:** check name in OS gazetteer—eg, Loch Lomond; Duddingston Loch  
logbook  
logjam  
long-standing; of long standing  
long-term [adj]; the long term [n]

loony left  
loophole  
lord-lieutenant; lords-lieutenant  
**Lords:** House of Lords; their lordships; bishops; law lords; peers; life peers; peeresses; peerages  
**lose out:** TRY lose  
loth [adj] (reluctant); loathe [vb] (hate)  
Lowlands (of Scotland); BUT a lowlander  
luddite  
lunch time

## M

macroeconomic; microeconomic  
Mafia (the organisation); a mafioso (the member)  
mailbag; postbag  
main line [n]; mainline [adj]  
main stream [n]; mainstream [adj]  
**majority** can be [sing] or [pl], according to context—eg, the majority is not always right; the majority of the inhabitants have voted with their feet (BUT, TRY most)  
make it clear that  
**make sure:** TRY ensure  
make-up [n]; make up [vb]  
malarkey  
man (the human race, mankind)  
man-made  
**management** is [pl] when it means the people involved; BUT management is more an art than a science  
manifesto; manifestos; the Conservative manifesto  
**NB** "The Communist Manifesto" (Marx, 1848)  
**many** and **much:** many is number, much is quantity—eg, many loaves; much bread  
Mao Zedong  
marginalise  
mark 1; mark 2  
**marketeer** (EC); anti-marketeer; pro-marketeer  
marketplace  
marquess (English); marquis (French); Marquess of Queensberry  
mason; masonic  
**master** (of a ship); shipmaster; harbourmaster  
mastermind  
master plan; but masterplan consent area  
mathematics [sing]  
**may well be:** TRY to AVOID  
it may well be that we shall develop = we may develop  
**maybe:** TRY perhaps  
**means** (income) [n]: [pl]  
**means** (method) [n]: [sing] or [pl]—eg, this policy is just a means to an end; the Government's means to this end are the recent tax cuts  
means test; to means test; means testing is bad; the benefits are means tested; means-tested benefits  
**media** [pl] but use your judgment  
medieval  
**meetings:** the Parliament and its committees have meetings  
See also **sittings**.  
**meet with:** TRY meet  
megawatts; 300MW  
member states (of the EU)  
**members:** see the procedure guide for setting up ministers and members.  
**Examples:** member of the Scottish Parliament; member of the Senedd; member of the Assembly; MS; MLAs; MSPs; MPs; Government member; Opposition member; Labour member; back-bench member (back bencher); front-bench member (front bencher); member of the Government, Opposition, Cabinet, committee, party, etc; senators; members of Congress; deputies; member in charge (committee bills)  
**NB (1)** AVOID references such as "the member who spoke for the Labour Party", "the member who opened for the Opposition", "the member for one of the Glasgow constituencies", "the last Labour member to speak before me", "the member who is to wind up for the Government".  
Identify who the speaker means.  
**NB (2)** AVOID making furniture talk—eg, "My front bench has put a powerful case."  
member's bill; members' bills  
members' business  
Met Office  
metres; 100m; 5m  
**micro:** "micro" words usually have no hyphen—eg, microeconomics; microgeneration. Use a hyphen when the second part of the word begins with an "o"—eg, micro-organism.  
microgram; 5 micrograms  
mid-1990s  
middle ages  
middle east  
middleman/men  
midlands; east midlands; East Midlands airport  
**NB** West Midlands is uc when referring to the English county.  
mileage  
milligram; 5mg  
miles per hour; 90mph  
miners strike  
minister; ministerial  
**minister:** the term can mean any member of the Government, including cabinet secretaries. When first referred to, they should be given their full title—eg, Minister for Dogs; Cabinet Secretary for Cats. Thereafter, and when it is clear who is meant, they may be referred to as "the cabinet secretary", "the health secretary" or "the minister". The same goes for shadow ministers.  
Generic terms are lc—eg, ministers; fisheries/green ministers; the Scottish ministers; the planning ministers  
**minority:** see **majority**  
minuscule  
minute [vb]; minuting; minuted; to take a minute  
Mòd (festival of Gaelic song, arts and culture)  
Mohammed, the Prophet  
monarch; monarchy  
**money:** the pound; the pound sterling; a few pence: 5p; £2; £2.35; £200; £2,000; £2 million; £2 billion (£2,000 million); £500-odd million; £250,000-worth of coal; millions of pounds-worth; between £3 million and £5 million-worth; tuppenceworth  
Use decimals in large amounts (NOT fractions)—eg, £2.5 million; £3.75 billion  
**NB** between £3 million and £5 million (NOT between £3 and £5 million)  
**old money:** 4/- (four shillings); 4/6 (four and six); 6d or sixpence, depending on context or feel  
the euro; € (AltGr-4); €8 billion  
the dollar; US dollars; \$17,000; \$1.20; 20 cents; \$64,000 question; the million dollar question (BUT \$64 million question)  
deutschmark; DM3.2; DM2 million  
French francs; FF30 million  
All other currencies go out in full—eg, 7 billion yen; 2.5 million Swiss francs  
moneylender  
moneys (NOT monies)  
MORI poll  
Morton's fork  
motto; mottoes  
moveable  
**movement:** trade union movement; co-operative movement; labour movement  
**multi:** "multi" words have no hyphen, except when followed by a vowel—eg, multi-agency  
Munro; a Munro-bagging expedition; a Munro bagger  
**museums** and **galleries:** follow the URL rule for the institutions and organisations, eg, National Museums Scotland runs the National Museum of Scotland, and Culture and Sport Glasgow runs the McLellan galleries (in McLellan Works) and the Burrell Collection  
Muslim  
**myriad** [adj]: there are myriad responses; there is a myriad of responses  
Both those examples are acceptable, so go with what the speaker says.

## N

nth  
naive (NOT naïve); naivety  
namby-pamby  
national health service; health service; the service; the NHS  
national lottery

**national park** is lc when referring to the space, and uc when referring to the bureaucracy (although only the full and correct name gets a full set of capitals)—eg, there should be a national park; the Cairngorms national park; the Cairngorms National Park Authority  
nationalist; Scottish nationalist; Scottish National Party

nationwide

**natural features:** see place names and natural features

**nature:** in examples such as the following, TRY to AVOID  
the amendments are technical in nature = the amendments are technical  
matters of a party-political nature = party-political matters  
The same applies to "character".

naught (nothing); nought (a zero)

neanderthal

**near to:** TRY near

**neither** [sing]; see **either** for usage

nerve-wracking

nevertheless; nonetheless

new deal

**newspapers** are italicised. Check full and proper name, eg, *The Scotsman*, the *Edinburgh Evening News*. Exercise discretion when titles are run into sentences—eg, *The Scotsman* may be rendered thusly: "In yesterday's *Scotsman* ..."

The apostrophe s at the end of newspaper titles should not be italicised—eg, in *The Scotsman*'s article

The s at the end of a plural of a newspaper title should be italicised—eg, "I tripped over a pile of *Heralds* outside the newsagents." (But try to avoid such constructions.)

*Daily Mail*

*Daily Mirror*

*Daily Record*

*Edinburgh Evening News*

*Evening Times* (rebranded as *Glasgow Times* in December 2019—follow usage)

*Evening Telegraph*

*Financial Times*

*Metro*

*Private Eye*

*Scotland on Sunday*

*Sunday Mail*

*Sunday Mirror*

*Sunday Post*

(BUT *The Sunday Post Magazine* (defunct - now *Post Plus*))

*Sunday Sport*

*The Courier*

*The Daily Star*

*The Daily Star of Scotland*

*The Daily Telegraph*

*The Economist*

*The Guardian*

*The Herald*

*The Herald on Sunday*

*The Independent*

*The National*

*The Observer*

*The Press and Journal*

*The Scotsman*

*The Sun*

*The Sunday Times*

*The Times*

*The Times Educational Supplement*

*Times Higher Education* (no longer *The Times Higher Education Supplement*)

new year's day; new year's eve

NGOs; non-governmental organisations

"Nineteen Eighty-Four" (the book)

nimby; nimbyism

9/11 (September 11 attack on USA)

9-to-5 job

nirvana

nitty-gritty

no one [sing]

**no:** the answer is no (don't use quotation marks)

no-go area

no-man's-land

non-profit-making

**none** [sing]: none of us is saying that

nonetheless; nevertheless

**nonsensical:** TRY nonsense (which can be an [adj] as well as a [n])

Nordic

North America

North Sea

**Northern Ireland** may be called the Province, the Six Counties, Ulster, or the north of Ireland. Follow the member's usage.

Northern Ireland Office

nossey

not so much ... as (NOT not so much ... but)—eg, "It was not so much his tone, which was so soothing as to be soporific, as his words which worried me."

nought (a zero); naught (nothing)

**number [n]** can be [sing] or [pl], according to context—eg, a large number of people are waving their hats; there is a large and growing number of volunteers

number 1 priority

**numbers:** see **figures**

**numerals:** see **figures**

numptie

## O

ob-gyn - obstetrics and gynaecology first time, ob-gyn thereafter

**occasions** is overused

on many occasions = many times, often

on several occasions = several times

(Quick rule: leave out "on" and change "occasions" to "times".)

**oceans** are uc—eg, Atlantic Ocean

**odd:** £400-odd million; 40-odd years old

**odds** take the form 100-1, 10-1, etc

oestrogen

**of the order of:** TRY about

**Official Secrets Acts** is correct (many are in existence, so a year is not needed). Official Secrets Act is acceptable in colloquial use.

off-licence; on-licence (as in licensed premises)

offline

offload; onload

offshore

oil-seed rape

okay

old-age pension/er

old boys network, old boy network -- follow speaker's usage

**ombudsmen** are lc except for ones appointed by the Parliament—eg, the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

online

**on numerous occasions:** TRY often, several times

See also **occasions**.

**on-going** is often unnecessary

we are engaged in on-going discussions = we are engaged in discussions

on stream

on to (NOT onto)

**one another** is not the gentrified version of "each other"; it refers to more than two people, whereas "each other" means only two

one man, one vote

one-off, a one-off payment; a one-off; I took one off the shelf

one-sided

onshore

**opencast:** see **coal mine**

**opera:** institutions uc, buildings lc—eg, Scottish Opera; Buxton opera house; going to the opera; "The Force of Destiny"

**Opposition** (the official parliamentary Opposition) [sing]; the official Opposition; Opposition parties; the leader of the Opposition; the leader of the Labour Party, etc

general references to the concept of opposition are lc—eg, when we were in opposition; the frustrations of opposition

See also **Government**.

opprobrium

opt-out [n] and [adj]; opt out [vb]; opting-out hospitals; hospitals that opt out; opted-out schools; schools that have opted out

**orders** are lc except when the full title is given—eg, Scotland Act 1998 (Border Rivers) Order 1999 (SSI 1999/1746)

organ grinder

**orient, orientate:** both are correct, so follow the speaker

**Osmotherly rules** are the rules that allow civil servants to attend Westminster select committees

out-of-area (NOT outer area) operations

**out** [prefix]: follow "Chambers"—eg, outflow; out-patient; outturn; outvoted

Outer Hebrides

outwith

**over** is often used when more than would be better—eg, **ever** more than 60 per cent of production ...

**over:** compound words involving over are unhyphenated, unless they also involve numbers—eg, overrun; over-80s; over-fives

owner-occupier; owner occupation

## P

Paisley buddie (NOT buddy)

paper chase

paperwork

parent-teacher association

Parliamentary Bureau; the bureau (the committee of the various parties' business managers)

**Parliament** is uc, even if the full name is not used—eg, the Scottish Parliament; the Parliament; European Parliament; Duma; House of Commons/Lords; House of Representatives; Congress; Senate; "a Parliament in the Baltic states"; "diverse Parliaments across the world"

parliamentary; parliamentary questions; parliamentarian

**NB (1)** For the period between elections, use "session" NOT "parliament", which is a Westminster term.

**NB (2)** The physical environment (eg, chamber, floor) is lc.

See also **Scottish Parliament, assemblies and session**.

**partake of** means share, not take part

**parties:** see **political parties**

**past experience:** TRY experience

**past history:** TRY history

pasteurise

pawkie

pawshop

pay day (n); payday (adj)

payroll

peacekeeping

peatland

peddle drugs; pedal a bicycle

peer; peeress; life peer

**people (professional titles):** only the full titles of royals, politicians, churchfolk and commissioners and ombudsmen appointed by Parliament are uc, and jobs are only uc if used as a title—eg, Prince Charles; the Duke of York; Queen Beatrice; the King of Norway; Lord Irvine; the Prime Minister; the First Minister; the Archbishop of Canterbury; the Bishop of Durham; Cardinal Winning; the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland; St Catherine; a saint; Professor Grey; the professor of linguistics; Professor Byrne; the lord provost of Glasgow; the mayor of London; Mayor Livingstone; Councillor Smith; chief constable of Strathclyde Police; Inspector Goole; procurator fiscal; secretary general of the United Nations; governor of the Bank of England; convener of the all-party working group; chairman and chief executive of the Royal Bank of Scotland; president of the Royal College of Physicians

Letters after people's names should not be expanded—eg, John Smith QC; Thomas Telford CEng; BUT a Queen's counsel; a chartered engineer

**people** [suffix]; treat the same as men [suffix] and women [suffix]—eg, businesspeople

**per:** TRY a—eg, £25 a week; £3 a head

Use a word, NOT an abbreviation, after per—eg, 250 tonnes per hectare; 250mg per kilogramme; £23 per metre

EXCEPTIONS—mph; kph

**per cent:** 1 per cent; 0.5 per cent; 15 to 20 per cent; between 1 and 2 per cent

**percentage points:** 1 percentage point is almost always much larger than 1 per cent. For example, if the mortgage rate rises from 7 per cent to 10.5 per cent, it has risen by 3.5 percentage points, but by 50 per cent.

**period:** TRY to AVOID

a four-year period = four years

during that period of time = during that time

**a permanent secretary** is a chief civil servant in a UK Government department. The Scottish Government has only one permanent secretary.

permissible

**petitions:** PE370 or petition PE370 (NOT petition 370)

next petition is PE370," is better than "The next petition is petition PE370."

pettifogging

phase 1, 2, 3

phenomenon [sing]; phenomena [pl]

philistine

**phone:** TRY telephone; BUT phone-in; mobile phone; car phone

phoney

photo call; photo opportunity

pigeonhole [n] and [vb]

piggyback

pin money

placement

**place names and natural features**

Both the proper name and the generic term (eg, "Law" in North Berwick Law) are uc if the Ordnance Survey lists them (see the gazetteer, a map or OS website: osmaps.ordnancesurvey.co.uk )

—eg, North Sea; Moray Firth; Scapa Flow; Fife Ness; Grand Banks; Pennine range; BUT east neuk; Falkland hill (because the OS doesn't list them)

**NB** - place names that are administrative areas are UC, even if not listed by the OS -- eg the Western Isles; South Scotland

plane: aeroplane

plant life (see also bird life, wildlife)

**play titles:** "Othello"; "Henry VI, Part 1"

playground

playgroup

playing field

plc, plcs. Usually unnecessary in reported speech

**plus:** £400 million-plus; 40-plus years old

**poems:** in poem style, with quotes.

**police** [sing] when part of organisational name, otherwise [pl]—eg, "Police Scotland is underfunded", "police are looking for..."; policemen, policewomen, policemen and women. The full name of forces uc—eg, Metropolitan Police; Police Service of Northern Ireland

**List of former Scottish forces:** Central Scotland Police; Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary; Fife Constabulary; Grampian Police;

Lothian and Borders Police; Northern Constabulary; Strathclyde Police; Tayside Police

policyholder

policy maker

**political parties**

**List of Scottish parliamentary parties (past and present):**

Conservative Party or Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party  
Co-operative Party  
Labour Party or Scottish Labour  
Scottish Green Party  
Scottish Liberal Democrats  
Scottish National Party  
Scottish Senior Citizens Unity Party  
Scottish Socialist Party

Common short forms and alternative names are acceptable—eg, Lib Dems; Greens; nats (lc). The ilk part is lc if the full name is not used  
**political stances** are lc—eg, nationalist; unionist; monarchist; republican; loyalist; fascist; communist

pollicking

**politics** [sing]

the Poor Law

population [sing] - the population is growing

**portakabin** is lc unless referring to the company

**post** as prefix: follow Chambers - common examples: postholder, postgraduate, post-modern

as synonym for "after" - try "alter" (eg the situation post-Brexit = the situation after Brexit), unless it precedes a phrase (eg the post-Brexit situation)

**post-mortem** a post-mortem, a post-mortem examination (NB - there is a temporary exception in relation to PE1911, where we should do a post mortem, a post-mortem examination)

**post office:** the Post Office; Leith post office (branch)

postbag; mailbag

postcode

pound; pound sterling

See also **money**

powerhouse

powerplay

practice [n]; practise [vb]

praetorian guard

**pre** follow Chambers

common examples: predate, prejudice, preschool, pre-war

precognosce; precognition

precondition

prejudge

premise

prerogative; royal prerogative (of mercy)

preschool

**president** is lc for the President of a country or the European Commission, Commission or Parliament — eg, President Obama, the German President

Use lc for the president of anything else; or for the presidency of anything

Presiding Officer; Deputy Presiding Officer; the Presiding Officers

NB If a member calls a Deputy Presiding Officer "Presiding Officer", change it to "Deputy Presiding Officer".

**press** (newspapers or journalists) can be [sing] or [pl], depending on context—eg, the press is a bulwark of democracy; the press are hounding my brother

**prevent/stop:** you stop someone doing something; you prevent them from doing something

If I stop you doing something, you are already doing it; but if I prevent you from doing it, I do not even let you start.

**preventive/preventative:** follow members' usage

primary 1; primary 2; P1; P2, etc

Prime Minister (NOT PM); prime ministerial

**PRINCE:** put out in full—ie, projects in controlled environments

Principality (meaning Wales); lc for all other principalities

principle [n] (a fundamental, or a rule of action); principal [adj] (first, most important); principal [n] (head of a college)

printout [n]; print out [vb]

**prior to:** TRY before

**prisons:** all forms of their name are acceptable—eg, HM Prison Edinburgh; HMP Edinburgh; Saughton prison (HM needn't go out in full)

private finance initiative; PFI

private/public sector investment (no hyphen)

privately/publicly owned (no hyphen)

privilege; parliamentary privilege; breach of privilege

proactive

procurators fiscal [pl]

**professors:** Professor Philip Smith; Professor Smith; the professor of rocket science

program (computer); programme (TV, agenda, etc)

programme for government

**programmes (media)**

radio/television programmes: "Panorama"; "The World at One"; BUT the shipping forecast; the news

podcasts: "Podlitical"

**proof:** to equality/future/inflation proof; equality proofing is good; the budget has been inflation proofed; future-proofing approach

**proportions:** see **ratios/proportions**

**prorogue:** the Westminster Parliament is prorogued at the end of a session (prorogation), and dissolved before a general election (dissolution)

See also **session**.

Protestant

protester

proviso; provisos

public [pl]

public-private partnership

public/private sector investment (no hyphen)

**publications**

**book titles:** "Treasure Island". Familiar short forms may be used for well-known reference books—eg, "Oxford English Dictionary"; "Erskine May"; "Whitaker's". NB "Yellow Pages".

Some titles have been assimilated into the language and need no embellishment—eg, an Alice in Wonderland proposal; a catch-22 situation

**periodicals** (magazines, journals etc, printed and online) are italicised. Check full and proper name: *New Statesman*, *Bella Caledonia*

**newspapers** -- see separate entry above

Punjab (NOT Panjab)

purpose-built

**put forward:** (A great favourite, this; see also **bring forward**.)

TRY

introduce, sponsor (a bill)

express (concern, misgivings, etc)

give (reasons, views)

make (suggestions, an argument, a case)

move (amendment, motion)

lodge (amendments)

use (arguments)

pygmy

pyrrhic victory

## Q

**qualifications** are usually put out in full the first time, but exercise common sense. Letters after people's names should not be expanded—eg, Thomas Telford CEng, BUT chartered engineer.

NB University degrees [eg PhD; MSc; BSc; MA; BA; LLB] and school exam qualifications [eg national 5, A level, GCSE] do not need to go out in full.

Lower case for bachelor's degree; master's degree; doctorate; post-doctoral degree etc.

quango; quangos

**Quebec; Québécois; Quebecer and Québécois** are all acceptable—follow what the speaker says

**queen:** Her late Majesty the Queen; the Queen of Belgium; queens and kings of Scotland

Queen's counsel; QC (QC just after a name should not be expanded—eg, John Smith QC)

NB The plural is also Queen's counsel, but the abbreviation is QCs.

**question:** there is no question that this will happen = it will not happen

there is no question but that this will happen = it will happen

**questions:** parliamentary questions; question time; First Minister's question time; questions for oral answer; oral questions; questions for written answer; written questions

question-and-answer session

question mark

question whether (NOT question of whether)

queueing

**quicker/more quickly:** "quicker" is a comparative adjective; "more quickly" is an adverbial phrase

"a quicker response" is RIGHT

"it rose quicker" is WRONG

"it rose more quickly" is RIGHT

**quote/quotation:** "quote" is an acceptable alternative to "quotation" - "I have a quote from *The Scotsman*."

**quotations:** direct quotations of five or more words appear separately from the body of the text, in either Quote or Quote run-on style. When a long quotation is broken up by words inserted by the speaker, the total word count is what matters, not the word counts of the fragments of the quotation.

the Qur'an

## R

Rs; the three Rs

racecourse

rack (to torture, torment); rack one's brains; BUT wrack and ruin

rateable

**ratios/proportions:** With words, do not use hyphens or colons. Instead, separate the nouns with a space or with "to", if that is what was said—benefit to cost ratio, NOT benefit-to-cost ratio; pupil teacher ratio or pupil to teacher ratio, NOT pupil-teacher ratio or pupil:teacher ratio  
With numbers, separate the numbers with a colon—eg, a ratio of 5:2

**re:** [prefix]: use a hyphen only when the following verb begins with "re" (eg, re-enact); or if confusion may arise (eg, re-sent, re-let); or with some verbs starting with "re" (eg, re-release)

reafforestation (NOT reforestation)

**real and genuine:** TRY one or the other, not both

the realm; defence of the realm; Defence of the Realm Acts

referable

the reformation

**regarding, inwith regard to:** TRY about, on

"Register of Interests of Members of the Scottish Parliament"; the register of members' interests (both are acceptable)

**regulations** (delegated legislation made under a parent act); use lc except when giving the full title—eg, Abortion Regulations 1968; the regulations; regulation 1(2)

regulator

**religions** are uc—eg, Christian; Judaism; Buddhism; Muslim; Hindu; Shi'ite; Orthodox; Presbyterian; Bahá'í

remembrance day

renaissance

renewables; renewables industry; renewable energy; renewable energy industry

rent-a-mob

**reports:** in general, put out title in full first time, but use judgment

Titles go in quotation marks; follow its own cap and punctuation style, eg "Equally Well: Report of the Ministerial Task Force on Health Inequalities"; but "Building a low-carbon economy—the UK's contribution to tackling climate change"  
the Bracadale report; report of the Bracadale review; the committee's report; the sixth report in 2010 of the Justice Committee

Republic of Ireland; the Republic

republican [n] and [adj]

restaurateur

retail prices (NOT price) index; RPI

**reverend:** the Rev John Jones; the Right Rev John Jones; Mr Jones; NEVER Rev Jones or the Rev Jones or Reverend Jones

Rt Hon—the Rt Hon David Cameron; right honourable if hypothetical, e.g., my dog, the right honourable Fido

right wing [n]; the right; right-wing party; right wingers

ring fence; to ring fence; ring fencing is bad; the funds are ring fenced; ring-fencing approach

road map

road works

roll-out [n]

Roman Catholic; Catholic

Romania

roughshod

round table [n]; round-table [adj]

routing the enemy; BUT routing roads

**royal:** except in the full and proper title of an organisation, "royal" is lc—eg, royal assent; royal charter; royal dockyard; royal prerogative  
**royal commission:** check the full and proper name. Only the full name of a real royal commission is uc—eg, the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution; a royal commission

Royal Navy; royal naval

RSPB Scotland is the full name (do NOT expand)

rubber stamp [n]; rubber-stamp [adj] and [vb]

Rubicon; crossing the Rubicon

**rules:** rule 18.1 of standing orders; rules of order; judges' rules; rules of court

rulebook

run-up [n]; run up [vb]

rundown [adj] and [n]; run down [vb]

runway

## S

sale room

saltire

salutary

scaremongering; scaremongers

**schemes** are lc—eg, community refurbishment scheme; city challenge; new deal

**schools:** the ilk part should be lc—eg, Cumnock academy; Oban high; Royal High primary school

school leavers; school-leaving age

schoolteacher; schoolmaster; schoolmistress; schoolchildren; BUT primary school children

schtum

**scientific names:** When using the full scientific name of an organism, follow the scientific taxonomy rules (genus upper case and species lower case). For example: *Clostridium difficile*, *Tyrannosaurus rex*, *Nephrops norvegicus* BUT *tyrannosaurs*, *nephrops*

scot free

**Scottish Administration** (meaning the Government); the Administration

See also **departments and executive**.

Scottish council of the Labour Party

**Scottish ministers:** see **minister**

Scottish National Party; nationalists

**Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body** (the parliamentary corporation), SPCB

scouts (children's organisation); but Scout Association; Scouts Scotland

scrap heap; scrap yard

Scylla and Charybdis

sea bed; sea shore

seamen; seafarers

**seasons** are lc—ie, spring; summer; autumn; winter

seat belts

second world war; world war two

second-hand [adj]; at second hand

**see** is often used unnecessarily—eg, "We all want to see Morton win" usually means "We all want Morton to win"

seedcorn

**self** [prefix] takes a hyphen—eg, self-govern/ing/ment; self-interest

sell-by date

sell-out [n]; sell out [vb]

semi-detached

serviceman; servicewoman; servicemen and women

**session:** in Edinburgh, the five-year term between elections; in Westminster, the parliamentary year from Queen's speech to prorogation; in committees, evidence-taking session

set-aside rules; the set-aside

sett (where animals live); set (everything else)

Sewel motion; Sewelling; Sewelled

**NB** It's not necessary to change this if it's said, but be aware that the "official" name is "legislative consent motion".

sgian dubh is RIGHT; skean dhu is WRONG

shadow cabinet; shadow chancellor; shadow spokesman

sheep farm

sheikh; the Sheikh of Dubai

sheriff officer/s

shibboleth

shilly-shally/ing

**ship names:** no quotation marks and no italics—eg, Marchioness, HMS Victory, MV Gaul, the Belgrano

**NB** No need to put HMS or MV in full.

**shore:** foreshore; offshore; inshore, BUT sea shore

shopkeeper  
shop worker  
shoplifting  
short-sighted

**Short money** is used to assist Opposition parties at Westminster. It is named after Edward Short, later Lord Glenamara.

shortfall  
shortlist  
side effect  
sidetrack

Sikh  
silicon glen; silicon valley; (NOT silicone glen)

Single European Act

Sinn Féin

siphon; siphoning off

**sittings:** a sitting day is a day on which the clerks are open for business and the Parliament is not in recess or dissolved. Meetings are held on sitting days, but the fact that a day is a sitting day does not mean that there will be a meeting. If someone refers to a sitting but means a meeting, make them say "meeting".

See also **meetings**.

sizeable

skean dhu is WRONG; sgan dubh is RIGHT

skill set

skulduggery

slaughterhouse

smallholding

smokescreen

**socialist** is lc except in full titles—eg, Socialist Business Values Association

socioeconomic

**something like:** TRY about, almost, nearly

**sort of:** see **kind of**

soundbite

soup kitchen

**south** is generally lc—eg, south of Ireland; north-south dialogue; BUT South America

sovereign; the sovereign

**speak:** Newspeak; doctorspeak

specialty (in medicine) (NOT speciality)

spin-doctor; spin-doctoring

spiv

spokesman; spokeswoman; spokesperson (use whichever the member uses); Government/Opposition spokesman

sportsmen/women

springboard

**square measurements:** use a superscript<sup>2</sup> (eg, m<sup>2</sup>) unless the unit is a word (eg, miles) or the number contains a word (eg, million)—eg,

60m<sup>2</sup>

BUT

60 square feet

60 square miles

60 million square metres

**NB** If the member says, "a hundred square(d) metres," put 100m<sup>2</sup>.

60 deer per square kilometre

**St** is short for saint, not street

St David's day

St James's park

staff [pl]

stage 1, 2, 3

**stage directions:** every effort must be made to discover who made a sedentary intervention and what was said. If all else fails, use [Interruption.] to account for an otherwise inexplicable response or loss of continuity by the main speaker. [Laughter.] and [Applause.] may also be used as "stage directions", but only when there is a loss of continuity or sustained or significant laughter/applause. The full stop is always used, even if the stage direction occurs in em-dashes in the middle of a sentence, eg, "blah blah—[Interruption.]—blah"

standby [n]; stand by [vb] (even if used in a legal context)

**standing orders** [pl]: eg, see rule 18.2 of standing orders

standstill [n]; stand still [vb]

stabile

the state; reasons of state; member state; state benefit; department of state; head of state; state visit; nation state; welfare state; state of

Ohio; Washington State University

state veterinary service

**stations:** the ilk part is lc—eg, Drem station

statute; statute book

"stay put" policy

steamroller; steamrollered

step-parents; stepfather; stepchild

**sterling:** see **money**

stillbirth

stocktaking

stone; 2 stone; 10 stone

**storeys:** two-storey (NOT storeyed) building

straight away (NOT straightaway)

straightforward

straitened (circumstances, etc)

straitjacket

**straits:** see **natural features**

**straths:** see **natural features**

street; Downing Street

strikebreaking; strikebreaker

stushie (NOT stooshie)

**sub:** a selection ...

sub-committee

subcontinent

subcontracting/or

subculture

sub-group

sub-judice

sub-mode sickness

subnational

subparagraph

sub-post office

sub-Saharan Africa

subsea; undersea

substandard

subtext

subtitle [n] and [vb]

substitutes bench

summit; Luxembourg summit

supranational

**sus** (NOT suss): sus it out; sussed it out

Swanee; down the Swanee

swathe (NOT swath)

T

T-shirt

**t's:** dotting the i's and crossing the t's  
take-home pay  
take-up [n] and [adj]; take up [vb]  
takeaway [n] and [adj]  
takeover [n]; take over [vb]; takeover panel  
Taliban  
targeted/ing  
task force  
tawse (the strap, the belt)  
taxpayer, tax-paying; BUT council tax payer  
teamwork  
Teesside  
**television** goes out in full the first time; TV is fine thereafter  
**television/radio programmes:** "Panorama"; "The World at One"

i  
Check names if channel not listed above

**temperature:** see **degrees**

the 10 commandments

textbook

**thank you:** we say thank you to the Government

**that:** see **which**

The Hague (capital T); BUT the Netherlands; the Scottish Government etc

**theatre:** institutions uc, buildings lc—eg, the National Theatre of Scotland staged a production in the King's theatre; the theatre world

third world; third-world countries

the three Rs

threshold

throughcare

throughput

throwaway society

tightrope

**time:** speeches and debates are timed using the 24-hour clock, with hours and minutes separated by a colon—eg, 09:00; 13:15

In text, do what the member says, but use figures—eg, 7 o'clock; half past 2; 4 pm; 5 minutes to 3; 7.45; 19.45; BUT 9-  
to-5 job **NB** When not used in reference to the time on a clock, numbers follow the usual rule—eg, "I waited for five  
minutes."

timeframe

timeline

timetable

timescale

**titles:** except when someone is being set up to speak, non-ministerial titles are lc—eg, clerk to the Parliament

titlle-tattle

to-ing and fro-ing

tollbooth (a town hall); tollbooth (on a bridge)

**tonnes** (NOT tons): 4 tonnes; 10 tonnes; kilotonnes.

(Very occasionally, a speaker might genuinely mean "tons"—eg, if speaking about a past world record—in which case  
its use is permissible.)

top-slice

Topsy; grewed like Topsy

towards (NOT toward); BUT untoward

townie

toy/town

**trade names** are lc when assimilated into the language and used generically—eg, biro; cellophane; Hoover; nylon; sellotape; zimmer; BUT Mini

(the car); Ceefax; Guinness; Marmite

trade unions (NOT trades unions); the unions; BUT Trades Union Congress

Some trade unions either are not acronyms or do not need to be expanded—eg, Unison; GMB

**NB** Wales (NOT Welsh) TUC

tradeable

tranquilliser (NOT tranquilliser); tranquillity

**trans:** "trans" words usually have no hyphen—eg, transatlantic; transfrontier; BUT trans-Pennine; trans-Siberian

trans meaning transgender does not need to be expanded - trans man, trans woman

**treaties:** unless giving the full title, use lc—eg, treaty of Rome; the Maastricht treaty; treaties; the treaty

triable (NOT tryable)

trolley; trolleys

trunk road

tsar (NOT czar)

**tunnels** are lc—eg, Channel tunnel; Mersey tunnels

tuppence; I would not give tuppence for his opinion

tuppenny-ha'penny

turncoat

turnout [n]; turn out [vb]

turnover [n]; turn over [vb]

turnstile

24/7

**type of:** see **kind of**

## U

U-turn

Uncle Tom Cobbleigh and all

under way (NOT underway)

**under:** compound words involving under are unhyphenated, unless they also involve numbers—eg, underrepresented; under-80s; under-fives

EXCEPTION—under-secretary is hyphenated, as it is a job title

underground lines; the London underground; London Underground (the company); the underground; the tube

**union:** the union (UK); unionist; union flag; union jack; the Union (European)

Unison

United Kingdom; the kingdom

**United Nations organisations and committees** are uc if given their full name—eg, United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural

Organization, United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child

**universities:** check full and proper name —eg, University of Aberdeen; Aberdeen university; Heriot-Watt University; Open University; the

universities; a university

up front; up-front costs

update [n] and [vb]

uprate/ing

upskill

upstream

upturn

**URL rule** Organisations, campaigns etc that have their own URL take initial caps.

The home of the Time for Inclusive Education campaign is [www.tiecampaign.co.uk](http://www.tiecampaign.co.uk), so it gets initial caps. The home of Marie Curie's  
great daffodil appeal is a page on the Marie Curie website, so it doesn't have its own URL, which means that it doesn't get initial caps.

The URL rule also applies to less formal projects and groups, eg a youth club's summer activity group will go up if it has a URL, down if  
it doesn't, unless the project or group name is some sort of proper noun rather than a description. Examples: the Chillax project, run by  
a youth club; the get into summer project run by Early Years Scotland.

**NB** – there is an exception for things that are members of ilks such as schools, community councils, churches and so on, as some of  
them have websites and some do not, so we do the ilk part down: Carnock primary school; Newton community council.  
Please remember, as ever, to exercise your usual judgment and common sense.

**USA** doesn't need to go out in full first time; do what the member says—eg, United States; United States of America; the US; the States

**Used not to/did not use to:** Both are acceptable as negative forms of "used to". Although it occurs widely, "did not use to" is not acceptable,  
as it is the equivalent of saying "did not want" or "did not do".

user-friendly

**utilise, utilisation:** TRY use [vb] and [n]

**utilities:** check names—eg, Scottish Power; Scottish Water

It is sometimes impractical to be too precise because of links across utilities or suppliers.



utopia is lc when used generically

## V

**valley** is uc if in the OS gazetteer or the Philip's world atlas—eg, Forth valley; Death Valley  
**variety of** can be [sing] or [pl], depending on context  
**versus:** in the context of sport and law, use v on its own—eg, Airey v Ireland; Celtic v Rangers  
In every other context, use versus.

veto; vetoes  
videoconferencing  
videolink  
vilify  
vires; ultra vires (outside the powers)  
**vitaly important:** TRY vital  
vitamin A, B, etc  
volcano; volcanoes

## W

wagon; bandwagon  
**war** is lc—eg, first/second world war; Franco-Prussian war; great war; Vietnam war  
warhead  
warplane  
wartime; peacetime  
**wards:** see **natural features**  
website (but web page)  
**websites:** addresses (URLs) are lc; names are uc. "The Scotland Excel website's URL is www.scotland-excel.org.uk"  
websites that act as if they are publications are italicised, eg, *The Ferret*, *Bella Caledonia*  
websites that act as if they are services are not italicised, eg, Twitter.  
**weeks and years:** dementia awareness week; European year of the elderly  
welfare state  
wellbeing  
well-off people; the well-off; BUT those who are well off  
Welsh nationalists; Plaid Cymru  
west country  
**west end** is lc—eg, the west end; Glasgow's west end  
**west** is generally lc, including in political references—eg, east-west relations; the west (non-communist world); BUT it is uc in proper names—eg, West Yorkshire; West Renfrewshire  
**whether:** "if" is often used instead, but if "whether" will fit, use it—eg, "I do not know if whether I will go."  
the question whether (NOT the question of whether)  
See also **if**.  
**which/that:** apples, which come from France, are green = all apples come from France and are green  
apples that come from France are green = those which come from France are green

**which/who/whose:** use "which" for things (including the Government, companies, councils, etc); use "who" for people; and use "whose" for both—eg, the company which (NOT who) has worked hard; the company, whose staff have worked hard  
**while** (NOT whilst)

If "while" means "although", use the latter—eg, "While Although the debate was long, it was never dull."

whip  
whisky; whiskeys (Scotch); whiskey; whiskeys (Irish)  
whistleblower/ing  
whiz; whiz kid  
whole-heartedly  
**wide:** proper nouns take a hyphen—eg, Scotland-wide; UK-wide.  
Other nouns do not—eg, nationwide; countrywide  
**NB** Europe-wide (NOT European-wide)

wildlife (see also bird life, plant life)

wifi  
windfall [n] and [adj]  
wishy-washy  
withhold/eld  
**within:** TRY in  
wits' end  
women's liberation; women's lib  
workforce  
workload  
workhorse  
working-class [adj]; working class [n]  
workman; workpeople; workplace  
workshy  
workstream  
World Bank; the bank

**worth:** two days' worth; two years' worth; £250,000-worth (note: no apostrophe when talking about money, even when using words instead of figures, eg, millions of pounds-worth)

See also **money**.

worthwhile [adj]; worth while; it is a worthwhile project; the project is worth while

wrack and ruin; BUT rack one's brains

**written answers report** (WAR): see **ascriptions**

wrongdoering (NOT wrong-doing)

## X

X, Y and Z; we are doing X, Y and Z

## Y

yah-boo; yah-boo politics

yards; 100 yards

year in, year out

**years:** separate consecutive years with "to" unless a specific time such as a financial or academic year is meant—eg, "from 2001 to 2002" but "in financial year 2001-02"  
separate non-consecutive years with "to" and do not contract—eg, 2007 to 2013

**Examples:** between 2001 and 2005; from 1969 to 1974; from 1969-70 to 1980-81; from 1999 to 2001; in academic year 1999-2000 to 2000-01; in the time since ~~the year~~ 2000; the 1970s; the mid-1990s or the mid-'90s

See also **century**.

"Yellow Pages"

**yes:** the answer is yes (don't use quotation marks)

yes-man/woman

yobbo; yobboes

yoghurt

yuppie; yuppies

## Z

zeroes (NOT zeroes)

zig-zag



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—

on.