



MEDIAHUIS

IRELAND

Stylebook 2023

A guide for editors, news editors,
reporters, columnists, contributors,
sub-editors, page editors,
podcasters and video producers

Compiled and edited by chief sub-editor Tom Sweeney,
with the invaluable collaboration of editorial colleagues

In print, online, on air

Every newspaper, magazine and online publication has an in-house stylebook. The stylebook lays down rules, conventions and guidelines governing spelling, grammar, punctuation, typography and good taste employed in the writing, editing and presentation of words to ensure consistency, conciseness and clarity and to avoid confusion and offence.

The guidelines for writers and editors apply also to podcasters, who must choose the correct and appropriate words for broadcast, and to video producers, who must ensure captions and other on-screen information is accurate and free of grammatical and spelling errors.

A stylebook evolves as words and phrases come into or go out of fashion or fail to keep up with new and enlightened

perceptions of old attitudes (much of what was once acceptable when writing about race, ethnicity, gender and LGBTQ+ issues, for example, is now rightly viewed with horror).

This updated and greatly expanded edition of the Mediahuis Ireland Stylebook is not an exercise in teaching grannies to suck eggs. Rather, it is a resource to be used when questions or doubts arise.

In Mediahuis Ireland, we take great professional pride in producing quality journalism and strive always to create authoritative and error-free content for readers, listeners and viewers. This stylebook helps us to accomplish that mission.

Introduction

“To err is human, to forgive divine”

Alexander Pope (1688-1744)

English poet of the Enlightenment

“Up to a point, Lord Copper”

Mr Salter

Foreign editor, *The Daily Beast*.

From Evelyn Waugh’s 1938 novel, *Scoop*

Even the most skilled and experienced journalist makes mistakes, especially when under the pressure of a looming deadline. Most mistakes are spotted and corrected during editing or revision, which avoids embarrassment.

In the A to Z listings that follow, we have included everyday words that are occasionally mixed up with others that sound the same but are spelled differently and have different meanings. You will also find many words that are often misspelled and others whose meaning is the opposite of what some of us have always believed it to be.

An appendix to section Q gives guidance on the correct use of punctuation and attributions when quoting; that it runs to several pages shows this is an area where we often encounter problems, which we trust this stylebook will help to resolve. Please give special attention to, and familiarise yourself with, the contents of this appendix.

Other entries in the A to Z listings highlight bad writing habits, clichés to be avoided (like the plague), inelegant and ugly words we should never use, swear words, questionable grammar and the jargon and tautology that can infiltrate our copy and make us look careless.

Individual entries cover topics including gender, sexuality, disability, race, ethnicity and religion and others where there

lurks the danger of appearing disrespectful to people or groups who hold dear their beliefs and lifestyle choices.

Everything in this stylebook was collected during a six-month examination of raw and subbed copy and news, sports, features and comment articles that were published in our daily and Sunday print publications and online.

Some colleagues will wonder why much of the content is included, saying: “Sure, we know all this already.” It is simply because many entries are justified by our having found examples of misuse.

The stylebook is as comprehensive as we could make it in the time allotted for its compilation and editing, yet even as the final draft was being read by Cormac Bourke, Alan English, Finn Gillespie, Ciarán Burke and Ronan Price and proofed by Mary Conroy and Patrick Lawlor – to all of whom, many thanks – we were noting further examples of misuse that merited inclusion. These and others as we come across them will be added to the online version.

On a lighter note, and for your entertainment before the A to Z listings, there follows a selection of paragraphs that appeared over the years in raw and subbed copy, but, thank goodness, got no farther.

You cannot be serious

Iarnród Éireann is introducing plans to slash passengers travelling on the country's trains

A 36-year-old man suspected of carrying out the arson attack is recovering from his burns in hospital, where detectives are waiting to grill him

A council has ordered a farmer to demolish his new house because he put the septic tank in the wrong place

The funeral party was made up of family, friends and other well-wishers

Twenty clergymen have arrived in Ireland from Poland's exploding priest population

Despite being left speechless with shock, she managed to call the local garda station, where the sergeant immediately recognised her voice and sent two officers to her house

Gardaí trying to identify the body of a man found in a fishing boat's nets off the east coast are trawling through missing persons records

Detectives flooded 5,000 homes in their search for the killer

Every year, a dark horse wins the Irish Greyhound Derby

Spare ribs dripping with barbecue sauce could leave you with egg all over your face

Parents of blind children want Education Minister Micheál Martin to make more braille books available. A spokeswoman said: "The Government shouldn't turn a deaf ear to blind children."

Two nurses have told how they were lucky to escape from the horrific blaze with their livers

Soccer wonderkid Robbie Keane is moving to Milan, the capital of Italy

Byrne admitted hitting Mr Donnelly over the head with a baseball bat, but insisted he had got the wrong end of the stick

Gardaí said the incident was being treated as suspicious because petrol was poured through the letterbox and set alight

Dublin Zoo's new baby tapir is a cross between a rhinoceros and a horse

Local councillors want hourly car parking charges kept to a minimum to avoid crippling visitors to Knock Shrine

Very few incidents of sexual abuse are reported to gardaí because of the stigmata the victims often feel

A mother of two who feared she had breast cancer is celebrating after an autopsy gave her the all-clear

The Cork hurling team will be staying at the Walled-off Historian, one of New York's most famous hotels

Johnson's Cottage has been turned 360 degrees to face the sea instead of the mountains

AAa

a, an Write **a** before an aspirated H – **a hero, a hotel, a historical building**. Write **an** before a silent H – **an heir, an hour, an honour**. Before a currency symbol, write **a €3m lottery jackpot** but **an €8m investment** – let the initial letter of the number be your guide

a, per Write **a day, a week, a year**, not **per day, per week, per year**, unless quoting

abattoir One B and double T, and preferable to **slaughterhouse**

ABBA Swedish pop group, all upper case

abdominal, abominable Write **abdominal** when referring to the **abdomen**, the area between the chest and the pelvis; **abominable** means **bad, terrible, revulsive**, and also refers to the ape-like Himalayan **Abominable Snowman** (the **Yeti**) of legend. We once read about an **Abdominal Snowman** in a travel feature about Tibet

abduct, kidnap have similar meanings, but there is a difference: **abduct** means to **carry off a person illegally** by force or fraud, while **kidnap** involves the same illegal action, but with the intention of **obtaining a ransom**

aboard, on board, onboard In the sense of **greeting** an airline or cruise ship **passenger**, for example, or a **new employee** on to a team, “**Welcome aboard**” and “**Welcome on board**” are interchangeable; when the full complement of passengers have taken their seats on a plane, everyone is **on board**; on the ferry from Dublin to Holyhead, passengers can spend time in the **onboard** (adjective, one word, no hyphen) **bars, restaurants and shops**

Aborigine(s) is an outdated and offensive word when used to describe the earliest known inhabitants of Australia. Write instead **Indigenous Australians**, unless quoting. The adjective **aboriginal**, lower case, is OK in an anthropological sense – it means relating to the earliest known inhabitants of a region. See also **Australia**

abortion is an emotive subject about which people have a private, unexpressed view or an open and often vociferous view – or profess to have no view at all. That is a personal matter for each individual. The phraseology we use in our news reporting on abortion themes must always be **impartial and objective**; in **comment pieces** and in **letters to the editor**, we allow columnists and readers the space to **express their opinions**. However, we reserve the right to edit what they submit to **maintain our standards of accuracy and good taste**; we also allow the **right of reply** to readers who

disagree with columnists’ and letter writers’ opinions, again while applying our standards before publication. Generally (and we stress, generally), someone who **opposes abortion** might identify as being **pro-life** or **anti-abortion**; someone who **believes the option of abortion should be available** to those who seek it might identify as **pro-choice** or **pro-reproductive rights**. If when writing or editing you have any doubt about the appropriate phraseology, seek guidance from a colleague. See **helplines**

abscess Note the C after the first S

abseil Not **absail**

absorb Like a **sponge**, but the noun is **absorption** with a P

academic degrees Write **master’s degree (MA)** and **bachelor’s degree (BA)**, both lower case and with an apostrophe

Academy Awards, Oscars Presented annually since 1929 by the **Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (the Academy** for short) and commonly known as **the Oscars**. Individual awards have upper case initials – **Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Picture, Best Cinematography**, for example

a cappella Two words, double P and double L – **unaccompanied singing** (without instruments)

accents We **rarely use accents** in foreign-derived but common words, although there are a few exceptions – **exposé** is one, to avoid confusing with **expose**; another is **résumé (CV)**, to avoid confusing with **resume**; also **rosé (wine)** to avoid confusing with **rose**. See also **fadas** and **El Niño, La Niña, mañana**

access is a noun and verb, so go ahead and **access your bank account**

accommodate, accommodating, accommodation Double C and double M

accordion, melodeon Penultimate O in **accordion**, so not **accordian**, and **melodeon** ends with **eon**, not **ian**, so not **melodian**

accost means to **approach** and **speak to someone** in an often **aggressive** or **challenging** way, it does not mean **assault**

accused, defendant, suspect A person who is **suspected** of having **committed a crime** is the **suspect**; when they are **charged** with that crime, they are the **accused**; when they appear in **court** to be tried, they are referred to as the

defendant (in a court setting, **accused** and **defendant** are interchangeable)

accustomed to Write **used to**, unless quoting

Achilles' heel, Achilles tendon Figuratively, **Achilles' heel** refers to a **weak or vulnerable spot** and takes an apostrophe after the S; the **Achilles tendon** connects the **back of the heel** to the **calf muscles**, no apostrophe

acknowledgment No E after the G, same with **judgment** and **lodgment**

acronyms When an acronym is pronounceable as a word (**Cab, Nama, Siptu, Camhs, Vat** and even **Gsoc**), it is in most cases treated as a proper noun and the initial letter is upper case. Where all the letters in an acronym are individually pronounced (**INMO** and **INTO**), it is written entirely in upper case. If in doubt, ask a colleague. See also **MAGA** and **VAR**

acrophobia is a **fear of heights**. See also **vertigo** and **phobias**

across the Pond Write **across the Atlantic**

act (legislation) Upper case when writing the full name, as in the **Payment of Wages (Amendment) (Tips and Gratuities) Act 2022**, but lower case thereafter – **the act**; the same rule applies to **bill**

actor, actress Write **actor** for male and female; **actress** is OK when quoting or to avoid confusion (an Oscar is still awarded for **Best Actress**). Do not write **thespian** or **thesp**, unless quoting

acute, chronic An **acute illness** comes on **rapidly** and is accompanied by distinct symptoms that **require urgent or short-term care**; a **chronic illness** is one that **lingers**, perhaps for years, and is **not easily cured**

AD, BC are abbreviations in the **Christian calendar**. Put **AD** (Anno Domini – In the Year of the Lord) before the date, so **AD74**, and **BC** (Before Christ) after the date, so **458BC**, without a space; both go after the century, with a space – **eighth century AD, third century BC**. **Secularly**, we would write **BCE** (Before Common Era) instead of **BC** and **CE** (Common Era) instead of **AD**, but for the moment we will continue to use **AD** and **BC**, unless quoting

address We **address** an **audience** and an **envelope**; unless quoting, we **deal with** (not **tackle**) a **problem**

addresses are spelled out fully – **O'Connell Street** (not **St**), **Prospect Avenue** (not **Ave**), **Bull Terrace** (not **Tce**). Always give the county for towns and villages – **Birr, Co Offaly**. Do

not forget the **closing comma** when the address forms part of a continuing sentence, as in **Mrs O'Neill, of Naas, Co Kildare, died yesterday of heart failure**. Also, it should be **Cork city** and **Longford town** for the locations, with city and town in lower case (**Cork City** and **Longford Town** are **soccer teams**)

ad hoc Latin, means **for this situation**, and is used mainly as an adjective to describe, say, a **meeting set up to deal with an issue as it arises**, hence **ad hoc committee**

adjacent, adjoining. Write **adjacent** to mean **next to** or **next door** where a space between two things exists, as in **adjacent detached houses**; use **adjoining** to mean **joined to** where no space exists – a detached house with **adjoining two-car garage**

adjectives Use adjectives like **key decisions, crunch talks** and **frantic searches** sparingly and resist the temptation to call all reports **major**. Breathless adjectives describing **criminals** and their activities are unnecessary – the **shocking attack** (overused), the **notorious gangster** and, worst of all, the **reckless criminal**

ad lib means to **improvise, say something** in a speech or performance that has **not been prepared or rehearsed**; short for the Latin **ad libitum**, meaning **at pleasure**

admissible, inadmissible With **ible**, not **able**, at the end

admit, admitted OK in a court report and when quoting, but use sparingly elsewhere – **said** or **claimed** are generally sufficient

ad nauseam Ends with **am**, not **um**, and describes something **repeated so often** that it becomes **annoying** or **boring**

adopted, adoption, adoptive Do not write that a child was **given up for adoption**, which is insensitive – write **placed for adoption**; use **birth** or **biological mother, father, parents** instead of **real mother, father, parents**. Also, it is **adopted child**, but **adoptive parents**

adrenaline With final E. The body's adrenal glands produce **adrenaline** – the **hormone epinephrine hydrochloride**. See also **epinephrine autoinjector (EpiPen)**

advance booking, advance notice, advance planning No need for **advance**

adverbs Adverbial phrases that **end in ly** do not take hyphens – for example, **genetically modified, hotly disputed, wholly owned** are correct; for adverbs that **do not end in ly**, insert a hyphen only when there would be a possibility of ambiguity without one – for example, **ill-prepared speech**; phrases such

as **near fatal**, **now defunct** and **once popular** do not take hyphens; when **much** and **well** are used **before a noun**, insert a hyphen – a **much-admired teacher** (but a teacher who is **much admired**), a **well-founded suspicion** (but a suspicion that is **well founded**)

adverse, averse Write **adverse** when you mean **unfavourable** or **hostile** and **averse** when you mean **reluctant** – she was **averse to taking the ferry** in such **adverse conditions**

adviser With **er**, so not **advisor**, but **advisory** is correct. Do not write someone acted **in an advisory capacity** when you mean they **advised**

A&E is an acceptable abbreviation used in everyday conversation for the **Accident & Emergency** department of a hospital. If the hospital in an article has an **Emergency Depart** (A&E by a different name), that is what we write, but **do not abbreviate to ED**

aerophobia is a **fear of flying**. See **phobias**

aeroplane, airplane, jet We always write **aeroplane**. Never write the US **airplane** (except when referring to the 1980 comedy film *Airplane!*, with an exclamation mark); **plane** is a perfectly acceptable short form of aeroplane, and **aircraft** includes helicopters. Avoid using the word **jet** unless you are differentiating between a **turboprop (propeller, not propellor)** plane and a plane with **jet engines**, and do not write that someone **jetted off** on holiday – they **flew off** or simply **went on holiday**. See **helicopter**

affect is a verb we use when we mean **to influence** – humid weather **affects** his asthma. See also **effect** and **impact**

affection, affectation Write **affection** when you mean a **feeling** or **expression** of **fondness** or **love**; use **affectation** when referring to a **pretentious attitude** or **behaviour** that is **meant to impress** but rarely does

affidavit is a **written declaration** made **on oath (sworn)**, so it is unnecessary to write **sworn affidavit**

affinity with is correct, **affinity for** and **affinity to** are incorrect

Afghan is a person from **Afghanistan** (capital **Kabul**) and the adjective for all things pertaining to the country, so **Afghan hound**, **Afghan coat**; **afghani** is the **unit of currency** used in Afghanistan

aficionado One F, plural **aficionados**

African-American Hyphenated

afro Lower case for the **hairstyle**

ageing With an E after the G

ages go in parentheses when the sentence reads, for example: “Kevin Dorgan (**45**), of Swords, Co Dublin,...”. When ages are used adjectively, we write: “Kevin Dorgan, a **45-year-old** [hyphenated] father of three, of Swords, Co Dublin,...”. We can also write that Mr Dorgan is **45 years old** (no hyphens). He might have a **four-year-old** (hyphenated) daughter, Anne-Marie – in parentheses, she is Anne-Marie (**4**)

aggravate does not mean to **annoy**, it means to **make a bad situation worse**

agnostic, atheist An **agnostic** believes it is impossible to **know** if deities exist (not someone who is **unsure** about their existence), while an **atheist** does not believe deities exist, hence **non-believer**

agoraphobia is a **fear of open spaces** or **crowds**. See **phobias**

ahead of, prior to Write **before**, unless quoting **aid, aide** Use **aid**, meaning **help**, as a noun, verb (rarely) and adjective – **aid worker, aid package**; write **aide**, with a final E, for an **assistant** – **aide-de-camp**, hyphenated, is a **personal assistant** to a high-ranking military officer or politician (the plural is **aides-de-camp**)

aided and abetted is tautologous as both mean **helped**, so write **aided and abetted** only when quoting

Aids is **acquired immune deficiency syndrome**, but no need to write out fully. Do not write **Aids victim** or **suffering from Aids** – write **people with Aids** or **living with Aids**. See also **HIV**

Airbnb is the correct spelling

air hostess, air steward, air stewardess are outdated phrases. See **cabin attendant, cabin crew** and **trolley dolly**

airplane See **aeroplane**

air show Two words – the **Bray Air Show**

airstrike One word

air traffic control/controller No hyphens

aisle, isle An **aisle** is a **passageway** in a **church**, on an **aeroplane** and in a **supermarket**; an **isle** is a **small island**. See **islands**

AK-47 is hyphenated and short for the Russian-made **Kalashnikov assault rifle**, as used and photographed during the **Regency Hotel attack** in Dublin in February 2016

aka All lower case, abbreviation for **also known as**, but best avoided, unless quoting. See also **alias**

akimbo means **hands on hips with elbows out**, so never **legs akimbo**

Alexa Upper case, the **Amazon voice assistant**, not **Alexis**

alfresco One word, no hyphen

alias is an **assumed** or **false name**

alibi is the **defence of having been somewhere else** when an offence was committed, it is not another word for **excuse**

allay, alleviate, assuage The first two are acceptable, but we prefer **ease, lessen, reduce, relieve**. Do not write **assuage**, unless quoting

alleged is an important word in court reports, but do not overuse – it is interchangeable with **claimed**

alleluia See **hallelujah**

alleviate See **allay, alleviate, assuage**

all right, alright Until it really catches on and we throw in the towel, we will continue changing **alright** to **all right**, two words, no hyphen.

all together, altogether Write **all together**, two words, no hyphen, to mean as **one united body**, as in **we are all together in this**; use **altogether**, one word, one L, to mean **completely** or **entirely**, as in that is an **altogether different matter**

allude, refer Write **allude** when you mean to speak about something or someone **without specifically mentioning** it or them; **refer** means to **speak directly** about something or someone. See also **elude**

alphabet (phonetic) See **phonetic alphabet**

Al-Qa'ida is how we write the name of the terrorist group, hyphenated and with upper case A and an apostrophe before the I

altar, alter An **altar** ends with **ar** and is found in a **church**, while **alter** ends with **er** and means to **change to a degree**

altercation Frequently used incorrectly to describe an exchange of kicks and punches. An **altercation** is a **heated exchange of words**, nothing more – it is a **row** or an **argument**, so **verbal altercation** is tautologous; no one is physically injured in an altercation, so never write **violent altercation**

alter-ego Hyphenated

alternate, alternative Write **alternate** when referring to **every other** – as an adjective, meetings take place on **alternate Thursdays**; as a verb, his **mood alternated between** cheery and churlish; write **alternative** when you mean **another thing** that could act as a **replacement** or **substitute** – an **alternative venue**, for example, or an **alternative method**. Note that **alternative is always singular** – there can be **only one alternative**, so do not write **alternatives**; when there is more than one choice, write **choices** or **options**

although, though These two words are largely interchangeable; at the start of a sentence, write **although**, not **though**

alumna, alumnus, alumni An **alumna** is **female**, an **alumnus** is **male**, and in both cases the **plural is alumni**, but the catch-all and gender-neutral **graduate(s)** is the word you want, unless quoting

Alzheimer's disease Write **Alzheimer's** for short. An **irreversible neurological disorder** that usually affects those older than 65, although it can strike younger people (**early-onset Alzheimer's**)

ambassador Always lower case – the **Ukrainian ambassador** to Ireland, Larysa Garasko (2023-), and then Ms Garasko, not Ambassador Garasko, and never write **Her** or **His Excellency**. See also **consul, embassy** and **papal nuncio, nunciature**

ambience Not **ambiance**

America See **Central America, Latin America** and **South America**

American spellings Always use Irish-English spellings for US proper nouns – **World Trade Centre** (not **Center**), **Pearl**

Harbour (not **Harbor**), and watch out in wire copy for words ending in **ize**, almost all of which should be changed to **ise**

America's Cup International sailing competition trophy, upper case initials and apostrophe before the S

Amhrán na bhFiann is the Irish national anthem

amid Not **amidst**. See also **among** and **while**

amok, run Not **amock** or **amuck**

among Never **amongst**. See also **amid** and **while**

amount, number Both refer to **quantity**, but the difference, generally, is that an **amount** refers to **mass nouns** and **cannot easily be counted**, while a **number can be counted**. For example, write the **amount** (or **volume**) of **peak-hour traffic** on the M50, but the **number of vehicles** using the Port Tunnel every hour; also, the missiles caused a **great amount of damage** when they struck a **number of buildings**. We do not write **amount** when referring to **people**

ampersand Use the ampersand symbol (&) only when it is part of a company's formal name – **Marks & Spencer**, for example, which can be shortened to **M&S**. See also **A&E**

An Garda Síochána The use of **garda** and **gardaí** and whether they should be upper case or lower case is a constant source of confusion (do not write **guard** or **guards**, unless quoting). **An Garda Síochána**, always upper case initials, is the national police force, which can be shortened to **the Garda**, upper case G, or referred to as **the force**, lower case F; **Garda**, upper case, is also a **rank**, so **Garda Fiona O'Keefe** at first mention, then **Gda O'Keefe**; if she is a member of the **detective branch**, she is **Detective Garda O'Keefe** at first mention, then **Det Gda O'Keefe** (no hyphen in her rank or any others); **garda**, lower case, singular, refers to an **individual officer** regardless of rank – a **garda**, a **retired garda**, an **off-duty garda**, plural **gardaí**; we also use lower case **garda** as an adjective – a **garda raid**, a **garda operation**, a **garda checkpoint**, a **garda station**; use upper case G for **Garda HQ**, **Garda press office** (lower case P and O), **Garda training college** (lower case T and C) and the **Garda helicopter** (lower case H); **garda ranks**, from least senior to most senior, are **reserve garda**, **garda**, **sergeant** (**Sgt** for short at second mention when it appears in front of a name), **inspector (Insp)**, **superintendent (Supt)**, **chief superintendent (Chief Supt)**, **assistant commissioner**, **deputy commissioner** and **commissioner**

analysis Plural **analyses**

ancestor is a person from whom you are **biologically descended**; the word can refer to several generations ago, and also centuries ago, as in **ancient ancestors**. See also **forbear**, **forebear**

And (at the start of a sentence) Generally, there is little wrong with writing **And** at the start of a sentence and no rule banning it, but do not overdo it – once or twice in a long-ish article is enough. See also **But (at the start of a sentence)**

and/or is indecisive. Write **and** or write **or**, whichever is more appropriate. See also **if and when**

anecdote, antidote An **anecdote** is a **short, amusing story**, while an **antidote** is a **medicine** taken to **counteract the effects of poison**. See also **poisonous, venomous**

aneurysm Note the Y. A **bulge** in a **weakened artery**; in the **brain**, this can lead to a **stroke**

Anglesey Not **Anglesea**. Island off the north-west coast of Wales where the ferry port of **Holyhead** is located

annex, annexe Use **annex**, no final E, as a verb – Vladimir Putin sent in his troops to **annex Crimea** (not **the Crimea**); use **annexe**, final E, as a noun – the sports day prizes will be awarded in the **school annexe**

anonymous describes a person whose **name** is **unknown** or **withheld** – an **anonymous buyer** of an artwork or an **anonymous benefactor** who makes an **anonymous donation**. See also **unanimous**

anorexia is an **illness**, not another word for **thinness**, so always treat with seriousness and respect; a person who is ill with **anorexia** is **anorexic** (adjective) and must never be described as **an anorexic**

Antarctic See **Arctic**

ante-, anti- The prefix **ante-** signifies **before** or **in front of** – **antecedents**, **anteroom**; also, in a card game, **up the ante** means to **raise the stake**; **anti-** signifies **in the opposite direction**, as in **anticlockwise**, and **against**, as in **anti-terrorism operation**

antenatal One word, no hyphen, refers to the **period before birth** (during pregnancy). See also **neonatal**, **perinatal** and **postnatal**

antenna When referring to **insects**, the plural is **antennae**; when referring to **aerials**, the plural is **antennas**

anticipate, expect As **anticipate** is in common use as a synonym for **expect** – gardaí **do not anticipate** any **trouble** during the **protest** – feel free to use in that sense

anticlimax One word, no hyphen

antidepressants One word, no hyphen

antisemite, antisemitic, antisemitism Lower case, all one word, no hyphen, no upper case S. An **antisemite** is someone who has an **irrational hostility towards** or **discrimination against Jews**. See **Jew(s)**

anti-social (behaviour) Hyphenated

anti-vaxxer, vaccine-hesitant Hyphenated and double X for **anti-vaxxer** – a person who is **opposed to vaccination**; the term **vaccine-hesitant**, also hyphenated, refers to someone who is **uneasy about getting vaccinated**

anxious means **uneasy** or **worried**, so do not write when you mean **eager** or **keen**

any more Always two words

apiary, aviary An **apiary**, with a P, is a **collection of beehives** from which **honey** is collected, while an **aviary**, with a V, is an **enclosed space** where **birds** are kept

apolitical describes a person who has **no interest** in or **takes no part in politics**

apostrophes (') indicate a **missing letter** or **letters**, as in **can't, we'll, shouldn't** and **you're**, or a **possessive** – **Fiona's jacket, Kevin's laptop**. Use an apostrophe in phrases such as **three weeks' holiday**, but not **seven months pregnant** (see **months pregnant**). Names ending in S normally take an apostrophe and an additional S, as in **St James's Hospital**, Dublin. Exceptions include **in Jesus' name** and **for goodness' sake**

app is short for **application**, typically found on a **mobile phone**

apparatchik is a **blindly devoted follower** or member of a **political party**, for example, who **always obeys orders**

appeal A person **appeals against** a planning decision or custodial sentence or financial penalty, they do not **appeal a decision** – always add **against**, although an exception can be made in print headlines where space is tight

appraise, apprise Both verbs. To **appraise** means to **evaluate**, while **apprise** means to **inform**

approximately Thirteen letters where five will do – write **about**, not **around** and never **in the region of**

April Fool's Day is celebrated on April 1; apostrophe before the S

aquarium Plural **aquariums**, not **aquaria**

aqueduct is the correct spelling for an **elevated water channel**, but it is almost always incorrectly spelled **aqueduct**, which is understandable as **aqua** is the Latin word for **water**

arachnophobia is a **fear of spiders**. See also **spider** and **phobias**

Aran Island is off **Co Donegal** and the **Aran Islands** are off **Co Galway**, while the **Isle of Arran**, with double R, is the largest island in the **Firth of Clyde** in Scotland. **Aran sweater**, whether Irish or Scottish, is written with a single R

archipelago Plural **archipelagos**

Arctic, Antarctic The **North Pole** is in the **Arctic** (polar bears), while the **South Pole** is in the **Antarctic** (penguins)

ard fheis Two words, no hyphen, no fadas, Lower case initials. Generally refers to an **Irish political party's annual conference**; the plural is **ardfheisanna**, one word

Ardoyne is a neighbourhood in **north Belfast** – do not write **the Ardoyne**, but **the Falls** and **the Shankill** are OK

are or **is?** See **collective nouns**

Army, Irish See **Irish Army** and **Irish Defence Forces**

around, round These two are largely interchangeable, as in **around/round the corner**, but **around** is more appropriate in "Let me **show you around**", while **round** is correct in "OK guys, **gather round**"

arranged marriage is traditional and acceptable (by both partners) in many countries, cultures and religions. See also **forced marriage** and **'honour' killing**

arrest, arrested No need to write **arrested by gardaí**, just write **arrested**. If you want to be specific, write **arrested by armed detectives**, for example

arse, ass Both mean **buttocks** and **ejit**. We write **arse**, Americans write **ass**; both words are semi-vulgar, but used in everyday speech and not offensive, so no need for asterisks. See **swear words**

art movements Lower case – **art deco, art nouveau, impressionism, surrealism**, but upper case **Romantic** to differentiate between a painting of a romantic scene and a Romantic (art movement) painting

artefact With an E, not an I, so not **artifact** (US). Refers to a **simple or primitive object, tool or weapon**, for example, of **historical or archaeological interest** that was **made by a human**, so a **fossilised dinosaur bone** is not an **artefact**

artist Male and female

artiste Be specific and write **entertainer, dancer, singer** or other class of **performer**, unless quoting

artworks We **do not italicise** the titles of **paintings, sculptures, statues, installations** and **other artworks**. This applies to **all** online and print articles

ascend, ascent, assent Write **ascend** (verb) and **ascent** (noun) when referring to an **upward movement**, as in **mountain climbing**; use **assent** (noun and verb) when referring to **approval** or **agreement**

Asperger's syndrome, which we can shorten to **Asperger's**, is a **neurodevelopmental disorder**, not an **illness**, that describes **autistic people** without cognitive issues or speech delay – indeed, many have above-average intelligence. However, there is growing disquiet about the use of the name of Austrian paediatrician **Hans Asperger** (1906-1980), who first diagnosed the syndrome in the 1940s, as he collaborated with the Third Reich in the murder of children with disabilities; while many people with the syndrome identify as having **Asperger's**, medical professionals now diagnose **autism**. Find out the terminology the person you are writing about prefers (be careful when spellchecking as we have seen **Asperger's** changed to **asparagus**). The phrase **on the spectrum** is considered offensive. See **autism**

assassin, killer, murderer An **assassin kills an important person**, such as a head of state; a **killer** is someone who generally **kills with a motive**, although the act can be **unintentional (involuntary manslaughter)**; a **murderer** can be described so only after being **convicted of murder**. Criminals who die as the result of gangland violence are **killed** or **murdered**, they are **not assassinated**

assist, assistance Just write **help**, as a verb and a noun

assisted dying is the acceptable phrase, never write **assisted suicide**. See **euthanasia**

assuage See **allay, alleviate, assuage**

assume, presume (assumption, presumption) While both mean **take to be true**, the difference is in the degree of confidence. If you **assume**, you make a **guess** based on **little or no evidence**, which can backfire badly – in our **news reports**, we deal only with **facts, not assumptions**. If you **presume**, you make an **informed guess** based on **reasonable evidence**; in the legal sense of **presumed innocent until proved (not proven) guilty**, an accused person is **considered innocent**, thereby placing the burden of proof on the prosecution

assure means to **inform positively**, as in **I assure you I will meet the deadline**. See also **ensure** and **insure**

asterisk(s) Not **asterix(es)**

astraphobia is a **fear of thunder and lightning** (not **lightening**). See **phobias**

astrologer, astrology Write when referring to **horoscopes**

astronomer, astronomy Write when referring to **telescopes**

asylum-seeker An **asylum-seeker**, hyphenated, is a person seeking, but has not yet been granted, **refugee status** or **humanitarian protection** in another country. See also **refugee**

ATM is the abbreviation of **automated teller machine**, so **ATM machine** is tautologous

attain means to **reach** or **achieve**, it does not mean to **get** or **obtain**

attempt is OK as a noun, but as a verb write **try**, unless quoting

attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) Lower case initials, abbreviate to **ADHD** after first mention. A condition characterised by **impulsiveness, fidgeting, incessant talking** and **lack of concentration**, but it can also manifest in **hyper-focus** and **above-average problem-solving skills**

Attorney General, attorney general Upper case initials, no hyphen, in all instances when referring to the **current** Irish office-holder. Example, from the *Irish Independent*: "The public might soon be asked to vote via referendum on the constitutional definition of a family contained in article 41, the **Attorney General** [Rossa Fanning] has told the Supreme Court." For **former** office-holders, use lower case initials. Example, from the *Sunday Independent*: "Former chief justice and **attorney general** John L Murray, who has died at the age of 79...." Plural is **attorneys general**, not **attorney generals**. See also **director general** and **secretary general**

aural, oral Sometimes mixed up – **aural** concerns the **ears**, while **oral** refers to the **mouth**

Auschwitz-Birkenau, or just **Auschwitz**, is the **Nazi death camp** located 64km west of Krakow that was operated by Hitler's regime during the occupation of **Poland** in **World War II**. Never write **Polish death camp**, which is rightly offensive to Poles. The legend, in German, above the main entrance to Auschwitz reads "Arbeit macht frei" ("Work sets you free"). See also **Holocaust**

Australia has six states and two territories. The states are **New South Wales** (capital Sydney), **Queensland** (Brisbane), **South Australia** (Adelaide), **Tasmania** (Hobart), **Victoria** (Melbourne) and **Western Australia** (Perth). The territories are **Australian Capital Territory** (Canberra, which is the capital of Australia) and **Northern Territory** (Darwin). Do not write **down under** or **Oz** for the country – Australians generally do not use this phrase, so we should not; **Aussie** is OK for a **person** and when used as an adjective – **Aussie rules** (**Australian rules football**). See also **Aborigine(s)**

author Always a noun, never use as a verb. "JK Rowling **authored** seven books about boy wizard Harry Potter" is incorrect. Author JK Rowling **wrote** those books. See also **ink**, **helm** and **pen**

autism is a **neurodevelopmental disorder**, not an **illness**; as many people diagnosed with the disorder consider it an intrinsic part of who they are, write **autistic person**, not a **person with autism** and not **an autistic**. The phrase **on the spectrum** is considered offensive. See also **Asperger's syndrome**

Autocue is a trade name, so upper case, but write instead the generic **teleprompter**

autopsy, biopsy Do not to mix these up. An **autopsy** is the US equivalent of a **post-mortem examination**, which is the phrase we use, unless quoting. A **biopsy** is the removal of a small piece of **living tissue** to examine it for disease

autumn See **seasons**

avail of means to **use something**, or **take up an offer or opportunity** that is of **benefit to you**, but we prefer **use** or **take advantage of**

average, median The **average** is the **sum** of a list of figures **divided by the number** in the list. However, that it is not necessarily a good indicator of the middle, because it can be distorted by extreme figures. Use **median** (meaning the **middle number** of a list) where possible as it gives a better measure

awake, awaken, awakened, awaking, awoke You could fall asleep trying to work out the correct word to use. Save yourself a lot of bother and write **I wake up** at 8am, **she wakes up** at 9am, **they woke up** at 10am, **he was woken up** at 11am, **they were woken up** at noon, **I tried waking him up** at 1pm, **I woke her up** at 2pm

axe, axed, axing In a headline, **axe** is a handy short word, but **cut** is just as short, less sensational and preferable

BBb

babygrow One word, no hyphen for the generic **garment for an infant** (do not bother with the trade name **Baby-gro**)

bachelor is an old-fashioned word for an **unmarried man**, thus the US **bachelor party (stag do)**; the term **confirmed bachelor** smacks of **innuendo** and should not be used

back (sports player) Write **full-back**, hyphenated, same with **centre-back**, **left-back** and **right-back**

back benches (parliamentary) Two words, no hyphen, for the **seats** in the debating chamber occupied by **backbenchers** (one word, no hyphen) – TDs who are **not office-holders** in the governing or opposition parties; **backbench** (one word, no hyphen) is the adjective, as in **backbench revolt**. See also **front benches (parliamentary)**

back story One word, no hyphen

backward, backwards Write **backward** to mean **hesitant, shy, timid**; use **backwards** when referring to **moving in a reverse direction**

bacteria is plural, **bacterium** is singular

bagel Not **bagle**

bail, bail out, bailout Write **bail** when referring to the sum of **money** paid by a **person freed from custody** as a **surety** that they will **appear in court**; write **bail out**, two words, no hyphen, as a verb – taxpayers had to **bail out the banks**; as a noun, one word, no hyphen – the banks were saved by a **bailout**. See also **bale, bale out**

baited A **fishing hook** is **baited**, with an I (but usually with a worm). See also **bated breath**

bale, bale out A **bale** is a large, **wrapped bundle** of, say, **paper, cardboard, fabric** or **hay** – a **hay bale**; as a verb, we hope we never have to **bale out** from a **plane**. See also **bail out, bailout**

Balkan states, Baltic states It is generally accepted there are seven **Balkan states (the Balkans)**. They are **Albania** (capital Tirana), **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (Sarajevo), **Croatia** (Zagreb), **Kosovo** (Pristina), **Montenegro** (Podgorica), **North Macedonia** (Skopje) and **Serbia** (Belgrade); the three **Baltic states** are **Estonia** (Tallinn), **Latvia** (Riga) and **Lithuania** (Vilnius)

ball, bawl If you did not receive an **invitation to the ball**, you might **bawl your eyes out** or start **bawling (roaring)**

ballerina A **ballerina dances leading roles**; otherwise, she is a **ballet dancer**

Baltic states See **Balkan states, Baltic states**

bank holiday Lower case, two words, no hyphen in all instances

banknote One word, no hyphen

Bank of Ireland (BoI) Write out fully in the first instance, then shorten to **the bank**, lower case, or **BoI** (not **BOI**)

Bar In legal terms, upper case – called to the **Bar**; the **Bar of Ireland** is the professional association of **barristers** and is based in the **Law Library** in Dublin

barbaric, barbarity, barbarous Write **barbaric** and **barbarity** when referring to a **cruel person or act**; use **barbarous** when you mean **primitive** or **unsophisticated** or **uncouth**

barbecue with a C, not a Q, so not **barbeque**, but **BBQ** is OK in headlines

barcode One word, no hyphen

Barnardos No apostrophe in the name of the **children's charity**

barter, haggle To **barter** is to **trade** one thing or service for another; to **haggle** is to **bargain** for a better price

basis Overused word, as in **part-time basis** or **permanent basis**. Write **part-time** and **permanent** without the unnecessary embellishment

bated breath No I after the A, so not **baited breath**

battalion Two Ts, one L, like **battle**

B&B Perfectly acceptable abbreviation for **bed and breakfast**; do not write **bed & breakfast**

BC See **AD, BC**

beau Do not write **beau** when you mean **boyfriend** or **fiance**, unless quoting

before Always write **before**, never **ahead of**, **in advance of** or **prior to**

Beijing Capital of **China**, previously known as **Peking**

Belarus is the **landlocked country** bordered by Russia, Lithuania, Latvia, Ukraine and Poland; the capital is **Minsk** and the people are **Belarusian**, with only one S

beloved mother/husband/pet Write **beloved** only when quoting

benefactor, beneficiary A **benefactor** gives, a **beneficiary** receives

benefited, benefiting One T

benign, malignant Tumours diagnosed as **benign** are **non-cancerous**, usually **grow slowly** and **do not spread** to other parts of the body; tumours diagnosed as **malignant** are **cancerous**, can **grow rapidly**, **invade** and **destroy nearby healthy tissue** and **often spread throughout the body**

berserk Two Rs, not **beserk**

beside, besides Write **beside** when you mean **next to**; use **besides** for **in addition to**, **as well as**, **moreover**, but not **apart from**

bestseller, bestselling One word, no hyphen

betting odds Use a hyphen, not a forward slash, so it is **66-1**, not **66/1**. A person who bets is a **bettor**, but write **gambler** or **punter**

between Write **between 20 and 30**, not **between 20 to 30** or **between 20-30**; the same applies to years – write **between 1976 and 2012**

Beverly Hills Ends in **ly**, so not **Beverley**

Bhoys With a silent H after the B, is the nickname of **Celtic Football Club**. The **women's team** are known as the **Ghirls**

biannual, biennial Write **biannual** for **twice a year** and **biennial** for **every two years**

Bible, the Upper case, no italics (despite being a book) as a proper noun, but lower case when writing "the stylebook is the **journalist's bible**"; the adjective **biblical** is always lower case. See also **Koran**

bicentenary is a noun – a **200th anniversary**; the adjective is **bicentennial**

bid as a verb is an acceptable short word meaning **try**, but in headlines only, not in copy; as a noun and verb, **bid** also means **an offer** or to **make an offer**, as at an **auction sale**

bill (legislation) See **act (legislation)**

billion (bn) See **million (m)**, **billion (bn)**, **trillion (tn)**

bimonthly means **every second month**, while **semi-monthly** means **twice a month**

binary, non-binary A person who **identifies as male or female** is said to be **binary**; a **non-binary** person identifies as **neither male nor female**. See **gender identity**

bingeing With an E after the G, same as **swingeing** and **whingeing**

biodiversity refers to the existence of a **wide variety of plant and animal species**, including **algae** and **microorganisms**, in their **natural environments**. It is not another word for **wildlife**

biopsy See **autopsy**, **biopsy**

birdwatchers are also known as **birders**, not **twitchers**, and their hobby is **birdwatching** or **birding**, not **twitching**

birthday, anniversary A **person** or a **pet** has a **birthday**, while **institutions** and **events** have **anniversaries**; years of **marriage** and the date of a person's **death** are marked by **anniversaries**

bitcoin One word, no hyphen, lower case

bite, byte You **bite an apple**, while a **byte** is a unit of measurement of **computer storage**

biweekly Means **every second week**, while **semi-weekly** means **twice a week**

black, brown, coloured, person of colour We are often asked about the Mediahuis style for **black** when used as an adjective in matters of ethnicity – it is **lower case**. We recognise there is much debate on this issue in the United States, where many media outlets have ruled in favour of upper case Black while retaining lower case white; in Ireland and the UK, most outlets traditionally use lower case black. This might change, but for the moment our style is lower case. We must never write the offensive **a black, blacks** or **coloureds** when referring to a person or people, unless quoting, and then only after consulting a senior colleague; **black person** and **person of colour** are OK, as are **black community** and **black neighbourhood** and so on; many **young Asians** are happy to identify as **brown**, but older generations take exception to references to skin colour, so write **brown** only when quoting

black out, blackout Two words, no hyphen for the verb – he felt he was **going to black out**; one word, no hyphen for the noun – he **suffered a blackout**

blaspheme, blasphemy To **blaspheme** is to **say, write, publish** or **broadcast** something that **insults** or shows a **lack of reverence** or **respect** for a **deity (God)** or **something held sacred** by others. In Ireland, the 37th Amendment of the Constitution (Repeal of offence of publication or utterance of blasphemous matter) Act 2018 decriminalised blasphemy; while it is no longer a punishable offence under law, it can still offend readers, so always seek guidance when copy contains quotes or narrative that might be perceived as blasphemous

bloc Write **bloc**, no final K, when referring to an **alliance of countries** united by a **common interest**

blond, blonde Both are noun and adjective; **blond**, no final E, refers to **males**, while **blonde**, with a final E, refers to **females**

bloodsports One word, no hyphen

Bluetooth Upper case, one word, no hyphen

Blu-Tack Trade name, so upper case initial, and insert a hyphen

boasts Only **big-headed people**, not things, can **boast**, so do not write **the hotel boasts** easy access to the beach – write **has** instead

boat, ship Generally, a **boat** is a **small vessel** – a **fishing boat, lifeboat, rowing boat**; write **ship** when referring to a **large ocean-going vessel** used for carrying **passengers** or **cargo**, such as a **cruise liner, container ship** or **supertanker**. Also, boats and ships are **not feminine**, so refer to them as **it**, not **she**, and their **names** are not written in italics

body (lifeless) No need to write **dead body** – if we tell readers the **body of a man was recovered from the canal**, they will not wonder if he was dead or alive. See also **cadaver** and **corpse**

boffin Dated word for **scientist**, so do not use, unless quoting

bogey, bogie A **bogey** is a score of **one over par** in **golf**, while a **bogie** is a type of **wheeled trolley** and a reason to reach for your **hankie**

bolognese with a lower case B is what we write for **spaghetti bolognese** – do not write **bolognaise**, which is the French spelling

Bombay Former name of the Indian city now known as **Mumbai**

Border Always upper case as a noun when referring to the **Republic of Ireland** and **Northern Ireland/the North**, so the **Border**; use lower case for **border county, border poll, border town** and so on; any other border, wherever it is in the world, is lower case in all instances

born, borne Write **born** when referring to the **start of life**; use **borne**, with final E, as the past participle of **bear**, as in **he has borne his difficulties** with great courage – **borne** means **carried** (a **water-borne disease**, for example)

both is unnecessary in most phrases that contain **and**, as in **both men and women**, says no more than **men and women**, so drop **both**

Botox Trade name, so upper case

Boxing Day is the name for **December 26** in many countries, including Northern Ireland, but in the Republic of Ireland we write **St Stephen's Day**, always with **St**

box office, box-office Two words, no hyphen when writing **the box office**, but add a hyphen when used as an adjective – **box-office success**

box set Two words, no hyphen

boy, girl A child or young person aged **under 18**

boy band Two words, no hyphen, same with **girl band**

boycott, embargo When referring to **international trade**, a government **boycott** is an **absolute ban on buying** and **importing** certain goods from certain countries (on a much smaller scale, dissatisfied customers might **boycott a shop**, for example); an **embargo** is a **refusal to sell** certain goods to certain countries. See also **sanctions**

braille Lower case. System of **raised dots** that can be **read with the fingers** by people who are **blind** or have **limited vision**

brainchild Write **idea**, unless quoting

brasserie, brassier, brassiere, brazier A **brasserie** is a **bar-cum-restaurant**; a **brassiere** is a **bra**; **brassier** means **more brassy**; and a **brazier** is a **metal drum** or **basket** in which **wood** or coal is **burned**

breadth, breath, breathe Write **breadth** to **mean** width, which is easy enough until we mistakenly write **hare's breath** (it should be **hair's breadth** – the breadth of a hair); **breath** is one of those deep ones we take before diving into the sea; and **breathe**, with a final E, is what we do to avoid going blue in the face

breastfeed(ing) One word, no hyphen

breathalyser Write lower case **breathalyser** (or **breath test**) and **breathalysed**

breathtaking is cliched, so use sparingly

brew, brewery If you drink **beer** or **cider**, they are **brewed** (not **distilled**) and come from a **brewery**. See also **distil**, **distillery**

Brexit, Brexiteer The **Brexit referendum** took place in the **UK and Gibraltar** on **June 23, 2016**; the overall result of the **vote to leave the European Union** was **52pc in favour** and **48pc against** (majorities in England and Wales voted to leave, while majorities in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Gibraltar voted to remain); the **UK left the EU** on **December 31, 2020**; a person who voted or campaigned to leave is a **Brexiteer**, not a **Brexiter**

bric-a-brac With hyphens, but without CKs

Britain See **United Kingdom (UK), Britain, Great Britain (GB)**

British and Irish Lions, the is the official name of the **rugby union touring team**; write **the Lions** for short

British Isles is a historical name for **Great Britain and the island of Ireland**, to be used only when quoting. See also **United Kingdom (UK), Britain, Great Britain (GB)**

British royals First, we write **royal, royals** and **royal family** in lower case in all instances

- **King Charles III**, formerly the **Prince of Wales (Prince Charles)**, became monarch on the death of his mother, **Queen Elizabeth II**, at Balmoral, Aberdeenshire, on September 8, 2022. On that day, Charles was aged 73 (Elizabeth was 96), making him the oldest person to accede (not ascend) to the throne. He was crowned on May 6, 2023, in Westminster Abbey, London

- Elizabeth was predeceased by her husband, **Prince Philip (Duke of Edinburgh)**, who died in April 2021, aged 99. They had been married for 73 years and had four children – **Charles, Anne (Princess Royal), Andrew (Duke of York)** and **Edward (Duke of Edinburgh)**

- Charles's wife, **Camilla (76)**, formerly Camilla Parker Bowles, became **Queen Consort Camilla** when her husband became king and **Queen Camilla** when he was crowned. The couple wed in 2005

- Charles was previously married to **Diana, Princess of Wales** (we write **Princess Diana**), formerly Lady Diana Spencer, who died, aged 36, following a car crash in Paris in August 1997. The couple, who wed in 1981 and divorced in 1996, had two children – **William (Prince of Wales)** and **Harry (Duke of Sussex)**

- William (41), who is heir apparent to the throne, married **Catherine (Kate) Middleton (Princess of Wales)** in 2011. The couple have **three young children** – **George** (second in line to the throne), **Charlotte** (third in line) and **Louis** (fourth)

- Harry (38), who is fifth in line to the throne, married US actor **Meghan Markle (Duchess of Sussex)**, who is aged 42, in 2018. The couple have **two young children** – **Archie** (sixth in line) and **Lilibet** (seventh)

We do not use the honorifics **His Majesty (HM)** or **His/Her Royal Highness (HRH)**, unless quoting. When applied as a title before a name, we use **upper case** for **King** and **Queen** and **Prince** and **Princess**, but **lower case** when writing **the king, the queen, the prince, the princess, the duke, the duchess**

Brits Avoid writing **Brits**, unless quoting, as some people find the word offensive – write **the British, British people** or **Britons**

broach, brooch To **broach** a subject is to **bring it up**, while a **brooch** is a **piece of jewellery**, so you might **broach the subject** of the **stolen brooch**

brought, taken We frequently – almost always – read that a person involved in a car crash, for example, was **brought to hospital** (by ambulance), but this is incorrect – they were **taken to hospital** (by ambulance). The difference is easy to remember – **bring it here**, but **take it there**

brown See **black, brown, coloured, person of colour**

brownie points Lower case B

brussels sprouts Lower case B

Bucharest, Budapest These cities are often mixed up. **Bucharest** is the capital of **Romania** and **Budapest** is the capital of **Hungary**

bucket list Two words, no hyphen

Budget, budget Upper case when referring to **Budget 2024**, for example, but lower case for past budgets (**the 2018 budget**) and when used as an adjective (**budget measures**)

bulletproof One word, no hyphen

bullseye One word, no hyphen

bungee jumping Two words, no hyphen

burglar, burgle A **burglar** enters a **property** or **premises illegally** (he **burgles** the place – that is a **burglary**) with the intention of **committing a crime**, usually **theft**

Burma is the former name of the Asian country now called **Myanmar**. The capital is **Naypyidaw**

burned, burnt, burnt-out, burnout We write **burnt** rather than **burned**, so **he burnt his toast** and **his toast was burnt**; when referring to a **vehicle** that was used in the execution of a crime and later found **destroyed by fire**, we describe it as **burnt-out**, hyphenated; **overworked nurses** and other health service staff can suffer from **burnout**, one word, no hyphen

burka is a **long, all-enveloping dress** that **covers the body and face**, with only a **narrow screen** to see through, and is worn in public by some Muslim women. See also **chador, hijab, niqab** and **yashmak**

businessman, businesswoman, businessperson are OK for individuals; the gender-neutral plural is **businesspeople**

But (at the start of a sentence) Generally, there is little wrong with writing **But** at the start of a sentence and no rule banning it, but do not overdo it – once or twice in a long-ish article is enough. See also **And (at the start of a sentence)**

by-law, by-election Hyphenated **by-**, never **bye-**

bystander One word, no hyphen, invariably and unnecessarily described as **innocent**. See also **passerby**

byte See **bite, byte**

CCc

Cab See **Criminal Assets Bureau (Cab)**

cabby Not **cabbie**, and use only when writing about a London taxi driver (plural **cabbies**). We always write **taxi driver**, not **taxi man** or **taxi woman**. In **Belfast**, you might take a sightseeing tour in a **black cab**, which is driven by a **black-cab driver** (note the placement of the hyphen – **black cab driver** suggests a **Black person** at the wheel)

cabin attendant, **cabin crew** is what we write when we mean the **onboard airline staff** who talk passengers through the safety procedures and serve food and drink. Do not write **air hostess**, **air steward** or **air stewardess** and never write the antiquated, condescending and sexist **trolley dolly**

Cabinet (Irish) Only the serving **Cabinet** is upper case; use lower case for previous cabinets (**Bertie Ahern's cabinet**) and those of other countries (**Rishi Sunak's cabinet**) and when applied as an adjective – **cabinet meeting**, **cabinet proposal**. See also **Government (Irish)**

Cabinet, the Some of us have a habit of dropping **the** from in front of **Cabinet** (and sometimes **Government**). The following two examples are from recent editions of the *Irish Independent*. **1.** "Asked last Thursday ... whether the public could expect to see any fresh faces **in Cabinet** ... Mr Varadkar deflected the question." **2.** "New legislation being brought **before Cabinet** today by Tourism Minister Catherine Martin will put the new register into law in the new year." We should write **in the Cabinet** and **before the Cabinet**. The same rule concerning **the** should be applied to **Government**. See also **Government (Irish)**

cactus The plural is **cacti**, not **cactuses**

cadaver is a **dead human body**, especially one used by **medical students** for **dissection**. See also **body (lifeless)** and **corpse**

caddie, caddy A **caddie** carries a **golfer's bag** of clubs; a **caddy** is a container for **teabags** or **loose tea**

caesarean section, C-section Lower case C for **caesarean**, but upper case C and hyphen for **C-section**

cafe No accent on the E

caged Do not write when you mean **jailed** or **imprisoned**

Calcutta Indian city, now known as **Kolkata**

call centre Two words, no hyphen for the noun, but as an adjective, hyphenate **call-centre worker**

call signs (Foxtrot, Charlie, Delta and so on) See **phonetic alphabet**

callous, callus The adjective **callous** means **uncaring** or **cruel**, while the noun **callus** is an area of **hard skin**

camera phone Two words, no hyphen

Canada has 10 provinces and three territories. The provinces are **Alberta** (capital Edmonton), **British Columbia** (Victoria), **Manitoba** (Winnipeg), **Newfoundland and Labrador** (St John's), **New Brunswick** (Fredericton), **Nova Scotia** (Halifax), **Ontario** (Toronto), **Prince Edward Island** (Charlottetown), **Quebec** (Quebec City) and **Saskatchewan** (Regina). The territories are **Northwest Territories** (Yellowknife), **Nunavut** (Iqaluit) and **Yukon** (Whitehorse). The **capital of Canada** is **Ottawa** (not **Ottowa**) and is in **Ontario**

cannabis Double N and one B

cannon, canon Historically, a **cannon**, with double N in the middle, was a **large-calibre heavy gun**, usually on wheels, that fired solid metal or stone balls (**cannonballs**); a **canon**, with one N in the middle, is a **general rule or principle**, a **creative person's body of work** and a **senior priest**. See also **churches**, **church titles**, **church officials**

canvas, canvass Write **canvas**, with one S, when referring to the **durable fabric** used to make **sails** and, traditionally, **tents**, and the **surface of a boxing ring**; it is also the **material** on which **artists paint** with oils or acrylics; the verb **canvass**, with double S, means to **solicit votes** or **opinions**

Capitol, US Note the **ol** ending. The **United States Capitol**, in Washington DC, is the main building of the **US Congress** and the seat of the legislative branch of the US federal government, which was stormed by Donald Trump supporters on January 6, 2021

cappuccino Double P and double C (not CH)

car bomb, car mechanic, car wash Two words, no hyphen. See also **car park**

car crash See **road traffic accident**

car park Two words, no hyphen; can be preceded by **multi-storey**, **underground** or **street-level**. Never write the US **parking lot** unless quoting

carat is a **unit of weight** (200 milligrams) for **diamonds** and other **precious stones**; it is also a measure of the **purity of gold** – **24 carat** is the purest

carcass is the **dead body** of an **animal**

cardiac arrest, heart attack A **cardiac arrest** happens when the **heart suddenly stops beating**; a **heart attack** happens when the **blood flow** to the heart is **blocked**

care home, nursing home These are much preferable to **old people's home**; never write **geriatric home**

care worker, carer A **care worker** is someone **employed** in a **caring profession**; generally, a **carer** is an **unpaid partner, relative** or **friend** who helps a **disabled** or **frail person** with their daily needs

Caribbean There are 13 sovereign states in the Caribbean – note one R and double B. They are **Antigua and Barbuda** (capital Saint John's), **Bahamas** (Nassau), **Barbados** (Bridgetown), **Cuba** (Havana), **Dominica** (Roseau), **Dominican Republic** (Santo Domingo), **Grenada** (St George's), **Haiti** (Port au Prince), **Jamaica** (Kingston), **Saint Kitts and Nevis** (Basseterre), **Saint Lucia** (Castries), **Saint Vincent and Grenadines** (Kingstown) and **Trinidad and Tobago** (Port of Spain)

carmaker One word, no hyphen and singular, so write **Ford is** and **Mercedes is**, not **Ford are** or **Mercedes are**

cashflow One word, no hyphen

caster, castor Write **caster**, with an E, for the type of **sugar** used in **baking** and a **wheel on a sofa**; write **castor**, with an O, for the **oil** that is made from the beans of the castor plant

casualties include the **dead and injured**, while **casualty**, lower case, is another name for a hospital **Accident and Emergency department (A&E)**. See **A&E**

Catalonia (Spain) With an O, not a U, so not **Catalunia**; the language is **Catalan** (also the adjective) and the people are **Catalans**, not **Catalonians**

Catholic Church See **churches, church officials, church titles**

CD A **CD** is a **compact disc**, plural **CDs**, not **CD's**. See also **disc, disk**

CE, BCE See **AD, BC**

ceasefire One word, no hyphen

celibate In its true sense, **celibate** means to **remain unmarried**, but in common usage has come to mean **abstaining from sexual intercourse**, especially for religious reasons

cellphone US, one word, no hyphen, but write only when quoting. We use **mobile phones**, or **mobiles** for short

Celsius, centigrade, Fahrenheit See **temperature**

cement, concrete These two words are often mixed up. **Cement** is one ingredient of **concrete**, along with **sand, crushed stone** and **water**; the lorry with a revolving drum, which everyone knows as a **cement mixer** – which we will continue to write – is actually a **concrete mixer**. See also **mortar**

ensor, censure, sensor As a verb, **ensor** means to **prevent publication** (as a noun, it is the person who does the **ensoring**); **censure** means to **criticise severely**; a **sensor** is a device that **detects the presence of or changes to**, say, **light, heat, pressure, moisture** or **motion**

Census, census Upper case for **Census 2022**, but lower case for **the 2022 census** and in general. A **census** (not **cencus**) is a periodical count and survey of the population carried out **every five years** by the **Central Statistics Office (CSO)** in the Republic of Ireland; in Northern Ireland, the census is carried out every 10 years

cent See **euro, cent (currency)**

centenarian is a person who has reached **the age of 100**. Do not confuse with **centurion**

Center Parcs Longford Not **Centre**, despite our rule on changing US spellings

centigrade, Celsius, Fahrenheit See **temperature**

centimetres Abbreviate to **cm**, not **cms**

Central America Seven countries make up **Central America**. They are **Belize** (capital Belmopan), **Costa Rica** (San Jose), **El Salvador** (San Salvador), **Guatemala** (Guatemala City), **Honduras** (Tegucigalpa), **Nicaragua** (Managua) and **Panama** (Panama City). See also **Latin America, Mexico** and **South America**

centre on is correct, **centre around** is incorrect (it should be **revolve around**)

century Lower case – **the 19th century**; add a hyphen when used as an adjective – **19th-century mansion**

Ceylon Former name for the island state in the Indian Ocean, now called **Sri Lanka**, capital **Colombo**

chair, chairman, chairwoman, chairperson Use **chair** and **chairperson** as a noun only when the gender is unknown. As a verb, to **chair a meeting** is OK

champ at the bit Not **chomp**

Champagne Upper case noun, lower case adjective. A **sparkling wine**, known colloquially as **bubbly**, from the Champagne region of north-east France – write a **bottle of Champagne**, but a **champagne bottle**; if it does not come from Champagne, call it **sparkling wine** (or **cava** from Catalonia, or **prosecco** from Italy, both lower case). See also **cheese** and **wine**

Champions League No apostrophe

Champs Elysees (Paris) is spelled thus

changeable E after the G

Channel tunnel Upper case C, lower case T; do not write **Chunnel**, unless quoting

chanteuse Write (female) **singer**, unless quoting

chaos, mayhem Write **chaos** when you mean **great disorder** or **confusion**; use **mayhem** for a **violent** or **damaging action**

chassis Singular and plural – the **framework** of a **car, van** or other **vehicle**

chat show, quiz show, talk show Two words, no hyphen

check in, check-in An **airline passenger checks in**, two words, no hyphen, at the **check-in desk**, hyphenated

check out, checkout A **hotel guest checks out** (and **checks in**), two words, no hyphen; a **supermarket customer pays** at the **checkout**, one word, no hyphen

check-up Noun, hyphenated, is a **medical examination**

cheese The names of cheeses are generally lower case, even if named after a place, so write **brie, cheddar, parmesan, stilton**; however, **Cashel blue** would look incorrect with a lower case C – if it looks wrong, use an upper case initial. See also **Champagne** and **wine**

chemist, chemist's Write **pharmacist** and **pharmacy**, unless quoting

chequebook One word, no hyphen. Do not write the US **checkbook**

cherrypick, cherrypicker One word, no hyphen

chief is a useful short word in a headline, but in copy use proper titles, such as committee **chairperson**, Fine Gael **leader**

child pornography See **porn, pornography (children)**

childcare, childminder, childminding One word, no hyphen

childish, childlike If you **laugh when someone breaks wind**, that is a **childish** reaction; write **childlike** to describe the **endearing qualities** of children – **childlike delight, childlike enthusiasm**

childless An insensitive word. If it is relevant to the story, write **has no children**

Chile, chilli The South American country is **Chile** (capital **Santiago**), while **chilli** is a **pepper**. **Red Hot Chili Peppers** (one L) are a **US rock band**, and **Red Hot Chilli Pipers** (double L) are a **Celtic rock band** from Scotland

chimpanzees (chimps) are **apes**, as are **gorillas** and **orangutans** – they are not **monkeys**, which generally have tails; the pickpocketing **Barbary macaques** on **Gibraltar** are **tailless monkeys**, not **apes**

China, china Upper case for the **country**, lower case for the **crockery**

choc-a-block Hyphenated; not **choc**, which is short for **chocolate**

chocoholic is spelled thus. See also **shopaholic, workaholic**

choose, chose Often mixed up. **Choose**, with double O, is present tense for **select** or **pick** (“I’m going to the shops to **choose a present** for my sister”), while **chose**, with one O, is past tense (“I went to the shops and **chose a present** for my sister”). See also **loose, lose**

Christ Church, Christchurch The **Church of Ireland Cathedral of the Holy Trinity** in **Dublin 8** is better known as **Christ Church Cathedral** (three words) and is in the area known as **Christchurch** (one word)

christen, christening Always lower case. Use only when writing about a **Christian baptism**. Also, **ships are not christened**, they are **named**

Christian name Write **first name** or **forename**

chronic See **acute, chronic**

churches, church officials, church titles A **Christian church** as an institution takes upper case initials at first mention, so the **Roman Catholic Church**, the **Church of Ireland (Col for short)**, for example; thereafter, and generally, we write lower case **the church**. **Roman Catholic priests** are referred to as **Fr (full name)** at first mention, then **Fr (surname)**; **Church of Ireland ministers** are referred to as **the Rev (full name)** at first mention, then **Mr or Ms (surname)** – about one in five of the church's 500 serving clergy are women. All **Catholic prelates** are **Dr**, hence the Archbishop of Tuam, **Dr Francis Duffy**; for **Cardinal Eamon Martin**, Primate of All-Ireland, write **Cardinal Martin** or **Dr Martin**. All **Col bishops** are **the Right Rev**, with the exception of the Archbishops of Armagh and Dublin and the Bishop of Meath, who are **the Most Rev**; not all **Col bishops** are **Dr**, so check before applying that honorific

cinemagoer One word, no hyphen

cis, cisgender These interchangeable words refer to **someone who identifies with the sex they were assigned at birth**. See **gender identity** and **personal pronouns (he, she, they)**

cite, sight, site To **cite** is to **quote** or **mention (a citation)**; write **sight** when you mean **visual perception** – one of the **five senses** (six, if you see dead people, in which case feel free to always work from home); **something interesting to see** on a holiday excursion – **sightseeing**; write **site** when referring to a location – a **building site**

Citizens' Assembly Upper case initials and apostrophe after the S

Citroen (cars) Not Citroën

civil servant, civil service Lower case in all instances. **Civil servants work directly for the Government** to support and implement its policies – they are permanent employees of government departments or certain state agencies, such as the Office of Public Works (OPW), the Department of Finance and the Revenue Commissioners. See also **public servant, public service**

claim, claimed These words carry an implication of doubt or suspicion, so it is preferable to write **said**; however, in court reporting, **claimed** is useful when we want to avoid too much repetition of **alleged** – they mean exactly the same

clamp down, clampdown, crack down, crackdown Two words, no hyphen for the verb, and one word, no hyphen, for the noun

classic, classical Lower case. Use **classic** as an adjective to mean **of lasting interest** or **significance**; as a noun, a **classic** is a **definitive work of art** (a **book** or **rock album**, for example); **classical** generally refers to **serious art music**, like that of **Beethoven** and **Mozart**

claustrophobia is a **fear of confined spaces**. See **phobias**

cliches In news reporting, **cliches should be avoided**, unless quoting – we should **write in plain English**, not **fanciful and flowery phrases**; it would be churlish to ban cliches from **comment pieces**, where, when used effectively, they can add **colour**, but we must **avoid cluttering our copy** with them. Expressions that were once clever and fresh, such as **Costa del Crime**, grow drab with overuse

clickbait One word, no hyphen

client, clientele, customer A **client** seeks **professional advice** or **services** from, say, a solicitor; **clientele** is the collective noun for **regular clients**; a **customer** buys **goods or services**, especially from a **shop**

cliffhanger One word, no hyphen

climactic, climatic Write **climactic** when referring to a **climax** (the **climactic moment** in a **film** when something important or exciting happens); **climatic** refers to **climate**
climate, weather These are not the same. **Climate** refers to the **prevailing weather conditions** in a **given region over a long period** – Ireland has a temperate oceanic climate with abundant rainfall and a lack of temperature extremes, while Malta has a Mediterranean climate with very mild winters and warm to hot summers; **weather** is the **state of the atmosphere** with regard to temperature, pressure, precipitation, wind and sunshine in a **given place at a particular time**

clingfilm One word, no hyphen

Clinton, Hillary Double L in Hillary

close-knit community If you use this cliched phrase, at least insert a hyphen. See **cliches**

Coalition, the (Irish Government) Upper case for the proper noun – **the Coalition**; lower case as an adjective – **the coalition parties**

coarse fishing Not **course**, and no hyphen

cocktail To write that a toxicology report showed a **cocktail of drugs and alcohol** trivialises the death of the person who

consumed the lethal **mixture**, which is the word we should use instead of **cocktail**

collective nouns (is or are?) All **organisations, companies** and **groups**, such as the Government, the Cabinet, the council, the committee, the union are treated as **singular**, so we write **Fine Gael is** (not **are**) and the **Labour Party was** (not **were**). Generally, **sports teams** and **groups of musicians** should be treated as **plural** – **Manchester United are** playing Liverpool and **U2 are** releasing a new album. There is a temptation, when the subject sounds plural, as in Marks & Spencer or General Motors, to follow it with **they** – resist

collide, collision See **road traffic accident**

Colombia South American country, not **Columbia**; the capital is **Bogota**

colons (:) have two main uses in our writing: to **introduce reported speech** and to **introduce a list**. If only one sentence follows the colon that introduces a list, the initial letter of the word immediately after the colon is written in lower case (unless it is a proper noun); if more than one sentence follows the colon, the word immediately after the colon is written in upper case

Colosseum Ancient **amphitheatre in Rome**, not **Coliseum**

coloured See **black, brown, coloured, person of colour**

coma is a state of **deep unconsciousness**. We once saw **self-imposed coma**, but the writer meant **medically induced coma**

comedian Male and female. Do not write **comedienne**

coming out See **out (has come out), outed** and **sexuality**

commence Write **start** or **begin**, unless quoting

commented Write **said**. See Appendix Quotes at the end of section Q

common sense, commonsense The noun is two words, no hyphen – **use your common sense**; the adjective is one word, no hyphen – a **commonsense approach**

compared We write **compared with**, not **compared to**, unless quoting

compass points Lower case **north, south, east** and **west**; lower case and hyphen for **north-east** and **south-west** and so on

complement, compliment Write **complement** when you mean **fill out** or **make complete** or **enhance**; write **compliment**, noun and verb, when referring to **praise**. You can receive **complementary (additional or supporting) information**, but **complimentary (admiring) remarks** and **complimentary (free) tickets** to a gig

comprise We sometimes see **comprised of**, which is always wrong – Mediahuis Ireland **comprises** several national, regional and local newspapers, among other interests, it does not **comprise of**

concertgoer One word, no hyphen

concrete See **cement, concrete**

confidant(e) A person you can **trust to keep a secret** or with whom you can **safely share personal information** is a **confidant** (female **confidante**)

conjoined twins Never write **Siamese twins**

Connacht is how we spell the **western province** comprising counties **Galway, Leitrim, Mayo, Roscommon** and **Sligo**. Do not write **Connaught**

conservationist, conservator A **conservationist** preserves and manages the **natural environment**, while a **conservator** preserves and repairs **objects of cultural importance or interest** and usually works in a **museum** or **art gallery**

considerable, significant Write **considerable** when you mean **of great size** – a **considerable amount of money**; use **significant** to mean **important** or **of consequence** – a **significant piece of legislation**

consortium The plural is **consortiums**, not **consortia**

Constitution, Irish Always upper case C for **the Constitution (Bunreacht na hÉireann)**. **US constitution** is lower case

construct, construction We prefer **build** and **building**

consul Lower case. A **consul** is a person appointed by a country to **serve** its **citizens** in a **foreign city**; a **full-time consul** works in a **consulate**, while an **honorary consul** might work from their place of business or home. See also **ambassador, embassy** and **papal nuncio, nunciature**

consult Do not write **consult with**

contagious, infectious A **contagious disease** is **spread by contact (touch)**, while an **infectious disease** is **spread by air or water**

Continent, the (Europe) It is common in our writing to refer to the European continent as **the Continent**, with an upper case C

continents There are seven continents. In descending order of size (largest first) they are **Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Antarctica, Europe** and **Australia**

continually, continuously Write **continually** when you mean **repeatedly** but not **constantly**, and write **continuously** for **without a break**; if it **rains continually** for three days, the showers are punctuated by **some dry spells**, but if it **rains continuously**, that is three days of **non-stop rain**

contractions See **apostrophes (')**

Convention Centre Dublin is correct, not **National Convention Centre**

convertible Not **convertable**

convince, persuade You can **convince** someone that God exists – you **make them believe**; a defence barrister might **convince a jury** of a defendant's innocence and **persuade the judge** to award costs to his client. **Convince to believe** and **persuade to act**

co-operate, co-operation Hyphenated

co-ordinate, co-ordination Hyphenated
cop, cops Do not use these words, unless quoting. Write instead **garda, gardaí** (never **guard** or **guards**, unless quoting) or **police**. See **An Garda Síochána**

copter, chopper Always write **helicopter**

copying and pasting When revisiting a story to write an update or a separate background piece – at the end of a trial, for example – it is sometimes necessary to include paragraphs from an earlier version or versions of that story. When this is the case, copy and paste those selected paragraphs only from the published article (the subbed and legalled version) that appeared online; do not go to your personal files to copy and paste from the unsubbed and unlegalled copy you submitted days, weeks or months before. What you originally wrote and what was published after subbing, fact-checking and legalling can differ, so follow this rule to avoid unnecessary and time-consuming re-editing

copyright, but **copywriter**

cord, chord A **cord** is a length of string or other material – a **pyjama cord**; also **vocal cords**; a **chord** is a group (typically three or more) of **notes sounded together**, as guitar players will know

Cork city, Cork City Lower case C for **city**, the place where FAI club **Cork City**, upper case C, have their home ground, **Turner's Cross**. See also **Derry city, Derry City**

coronavirus, Covid-19, long-Covid Write **coronavirus** for the **virus**, formally known as **Sars-Cov-2**, that causes the **disease Covid-19**; the lingering and sometimes debilitating effects of **Covid-19** are known as **long-Covid** – lower case L and hyphenated

corpse is a **dead human body**, especially one that has been **prepared for burial or cremation**; therefore, we should write that a man out walking his dog found a **body**, not a **corpse**, in a field. See also **body (lifeless)** and **cadaver**
cortege is a **funeral procession**

cosmetic surgery, plastic surgery, reconstructive surgery
Write **cosmetic surgery** when referring to a **medical procedure** intended to **enhance a person's appearance** and **boost their self-esteem**, such as a **facelift, boob job** or **nose job**; write **plastic surgery** and **reconstructive surgery** for procedures carried out to lessen or repair **congenital abnormalities** or **deformities** caused by **burns**, other **injuries** or **illness**, such as **tumours**

cost of living, cost-of-living Families are worried about the **cost of living**, noun, no hyphens; as an adjective, with hyphens, families are worried about how **the cost-of-living crisis** will affect (not **impact**) them

Costa del Sol Always lower case **del**. Do not write **Costa del Crime**, which is far from original

cottage pie, shepherd's pie A **cottage pie** contains **beef**, while a **shepherd's pie** contains **lamb**

could of, should of, would of are always incorrect – they should be **could have, should have** and **would have**, or, in reported speech, **could've, should've** and **would've**

councillor, counsellor A **councillor serves on a council**; a **counsellor offers advice**. Do not use **Councillor** or **ClIr** as an honorific, write **Mr** or **Ms**

coup d'etat Just write **coup**

coupe is, generally, a **two-door car**. No accent on the E

couple Write the **couple are** or **were**, not the **couple is** or **was**. See **collective nouns**

court martial is a **military court procedure**, plural **courts martial**, not **court martials**. See also **marshal**

courts (honorifics) In **civil cases**, the **plaintiffs** and **defendants** always take an **honorific (Mr, Ms, Dr)**; in **criminal cases**, the **defendants** are extended the **same courtesy** (unless the editor decides otherwise) **until they are convicted**, after which they are referred to by their **surname only**. All **witnesses** take an **honorific**. For **High Court** and **Supreme Court judges** and the **President of the Circuit Court**, write **Mr** or **Ms Justice (full name)**, with subsequent references covered by **the judge**. In **circuit** and **district courts**, the **judges** are **Judge (full name)** and then **the judge**

Covid-19 See **coronavirus, Covid-19, long-Covid**

co-worker Write **colleague**, not **work colleague**

CPR is the abbreviation for **cardiopulmonary resuscitation**, never any need to write it out fully

crack is a type of **cocaine**, as we know, but there is no harm in writing **crack cocaine** at first mention and thereafter just **crack**. See also **craic**

crack down, crackdown Two words, no hyphen for the verb, and one word, no hyphen, for the noun

craic is an **enjoyable time** spent with other people or a **pleasurable conversation** – she was **great craic**, the **craic was mighty**

crash See **road traffic accident**

creche No accent

Crimea Not **the Crimea**

Criminal Assets Bureau (Cab) follows the pronounceable acronyms rule, so upper case initial (not **CAB**). Write out fully on first appearance, then use **Cab**, but never **the Cab**. See also **acronyms** and **An Garda Síochána**

cripple, crippled Insensitive and offensive when referring to a **person** with a **disability** or **injury**, so do not use in that sense

crisis Plural **crises**

criterion Plural **criteria**

critique Always a noun meaning a **review**, never a verb meaning **to review** or **criticise**
crooner We can say **Frank Sinatra** was a **crooner**, as was **Tony Bennett**, and **Michael Buble** has been known to **croon**, but **Ronan Keating**, **Niall Horan** and **Daniel O'Donnell** are **not crooners**, and **female singers never croon**

cross-dresser See **transvestite**

crucifix, crucifixion Both lower case. A **crucifix** always depicts the crucified figure of **Christ on the cross**; if there is no Christ figure, just write **cross**

CT scan is what we write – it was formerly known as **CAT scan**
culprit Avoid writing in news stories, unless quoting

curb, kerb These words are often confused. To **curb** means to restrain, as in **curb your enthusiasm**; a **kerb** is the **edge of a pavement (kerbstone)**

currant, current A **dried grape** is a **currant**, with an A, as in **currant bun**; a **current** (noun), with an E, is a **movement of air or water** in a particular direction and the **flow of electricity** in a circuit; as an adjective, it means **at this time, now**

currency (conversion) The first instance in copy of a **sum of money in a foreign currency** must be **followed by its euro equivalent in parentheses**, so £650,000 (€733,000), for example. The precise conversion in that example was €733,093, but it is unnecessary to include the 'small change'. There is generally **no need to convert all such subsequent sums** – the first should be sufficient to give readers an idea of the relative values. It is not always correct to place a sum converted to euro in a headline. For example, **James Hewitt** (the **former lover of Princess Diana**) told US television he would consider **selling her letters for £10m**. Our headline read "**Hewitt wants €16m for Diana letters**". This was **misleading** as he specifically said £10m, and that is the figure that should have appeared in the headline (the €16m conversion was in the copy and should have stayed there). See also **euro, cent (currency)**

curriculum (education) Plural **curriculums**, not **curricula**

curriculum vitae (CV) Always use the abbreviation, no need to write out fully

customer See **client, clientele, customer**

cyber attack, cyber bully(ing), cyber crime and most other **cyber** phrases are two words, no hyphen, but **cyberspace** is one word, no hyphen

cynic, sceptic A **cynic** **disbelieves**, while a **sceptic** is someone who **doubts** or **does not accept** an **opinion** or **belief** – do not write the US **skeptic** with a K

cynophobia is a **fear of dogs**. See **phobias**

czar We write **tsar**

Czech Republic is what we write (formerly **Czechoslovakia**), not **Czechia**

DDd

DAA is the all-upper case abbreviation we use for **Dublin Airport Authority**, not **daa**

dad, Dad, mum, Mum Use lower case for the common noun: "Look – there's my **dad/my mum**." Use upper case for the proper noun: "Look – there's **Dad/Mum**."

Dáil Éireann Shorten to **the Dáil**, unless quoting

Dalai Lama The 14th and current (2023) **Dalai Lama**, whose name is **Tenzin Gyatso**, is the **spiritual leader of Tibet**. See also **llama**

Dame See **Sir, Dame**

dancefloor One word, no hyphen

Danish pastry Upper case D, lower case P (Danes call Danish pastries Vienna bread)

dashcam One word, no hyphen

dashes are useful devices when used in pairs as **parentheses** and to **avoid too many commas**, but do not use more than one pair of dashes per sentence; a dash is also effective when introducing a **suspenseful** or **emphatic end** to a sentence: "**He had only one choice – to resign.**"

data We write **data** as a singular noun, so the **data is** stored on a secure server in a data centre, not the **data are** stored

date rape is an ugly phrase that risks trivialising an appalling crime, so avoid, unless quoting. See also **gang rape**

dates Our style is day of the week first, followed by month, then day of the month, then year, so **Sunday, January 1, 2023** is correct

Davison, Rosanna As the **Irish former Miss World** appears often in our publications, we should spell her surname correctly – it is **Davison**, only one D, not **Davidson**

dawdle, doddle To **dawdle** means to **move** or **do something too slowly**, often to the annoyance of others, while a **doddle** is **something that is easy to do**

daytime One word, no hyphen, but **night-time** is hyphenated

defendant See **accused, defendant, suspect**

deadlock See **stalemate**

deadnaming Always refer to a person by the name they have chosen; **deadnaming** describes the **unnecessary** and **sometimes mischievous** or **malicious** referring to someone's **previous name**. See **gender identity**

deaf mute To describe a person who **cannot hear** or **communicate orally** as **deaf mute** is widely viewed as offensive; even more offensive is **deaf and dumb**. It is acceptable to write that a person is **deaf, hard of hearing, has a hearing impairment** or **communicates with sign language** or any necessary combination of these

dearth means **shortage** – a **dearth of information** – but why write **dearth** (unless quoting) when you can write **shortage** or **lack**?

death row, death-row As a noun, two words, lower case, no hyphen; as an adjective, insert a hyphen – **death-row prisoner**

deathbed, flowerbed, sickbed, sunbed One word, no hyphen

debacle is an **ignominious failure** or **collapse**. See also **farce, fiasco**

decades Our preferred style is **the 1970s, the 1980s, the 1990s** (no apostrophe), but **the Seventies, the Eighties, the Nineties** or **the Noughties** may be used occasionally when deemed appropriate. See also **years**

decimate In its original sense, **decimate** described the **killing of one in every 10** mutinous **Roman soldiers** as a punishment for the whole group. Sticklers insist the word should not be used when we mean **destroy, greatly damage** or **kill a large amount** of something, but that battle is lost. Feel free to write, for example, that **overfishing has decimated** North Atlantic cod stocks or the **oil spill decimated** marine life

defamation is the act of **writing, saying or broadcasting untruthful things** about a person or company that are **damaging to their reputation or business**. See **libel** and **slander**

defective, deficient If something is **defective**, it is **faulty** or **flawed**; **deficient** means **incomplete** or **lacking something essential**

Defence Forces See **Irish Defence Forces**

definite, definitive If something is **definite**, it is **clearly stated** or **known for certain**, while **definitive** describes something that is **decisive, authoritative** and **reliable**

defuse, diffuse An explosives technician will attempt to **defuse a bomb** to prevent it from exploding; **diffuse** means **scattered**

degrees See **academic degrees**

Deis The acronym for **Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools** follows the pronunciation rule of upper case initial followed by lower case, so not **DEIS**

deja vu Two words, no hyphen, no accents

delusion, illusion A **delusion** is a **false belief** firmly held **despite indisputable evidence** to the contrary – a person can be said to be **deluded** or **delusional**; an **illusion** is an **act of deception** performed by an **illusionist** or a **visual misconception of reality**, such as an **optical illusion** or a **mirage**

demesne, domain, domaine A **demesne** is a **piece of land attached to a manor**, retained by the owner for their own use; **domain** is a **territory** owned or controlled by a **ruler** or **government**, also a **website domain**; a **domaine** is a **French estate** on which **wine** is **produced**

Democrat, Democratic In US politics, upper case Democrat is a noun and Democratic is an adjective, so President **Joe Biden** is a **Democrat** and a member of the **Democratic party**

denier is a **person** who **denies**, as in **climate change denier** and **Holocaust denier**

dentophobia is a **fear of dentists**. See **phobias**

dependant, dependent Young **children** are **dependants** – they are **dependent on** their parents or guardians for their sustenance, clothing, education and general wellbeing

deprived, disadvantaged A **lack of disposable income** does not necessarily equate with **deprivation** or **disadvantage**, so be careful to **avoid applying labels** to **individuals** or **communities**. The children of low-earning parents might not receive expensive Christmas presents, but if they are showered with love, encouragement and support in everything they strive to achieve, they would hardly consider themselves **deprived**. We prefer **less advantaged** to **deprived** and **disadvantaged**

derby Lower case for a **football match**, say, between **local rivals**, such as **Bohemians v Shamrock Rovers** and **Celtic v Rangers**. No need to write **local derby**

Derry, Co Derry We always refer to the city and the county as **Derry** and **Co Derry**, never **Londonderry** or **Co Londonderry**, unless quoting

Derry city Lower case C for **city**, the place where FAI club **Derry City**, upper case C for **City**, have their home ground, the **Brandywell Stadium**. See also **Cork city, Cork City**

desert, dessert, just deserts The **Sahara** is a **desert**, while **rhubarb crumble with custard** is a **dessert**; if you do something terrible and it comes back to bite you, you get your **just deserts** (with one S between the Es)

despite the fact that Four words when one will do – just write **despite**

detrimental Write **harmful** or **damaging**

developing countries is what we write, not **Third World countries** or **the Third World**

diabetes Always lower case D. There are two categories of this chronic but manageable condition, **type 1** and **type 2**, with lower case T

diagnosis identifies and **defines a disease** or a problem. The plural is **diagnoses**. See also **prognosis**

dialogue Do not write **engaged in dialogue with**, write **spoke with** (not **spoke to**) or **discussed with** instead

diarrhoea is the correct spelling

Diaspora, Irish Upper case D for **the Irish Diaspora** (**Diaspóra na nGael**), which refers to the 70 million people around the world who claim Irish ancestry, then lower case for subsequent mentions – **the diaspora**

diatribe is a **long** and **bitter, angry** or **abusive criticism** of someone or something in **speech** or **writing**

dice is the plural of **die** (one **die**, two or more **dice**), but we write **dice** as **singular and plural**

died, passed away It appears **died** is considered a dirty word, going by many colleagues' reluctance to write it, except when quoting. We must get over this aversion and write that **people die**. However, the **death of a child** is always a tragedy, and we must be sensitive to the grief of parents, so

it is considerate and respectful to write that a **child passed away**

diehard One word, no hyphen, describes someone who is **resistant to change** or **stubbornly determined** or **loyal**, but the Bruce Willis film franchise is *Die Hard*

dietitian ends with **tian**, so not **dietician**

different is an often **unnecessary adjective**. If someone is on a Mediterranean cruise, for example, they might visit seven countries, all of which are different, so no need to write **seven different countries**. If someone speaks **four languages**, it is unnecessary to write **four different languages**

different from is our style, not **different than** or **different to**

diffuse See **defuse**, **diffuse**

digitalise, **digitise** Often mixed up. To **digitalise** means to **administer digitoxin to treat a heart condition**, while **digitise** means to **transcribe data** into a digital format

dike, **dyke** With an I, **dike** is an offensive term for a **lesbian**, so do not write, unless quoting; with a Y, a **dyke** is a **wall** or **embankment** built to **prevent flooding** from the sea, a river or a lake

dilemma A **dilemma** is a situation in which someone must **choose between two**, and only two, **courses of action**, neither of which is **satisfactory**

diocese Plural is **dioceses**, adjective is **diocesan**

dire straits Not **straights**

direct debit Lower case initials, two words, no hyphen

direct provision Lower case initials, two words, no hyphen

disabled See **disabilities**

director general Lower case initials, no hyphen, as in **RTÉ director general Kevin Bakhurst**; the plural is **directors general**, not **director generals**; the same rule applies to **secretary general**. See also **Attorney General/attorney general**

disabilities As with **gender identity** and **sexuality**, all the words and phrases we use when referring to a person's **disability** must be respectful and not used to define them – there is no place for **bias**, **discrimination**, **offensiveness** or **prejudice**. Words and phrases that are **acceptable** include **disabled person**, **person with an impairment** and **wheelchair**

user; those that are **unacceptable** include **afflicted**, **deaf and dumb**, **handicapped**, **invalid**, **crippled**, **wheelchair bound**, **confined to a wheelchair**, **suffering from** and **victim of**; do not refer to a person who has lost all movement in their arms, legs and torso as a **quadriplegic** – they are a **person with quadriplegia**. If you are in any doubt about the appropriateness of a particular word or phrase, look it up in this stylebook (if we have inadvertently omitted it, ask a colleague)

disappear, **go missing**, **vanish** We write that a **person** has **disappeared** or **gone missing**, but **people do not vanish** – only a **magician** can make things (usually white rabbits) **vanish**

disapprove, **disprove** When you **disapprove** of something, you **object to it** or **consider it wrong** or **reprehensible**, while **disprove** means to **show through argument or evidence** that something is **incorrect** or **untrue**

disassemble, **dissemble** To **disassemble** is to **take something apart**, while the rarely used **dissemble** means to **conceal**

disassociate, **dissociate** Both mean the same, but we prefer the latter when we mean to **break an association**

disc, **disk** Write **disc** with a C for a **compact disc** of music and **disk** with a K for a **computer hard disk** or **disk drive**

discover We can write that **penicillin** was **discovered**, but the **body of a man** was **found** in an alleyway

discharge, **release** A **patient** is **discharged from hospital**, while a **prisoner** is **released from prison**

disc jockey No hyphen and no need to write it out fully, **DJ** will do

discreet, **discrete** If you are **discreet**, you are **tactful** and can be **trusted with a secret**; the rarely used **discrete** means **distinct**, **separate**, **set apart**

disincentivise Do not use unless quoting, write **discourage**

disinterested, **uninterested** These two have different meanings – **disinterested** means **unbiased**, **objective**, while **uninterested** means **taking no interest**

Disneyland (one word) is in California, **Disneyland Paris** used to be called **Euro Disney** and **Disney World** (two words) is in Florida

disoriented Not **disorientated**

dispatch Not **despatch**

distil, distillery If you drink **whiskey** or **other spirits**, they are **distilled** and come from a **distillery**. See also **brew, brewery**

distinct, distinctive These words are not interchangeable. Use **distinct** to describe something that is **well-defined** or **clearly different** from other things – a **Cork accent is distinct from a Dublin accent**; also, use **distinct** to mean **strong** – there is a **distinct possibility** we will miss our flight. **Distinctive** describes a quality or feature that makes someone or something **stand out** – he has a **distinctive way of walking**

dive The past tense of **dive** is **dived**, not the US **dove**

divorcee No accent. A divorced person, **male** and **female**. See also **fiance, fiancée**

DNA is the abbreviation for **deoxyribonucleic acid**, no need to write it out fully

docudrama, docusoap One word, no hyphen

dog breeds We normally use lower case for **alsatian, doberman, dachshund, jack russell, labrador** and **rottweiler**, for example, but upper case for **German shepherd, Irish wolfhound, old English sheepdog, French bulldog** and **Yorkshire terrier**. Crossbreeds and so-called **designer dogs** are lower case, even when the name is formed partly from the name of a country or nationality, such as a **maltipoo** (Maltese and poodle cross)

dole is an inelegant word; unless quoting, write **unemployment benefit**, lower case, or **jobseeker's benefit** or **allowance**, lower case initials, apostrophe before the S

domain, domaine See **demesne, domain, domaine**

doner, donor A **doner** is a **kebab**, while a **donor** gives **money** or **blood** or an **organ**. See also **kebab**

doppelganger With EL, not LE

dos and don'ts No apostrophe in **dos**

dual, duel Write **dual** with an A when you are referring to **something consisting of two identical, similar or complementary elements** – a **dual carriageway**, for example; **duel**, with an E, is a formal arranged **combat between two people**, who are usually armed with pistols or swords

duct tape Not **duck tape**

doughnuts Not **donuts**

downmarket See **upmarket, downmarket**

downriver, downstream One word, no hyphen

Down syndrome Upper case D (no apostrophe, so not **Down's**), lower case S for syndrome; never write a **Down syndrome child** – the genetic disorder should not define the person. If relevant, write a **child with Down syndrome**

Downton Abbey TV drama series, only one W, so not **Downtown**

down tools is what **electricians, plumbers** and other **tradespeople** who use tools might do when they go on strike; do not use this phrase for striking **Luas drivers** or **air traffic controllers** – if they do not use tools, they cannot down them

down under is a term Australians rarely use, so is best avoided

draft, draught Write **draft** when referring to a **document**, and **draught** for a **current of air** or **beer on tap**

drama unfolded, the The only place this phrase should appear, if at all, is in **film** or **theatre reviews**

draught See **draft, draught**

dreamed, dreamt We prefer **dreamt** for the past tense of **dream**

dressing room Two words, no hyphen

drier, dryer With an I, **drier** is a comparative adjective meaning **more dry**; with a Y, **dryer** is a noun – **hairdryer, tumble dryer**

driver's licence Not **driving licence**, and not **license**

drought should be used only in a **meteorological sense** to refer to a **prolonged period** when there is **little or no rain**. Do not use **drought** as another word for **lack** or **shortage** – we once read about a **drought of taxis** in Dublin

due to the fact that Five words when one will do – just write **because**

Dunnes Stores No apostrophe in **Dunnes**. See also **SuperValu** and **Tesco**

duo, trio, quartet Use only when referring to **musicians**

duty-free Noun and adjective, with a hyphen, for the shop in the airport and the goods exempt from payment of duty that it sells, but **Dubai Duty Free Irish Derby** horseracing festival

dwarf Plural **dwarves**, not **dwarfs**, despite what Snow White says. See also **midget**, **dwarf**

dyslexia is a symptom, not a cause, of having **difficulties with words**. Do not call someone **a dyslexic** or write that they **suffer from dyslexia** or, even worse, that they are a **dyslexia victim**. It is OK to write someone **has dyslexia** or **is dyslexic**. Film director **Steven Spielberg** is dyslexic

E Ee

each and every Three words when one will do. Write **each** or **every**, not both

each other, one another These two are interchangeable, but we prefer **each other**

early hours of yesterday morning Just write **early yesterday**

earned Not **earnt**

earring One word, no hyphen, double R

earth, Earth Lower case **earth** for **soil**, upper case **Earth** for the **planet**. Figuratively, **earth** is lower case, as in: "What on **earth** are you doing here?"

earthquake In a headline where space is tight, **quake** is OK

EastEnders BBC TV soap opera – one word, no hyphen, two upper case Es

eastern Europe Lower case E for **eastern**; the same rule applies to **western, northern** and **southern**

eatable, edible Food that is generally **tasty** and **enjoyable** can be described as **eatable**, but it is hardly a word to use in a restaurant review; food that is **safe to eat**, but not necessarily enjoyable, is **edible**

eatery is a silly word for a **restaurant** – we do not call a **pub** a **drinkery**

eBay is how we write the name of the **multinational e-commerce company** within a sentence, but **Ebay** is OK at the start of a sentence

ebook is one word, no hyphen, but hyphenate **e-cigarette, e-commerce, e-learning, e-petition, e-reader, e-ticket**

E coli is short for the **Escherichia coli** bacterium (it is not a virus), but there is never any need to write it out fully

economic, economical Use **economic** as an adjective to mean related to **trade, industry** or **finance** – an **economic forecast**; something that is **economical** is **efficient** or **resourceful** – solar panels are expensive to install, but are **economical in the long run**; if someone is **economical with the truth**, they are **lying** or **withholding information**

ecstasy Not **ecstasy**. Lower case, refers to a **state of rapture** and is the common name for the **illegal drug MDMA**

eerie, eyrie Write **eerie** when you mean **creepy** or **spooky** or **weird**; an **eyrie** is an **eagle's nest**

effect as a noun means **result, consequence** or **outcome** – the burglary had a **terrible effect** on her sense of security; as a verb, **effect** means to **bring about** or **accomplish** or **carry out** – firefighters **effected an entrance** to the burning building (which we would never write). See also **affect**

eg is short for the Latin **exempli gratia**, meaning **for example**, but should appear in copy only when quoting. See also **et al, etc** and **ie**

egoist, egotist An **egoist**, with one T, is a **selfish person** who **puts their own interests first**, while an **egotist**, with two Ts, is someone with an **over-inflated sense of their own importance** – a **bighead**

Eiffel Tower Two Fs and one L

either means **one or the other** and refers to **only two** people, things or options, so "You can choose **either beef or salmon**" is correct, while "You can choose **either beef, salmon or chicken**" is incorrect. To complicate things, **either** also means **both**, as in "There's a bookie's shop at **either end of the street**". See also **neither**

elder, eldest These words mean **older** and **oldest**, but apply only to **people**, not **things** – my **elder brother**, my **eldest sister**

elderly Generally, write **older people** for those aged **65 to 74**; someone over **75** is elderly

electric, electrical, electronic All three words are adjectives. Use **electric** in front of specific nouns, so **electric toothbrush, electric lawnmower, electric cooker** (but **electricity bill**); use **electrical** more generally, as in **electrical appliances, electrical equipment**; write **electronic** to describe a device that uses **microchips** and other **small parts**, such as a **computer**

electrocardiogram (ECG) is a non-invasive test to check the electrical activity and rhythm of the heart, no need to write out fully

electrocuted If someone is **electrocuted**, by accident or state-sanctioned execution (US, **in the electric chair**), they die. If someone receives an **electric shock**, it could be as **harmless** as a **zap of static** from a door handle; if the shock comes from **contact with a live electrical current**, it could result in **localised or extensive burns** or **cardiac arrest** and might be **life-threatening** or **fatal**, depending on the strength

of the current, duration of contact and the victim's health. See also **drowned** and **strangled**

elegy, eulogy Do not mix these up when reporting on a funeral service. An **elegy** is a **poem of mourning**, while a **eulogy** is a **speech of praise**

elicit means to **draw out, obtain, attract** – he tried to **elicit sympathy** with his sob story. See also **illicit**

elite Overused adjective, as in the **elite Garda Emergency Response Unit**, but the **elite Blackrock College** is just about OK

ellipsis (...) has two main uses in our writing: to **indicate an omission** and to **indicate a trailing off of thought**. Do not use to fill out a headline. The plural is **ellipses**

El Niño, La Niña, mañana Rare examples where it is our style to insert the Spanish **tilde** above an N, which changes its sound to the **NI** in **onion** and the **GN** in **lasagne**

elude means to **avoid** or **evade** something or someone. See also **allude, refer**

email, emailed, emailing One word, no hyphen

embargo See **boycott, embargo** and **sanctions**

embarrassed Double R and double S, unlike **harassed**, which has one R and double S

embassy Always lower case – the **Ukrainian embassy** in Dublin, the **Irish embassy** in London. See also **ambassador, consul** and **papal nuncio, nunciature**

embedded Not **imbedded**

Emergency, the was the **state of emergency** that existed in Ireland during **World War II** (1939-1945) when the country remained ostensibly neutral

emigrate, emigrant, emigre To **emigrate** generally means to **voluntarily leave** your native country to settle in another, which makes you an **emigrant**; an **emigre** is **forced to leave** their native country for political reasons. See also **immigrate, immigrant** and **migrant, migrate**

eminent, imminent Write **eminent** when you mean **distinguished** (an **eminent scientist**) or **admirable** (**eminent good taste**); write **imminent** for **soon, impending** – the **imminent arrival** at Connolly Station of the 16.05 Enterprise service from Belfast

encyclopaedia, encyclopaedic Note the AE after the P. Do not write the US **encyclopedia**, and avoid the clichéd **walking encyclopaedia**

end result is tautologous, just write **result**

enormity A commonly misused word. It does not refer to **great size** (that is **immensity**), it means **great evil** or **wickedness**

enquire, inquire Both words mean the same – to **ask** – and from them come **enquiry** (casual) and **inquiry** (official). Our style is to write **inquire** and **inquiry** in all instances – **gardaí have launched an inquiry**, they are making **door-to-door inquiries**

enrol, enrolment One L, but double L in **enrolling**

en route Not **on route**

en suite Two words, no hyphen

ensure means to **make certain**. See also **assure** and **insure**

envelop, envelope To **envelop**, verb, no final E, means to **wrap** or **enclose**; an **envelope**, final E, is a piece of **stationery**

epicentre is the point **on the Earth's surface** or the **ocean's surface** vertically above the origin of an **earthquake** or **underground nuclear explosion**; it is incorrect to write that the epicentre was **7km below ground** – that subterranean location is called the **hypocentre**

epidemic is the occurrence of a particular **disease** in a **large number of people** in a **community** or **region** at the **same time**. See also **pandemic**

epileptic Always an adjective, never a noun. A person is not an **epileptic**, although they may experience an **epileptic seizure** (not an **epileptic fit**). The condition is **epilepsy**

epinephrine autoinjector (EpiPen) is a device for injecting **epinephrine (adrenaline)**, most often used for the emergency treatment of **anaphylaxis**, but there is never any need to write out fully; shorten to **EpiPen**, one word, no hyphen, upper case E and P

epitaph An **epitaph** is an **inscription**, often in verse, sometimes humorous, written on a **tombstone** in memory of the deceased. The **epitaph** beneath the Celtic cross that marks the grave of comedian **Spike Milligan** (1918-2002) in Saint Thomas the Martyr churchyard in Winchelsea, Sussex, reads: "I told you I was sick."

epithet An **epithet** is a **nickname** or **descriptive term** added to a person's name – for example, Vlad the Impaler, Mad King George III, The Boss (Bruce Springsteen), Piano Man (Billy Joel), The Liberator (Daniel O'Connell)

equator, the Lower case. The **imaginary line around Earth** at **zero degrees latitude**, halfway between the North Pole and the South Pole, that divides the planet into the northern hemisphere and the southern hemisphere. The distance around Earth (the circumference) at the equator is 40,075km

escalate, escalator The verb **escalate** means to **grow** or **get worse**; an **escalator** is a **moving staircase**

escapee, escaper Someone who escapes from prison is an **escaper**, not an **escapee**, just as someone who reads the *Sunday Independent* is a **reader**, not a **readee**

Eskimo is a **language** spoken in Greenland and parts of Canada, Alaska and Siberia by **Inuit people** – never refer to them as **Eskimos**. See **race, ethnicity, religion, nationality**

especially, specially Write **especially** when you mean **particularly** – I **especially enjoy reading** TV critic Pat Stacey's column in *The Herald*; Billy Keane's column in the *Irish Independent* is enjoyed by readers throughout the country, but **especially in his native Kerry**. Write **specially** when you mean for a **special reason**

espresso Not **expresso**

ESRI is the abbreviation of the (Irish) **Economic and Social Research Institute**, but no need to write out fully

estimate Do not write **guesstimate**

et al is short for the Latin **et alia**, meaning **and others** (**people**, not **things**), but use only when quoting. See also **eg, etc** and **ie**

etc is short for the Latin **et cetera**, meaning **and other [similar] things**, but should appear in copy only when quoting. See also **eg, et al** and **ie**

ethnicity See **race, ethnicity, religion, nationality**

eulogy See **elegy, eulogy**

euro, cent (currency) Always lower case, plural **euro**, not **euros**, and plural **cent**, not (US) **cents**; write **€4.25**, not **€4.25c**, and **20c**, not **20 cent**; in stories concerning seizures of drugs, for example, write **€7m of drugs**, not **€7m worth of drugs**

EuroMillions One word, upper case E and M, no hyphen

Euro MP (MEP) Upper case **Euro** (there are **705 Euro MPs**) and abbreviate to **MEP**, no need to write **Member of the European Parliament**

European arrest warrant Lower case for **arrest** and **warrant**. Write out fully at first mention, then refer to it as **the warrant**; do not abbreviate to **EAW**, which is meaningless to most people

European Commission Write out fully at first mention, then refer to it as **the commission**; do not abbreviate to **EC** in copy or headlines

European Parliament, the has its official seat in **Strasbourg, France**, while the main offices of the 705 MEPs are in **Brussels, Belgium**

European Union (EU), the consists of 27 member states. They are **Austria** (capital Vienna), **Belgium** (Brussels), **Bulgaria** (Sofia), **Croatia** (Zagreb), **Cyprus** (Nicosia), **Czech Republic** (Prague), **Denmark** (Copenhagen), **Estonia** (Tallinn), **Finland** (Helsinki), **France** (Paris), **Germany** (Berlin), **Greece** (Athens), **Hungary** (Budapest), **Ireland** (Dublin), **Italy** (Rome), **Latvia** (Riga), **Lithuania** (Vilnius), **Luxembourg** (Luxembourg), **Malta** (Valletta), **Netherlands** (Amsterdam, but the seat of government is The Hague), **Poland** (Warsaw), **Portugal** (Lisbon), **Romania** (Bucharest), **Slovakia** (Bratislava), **Slovenia** (Ljubljana), **Spain** (Madrid) and **Sweden** (Stockholm). The EU has seven main administrative bodies – the **European Parliament**, the **European Council**, the **Council of the European Union**, the **European Commission**, the **Court of Justice of the European Union**, the **European Central Bank** and the **European Court of Auditors**. For more information, see the official EU website, european-union.europa.eu

Euros, the Upper case, short for the **Uefa European Football Championship** (not **Championships**), no need to write out fully

Eurosceptic One word, upper case initial, no hyphen. **Nigel Farage** is perhaps the best-known **Eurosceptic**

eurozone One word, lower case, no hyphen. Refers to the **20 European Union member states** that have the **euro** as their **national currency**. They are **Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia** and **Spain**

euthanasia is a cold and clinical word – we prefer the more dignified and respectful **assisted dying**; never write **mercy killing**, which is insensitive; if a **vicious dog** attacks and

injures a person, the animal might be **destroyed** or **put down** – do not write that it was **euthanised**

evacuate Common usage allows us to write that a **place was evacuated** of people and **people were evacuated** from a place

every day, everyday Write **every day**, two words, no hyphen, when you mean **each day, daily**; use **everyday**, one word, no hyphen, for **commonplace** or **usual** – an **everyday occurrence**

every one, everyone Write **every one**, two words, no hyphen, when you mean **each**; use **everyone**, one word, no hyphen, when you mean **everybody**

every parent's worst nightmare Do not use this clichéd phrase, unless quoting

evoke, invoke To **evoke** generally means to **call up a memory** or **feeling**, while **invoke** means to **appeal to a deity** for help, **put a law or regulation into use (invoke a disciplinary procedure)** or **summon spirits** or **demons**

exams Write **Junior Cert** and **Leaving Cert**, not **Certificate**

exceptional, exceptionable Write **exceptional** when you mean **above average** or **extraordinary**; if you take **exception to something**, it is **exceptionable**, which means **objectionable**

Exchequer, the Proper noun, so upper case E for **the Exchequer**, but lower case as an adjective – Finance Minister Michael McGrath announced an **exchequer surplus**

exclamation mark (!) Fine in a quoted exclamation, such as **"Oh, my God!"** Avoid using in narrative copy to **emphasise a point** or suggest something is **funny** or **shocking**; never use an exclamation mark in a **headline**. The exclamation mark is an **only child**, so when it appears, it **appears alone**

execution is the carrying out of a **legally authorised death sentence**; gangsters and terrorists do not **execute** their victims, they **murder** them; never write that someone was **murdered execution-style**

executor, testator An **executor**, whose name you write in your will, is the **person** you wish to **manage (execute) your affairs after your death**; the **person** who **makes a will** in which they set out their wishes is the **testator**

exercise, exorcise To **exercise**, call in to the **gym**; to **exorcise**, call **Ghostbusters**

exhausting, exhaustive If something is **exhausting**, it is **tiring**; write **exhaustive** to mean **complete, comprehensive** or **thorough** – an **exhaustive study**, an **exhaustive search**

expat One word, no hyphen. Short for **expatriate** (never **expatriot**), a **person who lives** and perhaps works in or has retired to a foreign country

expert Before describing someone as an **expert**, ask yourself if they live up to the billing

exposé is one of the few words where an **accent** is OK (in this instance, to avoid confusion with **expose**)

extra-curricular Hyphenated

extrovert Not **extravert**

eyes, eyeing Do not write **eyes** or **eyeing** when you mean **considers** or **considering**, as in the headline **"Elon Musk eyeing Twitter"**

eyewitness One word, no hyphen, but just write **witness**

eyrie See **eerie, eyrie**

FFf

facade No cedilla (ç) under the C. **Facade** refers only to the **front of a building**; the word also describes a **deceptive appearance**

face-to-face is hyphenated in all instances

Facebook (FB) No need to introduce it as **the social networking site** – everyone knows what Facebook is; however, to avoid repeating the name too often in copy, we can alternately write **the site**. The abbreviation **FB** can be used, at a push, in a single-column headline where space is tight, but is best avoided; do not write **FB** in copy. **Facebook**, like **Instagram**, is a subsidiary of **Meta**, of which **Mark Zuckerberg** is the CEO

facelift One word, no hyphen

fadas are **always used in all copy and headlines**. To insert a fada in lower case, use Alt Gr + letter (upper case is Alt Gr + Shift + letter). Always check how the names of, say, politicians or TV personalities are spelled – Labour TD **Aodhán Ó Riordáin**, RTÉ news reader **Sharon Ní Bheoláin**, presenter **Hector Ó hEochagáin**, GAA commentator **Mícheál Ó Muircheartaigh**. If unsure of the spelling of Irish words containing fadas, consult the English-Irish-English dictionary at www.focloir.ie

Fahrenheit, Celsius, centigrade See **temperature**

fairy tale, fairy-tale Two words, no hyphen, for the noun – the story of **Cinderella** is a **fairy tale**; as an adjective, hyphenate – **fairy-tale character, fairy-tale ending**, but not the clichéd **fairy-tale wedding**, unless quoting

famed, famous If someone or something is **famed** or **famous**, there is no need to describe them or it as such

familiarity, forenames Do not refer to someone by their **forename** (except **children** and **teenagers**) in news reporting – use a person's **honorific** and **surname**. In the case of people in **showbusiness**, drop the honorific and write, for example, **Ed Sheeran** at first mention, and thereafter **Sheeran**, not **Ed** or **Mr Sheeran**. See also **honorifics**

family We write the **family are/were**, not the **family is/was**

farce, fiasco These two words are largely synonymous and describe a **ludicrous** and **embarrassing situation** – something that **went badly wrong**. Use **farce** when a **degree of humour** is involved and **fiasco** when it is **far from funny**. See also **debacle**

far-sighted, near-sighted, short-sighted are hyphenated, but **partially sighted** is two words, no hyphen

farther, further Write **farther** when referring to **distance** and **further** when you mean **additional**, as in **further job cuts**

fatal, fatalities As an adjective, **fatal** is OK – a **fatal car crash**; but write **deaths** instead of **fatalities**

father/mother of three (hyphens) Our style is to write **Father-of-three Kevin Browne** (hyphenated when used as an adjective before the name); his wife is **Catherine Browne, a mother of three** (no hyphens when used as a noun)

Father's Day Apostrophe before the S; same with **Mother's Day**

fauna, flora Easy enough to remember the difference. **Fauna** contains an N, as does **animals**, to which it refers, while **flora** is one letter short of **floral** and refers to **flowers, plants** and **trees**

fazed (unfazed), phased Write **fazed** to mean **daunted, disturbed** or **overwhelmed** (the opposite is **unfazed**); **phased** means **in phases** or **in stages**. We have seen **unphased** used mistakenly for **unfazed**

fed up with Not **fed up of**

fell pregnant Write **became pregnant**

female See **woman, women**

female genital mutilation (FGM) Never write **female circumcision**

ferment, foment A **winemaker ferments grapes**, while a **troublemaker foments (instigates, incites) a riot**

fewer, less Write **fewer** to mean smaller in **number**, so **fewer coins, fewer chances**; write **less** to mean smaller in **quantity** or **degree** – **less money, less harmful**

fiance, fiancée Write **fiance** with one E, no accent, for a **male**, and **fiancée** with two Es, no accent, for a **female** (there is **one E in male** and **two Es in female**). See also **divorcee**

fiasco See **farce, fiasco**

fictional, fictitious Related words and often interchangeable, but the difference is worth noting. **Fictional** refers to **books (fiction)** and their (usually) **invented** characters, places and scenarios, while **fictitious** means **fabricated** or **false**, sometimes in the sense of **concealing the truth**

Fifa Pronounceable acronym for international football's governing body, the **Federation Internationale de Football Association**, but no need to write out fully. See also **Uefa**

filmmaker One word, no hyphen

film titles are written in italics in copy – *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Banshees of Inisherin*; in headlines or captions, where we never use italics, use single inverted commas – 'The Wizard of Oz', 'The Banshees of Inisherin'

fire brigade is a **corps of firefighters**, such as **Dublin Fire Brigade**; do not write **fire brigade** when you mean **fire engine** or **fire tender**

firefighter(s) One word, no hyphen; never **fireman** or **firemen**

first aid, first-aid Two words, no hyphen as a noun – the paramedic **administered first aid**; hyphenated as an adjective – **first-aid box**

First World War, Second World War Our style is to write **World War I, World War II**

flair, flare You can wear **flares (wide-bottomed trousers)** with **flair (stylishness)**, but the fashion police might send up a **distress flare** if they spot you

flammable is what we write, not **inflammable** (they mean the same thing); the opposite is **non-flammable**

flat-screen TV Hyphenated, but write **big-screen TV**

flaunt, flout If you've got it, **flaunt it (show it off)**, as long as you do not **flout (break)** the law

flier, flyer A **flier** is a **pamphlet**, while a **flyer** is a person in an **aeroplane** – a **frequent flyer**, for example

flight attendant See **cabin attendant, cabin crew**

flotsam, jetsam Write **flotsam** for **cargo** or **wreckage** found floating in the sea; **jetsam** is stuff that has been **thrown overboard (jettisoned)**

flounder, founder To **flounder** means to **flail helplessly**, as a non-swimmer might do in deep water; as a noun, it is a **bottom-feeding flatfish**; write **founder** when you mean to **sink**, like a **ship**, and **foundered (failed)** to describe a **company** that went out of business

flout See **flaunt**

flu is short for **influenza**, no need to write out fully

flyer See **flier**

focus, focused, focusing Always one S

foetus, foetal Note the OE

following Straightforward enough when we mean **after**, but confusion creeps in when we write about a **fatal explosion**, for example. We might read that three people were **killed following** a gas explosion, but that is wrong because people are more likely to be **killed in** a gas explosion or **killed when** [not **after**] a gas tank exploded, because an explosion usually results in **instant death**. If a survivor of an explosion **dies later** of their injuries, we should explain that

foment See **ferment**

foot and mouth disease Lower case, no hyphens

forebear, forebear To **forebear** means to **refrain**, but write only when quoting; a **forebear** is an **ancestor**. See also **ancestor**

forced marriage A person has the right to choose whom they marry, when they marry and if they marry; **forced marriage** happens when a person is subjected to **threats, physical pressure** (beatings, sexual violence) or **psychological or emotional pressure** (made to feel they are bringing shame on their family) if they do not marry; while most victims are female, men are victims too. See also **arranged marriage** and **'honour' killing**

forego, forgo Write **forego** when you mean **go before**; write **forgo** to mean **go without, abstain, refrain**

forensics Feel free to describe scene-of-crime **garda technicians** in **white overalls** as **forensics officers (forensics)** with a final S)

for ever, forever Both mean **for all time**, but we prefer **for ever**, two words, no hyphen

Formula One (F1) Write out fully at first mention in copy, then use the abbreviation; **F1** is fine in headlines and standfirsts

fortuitous, fortunate Write **fortuitous** when you mean **by chance** or **not planned**; use **fortunate** for **lucky**

forward slash (/) The two acceptable uses are to represent the word **and**, as in a *Sunday Independent/Ireland* **Thinks** opinion poll, and to represent the Latin **cum**, meaning **also used as** or **combined with**, as in **kitchen/office** and **player/manager**, although in both uses a hyphen works just as well. Never use a **backslash (\)**, which is seen mostly in **mathematics** and **computing**

foul, fowl A football player might **commit a foul** against an opponent; **foul** also means **dirty, stinking** or **offensive**; a **fowl** is a **bird** usually kept for its eggs or flesh

fractions Always hyphenated, so write **two-thirds, three-quarters, two-and-a-half, half-a-kilometre** and so on

Frankenstein is the fictional scientist (**Dr Victor von Frankenstein**) who created a monster, which has no name, so we write **Frankenstein's monster**

Freedom of Information (FoI) Write out fully at first mention, then abbreviate to **FoI**, with lower case O, not **FOI**

fresh Write **new** instead, unless quoting or when referring to **fruit, vegetables** or **fish**

front benches (parliamentary) Two words, no hyphen, for the **seats** in the debating chamber occupied by **frontbenchers** (one word, no hyphen) – TDs who are **office-holders** in the governing or opposition parties; **frontbench** (one word, no hyphen) is the adjective, as in an assured **frontbench performer**. See also **back benches (parliamentary)**

front line, frontline Two words as a noun – nurses **worked on the front line** during the Covid pandemic; one word for the adjective – **frontline health workers**

fuels is overused in headlines, as in “Electricity price increase **fuels anger** among householders”. Write “Electricity price increase **angers** householders” (**fuelled** and **fuelling** have double L). See also **sparks** and **triggers**

fulfil Note the single final L, but **fulfilled** and **fulfilling** contain double L

fulsome does not mean **plentiful** or **abundant** or **superlative**; it usually appears before **praise**, but **fulsome praise** is no praise at all, because **fulsome** means **excessive, ingratiating, insincere** and **unctuous**. See also **noisome**

fundraiser, fundraising Noun and adjective, one word, no hyphen. Do not use **fundraise** as a verb – write **raise funds**

fungus Plural is **fungi**. The **wild dolphin** that disappeared from the waters off Dingle, Co Kerry, was named **Fungi**

further See **farther, further**

GGg

Gaddafi, Muammar Former leader of **Libya**, usually referred to as **Colonel Gaddafi**, who was killed in Sirte, Libya, by rebel forces in October 2011

Gaelic Upper case. The name of the **Scottish language** that is spoken by roughly 60,000 people in the Highlands, Skye, the Western Isles and, to a lesser extent, the Argyll Islands (write **Irish** and **Welsh**, not **Gaelic**, for the native languages of Ireland and Wales). Be wary of a spellchecker sucker punch as E and R are next to each other on the keyboard – we have seen **Garlic games** (but not yet **Gaelic bread**). See also **soccer, football**

gaff, gaffe A **gaff** is a **hook**, usually on the end of a pole, for pulling fish from the water, and slang for **house** or **apartment**; to **blow the gaff** means to **give away a secret**; a **gaffe** with a final E is a **blunder**

gambit is an **opening strategy** that involves a degree of sacrifice or concession, so **opening gambit** is tautologous

gamble, gambler, gambol A **gambler** (also known as a **punter**) places **bets** on horse races or football matches, for example, or generally **takes a risk** – they **gamble**; social media sites are full of photos and videos of **lambs gambolling** – **running** or **jumping** in a **playful way**

gang rape is an ugly phrase, so avoid, unless quoting

garda, gardaí See **An Garda Síochána**

garda station Always lower case initials, so **Store Street garda station**, not **Store Street Garda Station**

gas The plural noun is **gases**, with a single S in the middle; the past tense verb is **gassed**, with double S

gastropub One word

gatecrash, gatecrasher One word, no hyphen

gavel, gravel A **gavel** is a **little hammer**, as used by an auctioneer or a judge; **gravel** is **crushed stone**

gay Do not refer to someone as a **gay**, but **John is gay** is OK. See **out (has come out), outed** and **sexuality**

gay marriage We write **same-sex marriage**. See **sexuality**

GDP, GNP Abbreviations of **gross domestic product** and **gross national product**, no need to write out fully

gender identity In a Fox News interview in 2017, **Caitlyn Jenner** said: “Sexuality is who you choose to go to bed with, gender is who you go to bed as.” As with **sexuality**, all the words and phrases we use when referring to a person’s **gender identity** must be positive and respectful – there is no place for **jokes, bias, discrimination, offensiveness** or **prejudice**. If you are in any doubt about the appropriateness of a particular word or phrase, look it up in this stylebook (if we have inadvertently omitted it, ask a colleague)

general election Lower case in all instances

general public Just write **public**

Generation Alpha refers to people **born since 2012 and up to 2024**; write **Generation X** for people **born between 1965 and 1980**; use **Generation Y**, better known as **millennials**, for people **born between 1981 and 1996**; write **Generation Z** for people **born between 1997 and 2012**

geriatrics is a **branch of medicine** that cares for **elderly people**. Never describe an elderly person as **geriatric**

ghetto Plural is **ghettos**, not **ghettoes**

gif is short for **graphics interchange format**

gift is always a noun, never a verb – we receive or give something as a **gift**, we do not **gift something** to someone

gig Use informally for a **musical, comedy** or other **performance event**. We once read that the **RTÉ Concert Orchestra** would be **playing a gig** in the National Concert Hall – the conductor and musicians would not have been amused

gig-goer Hyphenated because **gigger** looks strange. See also **-goer**

girl, boy is a child or young person aged **under 18**

girl band Two words, no hyphen, same with **boy band**

glamour Noun, but the adjective is **glamorous**

glisten, glister, glitter The verb **glisten** means to give off a **lustrous** or **sparkling reflection**, as from the surface of **water** or **polished metal**; in Act II, Scene 7 of *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare used an older version of **glisten** when he wrote “**all that glisters is not gold**”, meaning something that appears shiny and alluring is not necessarily of great value or importance; as a verb, **glitter** means to **shine with a sparkling light**, and the noun describes the tiny pieces of **reflective material** used to decorate **Christmas baubles**

goat's cheese Apostrophe before the S

gobbledegook E, not Y, after the D, so not **gobbledygook**

gobsmacked is an inelegant word, so avoid, unless quoting

God, god Upper case **God** for the **supreme deity** in the Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths, but lower case when referring to a **god** or, say, the Greek and Roman **gods**

going forward Do not write unless quoting

go-kart, go-karting Hyphenated

gong is often written instead of **medal** or **award**, which we can live with when it is at the 'lower' end of the scale; do not describe the **Gold Scott Medal** as a gong – it is awarded, sometimes posthumously, to garda officers for exceptional courage and heroism

Good Friday Agreement is what we write, with upper case initials, in preference to **Belfast Agreement**, unless quoting. After first mention, write lower case **the agreement**, but do not use the abbreviation **GFA**

Google, google Upper case for the noun and adjective – **tech company Google** and **Google search**; use lowercase for the verb: "I wasn't sure, so **I googled it.**"

gorilla is an **ape**. See also **guerrilla**

go-slow, go slow The noun is **go-slow**, hyphenated, and is a form of industrial action during a dispute; **go slow**, two words, no hyphen, is the verb

got, gotten The only time **gotten** should appear in copy is when we write **ill-gotten gains**, and then only when quoting. For North Americans, **gotten** is an acceptable past participle of get – "I have **gotten used to it.**" In Irish English we write "I have **got used to it.**" **Got** is often unnecessary and can usually be dropped – **I have three brothers** is more elegant than **I have got three brothers**

gothic Always lower case for the **architectural style**

Goths, goths The Roman empire was invaded by the **Germanic tribe** known as **Goths**, upper case; the **young people** with pale faces who wear **dark eye make-up** and **lipstick** and **black clothes** and gather outside Belfast City Hall are **goths**, lower case

gourmand, gourmet Be careful – a **gourmand** is a **glutton**, while a **gourmet** is a **connoisseur** of fine food

Government (Irish) Only the serving **Government** is upper case; use lower case for previous governments (**Charles Haughey's government**) and those of other countries (**Rishi Sunak's government**) and when applied as an adjective – **government minister, government policy**. See also **Cabinet (Irish), Coalition, the (Irish Government), Government ministers (Irish)** and **State (Irish)**

Government ministers (Irish) We write **Housing Minister** (not **Minister for Housing**) **Darragh O'Brien** and **Education Minister** (not **Minister for Education**) **Norma Foley**. With **unwieldy portfolios**, such as the **Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media**, we refer to the office holder at first mention as **Tourism Minister** or **Media Minister Catherine Martin**, depending on the subject of the story. In subsequent mentions, we write **the minister** (lower case) or **Ms Martin**, not **the Minister** (upper case) or **Minister Martin**. Write **Taoiseach Leo Varadkar** and **Tánaiste Micheál Martin** at first mention, followed by **the Taoiseach** and **the Tánaiste**, which are interchangeable with, respectively, **Mr Varadkar** and **Mr Martin**. All **ministers of state** are **junior ministers**, so we would write, for example, **junior education minister Josepha Madigan** and **junior health minister Hildegard Naughton**, with the title in lower case. The Government's official website is www.gov.ie

graceful, gracious are adjectives. **Graceful** means **elegant** in form or movement, while **gracious** means **courteous, generous, polite**

graffiti The Italian speakers among us know **graffiti** is the plural of **graffito**, but for singular and plural we always write **graffiti**

gram Not **gramme**. See **measurements and weights**

grandad, great-grandad One D after the N in **grandad**, and **great-grandad** is hyphenated (or two words, no hyphen if you are saying your grandad is a great guy); **granddaughter** is one word, no hyphen, with double D

Grand Prix Plural **Grands Prix**

grassroots One word, no hyphen

Great Britain (GB) See **United Kingdom (UK), Britain, Great Britain (GB)**

Green, Greens, green Upper case for the **Green Party** (also the **Greens**), but lower case for the adjective – **green issues, green agenda**

grenade is generally a **small explosive weapon** launched by hand, so usually no need to write **hand grenade**, unless quoting, but **rocket-propelled grenade (RPG)** is hyphenated

grievous One l, so not **grievious**

grill, grille An **oven** has a **grill**, a **car** has a **grille**. Detectives do not **grill suspects**, they **question** them, or, at a push in a headline, they **quiz** them

grisly, gristly, grizzled, grizzly Something that is **grisly** is **gruesome** (avoid using these two cliched adjectives, especially in crime stories); **meat containing cartilage**, such as oxtail, is **gristly**; a beard **streaked with grey** is **grizzled**; a **grizzly** is a bear

groundbreaking One word, no hyphen

Ground Zero Upper case initials for the former site in **New York** of the **World Trade Centre** (not **Center**), whose **Twin Towers** collapsed as a result of the **terrorist attacks** of September 11, 2001, a date known as **9/11**

guerrilla is a person who takes part in **guerrilla warfare**. Note the double R and double L. See also **gorilla**

guesstimate is a contradictory hybrid of **guess** and **estimate**. An **estimate** is based on available information, while a **guesstimate** is based on conjecture, so just write **guess** or **estimate**

guest is always a noun, as in **hotel guest**. Never use as a verb – write Imelda May **will be a guest** or **will appear** on *The Late Late Show*. Do not write Imelda May **will guest** on *The Late Late Show*

guesthouse One word, no hyphen

Guinness Book of Records is now called **Guinness World Records**

gushed Please refrain from writing **she gushed** instead of **she said**. See Appendix Quotes at end of section Q

Gypsies, Travellers, Roma Upper case initials in all instances. **Gypsy** starts with GY, not GI, and there is no need to be squeamish – **Traveller groups** in **England, Scotland** and **Wales** call themselves **Gypsies**; on the **island of Ireland**, the correct terms are **Travellers** and **members of the Travelling community**; we write **Roma** when referring to more **recent immigrants from Europe**, to whom the term **Gypsy** is **offensive**

HHh

habeas corpus is a detained person's right to be brought before a court or a judge to determine if their detention is justified

haemorrhage, haemorrhaging Best avoided, except in the medical sense (but even then there is nothing wrong with writing **bleed** or **bleeding** instead)

haggle See **barter, haggle**

hails from Write **is from** or **comes from**, unless quoting

hairbrush, haircut, hairdresser, hairdryer, hairstyle are all one word, no hyphen, but **hair salon** is two words, no hyphen

haka is a **welcome** or **challenge** most commonly performed before rugby matches by the **New Zealand All Blacks** – it is not a **Maori war dance**

halal is the Arabic word for **permissible**, and commonly describes **meat from animals** and **poultry** that have been **slaughtered** according to **Islamic law** as defined in the Koran. The Islamic manner of slaughtering involves the use of a **urgically sharp knife** to cut through the **jugular vein, carotid artery** and **windpipe**, traditionally without first stunning, and all the **blood is drained** from the carcass. See also **kosher**

hale and hearty is cliched, so do not use, unless quoting

half, halve, halves, halving No hyphen when **half** is used as an adverb – the flags flew at **half mast**; hyphenate when used as an adjective – **half-cut**; the verb **halve (halved, halving)** means to **reduce by half** or **divide into halves** (it is tautologous to write **two halves**)

half past six No hyphen, same with **quarter past nine** and **quarter to four** and so on

half-time, halftime Hyphenate when used as an adjective – **the half-time score**; the noun is one word, no hyphen – **the score at halftime**

halfway One word, no hyphen

hallelujah, alleluia Both words mean the same – **praise the Lord** – and come from the ancient **Hebrew** language. In the **Jewish faith**, it is written as **hallelujah**, while **Christians** write **alleluia**. The Leonard Cohen song released in 1984 is *Hallelujah*

Halloween No apostrophe, so never **Hallowe'en**

handbook, handbuilt, handheld, handmade One word, no hyphen

handicap, handicapped These words should only be used in the context of horse racing and golf, for example; they should never be used to refer to people with **disabilities** or **learning difficulties**. See **disabilities**

handout, hand out The noun, **a handout**, is one word; the verb, **hand out**, is two words, no hyphen

hangar, hanger A **hangar** is a **shed for aircraft**, while a **hanger** is for **clothing**

hanged, hung Outlaw Ned Kelly and Saddam Hussein were **hanged**; a **parliament**, a **pheasant** and a **picture** are **hung**

harass, harassment One R and double S, unlike **embarrass**, which has double R and double S

hardcore is one word, whether noun or adjective

hard line, hardline, hardliner To take **a hard line**, two words, no hyphen, is to be **strict, inflexible, uncompromising**; use **hardline**, one word, no hyphen, as an adjective – the Government's **hardline stance** on street crime; a **hardliner** is someone who **sticks stubbornly** to a set of principles or policies

hardy, hearty Use **hardy** when you mean **tough, robust, courageous, bold**; use **hearty** for **substantial** and **nourishing** (a **hearty breakfast**) or **vigorous** and **enthusiastic** (a **hearty slap on the back**)

hare-brained Not **hair-brained**

hare lip is an insensitive and offensive term – write **cleft lip** or **cleft palate**, which are the medical terms

Harley-Davidson Motorcycle, hyphenated

Harrods No apostrophe for the London department store

hat-trick Hyphenated

haven A haven is by definition a **place of safety**, so it is tautologous to write **safe haven**

Hawaii, Hawaiian Double I

Hawk-Eye Hyphenated, not **Hawkeye**. Technology that **tracks the ball** in **Gaelic football** and **hurling**

hay fever Two words, no hyphen

head-butt is hyphenated as a noun and verb

headdress, headhunted, headroom but **head-on collision**

headlines (squeezing and stretching) In our print publications, sub-editors should **edit headlines to fit** using their word skills – they should not **squeeze or stretch them** beyond approved limits. In the *Irish Independent*, a squeeze of **minus 5 is acceptable**, or **minus 10 at a push** – we insist you **do not go beyond minus 10**; in the *Sunday Independent's* page templates, headlines have a **default weight of minus 20**, which is more than generous, so **do not go beyond that limit** without permission

headlines (point size) Sub-editors must **never change the point size** to make a print headline fit the space allotted

headquarters is usually expressed as a plural – **our headquarters are** in Independent House/Belfast Telegraph House; but the abbreviation **HQ** is always singular – **Garda HQ is** in the Phoenix Park

head teacher Two words, no hyphen. Do not write **headmaster** or **headmistress**, but **principal** is OK

healthcare One word, no hyphen

Hear, hear! is the exclamation of **approval** heard during a **speech**. It is incorrect to write **Here, here!**

heart attack See **cardiac arrest, heart attack**

heartache, heartburn, heartbroken, heartfelt, heartwarming are all one word, no hyphen, but **heart-throb** is hyphenated and generally written only when quoting

heatwave Met Éireann defines a heatwave as a period of **five consecutive days** or more with **temperatures above 25C**

heaven, hell Always lower case

hefty, heavy Write **hefty** to mean **big and strong (a hefty weightlifter)** or **forceful (a hefty blow to the jaw)** or **sizeable (a hefty electricity bill)**; use **heavy** to describe something of **great weight (a heavy load)** or **great force (heavy seas)**; if something is **difficult to do** or **hard to understand**, it is **heavy going**; when you have a **heavy cold**, you are **severely congested**

height, weight We generally use **metric measures** for the **heights of buildings, mountains and monuments** (the Dublin

Spire is 120 metres tall), for example, but a **person's height** and a **newborn baby's weight** are usually presented in **imperial measures**: while former footballer Peter Crouch is **two metres tall**, we convert to feet and inches, so Crouch is **six-foot-seven**, which we hyphenate, and a **baby weighing 3.345kg** is **seven pounds six ounces**, no hyphens

hello is what we write, not **hallo** or **hullo**

Hells Angels No apostrophe in **Hells**

helm is always a noun – Steven Spielberg **directs films**, he does not **helm** them. See also **author, ink** and **pen**

helplines One word, no hyphen. It is our practice with certain articles about distressing subjects to add the contact details of an appropriate **helpline** as an **endnote**. These are the helpline endnotes we should use and which you can copy and paste

•**Alcohol abuse:** *If you have been affected by any of the issues in this article, call Alcoholics Anonymous Ireland on 01 842 0700, email gso@alcoholicsanonymous.ie or see alcoholicsanonymous.ie*

•**Drug abuse:** *If you have been affected by any of the issues in this article, call the HSE Drugs and Alcohol Helpline on Freephone 1800 459 459 or email helpline@hse.ie*

•**Problem gambling:** *If you have been affected by any of the issues in this article, call Gamblers Anonymous Ireland on 087 748 5878, email info@gamblersanonymous.ie or see gamblersanonymous.ie*

•**Child neglect, abuse, bullying:** *If you have been affected by any of the issues in this article, call Childline on Freephone 1800 66 66 66 or choose the live chat button at childline.ie*

•**Sexual abuse and rape:** *If you have been affected by any of the issues in this article, call the Rape Crisis Centre on Freephone 1800 77 88 88*

•**Debt:** *If you have been affected by any of the issues in this article, call the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) on 0818 07 2000 or see mabs.ie*

•**Homelessness:** *If you have been affected by any of the issues in this article, call Focus Ireland on 01 881 5900, email help@focusireland.ie or see focusireland.ie; or call Peter McVerry Trust on 01 823 0776, email info@pmvtrust.ie or see pmvtrust.ie*

•**Housing difficulties (preventing homelessness):** *If you have been affected by any of the issues in this article, call Threshold on Freephone 1800 45 44 54 or see threshold.ie*

•**Loneliness (aged people):** *If you have been affected by any of the issues in this article, call Alone on 0818 222 024 or see alone.ie*

•**Depression and anxiety:** *If you have been affected by any of the issues in this article, call Aware on Freephone 1800 80 48 48 or see aware.ie*

•**Suicide:** *If you have been affected by any of the issues in this article, call Samaritans free on 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.ie; or call Pieta on Freephone 1800 247 247 or text HELP to 51444*

•**Crisis pregnancy:** *If you have been affected by any of the issues in this article, call the HSE My Options service on Freephone 1800 82 80 10*

•**LGBTQ+ youth:** *If you have been affected by any of the issues in this article, call Belong To 01 670 6223 or see belongto.org*

•**Eating disorders:** *If you have been affected by any of the issues in this article, call Bodywhys on 01 210 7906, email alex@bodywhys.ie or see bodywhys.ie*

•**Alzheimer's:** *If you have been affected by any of the issues in this article, call the Alzheimer Society of Ireland on Freephone 1800 34 13 41, email helpline@alzheimer.ie or see alzheimer.ie*

•**Domestic abuse (against men):** *If you have been affected by any of the issues in this article, call Men's Aid Ireland on 01 554 3811, email hello@mensaid.ie or see mensaid.ie*

•**Domestic abuse (against women):** *If you have been affected by any of the issues in this article, call Women's Aid on Freephone 1800 34 19 00, email helpline@womensaid.ie or see womensaid.ie*

here in Ireland Our articles appear online and are read by a worldwide audience, so write **in Ireland**, not the parochial **here in Ireland**

heroin, heroine Two words that are sometimes mixed up. **Heroin**, no final E, is the **class-A illegal drug**; a **heroine**, with a final E, is a **courageous woman**

hiatus is a **break** or **pause** in activity. Do not write, unless quoting

hi-fi Hyphenated, short for **high-fidelity (sound)**

highchair For a small child, one word, no hyphen

High Court Upper case initials as noun and adjective

high-end is an adjective that means of **superior quality** and usually **expensive**

high jinks Two words, no hyphen; not **high jinx**

high-speed pursuit Write **high-speed chase**

high stool Two words, no hyphen

high street, the British term describing the **general retail sector**, but we do not use it in Ireland, unless quoting

higher education Two words, no hyphen

hijab is a **headscarf** worn by some **Muslim women** that covers the hair and neck. See also **burka, chador, niqab** and **yashmak**

hijack Only **movable objects**, such as **cars, aeroplanes, cash-in-transit vans** and **ships**, can be **hijacked** (we have no problem with **carjacking**); do not write that **people, schools** or **embassies** were hijacked; figuratively, we can say a **trend** or **fad** has been **hijacked** by an **opportunistic politician**

hike is OK for **price increase** in headlines as it is a handy short word, but avoid in copy

Hispanic Upper case H. Refers to someone from a country, or the country itself, where the **primary language is Spanish**. We have seen **Brazil** described as Hispanic, but it is not as **Brazilians speak Portuguese**. See also **Latina, Latino**

historic, historical Something that is **historic** is **important, significant** or **famous** or likely to become so – a **historic event**, a **historic accord** (like the Good Friday Agreement); **historical** means **old** – a **historical building**. We write a **historic** and a **historical**, not **an**

hi-tech Hyphenated; not **high-tech**

Hitler, Adolf Not **Adolph**

hitlist, hitman One word, no hyphen, but **hit squad** is two words, no hyphen

HIV is a **virus**, not a **disease**; do not call it **the Aids virus** or describe an **HIV test** as an **Aids test**, as these are stigmatising phrases

hi-vis is correct (for a **brightly coloured bib**). Do not write **high-vis**, **hi-viz** or **high-viz**

hoard, **horde** As a noun, **hoard** is a **hidden store** of, say, **ancient coins** or **treasure**, often found in a field by someone using a metal detector; as a verb, to **hoard** is to **gather** or **accumulate** things; **horde** is a **crowd** or **mob**

holidaymaker(s) One word, no hyphen. Never write the US **vacationer(s)** or **vacationing**, unless quoting

Holland See **Netherlands**, the

Hollywood, California with double L, but **Holywood, Co Down** (the home town of golfer **Rory McIlroy**) with one L

Holocaust, the Historically, **the Holocaust**, always upper case, was the systematic state-sponsored murder of six million Jewish men, women and children and five million other people considered 'inferior' by Nazi Germany and its collaborators during World War II. The only other use of the word that is acceptable is in the phrase **nuclear holocaust**, lower case H. Never use **holocaust** generally to describe an event of great destruction or death

holy means **sacred**. See also **wholly**

holy communion Lower case, as with all other sacraments. See also **mass**

holy grail is lower case, but use upper case initials for **Holy Land**, **Holy See**, **Holy Week**

homage Do we write **a homage** or **an homage**? We write neither, because people **pay homage to**, or **homage was paid to**, so no need for **a** or **an**

homebuyers, **homeowners** One word, no hyphen

home in, **hone in** A guided missile **homes in** on its target, it does not **hone in** – **hone** means to **sharpen** (a knife, an axe blade or your skills)

homeland, **homemade**, **homepage** are all one word, no hyphen

home schooled, **home schooling** Two words, no hyphen

home town Two words, no hyphen

homo Offensive term for a **homosexual person**, so never write, unless quoting. See **sexuality**

homophobia is the irrational **fear of homosexual people** or **homosexuality**. See **phobias** and **sexuality**

honorifics Do not use honorifics before full names at first mention – introduce a person as, say, **Tom Kelly** or **Margaret Browne**, and refer to them subsequently as **Mr Kelly** and **Ms Browne** or another appropriate title, such as **Dr** or **Prof** (exceptions can be made in colour, comment and features copy where the use of surnames only is acceptable). **Women** are **Mrs**, **Ms** or **Miss**, as they prefer, but when the preference is not known, write **Ms**. When writing about **celebrities** and **sportspeople**, do not use honorifics – refer to them by their surname; **people charged with crimes** keep their honorific until convicted, but **well-known criminals** are referred to by their surname – unless they are a defendant in a court case. In the **British honours system**, Dubliner **Bob Geldof** received an **honorary KBE (Knight of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire)**, but as an Irish citizen is not eligible to use the honorific **Sir**, so do not write **Sir Bob Geldof** (or **Sir Paul McCartney** or **Sir Rod Stewart**); never use the honorific **Dame**, as in **Dame Judi Dench**; if a **Sir** or a **Dame** is **well-known**, just use their **surname**, and if they are not well-known, write **Mr** or **Ms**. The same rule applies to the **British nobility**, so do not write **Lord** and **Lady**. See also **familiarity**, **forenames** and **courts (honorifics)**

'honour' killing When using this phrase, always write **'honour'** with single inverted commas, which signify scepticism or disbelief, or write **so-called honour killing**, because there is nothing honourable about **murder**. Honour-based violence (**HBV**) goes back many centuries and is a **deep-rooted phenomenon** in some countries and cultures. **'Honour' killings** happen in **families**, **social groups** and **communities** and are **committed in the name of upholding cultural or religious beliefs or honour**. Those targeted are considered to have **brought disgrace** on their family or community by, for example, opposing a forced marriage or refusing an arranged marriage; entering a relationship with someone deemed inappropriate; renouncing their faith; or behaving or dressing in a manner thought to be inappropriate. **Men and women can be victims** of honour killings, although women are most commonly targeted

hoodie Not **hoody**

hoof Plural is **hooves**, not **hoofs**. See also **roofs**

hoover, **Hoover** Although **Hoover** is a trade name, and so takes an upper case initial, feel free to use lower case for the generic noun, verb and adjective – **the hoover**, **hoover the carpet**, **hoover bag**. See also **vacuum**

hospitalised is OK in copy, but **never in headlines**

hotline, hotspot One word, no hyphen

Housing for All is the title printed on the front of the official policy document, so that is what we write – upper case H, lower case F and upper case A

however If you write **however** for **but** at the start of a sentence, it is **always followed by a comma**; when it is not the first word of a sentence, **however** takes a **comma before and after**; in its other senses, **however** means **no matter how** and **in whichever way**, as in “**However cold it gets**, do not turn on that electric fire – I’m not made of money” and “**However you look at it**, it doesn’t look good”

how long more? This will win no prizes for good grammar – it should be **how much longer?**

HSE Always abbreviated, never any need to write **Health Service Executive**

hubby Not **hubbie**. Short for **husband**, but only when quoting

human, humane A **human** is a person; **humane** means **compassionate, sympathetic, merciful**; in a non-halal abattoir, cattle, sheep and pigs are slaughtered with a **humane killer**. See **halal**

humerus, humorous The **humerus** is the **upper arm bone** that extends from the shoulder to the elbow; there is nothing **humorous** about accidentally banging the so-called **funny bone** part of the elbow (the **ulnar nerve**) against the arm of a chair

hummus, humus With double M, **hummus** is a paste or puree made from **ground chickpeas**; with one M, **humus** is partially **decomposed organic material** or **compost**

humour ends with **our**, but note the **or** in **humorous**. See also **glamour, glamorous**

Hutch-Kinahan feud is correct, with a hyphen, not a forward slash, and not **Kinahan-Hutch**

hyperthermia, hypothermia When a person’s body temperature is **too high**, they are suffering from **hyperthermia**; with **hypothermia**, the body temperature is **too low**

lli

ice-cream Hyphenated in all instances

icon, iconic These words are frequently used to describe unremarkable people (although they might be remarkable in the eyes of their loved ones), things and events that are **not in the least iconic**. The principal definition of **icon** is: “A representation of Christ, the Virgin Mary, or a saint, especially one painted in oil on a wooden panel, depicted in a traditional Byzantine style and venerated in the Eastern Church.” It is a bit of a leap from that to **the iconic Swords Express** bus service, which we have seen. While **icon** and **iconic** are not banned, they should be used to describe only someone or something widely known and acknowledged for **distinctive excellence**, such as **Hollywood icon Maureen O’Hara** and **the iconic Orient Express**. See also **legend, legendary**

ID is the informal abbreviation of **identify** (verb) and **identification** (noun), and as such is acceptable when quoting and just about OK in a headline where space is tight; do not be tempted to shorten **identified** to **IDed, ID-ed** or **ID’d**

idiot savant is obviously an offensive phrase to describe a **person** with a **developmental disorder** who has **extraordinary skills** in one particular area or in several; acceptable phrases are **autistic savant** and **savant syndrome**

ie is short for the Latin **id est**, meaning **that is**, but should appear in copy only when quoting. See also **eg, et al** and **etc**

if and when Where there is **uncertainty** that something will happen, write **if**; where there is certainty, write **when**; do not write **if and when**

if, whether Write **if** to introduce a condition: “We will be delighted **if** everyone reads the stylebook.” Write **whether** when there is an alternative: “We don’t know **whether** everyone will read the Mediahuis Ireland stylebook.” Do not write **whether or not**

IFSC Abbreviation of **Irish Financial Services Centre** in Dublin, no need to write out fully

illegitimate should never be used to describe **children born outside marriage** (not **outside wedlock**)

illicit means **illegal**, as in **illicit tobacco, illicit drugs** and **illicit alcohol**, but stick with **illegal**, unless quoting. See also **elicit**

immigrate, immigrant To **immigrate** means to **enter a country** with the intention of settling there, which makes you

an **immigrant**. See also **emigrant, emigrate** and **migrant, migrate**

illusion See **delusion, illusion**

immensity refers to great size. See also **enormity**

immune to disease, but **immune from** prosecution

impact is a noun, not a verb, so while we can write **an impact** and **the impact**, it is incorrect to write **will impact** and **has impacted** – write instead **will affect** and **has affected**, or another suitable verb, such as **will result in** or **will delay**

impasse See **stalemate**

imply, infer To **imply** means to **suggest**, while to **infer** means to **draw a conclusion** – a **speaker implies**, while a **viewer, listener** or **reader infers**

impostor Not **imposter**

impracticable, impractical These two words are almost synonymous – they mean **cannot be done** – but we choose to write **impractical** in all instances, unless quoting

impunity Not **impugnity**, but **impugn** is a verb meaning to **dispute the truth** or **validity** of something

in, on For **addresses**, we generally write **on O’Connell Street** and **on Wolfe Tone Square**, not **in**; also, **on the grounds of the Royal Hospital Kilmainham**, not **in**; but **in St Stephen’s Green** is OK

inadmissible Not **-able**

in conjunction with Just write **with**

incredible means **unbelievable**, not **wonderful** or **superlative**

index When referring to an **index** at the **back of a book**, the plural is **indexes**; the plural **indices** is used only in mathematics and science

infamous is not another word for **famous** – it means **bad** or **having a bad reputation**. See also **famed, famous** and **notorious**

infant refers to a **child up to 12 months**. See also **toddler**

infectious See **contagious, infectious**

inflame, inflammation Not **enflame, enflammation**

inflammable See **flammable**

initiate Write **start** or **begin**, but not **commence**, unless quoting

ink is a noun and an adjective; never use as a verb when you mean **sign** – we saw “Borussia Dortmund’s 21-year-old Norwegian striker Erling Haaland has **inked a five-year deal** with Manchester City” and changed **inked** to **signed**

inkling Not **inklink**

in lieu of means, in its simplest sense, **instead of**, and appears most often in court reports, where we might read that litter lout Larry Lonergan was given three months’ community service **in lieu of a €200 fine**; if Larry completes the community service to the court’s satisfaction, the slate will be wiped, but if he does not, he will have to pay the €200. Also, if you have volunteered to work on your day off to cover for an indisposed colleague, you are entitled to that day **in lieu** (a **lieu day**), to be taken at a future date

inner city, inner-city As a noun, two words, no hyphen – Dublin’s **north inner city**; as an adjective, hyphenated – **north inner-city neighbourhood, south inner-city councillor**

innocent bystanders, innocent civilians The adjective is unnecessary as we have yet to encounter **guilty bystanders** or **guilty civilians**

inoculate, vaccinate One N in **inoculate**. These two words are largely synonymous and mean to **introduce an infectious agent (antigen)** into the body to **induce an immune response**; while the words are interchangeable, choose one and stick with it

in order to Just write **to**

inpatient, outpatient Both one word, no hyphen

inquire See **enquire, inquire**

insisted We prefer **said**

in spite of the fact that Six words when one will do – just write **despite**

install, instalment Double L for the verb, one L for the noun

insure means to **guarantee against loss or harm** by buying, say, **health insurance** or **travel insurance**. See also **assure** and **ensure**

intended Do not use to mean **fiance** or **fiancee**, unless quoting

intense, intensive Write **intense** when you mean **extreme** and **intensive** to mean **thorough**

inter, intern To **inter** means to **bury human remains** in a grave or tomb; as a verb, **intern** means to **imprison without trial**; as a noun, an **intern** is a **student** or **recent graduate** who receives **supervised training** in a workplace for low or no pay

inter-city Hyphenated, for **buses** and **trains**

internet Always lower case. Sourcing information or images from the internet is **fraught with danger**. Information sourced from online sites must be **checked and verified** before it can be reproduced in our publications. Just because a story appears on a website does not mean it is accurate or true. Sourcing **images from social networking sites** carries risks too. Any images sourced from Facebook, X (formerly Twitter) or Instagram must be **checked and verified** before we can use them. If you source information or images from the internet, **alert the newsdesk, subs** and **publishing desk**. We cannot stress enough the importance of these security procedures. See also **Wikipedia**

interpreter An **interpreter** works with the **spoken word**, often in an Irish court where a defendant or witness whose first language is not English needs help to follow the proceedings and communicate. See also **translator**

interpretive Not **interpretative**

Inuit See **Eskimo** and **race, ethnicity, religion, nationality**

invalid is an adjective meaning **not valid** or **of no worth** and should be applied only to inanimate objects, like an **out-of-date train ticket**; never describe a **disabled person** as an **invalid**. See **disabilities**

invariably does not mean **hardly ever changing**, it means **never changing**

in view of the fact that Six words when one will do – just write **because**

invitation, invite We **send** or **receive** an **invitation** (noun) and we **invite** (verb) guests to our birthday party; there is no such thing as an **invite**

invoke See **evoke, invoke**

iPad, iPhone, iPod, iTunes are correct

Ireland, Republic of Write **the Republic of Ireland** when making a distinction from **Northern Ireland/the North**, writing about the **national soccer team**, for example, or quoting; in all other instances write **Ireland**. See also **Irish counties and county towns** and **Northern Ireland, the North**

Irish Air Corps is correct, while **Irish Aer Corps** is wrong and **Irish Air Corpse** is dead wrong. The **Irish Air Corps**, which can be shortened to **the Air Corps**, is the **air component** of the **Irish Defence Forces** and has its headquarters at Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnel, Dublin. **Ranks** from least senior to most senior are: recruit (Rec), apprentice (App), airman 2 star (Amn 2*), airman 3 star (Amn 3*), corporal (Cpl), sergeant (Sgt), flight quartermaster sergeant (FQMS), flight sergeant (FS), regimental quartermaster sergeant (RQMS), regimental sergeant major (RSM); **Officers** – officer cadet (O-Cdt), second-lieutenant (2nd Lt), lieutenant (Lt), captain (Capt), commandant (Comdt), lieutenant-colonel (Lt Col), colonel (Col), brigadier-general (Brig Gen), major-general (Maj Gen), Lieutenant General (Lt Gen). See **Irish Defence Forces**

Irish Army Only the **Irish Army**, which can be shortened to **the Army**, takes an upper case A, all others are lower case – **British army**, for example; it is the **land component** of the **Irish Defence Forces** and has its headquarters at McKee Barracks, Dublin. **Ranks** from least senior to most senior are: recruit (Rec) private 2 star (Pte 2*), private 3 star (Pte 3*), corporal (Cpl), sergeant (Sgt), company quartermaster sergeant (CQ), company sergeant (CS), regimental quartermaster sergeant (RQMS), sergeant major (RSM); **Officers** – junior officer cadet (Jr Cdt), senior officer cadet (Sr Cdt), second-lieutenant (2nd Lt), lieutenant (Lt), captain (Capt), commandant (Comdt), lieutenant-colonel (Lt Col), colonel (Col), brigadier-general (Brig Gen), major-general (Maj Gen), lieutenant-general (Lt Gen). See **Irish Defence Forces**

Irish counties and county towns For the record, there are 32 counties on the island of Ireland, 26 in the Republic and six in Northern Ireland/the North (NI). In alphabetical order they are **Antrim/Aontroim** (NI, county town Antrim), **Armagh/Ard Mhacha** (NI, Armagh), **Carlow/Ceatharlach** (Carlow), **Cavan/An Cabhán** (Cavan), **Clare/An Clár** (Ennis), **Cork/Corcaigh** (Cork city), **Derry/Doire** (NI, Coleraine), **Donegal/Dún na nGall** (Lifford), **Down/An Dún** (NI, Downpatrick), **Dublin/Bhaile Átha Cliath** (Dublin), **Fermanagh/Fear Manach** (NI, Enniskillen), **Galway/Gaillimh** (Galway city), **Kerry/Ciarraí** (Tralee), **Kildare/Cill Dara** (Naas), **Kilkenny/Cill Chainnigh** (Kilkenny), **Laois/Laois** (Portlaoise), **Leitrim/Liatroim** (Carrick-on-Shannon), **Limerick/Luimneach** (Limerick city), **Longford/An Longfort** (Longford), **Louth/Lú** (Dundalk), **Mayo/Maigh Eo** (Castlebar), **Meath/An Mhí** (Navan), **Monaghan/Muineachán** (Monaghan), **Offaly/Uíbh Fhailí** (Tullamore), **Roscommon/Ros Comáin** (Roscommon), **Sligo/Sligeach** (Sligo), **Tipperary/Tiobraid Árann** (Nenagh),

Tyrone/Tir Eoghain (NI, Omagh), **Waterford/Port Láirge** (Dungarvan), **Westmeath/An Iamhí** (Mullingar), **Wexford/Loch Garman** (Wexford) and **Wicklow/Cill Mhantáin** (Wicklow)

Irish Defence Forces, the Write out fully at first mention, then shorten to **the Defence Forces** – do not write **IDF**, which is the internationally recognised abbreviation for the **Israel Defence Forces** (not Israeli). The **President of Ireland** is the **Supreme Commander** of the **Irish Defence Forces**. See **Irish Air Corps, Irish Army** and **Irish Naval Service**

Irish Naval Service Ireland has a small **navy**, but it is called the **Irish Naval Service**, which can be shortened to **the Naval Service**, not **the Irish Navy** or **the Navy**; it is the **maritime component** of the **Irish Defence Forces** and is based at Haulbowline in Cork Harbour. The **names of Irish naval vessels** are preceded by the abbreviation **LE** for **Long Éireannach** (Irish ship). **Ranks** from least senior to most senior are: ordinary seaman (OS), able seaman (AB), leading seaman (LS), petty officer (PO), senior petty officer (SPO), chief petty officer (CPO), senior chief petty officer (SCPO), warrant officer (WO); **Officers** – officer cadet (O Cdt), ensign (Ens), sub-lieutenant (Sb Lt), lieutenant (Lt), lieutenant commander (Lt Cmdr), commander (Cmdr), captain (Capt), commodore (Cdre), rear admiral (R Adm) and vice admiral (V Adm). See **Irish Defence Forces**

Irish provinces There are **four provinces** on the island of Ireland. They are **Connacht** (counties Galway, Leitrim, Mayo, Roscommon and Sligo); **Leinster** (Carlow, Dublin, Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Longford, Louth, Meath, Offaly, Westmeath, Wexford and Wicklow); **Munster** (Clare, Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford); and **Ulster** (Antrim, Armagh, Cavan, Derry, Donegal, Down, Fermanagh, Monaghan and Tyrone)

irregardless No such word exists, write **regardless**

irresistible Not **-able**

is or are? See **collective nouns**

Islamic State (IS) Write out fully at first mention, then abbreviate to **IS**, not **ISIS**

Islamist fundamentalist/extremist Not **Islamic**

islands We live **in** Ireland, but **on** the island of Ireland. Elsewhere, and generally, the choice of **in** or **on** is determined by the size of the island or group of islands – **in** for **big** and **on** for **small**; so, **on Arranmore, on Inishmore, on Rathlin Island**, but **in the Shetlands, in Mallorca, in Sicily**

It comes after, It comes as Do not write **It comes after** and **It comes as** at the start of a sentence; we see this when a writer is introducing additional information or when heading off in another direction, but it can be confusing. The problem is the use of **It** – when several issues have already been mentioned, to what precisely does **It** refer? Be specific and write, for example, **The decision to refuse planning permission comes after** or **The increase in on-street parking charges comes as** – do not leave readers in any doubt

italics We use **italics** when writing the names of **TV and radio programmes, films, stage musicals, stage plays, songs, albums, poems, books** (but not the Bible or the Koran), **newspapers and magazines**. We **do not use italics** for the names of **paintings, sculptures, statues, installations** and other **artworks**. Also, **do not use italics** for **Latin words** or the **names of ships**

it's, its With an apostrophe, **it's** is short for **it is**; without an apostrophe, **its** means **belonging to it**

ize endings are common in **US spelling** – for example, **colonize, emphasize, fertilize** and **realize**, but in Irish English these and hundreds, perhaps thousands, of other verbs correctly end with **ise**. There are two exceptions we know of – **capsize** and **synthesize**. Watch out for **ize** endings in wire copy from the US and change to **ise**

JJj

jack-knife In a traffic accident, an **articulated truck** is said to have **jack-knifed** (not **-knived**) when the tractor unit and the detachable trailer fold in on themselves. See also **lorry, truck, pick-up truck**

Jacuzzi Trade name, so upper case, or write the generic **whirlpool bath** or **whirlpool spa**

Jeep Trade name, so upper case for vehicles of that marque made by Chrysler. For similar vehicles from other manufacturers, write **SUV** or **4x4**, but **jeep** (lower case, generic) is OK when quoting

Jehovah's Witness Upper case initials and apostrophe

jejune means **naive, simple, unsophisticated**, but do not write, unless quoting

jet See **aeroplane, airplane, jet**

jet lag Two words, no hyphen

jetsam See **flotsam, jetsam**

Jet Ski is a trade name, so upper case initials and two words, no hyphen; however, feel free to write the generic **jet-ski**, lower case and hyphenated

Jew(s) is an **inoffensive** and **perfectly acceptable word**, so no need to write **Jewish people** or **people of the Jewish faith**, unless quoting

jewellery is what we write, not the US **jewelry**

jibe (not **gibe**) is a **taunt** or a **mocking** or **insulting remark**

jihad Lower case. In common usage, **jihad** is a **holy war** waged on behalf of Islam as a religious duty and has come to be associated with radical actions and terrorism; a person involved in such actions is a **jihadi**, the adjective is **jihadist**. See also **fatwah**

jobs We want to know as much as possible about the person we are reading about, and that includes what they do for a living (if they have a job). If the person who wins a €10m Lotto jackpot has a low-paid job, that is a satisfying piece of information; if the winner is a super-wealthy merchant banker, that is not so satisfying. Where possible, include a person's trade or profession (if they are a student, tell us what they are studying and where)

job titles Always lower case, except when writing about positions of high office, so lower case managing director,

chief financial officer and editor-in-chief (there goes the pay rise), but upper case **Tánaiste**, First Minister and Chief of Staff of the Irish Defence Forces. Also, job titles should **flow** – write **AIB chief executive Colin Hunt**, not the staccato **Colin Hunt, chief executive, AIB**

jobseeker's benefit/allowance Lower case initials, and apostrophe after the R

jobsworth One word, no hyphen

joyrider, joyriding Contentious words that can cause great distress to the loved ones of victims, so avoid. Write **so-called joyriders** or **so-called joyriding** when referring to this criminal activity that can cause material damage, serious injury and death

judgment No E after G (in all instances), same with **acknowledgment** and **lodgment**

judicial, judicious Matters relating to justice and judges are **judicial** – a **judicial review**; a **judicious person** is **wise** or **shows sound judgment**

junction, juncture A **junction**, generally, is a place where two or more roads meet; a **juncture** is a point in time (**at this juncture**), but use only when quoting

Junior, Senior are abbreviated to **Jr** and **Sr**, not **Jnr** and **Snr**

Junior Cert is what we say, so no need to write **Junior Certificate**; the same goes for **Leaving Cert**

just deserts Has nothing to do with jelly and ice cream, so **not double S**. To make things easy, instead of writing "he got his just deserts", write "he got what he deserved"

KKk

k is short for **kilo**, the Greek prefix meaning **thousand**. It is acceptable in headlines, but not in copy, and **only for sums of money**, so **€500k Lotto winner** is OK, but **Putin to conscript 100k students** is not – it should be **100,000 students**

Kathmandu With TH, capital of Nepal

kebab A **doner** (not **donor**) **kebab** is made using meat sliced from a rotating vertical spit; a **shish kebab** is cubes of meat on a skewer. See also **doner, donor**

Kellogg's Corn Flakes Trade name, so upper case initials and three words, but generic **cornflakes**, one word, no hyphen

key is a useful headline word when we mean **important** or **crucial**, but is overused, so avoid

khaki Not **kakhi**. A dull **yellow-brown** or **olive colour**, usually seen in military uniforms

kick-off, kick off Hyphenated as a noun – the **kick-off** is at 3pm; two words, no hyphen as a verb – the match will **kick off** at 3pm

kick-start Noun and verb, hyphenated

kidnap See **abduct, kidnaper**

kids In formal reporting, write **children**, unless quoting

Kilimanjaro Not **Mount Kilimanjaro**

killer All **murderers are killers**, but a **killer is not a murderer** until he or she is **convicted of murder**. See also **assassin**

kilograms Not **kilogrammes**. Abbreviate to **kg**, not **kgs**

kilometres Abbreviate to **km**, not **kms**, as in a distance of **80km**. However, many people take part in Saturday morning **parkruns** over a distance of five kilometres, which has come to be commonly written as **5k**, so we will not quibble with that

kilometres per hour Abbreviate to **kmh**, not **kph**, but **mph** is correct for **miles per hour**

Kim Jong Un is the supreme leader of North Korea, do not write **Kim Jong-un** or **Kim Jong-Un**

King Charles III See **British royals**

Kiwi(s) See **New Zealand (NZ)**

knock out, knockout As a verb, two words, no hyphen; as a noun and adjective, one word, no hyphen – the boxer was **beaten by a knockout** in the first round; we got as far as the **knockout round** in the pub quiz

knots refers to a measure of **nautical miles per hour** (not distance), so there is no need to write **knots per hour** – the ship was **travelling at 15 knots** is correct. One knot equals 1.85kmh

know-how Hyphenated

knowledgeable With an E after the G

koala Not **koala bear** – it is not a bear, it is a **tree-climbing marsupial** native to Australia

Kolkata Indian city, formerly **Calcutta**

Koran Not **Quran**. The holy book of Islam. See also **Bible**

kosher describes **food** that **complies with Jewish dietary law**, which governs what can and cannot be eaten. The method of **slaughtering animals** and **poultry** is similar to that practised according to Islamic law. See also **halal**

K-pop Upper case K, hyphenated, lower case P – **South Korean pop music** genre

Krakow Not **Cracow**. City in southern Poland, pronounced **krak-uv**, not **crack-cow** (the city of **Wroclaw** in western Poland is pronounced **vrots-wahf**)

krona is the unit of currency in **Sweden**, plural **kronor**; in **Iceland** it is also **krona**, but plural **kronur**; in **Denmark** they have the **kroner**, plural **kroner**; and in **Norway** it is **kroner**, plural **kroner**. Whichever of these four Nordic countries you visit, a pint will cost you an awful lot of kronor, kronur or kroner

kudos means **praise** and **honour** for an achievement

Ku Klux Klan Upper case initials, no hyphens; often misspelled as **Klu Klux Klan**

kung fu Two words, no hyphen – a primarily unarmed **martial art form** from China

Kyiv is the capital of **Ukraine** (not **the Ukraine**), and that is the spelling Ukrainians insist on (**Kiev** is the **Russian spelling**). However, the dish remains **chicken kiev** with lower case initials

LLI

lab is an acceptable short form for **laboratory** and handy in headlines

Labour Party, the is written with a U in **Ireland** and **Britain**, but **Labor**, no U, in **Australia**

lackadaisical is an adjective that describes a **lazy, uninterested, unenthusiastic** or **half-hearted attitude** or **effort**

lady, ladies Write instead **woman** or **women**, unless quoting, but **Ladies' Day**, with an apostrophe after the S – at the Galway Races, for example – is correct

laid off, lay off Two words, no hyphen in all instances. To **lay off** workers does not mean to **sack** them or make their jobs **redundant**, it means to **send them home on part-pay** because of a temporary lack of demand for their products or services; workers who are **laid off** might be subject to a series of **lay offs**

lamp-post Hyphenated, but **lamplight** is one word, no hyphen

landmark Overused as an adjective, as in **landmark decision, landmark ruling, landmark legislation** – write **important** or **significant** instead

landmass One word, no hyphen

landmine One word, no hyphen

Land Rover Two words, no hyphen, same with **Range Rover**, but **Rolls-Royce** is hyphenated

laptop One word, no hyphen

lasagne With a final E, not **lasagna**, despite how it sounds

last April, last Saturday are correct usage, while **April last** and **Saturday last** are wrong, unless quoting

last number of weeks, months, years Too vague – be precise, which can be achieved with a quick search

last, past Do we write **the last six days/weeks** or **the past six months/years**? Stop wondering and **write last in all instances**, unless quoting

late, the If it is well known that someone, perhaps famous, is dead, there is no need to describe them as **the late**, so we

would not write **the late Éamon de Valera** or **the late Gay Byrne**; only write **the late** when a person was **not in the public eye** and their being dead is a **pertinent piece of information**

Latin words and phrases are OK when quoting, but avoid using in narrative copy when perfectly good English words or phrases are available. When Latin words are used, **do not italicise**

Latin America is generally considered to include **Mexico** and those countries of the **Caribbean, Central America** and **South America** where the principal language spoken by the inhabitants is French, Portuguese or Spanish. See also **Caribbean, Central America, Mexico** and **South America**

Latina, Latino A **Latina**, final A, is a **female from Latin America**, while a **Latino**, final O, is the **male** equivalent

latter, former Use only when **two people** or **things** are involved and to differentiate between the **second mentioned (the latter)** and the **first mentioned (the former)**. To say someone or something is the latter or former of more than two is **incorrect** – in such cases, the correct words are **the last** and **the first**

launch Noun and verb. If we are being strict, use only for **ships, space rockets** and **missiles**; however, **launch** is in common use for **books, music albums** and the **latest iPhone**, so go ahead

laundrette E after the D, but Stephen Frears' 1985 film starring Daniel Day-Lewis is called *My Beautiful Laundrette*, no E after the D

lavatory is too formal, unless quoting – write **toilet** or **bathroom**

lawmaker Write instead **TD, senator, MP** or **MEP**, for example, unless quoting

lay, laid, lain, lie Frequently mixed up. We **lay the table** for dinner, a carpet-fitter **lays a carpet**, a hen **lays an egg** and a judge **lays down the law** – the past tense is **laid**; **lay** can also be past tense – the armed gang **lay in wait** for the cash delivery van; with **lie**, we might say we are going to **lie down** for a while, and after an hour decide we **have lain** (or **been lying**) there long enough

lay-by Hyphenated

leach, leech To **leach** (verb, with EA) means to **remove chemicals** or **soluble elements** from **soil**, for example, by

passing water or another **percolating liquid** through it; a **leech** (noun, double E) is a **bloodsucking worm**

lead, led As a verb, you can **lead** (present tense, with an A) a horse to water, and afterwards you can say you **led** (past tense, no A) the horse to water; this is the **most-frequently misspelled word** in copy, and we suspect the confusion arises from **read**, which is **present** and **past tense**. As a noun, **lead** is a **heavy but pliable metal**

learned, learnt Use the adjective **learned** when you mean **scholarly** or **wise** – a **learned colleague**, although we prefer **bright** or **clever**; write **learnt** for the **past tense** and **past participle** of **learn** – **he learnt his lesson the hard way** and **I have learnt to be more patient**

learnings Do not write **learnings**, unless quoting, when you mean **lessons**

Leaving Cert No need to write **Certificate**, same with **Junior Cert**

Lebanon Not **the Lebanon**; the capital is **Beirut**

legal aid Lower case, two words, no hyphen, as a noun and adjective; upper case for the (Criminal) **Legal Aid Act 1962** and (Civil) **Legal Aid Act 1995**

lend, lent Verbs, lower case. The past tense of **lend** is **lent**, not **loaned**. See also **loan**

Lent Upper case for the period in the **Christian calendar** from **Ash Wednesday to Easter Saturday** inclusive, a total of 46 days, but Sundays are excluded, so **40 days**

less, fewer Write **less** for **smaller in quantity**, as in **less money**, and write **fewer** when you mean **smaller in number**, as in **fewer coins**; similarly, **less coal**, but **fewer coalminers**

lest means **in case, for fear that** and **to avoid** or **prevent**, as in: “I spellchecked my copy three times, **lest** an embarrassing error slipped through.” Avoid using and write **in case**, unless quoting

leukaemia is any of the group of **cancers** that start in the **blood-forming tissues**, usually the **bone marrow**, and lead to the **over-production of abnormal white blood cells**, which adversely affects the body’s ability to fight infection

LGBTQ+ is the initialisation we use for **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender** and **Queer** or **Questioning** (the + covers additional self-identifications), but other variations are OK when quoting

Liam MacCarthy Cup Note the **Mac**, not **Mc**. The **trophy** awarded to the winning team in the **All-Ireland senior hurling final**

libel is **written** or **broadcast defamation** and can prove costly. See also **defamation** and **slander**

licence, license The noun is **licence**, with a penultimate C – **driver’s licence** and **off-licence**; the verb is **license**, with a penultimate S – the restaurant is **licensed to sell alcohol**

lie See **lay, laid, lain, lie**

lifeguard, lifejacket, lifelike, lifelong, lifesize One word, no hyphen, but **life-saver** and **life-saving surgery** are hyphenated

lightbulb One word, no hyphen

lightening, lightning Get these two mixed up and you deserve to be struck by you-know-what. **Lightening** with an E is the act of **making less heavy (lightening the load)** or **less dark (lightening your hair colour)**, while **lightning** without an E is an **electrical discharge** in the **atmosphere**

light-headed, light-hearted Hyphenated

like, such as Write **like** when **comparing** people or things **that are similar but not specific**, and write **such as** when **introducing a specific example** or **examples**. The following sentence using **like** is correct: “When my daughter, Aoife, graduates from UCD, she wants to move to the States and work in a big city **like** New York.” We know Aoife wants to work in a **big city in the States** that is **similar to but not necessarily New York** – she might also have Boston or Chicago in mind. Her choice of big city is **not specific**, so we write **like**. The following sentence using **such as** is correct: “When my son, Patrick, leaves school, he wants to learn a trade, **such as** painting and decorating or plumbing.” So Patrick has his mind set on becoming a **painter and decorator** or a **plumber** when he leaves school. His choices **are specific**, so we write **such as**

likeable E after the K, not **likable**

likely, probably It is incorrect to write that the Taoiseach **will likely visit** the White House on St Patrick’s Day – correctly, the Taoiseach **will probably visit** the White House. **Likely** is usually preceded by **it is** and sometimes followed by **that**, as in **it is likely that** the Taoiseach will visit the White House; we can also correctly write that the Taoiseach **is likely to** visit the White House

linchpin One word, no hyphen; note the LI, not LY, so not **lynchpin**. Means a **person** or **thing** that is **vital to a plan** or an **organisation**. See also **lynch**, **lynch mob**

line breaks Be wary of where **words break at the end of a line** – the result can be at best ugly and at worst legally dangerous; the prime example is **therapist**, which can leave **the-** at the end of one line and **rapist** at the start of the next; another common example is **manslaughter**, which can leave **mans-** at the end of one line and **laughter** at the start of the next; also, watch out for surnames beginning with **Fitz** – we have often seen **Fit-** at the end of one line and **zpatrick** or **zgerald** at the start of the next. The same attention should be applied to place names – frequent offenders are **Belf-ast**, **Blanchard-stown** and **Kins-ale**. Before submitting copy for revise, **subs must always** run an eye down the right-hand side of columns to check for bad line breaks and fix them

LinkedIn One word, no hyphen, and note the penultimate upper case I

lion, lioness The **male** is a **lion**, the **female** is a **lioness**; do not write **female lion**. See also **tiger**, **tigress**

Lions See **British and Irish Lions**

liquefy, liquefied Note the E before the F, so not **liquify** or **liquified**; it means to **convert a gas** or a **solid** to **liquid**

liqueur, liquor A **liqueur** is a **flavoured distilled alcoholic drink** that can be drunk on its own or added to a cocktail; **liquor** refers generally to distilled spirits such as **whiskey**, **vodka**, **gin** and **rum**

liquidate, liquidation, liquidator, liquidise When a **company becomes insolvent**, it can enter into a process of **liquidation**, where its **assets are converted to cash** by a **liquidator** to **settle debts** and **pay creditors**; **liquidise** means to **turn something into a liquid form**

liquor See **liqueur, liquor**

lira is the **Turkish currency**, and was the **Italian currency** before the **euro**

literally To write that someone **literally exploded with anger** is absurd, as are most examples of this overused word, so avoid

live stream, live streamed, live streaming Two words, no hyphen, in all instances

llama A **llama**, double L, is a **ruminant animal** native to South America. See also **Dalai Lama**

loan is a noun, not a verb; you **ask for a loan** or **make a loan**, but you do not **loan money**, you **lend** it. See **lend**, **lent**

loathe, loath Write **loathe** (pronounced like **clothe**) when you mean **detest**; write **loath** (pronounced like **oath**) when you mean **reluctant**

local(s) If we pop in for a pint to our **neighbourhood pub** – our **local** – the place might be packed with **local people** (do not write **locals**). The word **local** is often unnecessary, as in **local parish priest**

loch, lough In **Scotland**, a lake is commonly called a **loch** – **Loch Lomond**, **Loch Ness**; in **Ireland**, we write **lough**, as in **Lough Neagh**, **Lough Eske** and **The Lough** neighbourhood in **Cork city**

lock-in, lockout Nouns. A pub might offer customers an **after-hours lock-in**, which is hyphenated (and illegal); a **lockout**, one word, no hyphen, can describe the action taken by an employer during an **industrial dispute** in which employees are **denied access to a workplace** – historically in Dublin, the **1913 Lockout**; as verbs, write **lock in** and **lock out**, two words, no hyphen

log in, log on, log off, log out Two words, no hyphen, in all instances. See also **sign in**

logjam One word, no hyphen. See also **traffic jam**

Londonderry Use only when quoting. In the Republic of Ireland, we always write **Derry** for the city and county. **Derry city**, lower case C, is the place where the FAI club **Derry City**, upper case C, have their home ground, the **Brandywell**. See also **Cork city**, **Cork City**

long-Covid is hyphenated. See also **coronavirus**, **Covid-19**, **long-Covid**

longlist(ed), shortlist(ed) One word, no hyphen

long-standing, long-suffering Hyphenated

long-term, long term Hyphenated as an adjective, as in **long-term unemployment**, but two words, no hyphen, as a noun – **in the long term**; same with **short-term, short term**

long-time Hyphenated as an adjective – **long-time partner**

loo We prefer **bathroom** and **toilet**, unless quoting, but if we are caught short, the **loo** will do

looking to Write instead **seeking to** or **hoping to**, unless quoting

lookout As a noun, one word, no hyphen

loose, lose Frequently mixed up. **Loose**, adjective, with double O, means **slack** or **untied**, like a **shoelace**, or **unpacked**, like **vegetables** or **fruit** on a market stall; write **lose**, verb, with one O, to mean **misplace something** or **be defeated**. See also **choose, chose**

lorry, truck, pick-up truck While **lorry** and **truck** describe **heavy vehicles**, there is a difference. Generally, a **lorry** is a **self-contained vehicle**, where the driver's cab, engine and cargo space form an **all-attached single unit** – a **bin lorry**, for example; a **truck** is a **bigger and heavier** and often **longer vehicle** that consists of a **tractor unit** and a **detachable trailer** or **tanker** (like a **Guinness truck**); a **pick-up truck** is a **single-unit light-duty utility vehicle (UV)** with a **cargo bed** with two low 'walls' and a tailgate

lottery (Irish) Officially the **Irish National Lottery**, so upper case initials, and upper case the **Lotto** for short; write lower case **lottery** and **national lottery** in general and as adjectives – no hyphen in **lottery winner**, but hyphenate **lottery-winning syndicate**

loveable E after the V, not **lovable**

low-key Hyphenated

loyalist (Northern Ireland) Lower case. See also **nationalist, republican** and **unionist**

ludicrous See **ridiculous**

lumbar, lumber Write **lumbar** when referring to the **lower spine (lumbar puncture)**; as a noun, **lumber** is **junk furniture** and (US) **timber cut into planks** (in the US drama series *The Waltons*, Grandpa and John Sr run a **lumber mill**); as a verb, **lumber** means to **move in a clumsy manner**. See also **timber, timbre**

luvvie is an **actor** who is particularly **effusive** or **affected**, but avoid the term, unless quoting, as it can offend. Do not write **lovey**

luxuriant, luxurious, luxury Write **luxuriant** to describe something **growing profusely** or **abundantly** – a **luxuriant beard** or a **luxuriant mane of thick long hair**; use **luxurious** to describe something that is **opulent** or **expensive** – a **luxurious lifestyle**. While **luxury** is a noun, meaning **something enjoyable** and **costly** but **not essential**, it is commonly used as an adjective, and we are OK with that – a **luxury holiday**, a **luxury apartment**

Lycra is a trade name, so upper case L

lynch, lynch mob Someone who is **lynched**, lower case and with a Y, not an I, is **put to death without trial**, historically and commonly by **hanging** and often by a **lynch mob**. The popular belief is that the verb **to lynch** is derived from **Captain William Lynch** (1742-1820), a farmer and self-appointed judge in Pittsylvania County, Virginia, during the Revolutionary War. See also **linchpin**

MMm

Mac, Mc (surnames) Always check if a surname begins with **Mac** or **Mc** and if there is a **space after it**; also, some Mac names have **no second upper case letter**, such as **Macbeth**. Readers do not like to see names – theirs or those of others – spelled incorrectly, so always check if you have the slightest doubt

MacGowan, Shane Former frontman of The Pogues, not **McGowan**

machine gun Two words, no hyphen, but **sub-machinegun** is hyphenated. See also **AK-47**

Madison Square Garden Not **Gardens**, in New York City

Mafia is the organised crime group that originated in Sicily and operates throughout Italy and in the US. **Russian Mafia** is OK, but do not describe any other criminal organisation as Mafia/mafia

MAGA All upper case, pronounceable acronym for **Make America Great Again**. This is an exception to the upper and lower case rule, simply because it looks more correct in upper case. See **acronyms**

magistrates court is the UK equivalent of a **district court** in Ireland and is lower case, no apostrophe; when preceded by a location – **Birmingham Magistrates Court**, for example – use upper case initials

major Overused and unnecessary adjective – **major investigation, major inquiry, major accident**. Drop the **major** in most instances

majority, minority A **majority** is the **larger part of a measurable number**, while a **minority** is the **smaller part**; we disagree with those who discourage the use of **big** or **overwhelming majority** and **small** or **tiny minority** – if the result of a vote is, say, **95 for** and **five against**, there is clearly an **overwhelming majority for** and a **tiny minority against**, so feel free to tell readers if it was a landslide or a close-run contest by using an **appropriate adjective** (but not **whopping**); do not write **vast minority**, which we saw in copy

makeover One word, no hyphen and refers to a **renovated property** or a **new outfit** or personal **new look**, for example

make-up Cosmetics, hyphenated

malignant See **benign, malignant**

Mallorca, Menorca We use the Spanish spellings, so not **Majorca** or **Minorca**

mammoth is an adjective to avoid, as in **mammoth task**, but **mammoth tusk** is OK

manifesto Plural is **manifestos**, not **manifestoes**

man-made Use the gender-neutral **artificial** or **synthetic**, unless quoting

manned Use the gender-neutral **crewed** or **staffed**, unless quoting

manoeuvre, manoeuvring, manoeuvrable are the correct spellings; in wire copy, watch out for the US spelling **maneuver**

Mantel, Hilary is correct for the bestselling author, not **Hillary** or **Hillery**

mantelpiece is the correct spelling, with EL, not LE, so not **mantlepiece**

Maori(s) See **New Zealand (NZ)** and **Aborigine(s)**

marathon Lower case noun; use only for the **race** of 42.195km; do not use as an adjective to mean **lengthy**, as in **marathon talks**

margarita, margherita Both lower case – **margarita** is a **cocktail**, while **margherita** is a **pizza**

Marie Celeste is a common misspelling. **Mary Celeste** is the correct name of the **ghost ship** that was found adrift, intact and abandoned 740km east of the Azores on December 4, 1872

Marks & Spencer (M&S) Write out fully at first mention, then use the abbreviation **M&S**

marshal, martial, marital One final L, not two, in the noun and verb **marshal** (but past tense **marshalled**, with double L) – a **St Patrick's Day parade** is led by a **Grand Marshal**; also, **security personnel** at **sporting events**, for example, are **marshals**; as an adjective, **martial** refers to anything connected with or characteristic of **armies** or **war**, as in **martial law**; be careful, as **martial** and **marital** are often mixed up and will not be caught by the spellchecker

mass Lower case in all instances for the Roman Catholic service of worship – **Sunday mass, funeral mass, requiem mass**

mass As an adjective, hyphenate **mass-gathering**, **mass-hysteria**, **mass-migration** and so on

massacre should be used only when referring to the intentional and indiscriminate **killing of large numbers of people**, not to sports results. See also **slaughter**

may, might Frequently mixed up. In a **future sense**, both refer to **probability**, but it is generally accepted that **may** suggests a **stronger likelihood** than **might**. We find this unconvincing and prefer to write **might** in all instances, unless quoting

May Day, mayday On the calendar, **May 1** is **May Day** in the UK, upper case initials, two words, no hyphen; **mayday**, lower case, one word, no hyphen, from the French **m'aidez (help me)**, is used internationally when making a **distress call** seeking urgent assistance in a life-threatening situation

McDonald's The international **fast-food chain** takes an apostrophe S, as does the Irish chain **Supermac's**

means test, means-tested Two words, no hyphen, for the noun, but the verb is hyphenated

Mecca, mecca Upper case **Mecca** for the city in **Saudi Arabia** that is the **holiest site in Islam** (birthplace of the **Prophet Muhammad**); use lower case **mecca**, although we discourage it, as in **Henry Street is a mecca [magnet] for Christmas shoppers**

media is treated as a plural (singular **medium**), so write the **media are**, not **the media is**; however, a convention of **spiritualists** would be attended by **mediums**

median See **average**

medics Refers to **first-responders, doctors** and other **medical professionals**, and is OK if not overused

medieval Only one A, so not **mediaeval**. See **Middle Ages**

Mediterranean Sea Note the double R. The **Mediterranean** is often mistakenly referred to as an ocean, but it is the **Mediterranean Sea**. The **22 countries with coastlines on the Mediterranean** (Portugal's coastline is on the Atlantic) are, clockwise, **Spain** (capital Madrid), **France** (Paris), **Monaco** (Monaco, not Monte Carlo), **Italy** (Rome), **Slovenia** (Ljubljana), **Croatia** (Zagreb), **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (Sarajevo), **Montenegro** (Podgorica), **Albania** (Tirana), **Greece** (Athens), **Turkey** (Ankara, not Istanbul), **Syria** (Damascus), **Lebanon** (Beirut), **Israel** (Jerusalem), **Palestine** (Jerusalem, but de facto Ramallah), **Egypt** (Cairo), **Libya** (Tripoli), **Tunisia** (Tunis), **Algeria** (Algiers) and **Morocco** (Rabat). **Cyprus**

(Nicosia) and **Malta** (Valletta) are island states in the Mediterranean and members of the EU. See also **oceans**

meet We do not **meet with someone**, we **meet someone** – in that sense, drop **with**, unless quoting. However, we can **meet with a fate worse than death** (whatever that might be). See also **consult**

Meghan Markle See **British royals**

melee It is unlikely you would say it, so avoid writing it, unless quoting – write **brawl** or **fight** or **scuffle** instead. See also **altercation**

melodeon See **accordion, melodeon**

memento is a **souvenir** of your travels, for example, and the plural is **mementoes** with a penultimate E; the word is often misspelled as **momento**, which is Spanish for **moment**

MEP (Europe) See **Euro MP**

mettle To **prove your mettle** (not **metal**) means to show **great courage or spirit**

meteor, meteoric A **meteor** is a piece of **space rock in space**; if it enters the Earth's atmosphere **without burning up**, it is a **meteorite**; do not write the cliched **meteoric rise to fame**

meter, metre Write **meter**, with **er**, for **gas meter, electricity meter** and **water meter**; write **metre**, with **re**, for **length, distance, height** and **depth**, as in **10 metres of hosepipe, a 30-metre free kick**. Also, **metres** should be written out fully to avoid confusion with **millions** (an exception is **athletics distances**, as in **she won the women's 400m hurdles finals**)

Mexico (capital Mexico City) occupies the southern-most portion of North America. It is bordered by the United States to the north and Guatemala to the south and is not considered a part of Central America and definitely not South America. See also **Central America, Latin America** and **South America**

mic is an acceptable short form for **microphone**; do not write **mike**

midday See **time of day**

Middle Ages The period roughly **between 500AD and 1455AD** (do not write **Dark Ages**, unless quoting). The adjective is **medieval**

middle class, upper class, working class An outdated reminder of **class distinction**, so try to avoid, unless quoting.

Nevertheless, two words, no hyphen, for the **category of people**, so **the middle class, the upper class, the working class**, but hyphenate the adjective – **working-class estate, middle-class upbringing, upper-class twit**

Middle East, Middle Eastern Upper case initials, no hyphen; do not write **Mid-East** (not even in headlines) or **Mid-Eastern**

midget, dwarf These words are considered offensive by many people. If used when quoting, each instance will be weighed for appropriateness. Always consult a senior colleague

midlands, the Lower case M for the **Irish midlands** (counties **Laois, Louth, Offaly** and **Westmeath**), but upper case M for the **English Midlands**

midnight See **time of day**

mid-term elections (US). Write out fully in the first instance, then shorten to **mid-terms**

migrant, migrate A **migrant** is a person who **moves to another country**, often to seek work; **migrate** generally refers to the **seasonal movement (migration)** of **animals** and **birds**. See also **emigrate, emigrant, emigre**

millennia, millennium Two Ls and two Ns – **millennia** is plural, **millennium** is singular

millennials Lower case. Refers to people **born between 1981 and 1996**; they are also known as **Generation X**

million (m), billion (bn), trillion (tn) One **million** is **one thousand thousand** (1,000,000); one **billion** is **one thousand million** (1,000,000,000); one **trillion** is **one million million** (1,000,000,000,000). With **monetary sums**, write **€24m, €24bn** and **€24tn**, no space after the number. However, when referring to **non-monetary amounts**, write out fully – the population of the United States is **332 million** (not **332m**) and the population of the world is **eight billion** (not **8bn**)

miner, minor A **miner**, with **er**, excavates **coal** or **gold**, for example; in the eyes of the law, a **minor**, with **or**, is someone **under the age of 18**

minibus, minicab, miniskirt, minivan All one word, no hyphen, but film character **Mini-Me** is hyphenated, with two upper case Ms

minority See **majority, minority**

minuscule means **tiny, microscopic** or **insignificant**; do not write **miniscule**, which looks logical, but is incorrect

miracle is a word that belongs only in the **Bible**. For extraordinary happenings in the real world, write **lucky escape** or **unexpected recovery**, never **miraculous**, unless quoting

mischievous Two Is, not three, so not **mischievius**

mistakable, unmistakable No E after the K

MLA, MP, MS, MSP Write **MLA** (Northern Ireland), no need to write **Member of the Legislative Assembly**; write **MP** (England), not **Member of Parliament**; write **MSP** (Scotland), not **Member of the Scottish Parliament**; write **MS** (Wales), not **Member of the Senedd**

Molotov cocktail Write **petrol bomb**

money See **euro, cent (currency)**

money launderer, money laundering, money-laundering The noun **money launderer** and the verb **money laundering** are two words, no hyphen; the adjective, as in **money-laundering gang**, is hyphenated

moniker is a **name** or **nickname**, but do not use, unless quoting

months pregnant without an apostrophe is correct. Do not insert an apostrophe where the time period (in this case **months**) modifies an adjective (**pregnant**) – we do not write **seven years' old**, so do not write **seven months' pregnant**; however, where the time period modifies a noun, we insert an apostrophe – **four weeks' notice** and **two days' time** are correct

moon Lower case for the **Earth's moon**

more than See **over, more than**

morgue is the US word for what we in Ireland call a **mortuary**, but it is in common use here, so feel free to use these two words interchangeably

morning-after pill Hyphenated

mortuary See **morgue**

mosquito Plural **mosquitoes**

most well-known should be **best-known**

motorbike is what we write, not **motorcycle**, unless quoting

motor neurone disease (MND) is a **rare condition** that progressively **damages parts of the nervous system**, leading to **muscle weakness**, often with **visible wasting**

Mother's Day Apostrophe before the S; same with **Father's Day**

moveable With E after the V, but **immovable** without E after the V

movie is interchangeable with **film**

Muhammad is the spelling of the name of the **chief prophet** and **central figure** of the **Islamic religion**. He was born in **Mecca** in AD570 and died in **Medina** in AD632 (both cities are in **Saudi Arabia**)

multi Write **multi-million** with a hyphen, but **multi-million euro**; the words **multifaceted**, **multilingual**, **multinational** and many others are one word, no hyphen; if it looks OK without a hyphen, leave it alone

mum, Mum, dad, Dad Use lower case for the common noun: "Look – there's **my mum/my dad**." Use upper case for the proper noun: "Look – there's **Mum/Dad**." Also, do not write **mom** or **Mom**, unless quoting – write **mum** or **Mum**

Mumbai is the Indian city formerly called **Bombay**

murder, murderer See **assassin, killer, murderer**

Muslim is what we write, not **Moslem**

Myanmar is the Asian country formerly called **Burma**. The capital is **Naypyidaw**

myriad is a word that is often used incorrectly, so avoid, unless quoting. However, for the record, **myriad** refers to a **large, unspecified number**, but is used **only as an adjective**; therefore, it is correct to write **myriad reasons/excuses**, but incorrect to write **a myriad of reasons/excuses**

NNn

naive, naively, naivety, naif Do not place a diaeresis (two dots) above the I; a **naif** is a **naive person**, but use only when quoting

named after Not **named for** – she was **named after** her maternal grandmother

names Always **check the spelling of people's names**. See also **Mac, Mc (surnames)** and **place names, street names**

Nasa is the pronounceable acronym for **National Aeronautics and Space Administration**, no need to write out fully. See **acronyms**

nation, the does not mean **the country** or **the state**, it describes **people** united by culture, history and language who form a distinct group within a larger territory (but **a nation in mourning** is OK)

national is an adjective, not a noun. Many of us have a habit of describing a person as a **foreign national** – write **foreign citizen**

nationalist (Northern Ireland) Always lower case. See also **loyalist, republican, unionist**

nationality See **race, ethnicity, religion, nationality**

nationwide Despite what we have said above (**nation, the**), **nationwide** looks and sounds better than **countrywide**, so feel free to use

native Avoid writing the parochial **Cork native, Donegal native, Kilkenny native** – write instead that the person is **from Cork, from Donegal** or **from Kilkenny**. As an adjective, **native city, native county** and **native country** are OK

Native American Upper case, two words, no hyphen, is what we write, not the offensive **American Indian** or **Red Indian**

Nativity, the Upper case. Refers to the birth of Christ, so the adjectives **Nativity play** and **Nativity scene** are OK

Nato is the pronounceable acronym for **North Atlantic Treaty Organisation**, no need to write out fully. See **acronyms**

naturalist, naturist, nudist A **naturalist** is a person who **studies nature**; a **naturist (nudist)** likes to go **naked outdoors**

nature Lower case initial in all instances. Do not write **Mother Nature**, unless quoting

naught, nought All my efforts **came to naught** means they **came to nothing**, but avoid; **nought** is the figure **zero (0)**

naval, navel Write **naval**, with a penultimate A, when referring to a **navy** or **navy ships, naval exercises**; write **navel**, with a penultimate E, when you mean **belly button**; when a person spends too much time **considering their own thoughts** or **problems**, we can say they are **navel-gazing**

nave is the long, **central space in a church**, often with aisles, where people gather to worship; a **knave** is a **boy servant, a tricky or dishonest man, a lowly seaman** (usually described as **scurvy**) on an old-time pirate ship and **the jack** in a pack of **playing cards**

Navy, Irish See **Irish Naval Service**

Nazi(s), neo-Nazi(s) Use upper case N when referring to **Nazis** and **neo-Nazis**, but lower case for **nazism** and **grammar nazi** (which should be used sparingly, if at all). See also **Hitler, Adolf**

NCT is the abbreviation of **National Car Test**, no need to write out fully. In the **UK**, the equivalent is **MOT**

nearby One word, no hyphen

needless to say If it is needless to say, it is **needless to write**, so avoid using this phrase, unless quoting

nefarious With F, not PH, so not **nepharious**. Means **evil, immoral, malicious**

negligent means **careless**, hence **negligence**, while **negligible** means **slight** or **insignificant** – a **negligible amount**

neither, none Write **neither** when **only two** people or things are involved – “**Neither** of the **[two]** accused **were** present in court”; write **none** when **three or more** people or things are involved – “**None** of the **[several]** staff **have** received a second Covid booster; **none** can also refer to a singular entity, as in **none of the stolen money** was recovered

neither... nor is correct, never **neither... or**

neonatal One word, no hyphen. Refers to **babies** in the **first month** after birth. See also **antenatal, perinatal** and **postnatal**

nerve-racking Hyphenated, no W, so not **nerve-wracking**

Netherlands, the Do not write **Holland** when you mean the country – **North Holland** and **South Holland** are two of the 12 regions of **the Netherlands**

nevertheless, nonetheless One word, no hyphens, and interchangeable, but choose one and stick with it; both words mean **in spite of, even so, however, yet**

new is often redundant, as in **a new report said**, but is always preferable to **fresh**; do not write **new innovation**, which is tautologous; **brand new** is OK

newborn One word, no hyphen

newfound One word, no hyphen – **newfound friend, newfound wealth**

Newfoundland and Labrador is the easternmost province of Canada

newscaster Write **newsreader**

new year, New Year, New Year's Lower case for **in the new year**, but upper case for **New Year party, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day**

New York City takes upper case initials, but lower case S for **New York state**

New Zealand (NZ) Always write out fully – do not abbreviate to **NZ**, except in parentheses (**NZ**) after, say, a golfer's name in sports results. The people are **New Zealanders**, who called themselves **Kiwis**. The **indigenous people** of New Zealand are **Maoris** and their language is **Maori**. See also **Australia** and **Aborigine(s)**

next, last Do not write that the Cabinet will meet on **Tuesday next**, the accident happened on **Saturday last** and the new swimming pool is expected to open by **February next**. Write **next Tuesday, last Saturday** and **next February**

nicknames Always use single quotes, never double, as in **Gerry 'The Monk' Hutch** and **Martin 'The Viper' Foley**

nightclub One word, no hyphen; people go **clubbing**, not **nightclubbing**

nightmare is a **horrible dream**, nothing else, so do not write **nightmare scenario**

night-time is hyphenated, but **daytime** is one word, no hyphen

nimby, nimbyism Lower case. Pronounceable acronym for **not in my back yard**

Nineteen Eighty-Four is the name of **George Orwell's** novel, not **1984**

niqab is a **face veil** that leaves the **eyes uncovered** and is worn with a headscarf by some Muslim women in public. See also **burka, chador, hijab** and **yashmak**

No 1 on the **bestsellers list**, **No 3** on the **Spotify charts** – no full point, and always a space between **No** and **the number**

No 10 Downing Street is the official London home and office of the British prime minister and can be shortened after first mention to

No 10 – no full point, and always a space between **No** and **10**

nod Your **head** is the **only thing you can nod**, so no need to write **she nodded her head**. See also **shrug**

no-fly zone Hyphenated thus

noisome has nothing to do with **noise** – it means **offensive** or **evil-smelling**. See also **fulsome**

no man's land Lower case, no hyphens

nonagenarian is a person **aged 90 to 99**

non-binary See **binary**

none See **neither, none**

nonetheless See **nevertheless, nonetheless**

non-fiction Hyphenated

no one Always two words, never hyphenated

noon See **time of day**

Nordic countries are **Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland** and **Iceland**. See also **Scandinavia**

normalcy, normality Every time we see the (US) **normalcy**, we change it to **normality**. Do not write **normalcy**

Northern Ireland, the North Write **Northern Ireland** at first mention, then the **North**. Never write **the South** for the **Republic of Ireland**. See **Irish counties and county towns** and **Ulster**

Northern Ireland Protocol Write out fully with upper case initials at first mention, then shorten to **the protocol**, lower case

northern lights Lower case. Natural phenomenon seen in the night sky in far northerly locations during winter and known also as **aurora borealis**; the same winter phenomenon in the southern hemisphere is called the **southern lights (aurora australis)**

nosy Not **nosey**; an over-inquisitive person can be described as **nosy**

notable, noticeable If something is **notable**, it is **worthy of attention, memorable** or **distinguished**; if something is **noticeable**, it is **easily seen**

not-for-profit Hyphenated, and always an adjective – a **not-for-profit organisation**; do not use as a noun – it is incorrect and incomplete to write **she works for a not-for-profit**

nought See **naught, nought**

Novichok is a **nerve agent (poison)** developed in the former **Soviet Union** in the 1970s. It was used in the suspected **attempted murder** of **Russian dissident Sergei Skripal** in **Salisbury**, England, in March 2018, for which Russia was blamed

number of, a If we know the number, we should always write it; otherwise, **a number of** is OK, as is **several**. Do not write **the past number of weeks/months/years**, which is far too vague – try to be as precise as possible

numbers We write **one** to **nine** as **words**; from **10 onwards**, we use **numerals**; write out fully the words **first** to **ninth**, then **10th, 11th, 43rd, 250th** and so on; numbers **at the start a sentence** are always written out fully, as in **“Forty-three** Ukrainian refugees were forced to sleep in Dublin Airport last night...” (if the number is **483**, for example, we would not write **“Four-hundred-and-eighty-three** Ukrainian refugees...”, we would write **“Nearly 500** Ukrainian refugees...” See also **some (in front of a number)**

nuptials Write **marriage** or **wedding**

n-word, the must never be written out fully. If this word must appear in copy, as in a court report, write **n******. See **swear words**

nyctophobia is a **fear of the dark**. See **phobias**

OOo

OAP See **pensioner, OAP**

obliged is what we write, do not use the (US) **obligated**

oblivious of Not **oblivious to**

occur, occurred, occurring Write **happen, happened** and **happening**, unless quoting

oceans There are five oceans. From the biggest to the smallest they are the **Pacific Ocean, Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean, Southern Ocean** (also known as the **Antarctic Ocean**) and **Arctic Ocean**

octogenarian is a person **aged 80 to 89**

OECD is the acronym for the intergovernmental **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development**, but no need to write out fully; it has 38 member countries, **including Ireland**

of is often unnecessary, as in **all of the people** – just write **all the people**

of all time Pele is regarded by many as the best footballer **of all time**, but best football player **ever** is shorter – we like economy of words

offbeat, offhand, offside and most other words with the prefix **off** are one word, no hyphen, but looking **off colour** is two words, no hyphen, and **off-colour** language is hyphenated

off-licence Hyphenated, and note that **licence** ends with CE, not SE. See **licence, license**

oilfield, oilwell One word, no hyphen, but **oil-fired** is hyphenated and **oil rig** is two words, no hyphen

OK is what we write in all instances, not **okay** or **okey**

Olympic Games can be shortened to **the Olympics** or **the Games**

omelette Not omelet

Omicron Upper case for the **Covid-19 variant**. See **coronavirus, Covid-19, long-Covid**

on board, onboard See **aboard, on board, onboard**

once-off, one-off Write **once-off** when referring to an **occasion** or **event** that is **never to be repeated** – something that happened or will **happen only once**; use **one-off** to mean **unique** – a **one-off piece of jewellery**

one in six, one in 10 Always treat as plural, so write **one in six are**, not **one in six is**, and no need to write the longer **one in every six** or **one out of every six**

one-time Write **former** or **ex-** instead

ongoing One word, no hyphen, and in common use, but avoid, unless quoting – we prefer **continuing**. At the end of a court report, write **the trial continues**, not **the trial is ongoing**

online One word, no hyphen

only must be applied **immediately before the word or phrase it qualifies** (**I only have €5** is incorrect, **I have only €5** is correct). This rule is ignored by The Flamingos in their 1959 hit song, *I Only Have Eyes for You*, which suggests the singer does not have ears, a chin and a left leg as well for You. If the song title were grammatically correct, it would be *I Have Eyes For Only You*, but who are we to mess with a classic?

only, just In the sense of **merely**, these two words are interchangeable, so feel free to write **she was only trying to help** or **he was just minding his own business**; it is OK to write **only just** in a phrase such as **I only just caught the train with seconds to spare**

on to Always two words, never **onto**

opened up about is inelegant. Write **has said, has told of** or **has spoken about**

openly gay Just write **gay**, without the unnecessary adjective. See **sexuality**

opposition, the (government) Lower case in all instances. See also **Cabinet (Irish), Coalition, the (Irish Government)** and **Government (Irish)**

oral, aural Sometimes mixed up. **Oral** concerns the **mouth**, while **aural** refers to the **ears**

orangutan One word, no hyphen

ordinance, ordnance An **ordinance**, with an I after the D, is a **decree** or **regulation**, while **ordnance**, no I, refers to **military weapons, ammunition, vehicles, stores and tools**

Ordnance Survey Ireland is the **national mapping agency** – **Ordnance** because, historically, surveying and mapping were carried out by the military

orphans See **widows and orphans**

Oscars, the See **Academy Awards**

Ottawa is the **capital of Canada**, but is often misspelled as **Ottowa**

ours Possessive, no apostrophe, so never **our's**, same as **yours** and **theirs**

out (has come out), outed Take care with these words and phrases, which commonly refer to gay people. **Has come out** generally has **positive connotations**, meaning a person is **happy to be known as gay** or has **personally made it known they are gay**; the word **outed**, the use of which we discourage, unless quoting, has **sinister connotations** and generally means a person has been **identified as gay to others**, usually **against that person's wishes**. See **sexuality**

outdoor, outdoors Use **outdoor** as an adjective – an **outdoor concert**; write **outdoors** (noun) when referring generally to the **open air**; the **Great Outdoors** when applied to the **countryside** is clichéd

outgrow, outgun, outmanoeuvre, outsmart and most other words with the prefix **out** are one word, no hyphen

outpatient, inpatient One word, no hyphen

outside Not **outside of** when referring to **location** or **position**

over, more than In the sense of a **greater number** or **quantity**, it has become the norm to automatically change **over** to **more than**, but this is not a rule – someone some years ago decided **more than** is preferable to **over** and it has stuck. If **more than** looks more appropriate in a sentence, use it; same with **over**

overestimate, overreact, override, overrule, overrun and most other words with the prefix **over**, including those with double R, are one word, no hyphen

Oxford comma, the is in everyday use in the US – it is the **comma before the final 'and'** in straightforward lists – but is not generally used in Irish journalism. However, its use is necessary at times to avoid confusion (and sniggers). Without the Oxford comma, "I dedicate this new album to my parents, Shane MacGowan and Taylor Swift" tells us **your father is MacGowan** and **your mother is Swift**. With the Oxford comma "I dedicate this album to my parents, Shane MacGowan, and Taylor Swift" is clear

Oz See **Australia (Oz)**

PPp

paedophile Every piece of copy that contains the word **paedophile**, even when no names are mentioned, **must be approved by the duty lawyer** before it is published; never shorten **paedophile** to **paedo**

paintings We **do not italicise** the names of paintings. See **artworks**

pajamas is the American spelling, we write **pyjamas**

palate, palette, pallet These three words are frequently mixed up. The **palate** is the **roof of the mouth** or **sense of taste**; an **artist** mixes paint on a **palette**; a **pallet** is a portable **wooden platform** used for storage (or for **building bonfires** in Northern Ireland)

pandemic is the **worldwide spread** of an **infectious disease** that affects a **very large number of people** across countries and continents – historically, the **Black Death** in the 14th century and the **1918 influenza epidemic (Spanish flu)**; more recently, the **Covid-19 pandemic** (the disease was first reported in the city of Wuhan, China, in December 2019). See also **coronavirus, Covid-19, long-Covid** and **epidemic**

papal nuncio, nunciature A **papal nuncio**, lower case P and N, is a diplomatic representative of the **Holy See** – an **ambassador of the Vatican**. In Ireland, the **apostolic nunciature** (embassy) is on Navan Road, Dublin. See also **ambassador, consul** and **embassy**

paparazzi is the plural of **paparazzo** – **Paparazzo** is the surname of a photographer in Federico Fellini's 1960 film *La Dolce Vita*

parallel is most often used as an adjective to describe things that are the **same distance apart along their entire length** – for example, Grafton Street **runs parallel with** Dawson Street; **parallel double yellow lines** prohibit parking; **parallel bars** are a piece of gymnastics equipment. As a noun, **parallel** means **similarity** – the traditional music of Ireland shares **many parallels** with that of Brittany. We can also write **in parallel** to mean **at the same time** – the Edinburgh Festival Fringe runs **in parallel with** the city's TV festival

paraphernalia refers to **items** or **equipment** needed for or connected with a **particular activity** and appears most often in court reports – **drugs paraphernalia**

partygoer One word, no hyphen. See also **goer**

passed away See **died, passed away**

passerby One word, no hyphen, plural is **passersby**, not **passerbys**. It appears we cannot write **passerby** without sticking **innocent** in front of it – a **guilty passerby** would be newsworthy, but refrain from writing **innocent passerby**. See also **bystander**

patronise To **patronise** or to be **patronising** is to be **condescending** about someone or something; avoid writing that someone **patronises** a certain **coffee shop** – say instead that they are a **regular customer**

payback, payoff, payout, payroll As nouns, these are all one word, no hyphen, while **pay cheque, pay day, pay rise** are two words, no hyphen; as verbs, **pay back, pay off** and **pay out** are two words, no hyphen

pdf All lower case (short for **portable document format**)

peak, peek, pique A **peak** is a **pointed mountain summit** and the **point of greatest development** or **strength** – the **peak of her career**; it is also the **period of highest use** or **volume** – hyphenate **peak-time TV, peak-hour traffic**; to **peek** is to **look quickly** or **surreptitiously** (take a **sneak peek**, not **sneak peak**); **pique** is **annoyance** or **resentment** – he left the meeting in a **fit of pique**, he was **piqued** – and also means to **arouse** or **excite**, as in his **curiosity was piqued** by the rumour

Peking is the former name of the capital of China, now called **Beijing**

pen Use **pen** only as a noun – a **ballpoint pen** (not a **Biro**); never use as a verb – Dubliner Bram Stoker **wrote** the novel *Dracula*, he did not **pen** it. See also **author, helm** and **ink**

pensioner, OAP If someone **receives any sort of pension**, they are a **pensioner**; do not use **pensioner** or **OAP** as another word for a person of **advanced years** – in Ireland, men and women qualify for the **state pension (old age pension)** at the **age of 66**, which is by no means **old** (except to a teenager) and is **not elderly**. If in doubt, write **older person**. See **elderly**

per is used too often for **a** – write €25,000 **a year** instead of €25,000 **per year** or **per annum**; sometimes **per** is unavoidable, as in **per head of population**, which is better than **per capita**

per cent Write the abbreviated **pc** in headlines and copy, with no space between it and the number, so **62pc** and **120pc**; on the rare occasions when a percentage amount begins a sentence, write "**Forty-five per cent** of Irish teenagers..."; we use the **percentage symbol (%)** **only in graphics**

perinatal One word, no hyphen. Refers to the period **three months before and one month after birth**. See also **antenatal, neonatal** and **postnatal, postpartum**

permit As a verb, write **allow** or **let**

person of colour See **black, brown, coloured, person of colour**

personal pronouns (he, she, they) Always use the personal pronoun the person we are writing about uses – this is a simple matter of respect. The English singer **Sam Smith** uses **they**, while the Canadian actor **Elliot Page**, formerly **Ellen Page**, made it known in December 2020 that he is transgender and uses **he** and **they**. In the case of **drag artists**, such as **Panti Bliss** and **RuPaul**, refer to their female persona as **she**. See **cis, cisgender** and **gender identity**

personnel Double N, but write instead **people, employees, staff** or **workers**

persons Always write **people**, unless referring to **missing persons** or when quoting

peruse (read) means to **study carefully**, it does not mean to **skim** or **flick through** the pages of a book or magazine

phalanx Historically (ancient Greece), a **phalanx** was a **formation of soldiers in close, deep ranks** with shields overlapping and spears protruding upwards; we recently saw **phalanx** used to describe a **criminal's associates** and immediately changed it to **gang**. Write **phalanx** only in the historical sense

pharmacist, pharmacy are the words we use – do not write **chemist** or **chemist's**, unless quoting

Phibsboro is how we spell the name of the Dublin northside neighbourhood, not **Phibsborough**. See **place names, street names**

philanthropist, philatelist A **philanthropist** performs **benevolent** or **charitable deeds**, while a **philatelist** is a **collector of postage stamps**. We once saw the late Irish-American **billionaire Chuck Feeney**, who donated €160m to the University of Limerick, described in copy as a **philatelist** (maybe he was, but he was known primarily as a **philanthropist**)

phobias are **irrational fears**, but they can be debilitating to those who live with them, so do not make fun of phobias. Among the most common are: **acrophobia** (heights), **aerophobia** (flying), **agoraphobia** (open spaces or crowds), **arachnophobia** (spiders), **astraphobia** (thunder and lightning), **claustrophobia** (confined spaces), **cynophobia**

(dogs), **dentophobia** (dentists), **homophobia** (homosexual people or homosexuality) **nyctophobia** (the dark), **pyrophobia** (fire), **trypanophobia** (needles, injections) and **xenophobia** (foreigners or strangers)

phonetic alphabet is formally the International Radiotelephony Spelling Alphabet, used by aircraft pilots, for example, when communicating with air traffic control and worth a point or two in a pub quiz. The words representing the letters of the alphabet are **Alfa, Bravo, Charlie, Delta, Echo, Foxtrot, Golf, Hotel, India, Juliet, Kilo, Lima, Mike, November, Oscar, Papa, Quebec, Romeo, Sierra, Tango, Uniform, Victor, Whiskey, X-ray, Yankee** and **Zulu**

phoney Not **phony**

photocall, photocopy, photofit, photojournalism and **photoshoot** are all one word, no hyphen, but **photo-finish** is hyphenated and **photo opportunity (photo opp** with double P for short) is two words, no hyphen; **Photoshop**, upper case, one word, no hyphen is a noun and a verb

pill, the Lower-case for the oral **birth control pill**

PIN All upper case (an exception to the pronounceable acronym rule). Short for **personal identification number**, so no need to write **PIN number**

pizzazz Note the two double Zs. If you say someone has **pizzazz**, it means they are **stylish, exciting** and **energetic** in an **attractive way**. See also **razzmatazz**

place names, street names Always check the spellings of place names and street names (readers do not take kindly to their town or street being misspelled). If a Google search offers more than one spelling, look for an **image of a street sign** or a **road sign**

plagiarism is the act of **passing off someone else's writing as your own**, which is unprofessional and unethical and can result in legal action

plain-clothes Hyphenated as an adjective, as in **plain-clothes gardai**, not **plain-clothed**, but gardai in **plain clothes**, two words, no hyphen

plaintiff, plaintive In civil law, the **plaintiff** is the person or group of people or an organisation who **pursue(s) a circuit court action** against another person (or group of people or an organisation) known as the **defendant(s)**; write **plaintive** (adjective) to mean **expressing sorrow** or **melancholy** or **sounding sad** – a **plaintiff** might state his or her case in a **plaintive voice**

planets We write the names of planets with an upper case initial. There are **eight planets** in the solar system. In order from the closest to the sun they are **Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune**. The **Earth's moon** and **the sun** are lower case

play off, play-off Sports term, two words, no hyphen as a verb – the teams **will play off** against each other; as a noun, insert a hyphen – the teams will **meet in a play-off**

plays, musicals The names of stage plays and musicals are written in italics – *The Plough and the Stars* (Sean O'Casey, no fada in Sean), *Mamma Mia!* (Benny Andersson and Bjorn Ulvaeus of ABBA)

PlayStation One word, no hyphen, upper case P and S. See also **Xbox**

pleaded, pled Write **pleaded guilty**, not **pled guilty**

plethora is sometimes used incorrectly. A **plethora** is an **overabundance** or **excess** of something, it is not another word for a **long list** or a **wide selection**

poignant means **distressing to one's feelings**, and therefore has **negative connotations** – a **funeral is a poignant occasion**, and a **wedding can be poignant** if, say, the father of the bride died only weeks before; a **happy occasion** is not **poignant**

poisonous, venomous Write **poisonous** when referring to a **substance (poison)** that is **harmful when consumed**; use **venomous** when describing a creature, commonly a **snake**, that **injects its poison by biting**. Therefore, write **venomous snake**, not **poisonous snake**

Pole (Poland) Some people believe it is offensive to refer to a **person from Poland** as a **Pole**. It is not offensive, as any **Pole** will tell you

pommel, pummel The first refers to a piece of **gymnastics equipment**, the **pommel horse**, while **pummel** means to **strike repeatedly with the fists**

poor Using this word as a noun (**the poor**) or adjective (**poor neighbourhood**) is disrespectful and stigmatising, so avoid. Unless quoting ("I was brought up in a poor household"), write **low-income** to describe **individuals** and **families or communities**

Pope Always upper case, so **the Pope, Pope Francis** (who has no regnal number after his name because there was no previous Pope Francis), **Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI** and **Saint Pope John Paul II**, but lower case **papal, pontiff** and **pontificate**

pore, pour You should **pore over (study carefully)** this stylebook after **pouring** a cup of coffee

porn, pornography (children) The short form **porn** is a word we discourage, so use only when quoting, and never write **child porn** or **child pornography** (younger colleagues will be horrified to learn that the phrase **kiddy porn** was common in some newspapers until quite recently); **images** or **video of child sexual abuse** are acceptable phrases in copy, but may be used only when we are reporting on an investigation into the suspected possession, production or distribution of such, or when a person is charged with or convicted of any or all of the above offences. All matters pertaining to the offence of child sexual abuse are defined under the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2006. If in any doubt about phraseology when reporting or commenting, always consult a senior colleague, the duty lawyer or the legal manager

port, starboard Which is **left** and which is **right**? An easy way to remember is that **port** has **four letters** and **ends with T**, as does **left**, so **port is left** and, therefore, **starboard is right**

Portuguese Note the U after the G, so not **Portugese**

postgraduate, undergraduate One word, no hyphen

post-mortem examination Hyphenated, and always with **examination** at first mention; thereafter, we can shorten to **post-mortem** to avoid repetition

postnatal, postpartum Both one word, no hyphen, and inextricably linked, but there is a difference in meaning. **Postnatal** pertains to **the baby** and refers to the period **six to eight weeks after birth**, while **postpartum** pertains to **the mother** in the same period. See also **antenatal, neonatal** and **perinatal**

practice, practise Often mixed up. A **GP works in a practice** (noun) and **practises medicine** (verb)

practising homosexual Do not write this – we would never write **practising heterosexual**. See **sexuality**

precede, proceed Use **precede** when you mean something that **goes before** and write **proceed** for **to go ahead**

predominantly Not **predominately**

Premier League, the is the **highest division** in the **English Football League** (it is no longer called **the Premiership**); its equivalent in the **Republic of Ireland** is the **SSE Airtricity League of Ireland Premier Division**; in **Scotland**, it is the **Scottish Premiership**

premier, premiere Write **premier**, no final E, to mean **best, most important** or **first in rank** (also a shorter form of **prime minister**). Write **premiere**, with final E, for the **premiere of a film**

prenuptial One word, no hyphen, and often misspelled as **preuptual**. The short form **prenup** is handy – at a push – in a headline. See also **nuptials**

prerogative Not **perogative**

prescribe, proscribe A **doctor prescribes** the use of a **drug**; to **proscribe** means to **ban** or **condemn** – the **IRA** is a **proscribed organisation**

presently means **soon**, it does not mean **now**

President, president Upper case P in all instances when referring to the current **President of Ireland**, so **the President** and **President Michael D Higgins**; use lower case for **former president Mary McAleese, ex-president Mary Robinson** and so on; lower case P for the presidents of other countries, so **the US president** and **the French president**, but upper case when used as a title, so **President Joe Biden** and **President Emmanuel Macron**

pressure is a noun, never a verb. Do not write that someone was **pressured** into doing something – they were **pressed** into doing something or **pressure was put on** them

presume See **assume, presume (assumption, presumption)**

preventive Not **preventative**

prime minister Lower case in every instance, so **prime minister Rishi Sunak** and **former prime minister Tony Blair**. See also **President, president**

principal, principle Write **principal** when you mean **first in importance or seniority** – the **principal partner** in a law firm, for example, or a **school principal**; use **principle** or **principles** when referring to a **standard of conduct** or a **set of personal values**

prior to Write **before**

prior appointment, prior conviction are wrong – the correct adjective is **previous**

prise, prize, pry (pries) Write **prise** when you mean to **lever something open**; we all know what a **prize** is; **pry** means to **stick your nose into** someone else's business or **meddle** – **they pry, she pries**

pro-choice, pro-life See **abortion**

prognosis means the **prediction** of the **course** or **outcome** of an **illness**. The plural is **prognoses**. See also **diagnosis**

program, programme Use **program** when referring to **computers**; write **programme** in all other instances – **TV programme, match-day programme** and so on

propeller Penultimate E, not O, so not **propellor**

prostate, prostrate Write **prostate** when referring to the **male gland** surrounding the neck of the bladder (**prostate cancer**); use **prostrate** when you mean **lying face down**

protest When using **protest** as a verb, it must always have **against** or **at** or **over** immediately after it – we do not **protest the cost of living**, we **protest against** or **protest at the cost of living**

protester With a penultimate E, not O, so not **protestor**

Protocol, protocol See **Northern Ireland Protocol**

proved, proven The past tense of **prove** is **proved** – he was **proved wrong**; write **proven** only as an adjective, as in **proven ability**

public Always look twice, as this sometimes mistakenly appears as **pubic**

public servant, public service Lower case in all instances. **Public servants support the work of the Government** and are paid by the State – they include **gardaí, RTÉ staff, Irish Rail train drivers and HSE nurses and doctors**. See also **civil servant, civil service**

publicly Not **publically**

pummel See **pommel, pummel**

punctuation See individual entries for **apostrophes, exclamation marks, semi-colons, colons, dashes, ellipses, backslash** and **forward slash**

punter is an informal word for a **gambler** or a **pub customer**, usually a regular

pupils, students Generally, we refer to **primary pupils**, but **post-primary students, secondary students** and **second-level students**; those in **third-level education** are, of course, **students**

purchase Do not write **purchase** as a verb, write **buy**;
however, **purchases** is OK as a plural noun

pyjamas Not the US **pajamas**

pyromaniac is a person with an **uncontrollable desire to start fires**. See also **arson**

pyrophobia is a **fear of fire**. See **phobias**

pyrotechnics refers to the **art of making fireworks or staging a fireworks display**, it is not another word for **fireworks**, such as **rockets, bangers** and **Catherine wheels**

QQq

Qantas is the Australian national airline, no U after the Q. Pronounceable acronym for **Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Services**. See **acronyms**

quandary Two As, not **quandry**. Means **predicament**

quango Acronym for **quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation**, never any need to write out fully. Plural **quangos**

quarter to, quarter past (time) No hyphen

Queen Elizabeth II See **British royals**

Queen's University Belfast With an apostrophe in **Queen's**

queer In the sense of sexuality, **queer** means different things to different people, so do not presume to use it unless quoting an LGBTQ+ person or organisation. See **sexuality**

queue, queued, queuing Only one E in **queuing**, so not **queueing**

questionnaire Double N

quid Do not write **quid** for **euro**, unless quoting

quintessential means **exemplary**, representing the **typical** or **perfect example** of something – the **quintessential black pudding** comes from **Clonakilty**

quiz Gardaí **question** suspects, they do not **quiz** them (except in headlines, and then at a push, but **never in copy**). See also **grill**

quotation marks, single and double See Appendix Quotes at end of section Q

quotes See Appendix Quotes at end of section Q

Appendix Quotes

"I'm so excited!" she gushed

Attributions

Sub-editors often change the attributions that go after (and sometimes before) quotes, as in the example above – broken drainpipes gush, people do not.

The only attributions you need, generally, are **he** or **she said** and **he** or **she added**. In the case of an official report or statement, you may write **it stated**. Others that are acceptable, if used sparingly, are **he continued**, **she explained**, **he recalled**, **she reflected**, **he remembered** and **she went on**.

Do not be tempted to use any of the following:

averred
bawled
bellowed
cackled
called
chuckled
concluded
cried
ejaculated
explained
grimaced
grinned
groaned
growled
grumbled
gushed
laughed
offered
opined
quipped
reiterated
roared
screached
shouted
shrugged
smiled
smirked
sniggered
squawked
squeaked
squealed
wincing
yelled

A source said

This, along with **a garda source said** and **a government source said**, is an acceptable attribution when the source

being quoted must remain nameless. Writing **a senior source said**, **a reliable source said** or **an informed source said** adds nothing to the authority of the quote as we are unlikely to report what a **junior source**, an **unreliable source** or an **uninformed source** has told us.

A prison insider said

We have seen this, and would prefer not to see it again.

Attributions go after the quote

For all Mediahuis print and digital platforms, the attribution goes, in most instances, **after the quote** (see **Exception**, below). For example:

"I've instructed my officers to arrest any dog owner who allows their pet to soil the pavement without cleaning up the mess afterwards," Garda Commissioner Colm Inches said.

"People have the right to enter their homes without trailing dog dirt all over the carpet."

Note that it is **Garda Commissioner Colm Inches said**, not **said Garda Commissioner Colm Inches**.

When the quote runs to two or more consecutive paragraphs, **the attribution must always go after the first paragraph** so we know immediately who is speaking. Never leave the reader guessing.

It is unnecessary in an uninterrupted run of several consecutive quote paragraphs to add an attribution after each paragraph – **the attribution after the first paragraph is the only one we need**. Some writers appear to panic and add attributions after all quote paragraphs. This is off-the-scale wrong:

Exception to placement of attributions after the quote

In an article in which several people are quoted, it is necessary to differentiate between one voice and another to avoid confusion. For example:

Neighbours have protested after a dog owner was arrested for allowing his pet to soil the pavement without cleaning up the mess afterwards.

Father-of-12 Aloysius Murphy (78) collapsed during the incident and had to be revived by paramedics.

Local shopkeeper Sean D'Olier (61) said: "I'm shocked and stunned. Aloysius is a quiet little man who keeps himself to himself."

Window cleaner Peter 'Pally' Lally (52) added: "You never expect something like this to happen around here. It's a crying shame."

In the example above, it is obvious who is speaking. In the example below, it looks like Mr D'Olier is still speaking in the second paragraph until we learn it is Mr Lally.

"I'm shocked and stunned. Aloysius is a quiet little man who keeps himself to himself," local shopkeeper Sean D'Olier (61) said.

"You never expect something like this to happen around here. It's a crying shame," window cleaner Peter 'Pally' Lally (52) added.

That sounds familiar (1)

Do not repeat word for word in quotes something you have already stated in narrative copy. For example:

Garda Commissioner Colm Inches has instructed his officers to arrest any dog owner who allows their pet to soil the pavement without cleaning up the mess afterwards.

"I've instructed my officers to arrest any dog owner who allows their pet to soil the pavement without cleaning up the mess afterwards," he said.

These are known as **parrot paragraphs** and should never appear in copy

That sounds familiar (2)

A variant of (1) is sometimes seen in articles about crimes or accidents where they are reported in detail and then the same information is repeated in quotes, from a garda spokesperson. Readers do not need telling twice.

Quotation marks, double and single

It is Mediahuis Ireland style to place reported speech and segments of reported speech within double inverted commas **"like this"**, not single inverted commas **'like this'**.

Single inverted commas are used only for **quotes within quotes**. For example:

Mr Inches said the garda had given Mr Murphy the opportunity to clean up his dog's mess, and he would be let off with just a warning.

"But he was having none of it," the commissioner added. "He told my officer, 'Mind your own business and go and arrest some real criminals'."

Punctuation in quotes

The final comma, full stop, question mark or exclamation mark in directly reported speech is placed **inside the quote**, as in the following correct example:

Retired bagpipes teacher Liam Burke (84) said: "This €10,000 pay rise for TDs is just a joke. They should be ashamed to accept it."

Or, written another way:

"This €10,000 pay rise for TDs is just a joke," retired bagpipes teacher Liam Burke (84) said. "They should be ashamed to accept it."

In a narrative sentence where an excerpt is lifted from directly reported speech, the punctuation is placed **outside the quoted words**, as in the following correct example:

Retired bagpipes teacher Liam Burke (84) said the €10,000 pay rise for TDs "is just a joke", and added: "They should be ashamed to accept it."

Editing quotes

The spoken words within the inverted commas may be edited – with care – when they make no sense, are contradictory, grammatically or legally unsound or could leave the speaker open to ridicule.

Politicians and corporate spokespersons are fond of using five words when one will do, resulting in long-winded sentences that can run for a dozen or more single-column lines.

Even with the inclusion of helpful punctuation, such verbiage can test the patience and intelligence of readers, who might have to go back to the start to try to make sense of what is being said.

When confronted with such quotes, feel free to split a long-winded paragraph into two or three shorter ones.

[Square brackets] in quotes

In our writing and editing, square brackets **[like these]** appear **only in reported speech**, nowhere else. Curved brackets **(like these)** appear **only in narrative reporting**, **never in reported speech**.

Square brackets are inserted in quotes:

For clarity: "My two brothers were there, and so was Mary [his wife]."

To add omitted information: "I have visited every state in the US except two [Alaska and Hawaii]."

[sic]

This makes rare appearances in reported speech and quoted material.

[sic] is the abbreviation of the Latin **sic erat scriptum** (“**thus was it written**”) and goes within **[square brackets]**; it is placed directly after a spelling, grammatical or factual error or a wrongly-chosen word or phrase.

[sic] is most likely to appear when we reproduce a tweet. For example:

Influencer Gabriella OMG told her 2.3 million followers on X, formerly Twitter: “I’m so exited [sic] to be the new face of Spotless Acne Cream!”

Be careful, because **[sic]** can be perceived as a condescending exercise in making people look careless.

Contractions in quotes

In everyday speech, people invariably use contractions – they say “isn’t” instead of “is not”, “I’ve” for “I have” and “you’re” instead of “you are”. We should report language as it is spoken. If the person being quoted says “I wouldn’t”, do not change it to “I would not”.

RRr

race, ethnicity, religion, nationality If a person's **race, ethnicity, religion** or **nationality** is **not relevant** to a story, **do not mention it**. Ireland is a multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-faith and multinational society, and this must be reflected in the quality journalism we strive to produce for an intelligent audience at home and worldwide. If you are in any doubt about the appropriateness of a particular word or phrase, look it up in this stylebook (if we have inadvertently omitted it, ask a colleague)

racecourse, racegoer, racehorse, racetrack One word, no hyphen, but **horse racing** is two words, no hyphen

rack, wrack You **rack your brain** and are **racked with guilt, shame** or **pain**; with a W, **wrack** is **seaweed** or other **marine vegetation** floating free or washed up on the shore

racket, racquet Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz plays **tennis** with a **racket**, not a **racquet**, but some of his fellow players make **quite a racket** with their grunting and groaning when serving

raft A **raft** is a **flat floating structure** for **transporting people or items on water**; avoid the phrase a **raft of measures** – write a **number of** or a **series of**

rainforest One word, no hyphen

Ramadan is the **ninth month of the Muslim (lunar) calendar** and a holy period of **fasting, reflection, charity** and **prayer**; the Muslim calendar is shorter than the Gregorian calendar, so Ramadan begins 10 to 12 days earlier each year – in 2023, it began at sundown on March 22 and ended at sundown on April 30. Do not confuse **Ramadan** (final N) with **Ramada**, the **hotels chain**

Range Rover No hyphen, same as **Land Rover**, but **Rolls-Royce** is hyphenated

rape We generally include **helpline numbers** as an endnote in longer stories or comment pieces about **rape, sexual assault** and **sexual abuse**. See **helplines**

rapped, rapt, wrapped Write **rapped** for **rapped on the knuckles**; use **rapt** when you mean **engrossed**; and **wrapped** when referring to **Christmas presents**

raze To say a **building** was **razed to the ground**, by a fire or a bulldozer, is tautologous, like saying a person **died to death** – a building cannot be razed to the sky, so do not write **to the ground**. See **tautology**

razzmatazz Three As, not four, so not **razzamatazz**. See also **pizzazz**

realpolitik refers to a **system of politics** that **focuses on material needs** and **practical goals** rather than **ideological pursuits** – in other words, **everyday concerns**; the word ends with K, not C, and is a singular noun, so no final S

rebuke, rebut, refute To **rebuke** (also a noun) is to **reprimand, tell off**; to **rebut** is to **disprove by argument** – she appeared on TV to **rebut the claims**; write **refute** when you mean to **prove false or incorrect by presenting evidence**

reckless criminal Every time we see a criminal described as **reckless**, we delete the adjective because we have never heard of a **careful and considerate criminal**

referendum Plural is **referendums**, not **referenda**

re-form, reform, reformer Write the verb **re-form**, hyphenated, when you mean **reassemble** or **regroup**, like a 1990s rock band getting back together because they miss the buzz of performing (in other words, they are broke); **reform** (verb and noun), one word, no hyphen, means to **change something for the better** – a **reformer** is someone who **strives for reform(s)**; a **person** who has **mended their ways** can be described as a **reformed character**

refugee generally describes a person who has **fled their home country** in fear for their life because of **danger** (war, for example) or **persecution** to **seek refuge** in another country. The tens of thousands of **Ukrainians** who arrived in Ireland in 2022, mostly women and children fleeing Vladimir Putin's bombs, are **refugees**. See also **asylum-seeker**

reign, rein King Charles III's **reign** began the moment his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, died on September 8, 2022; he has said he will **reign** until he dies. **Reins** control a horse or a toddler; **rein in** is two words, no hyphen; write **free rein**, not **free reign**. See **British royals**

release, discharge A **prisoner** is **released from prison**, while a **patient** is **discharged from hospital**

relic, relict A **relic** is an **artefact**, or a small **piece of bone**, say, from a **saint**, that is kept in a **reliquary**; a **relict** is an antiquated word for a **widow**

religion See **race, ethnicity, religion, nationality**

reluctant, reticent If you are **reluctant**, you are **unwilling to do something**, while **reticent** means **unwilling to speak** or **reveal one's thoughts**

reopen One word, no hyphen

repertoire is an **actor** or **other entertainer's complete set** of **plays, songs, dance routines, tricks** and so on that have been prepared and are available to perform

republican (Ireland, Northern Ireland) Lower case, but in US politics **Republican** is upper case. See also **loyalist, nationalist** and **unionist**

reside Write **live** or **stay**, unless quoting

restaurateur No N in the word, so never **restauranteur**

retch, wretch, wretched If you **retch**, usually as a **reaction** to a **disgusting smell**, you go through the **straining motions of vomiting** without vomiting; **wretch** is contradictory in its meanings – it can describe a **despicable person** or a **person worthy of pity**; the adjective is **wretched**

reticent See **reluctant**

reveller Not a word we use in everyday conversation, but it appears frequently in copy; write something more suitable like **partygoer**

review, revue As a noun and verb, **review** refers to an **examination, assessment** or **critique** (the film got **mixed reviews**); a **revue** is a form of **light entertainment** consisting of **topical sketches, songs, dancing** and **jokes**

ridiculous, ludicrous The main difference between these adjectives, which mean **absurd**, is that **ridiculous invites derision** while **ludicrous causes amusement**

riffle, rifle You **riffle** (double F) the **pages of a book**, but **rifle** (one F) through the contents of a **drawer**

rip off, rip-off The verb is **rip off**, two words, no hyphen, as in **con artists rip off gullible people**; use **rip-off**, hyphenated, as a noun and adjective – some **pub prices in Temple Bar** are a **rip-off**, except in a handful of bars that are not **rip-off joints**. In the sense of a **cheap** or **exploitative imitation**, you could say **those €50 'Gucci' handbags** must be **rip-offs** and the **artwork** on the cover of **The Clash's 1979 album London Calling** is considered by many to be a **rip-off** of **Elvis Presley's** eponymous 1956 album

risky, risque Write **risky** when you mean **potentially dangerous** or where **success is not guaranteed**; use **risque**, no accent on the E, to describe something that is **bordering on the indecent** – a **risque joke**, for example

road traffic accident Avoid writing this, unless quoting, when you mean **car crash, collision, road accident** or **traffic accident** – these are the words and phrases we use in everyday conversation. While writing that vehicles **were involved in a crash** or a **collision** or an **accident** is **legally OK**, we must never in the immediate aftermath use the phrase **collided with** – if we say **B collided with A**, we are **suggesting B is to blame**, which is **legally dangerous**. Also, keep in mind that a **collision** refers only to an **impact** between **moving objects** – for example, **two or more vehicles, a car and a pedestrian** or a **car and a cyclist**; therefore, a **vehicle cannot be in collision** with a **tree, a wall** or a **lamp-post** – in those instances, write **hits, strikes** or **crashes into**

road map is two words, no hyphen, and has become cliched when used to mean **plan**, which is the word we prefer, unless quoting or when we are writing about a map showing roads

rob See **steal, rob**

rock'n'roll One word, and note the apostrophes; not **rock 'n' roll**; but **Rock and Roll Hall of Fame** (in Cleveland, Ohio) is correct

Rohypnol Trade name, so upper case. Never describe it as a **date rape drug**

roller blades, roller coaster, roller skates Two words, no hyphen

rollover, roll over One word, no hyphen, when referring to a **lottery jackpot**; two words, no hyphen, as a verb – **roll over in bed**

Rolls-Royce Hyphenated

Roma See **Gypsies, Travellers, Roma**

Roman numerals Use only as **ordinal numbers**, as in **World War I** and **World War II**, or **regnal numbers**, as in **Henry VIII, Elizabeth II** and **Charles III**; also **Saint Pope John Paul II** and **Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI**

Romania Not **Rumania** The capital is **Bucharest**

rom-com Hyphenated, and short for **romantic comedy** film. See also **sitcom**

roofs is the plural of **roof**, do not write **rooves**. See also **hoof**

rosé (wine) One of the few words where we apply an accent, in this case to avoid confusion with **rose**

round See **around**, **round**

royals, British See **British royals**

RTÉ radio, RTÉ television The national (not state) public service broadcaster's **radio channels** include **RTÉ 1**, **RTÉ 2FM** (upper case FM), **RTÉ lyric fm** (lower case lyric and lower case fm) and **RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta**, and that is how they are written; its **television channels** are **RTÉ One** and **RTÉ2**, written thus. Note **RTÉ 1 radio**, but **RTÉ One television**

Rudolph, the red-nosed reindeer. Not **Rudolf**. Santa's other reindeer are **Dasher**, **Dancer**, **Prancer**, **Vixen**, **Comet**, **Cupid**, **Donner** and **Blitzen**

run down, run-down, rundown Use **run down**, two words, no hyphen, as a verb – **run down to the shop** and get me *The Herald*; **run-down**, hyphenated, is an adjective – a **run-down building** and **I'm feeling a bit run-down**; the noun is **rundown**, one word, no hyphen – **give me a rundown on tomorrow's meeting**

rung, wrung A **rung** is a **step on a ladder** and the past participle of **ring**, as in **have you rung your mother?** With a **W**, **wrung** is the past tense and past participle of **wring (squeeze and twist)** – she **wrung out her jeans** and hung them up to dry; I was so annoyed I could have **wrung his neck**

runner-up Hyphenated; plural is **runners-up**, not **runner-ups**

runners (footwear) is what we write, not **trainers** or **sneakers**, unless quoting

rural, rustic These two adjectives used to be interchangeable, but now have different, although related, meanings. Write **rural** when referring to **places** – in general, **countryside settings**, such as **hamlets**, **villages** and **farmland**, as opposed to **towns and cities (urban)**; use **rustic** in a positive sense to mean **characteristic** of a **simple, unsophisticated** and **unspoilt** lifestyle – a **rustic cottage**, for example. See also **urban**

rush hour, rush-hour The noun is two words, no hyphen – the **evening rush hour**; the adjective is hyphenated – **rush-hour traffic**

SSs

sacred, scared Be careful with these, especially when spellchecking, as we once saw a reference to a **Scared Heart picture** in a Catholic home

sacrilege, sacrilegious I before E, not **sacreligious**, even though it looks correct

sacrosanct means **inviolable, too important to be interfered with or changed**. You can say you do not mind working from Monday to Friday, but your **weekends are sacrosanct**

Sad Upper case initial, pronounceable acronym for **seasonal affective disorder**, no need to write out fully. See **acronyms**

Sahara, the No need to add **desert**

said, added Generally, these are all you need for reported speech in straightforward news reporting – **he or she said** and **he or she added** after (and sometimes before) a quote. Several other verbs are perfectly acceptable and can, especially in comment, analysis and feature articles, enhance the overall reader experience by adding a stylish or emotive touch. For examples of acceptable verbs to use with quotes – and a list of those that are likely to be changed to something more appropriate – see Appendix Quotes at end of section Q

Saint should be written out fully when referring specifically to the person/character, so we might, for example, write about the life and legacy of **Saint Patrick** or **Saint Bridget**. For the names of towns, churches, schools, festivals, football teams and so on, **abbreviate Saint to St**, so the village of **St Johnston** in Co Donegal, **St Agatha's Church** in Dublin, **St Malachy's Boys National School** in Donaghmede, the **St Patrick's Day** parade in Cork and Scottish football club **St Mirren FC**

St Andrews No apostrophe for the **town** or **university** in **Scotland**, but there is an apostrophe in **St Andrew's Day** (November 30)

St Stephen's Day, St Stephen's Green We often say **Stephen's Day** and **Stephen's Green** in conversation, but in our writing we should always include **St**. See also **Boxing Day**

sake, not **saki**, is Japanese **rice wine**

Samaritans no longer takes **the**, so it is simply **Samaritans**. See **helplines**

same-sex marriage is what we write, not **gay marriage**

sanctions are **strong actions**, usually imposed by governments, aimed at **forcing individuals** or **countries** to **obey international law**, or the **punishments** or **restrictions** imposed on them when they do not obey (governments imposed sanctions on Russia and Russian individuals following the invasion of Ukraine). See also **boycott, embargo**

sank, sunk, sunken The **ferry sank**, the **ship has sunk**, we went scuba diving on a **sunken wreck**

Santa, Santa Claus Do not write **Santy** or **Santy Claus** in news stories, unless quoting

sartorial is usually followed by **elegance** or **splendour**, but both phrases are clichéd, so avoid

sat-nav Hyphenated

Saudi Arabia Do not shorten the country name to **Saudi**; the capital is **Riyadh**, the people are **Saudis**

Scalextric is spelled thus

Scandinavia comprises **Denmark, Norway** and **Sweden**; with the addition of **Finland** and **Iceland**, the five are known as the **Nordic countries**

sceptic, cynic A **sceptic** is someone who **doubts** or **does not accept** an **opinion** or **belief** – do not write the US **skeptic** with a K; a **cynic** **disbelieves**

schadenfreude is a noun (German) that means the **taking of pleasure** in a person or group's **misfortune**

schizophrenia, schizophrenic should be used only in a **medical context**, never to mean **in two minds, contradictory** or **erratic**, which is wrong as well as offensive to people who live with this illness; **schizophrenic** is an adjective, not a noun, so never call a person a **schizophrenic**

schoolchildren One word, no hyphen, same with **schoolboy** and **schoolgirl**, but **school-leaver** is hyphenated. Do not write **schoolteacher** – **teacher** will do – or **schoolkids**, unless quoting

sci-fi Hyphenated short form of **science-fiction**

scion is a male or female **young member** of an **important** or **wealthy family**

scissors Always plural, so the **scissors are** (not **is**) in the cutlery drawer, bring **them** here

scot-free has nothing to do with Scotland. The **scot** in this phrase was a **medieval tax**, so if you got off **scot-free**, you **avoided paying**; the modern meaning is to **escape with impunity**

Scotland The people are **Scots**, the adjective is **Scottish**; the country produces **Scotch whisky** (**Scotch** for short, no E in whisky); you can also **scotch** (**put an end to**) a rumour; foodwise, **Scotch broth** is soup and a **Scotch egg** is a hard-boiled egg encased in sausage meat, coated in breadcrumbs and deep-fried; **Scotch mist** refers to **something that is hard to find** or **imaginary**. See also **whiskey, whisky**

sculptor, sculpture An artist who produces **sculptures** is a **sculptor**, not a **sculpturer** (and not **sculptress**, unless quoting)

sculptures, statues We **do not italicise** the titles of sculptures or statues. See **artworks**

seasonable (unseasonable), seasonal We rarely write **seasonable**, but when we do it should mean **suitable to the season** (and **unseasonable** when not – **snow in May** is **unseasonable**); write **seasonal** when you mean **relating to the seasons**, as in the **seasonal migration of birds**

seasons are always lower case, so write **spring, summer, autumn** (not the US **fall**, unless quoting) and **winter**

seatbelt One word, no hyphen

second-hand, second hand Hyphenated when used an adjective, so **second-hand clothes**; two words, no hyphen, for the **second hand** on a **watch**

secretary general Lower case initials, no hyphen, as in **UN secretary general Antonio Guterres**; the plural is **secretaries general**, not **secretary generals**; the same rule applies to **director general**. See also **Attorney General, attorney general**

see Do not write the passive verb **see** as in “The move **will see** €30 added to monthly electricity bills” when you can write “The move **will add** €30 to monthly electricity bills”. Always **replace see with an active verb**

self-employed is hyphenated, like all **self-** prefixes – **self-control, self-defence, self-esteem, self-harm, self-respect, self-service**

semi-colons (;) have been described as stronger than a comma, but weaker than a full stop. They are most commonly used in **longer lists that contain commas** to make those lists more manageable and to avoid confusion – they

act as super-commas. They are also placed **between two independent clauses** (which could stand alone as separate sentences) when a conjunction (and, but, for, nor, or, so yet) is left out, as in: “Google staff enjoy the perk of free food at work; truck drivers generally pack sandwiches or buy a burger at Applegreen.” They are further used **between independent clauses linked by a transition** (nevertheless, thus, consequently), as in: “The runways at Dublin airport are covered in snow; consequently, all flights have been grounded.”

Senior See **Junior, Senior**

sensor See **censer, censor, censure, sensor**

separate A, not E, after the P, so not **seperate**

sepsis, septic, septic tank Write **sepsis** for the often **life-threatening** and **sometimes fatal medical condition** caused by the body’s extreme response to an infection; **septic** means **infected with harmful bacteria**; a **septic tank** (not **sceptic tank**) is usually located underground and is a large **watertight container** in which **waste water** and **sewage** are collected and made harmless by bacterial action

septuagenarian is a person **aged 70 to 79**

sequester, sequestrate We occasionally read about a **jury** being **sequestered** – it means they are **kept together** overnight in a hotel and **isolated**, usually when a trial is at a crucial stage, to prevent them discussing evidence with non-jury members; **sequestrate** generally means to **confiscate (seize) property or other assets until a debt has been paid**

set back, setback Two words, no hyphen, for the verb – bad weather **set back our plans** for a picnic; one word, no hyphen, for the noun – our plans for a picnic **suffered a setback**

set to, set-to Avoid using the meaningless **set to**, two words, no hyphen, as in **interest rates are set to rise** – write **will rise** if the assertion has been confirmed, and write **are expected to rise** if the assertion is speculative; a **set-to**, hyphenated, is a **fight**

sett is a **badger’s den** – note the double T

sewage, sewerage Write **sewage** when referring to the **waste matter** that is conveyed through **sewers**, which form part of a **sewerage system**

sex change is a phrase we should not use. Many people live with **gender dysphoria**, which is the **distress** caused when the **sex they are assigned at birth does not match their gender identity**; some might choose to **transition** to their

self-identified gender by undergoing **sex reassignment surgery** or **gender affirmation (confirmation) surgery** – these are the acceptable and respectful phrases we use. See **transgender, transsexual**

sex offenders register Lower case initials, no hyphens, no apostrophe

sexuality In a Fox News interview in 2017, **Caitlyn Jenner** said: “Sexuality is who you choose to go to bed with, gender is who you go to bed as.” As with **gender identity**, all the words and phrases we use when referring to a person’s **sexuality** must be **positive and respectful** – there is no place for **jokes, bias, discrimination, offensiveness** or **prejudice**. If you are in any doubt about the appropriateness of a particular word or phrase, look it up in this stylebook (if we have inadvertently omitted it, ask a colleague). See also **cis, cisgender** and **personal pronouns (he, she, they)**

Shakespearean has an E after the R, not an I, so not **Shakespearian**

Shankill Road and **Shankill, Dublin** The **Shankill Road**, one H, so not **Shankhill**, is in **west Belfast**, while **Shankill**, also one H, is in **south Dublin**

sheikh, Sheikh Lower case, but upper case when used as a title; note the final H

shepherd’s pie See **cottage pie, shepherd’s pie**

sheriff One R, double F

ship, boat A **ship** is a **large ocean-going vessel** used for carrying **passengers** or **cargo**, such as a **cruise liner, container ship** or **supertanker**; generally, a **boat** is a **small vessel** – a **fishing boat, lifeboat, rowing boat**. Also, ships and boats are **not feminine**, so refer to them as **it**, not **she**, and their **names** are **not written in italics**

shock wave(s) Two words, no hyphen, and clichéd, so avoid, unless writing about an **explosion** or quoting

shocking is **overused** in news reporting, so use more sparingly

shoo-in Double O and hyphenated, not **shoe-in**

shootout Noun, one word, no hyphen, as in **penalty shootout**; also a **gunfight**

shopaholic, workaholic are in common use, so feel free to write them, with an A before **holic**. See also **chocoholic**

shortcut One word, no hyphen

shortlist(ed), longlist(ed) One word, no hyphen

short-term, short term Hyphenated as an adjective, as in **short-term employment**, but two words, no hyphen, as a noun – **in the short term**; same with **long-term, long term**

should of See **could of, should of, would of**

showed, shown Write **she showed great courage**, but **she has shown great courage**

showbiz, showbusiness One word, no hyphen; **showbiz** is OK in copy and headlines

showcase is a noun, but is commonly used as a verb, so go ahead

shrug Your **shoulders** are the **only things you can shrug**, so no need to write **she shrugged her shoulders**, which is tautologous. See also **nod**

Siamese twins Write **conjoined twins**

[sic] See Appendix Quotes at end of section Q

sickie Colleagues who **throw a sickie**, not **sicky**, are inconsiderate

side-effect is hyphenated and describes a **secondary and usually adverse effect of** or **reaction to** a vaccine, for example

sign in, sign on, sign off, sign out Two words, no hyphen in all instances

significant, considerable Write **significant** when you mean **important** or **of consequence** – a **significant piece of legislation**; use **considerable** when you mean **of great size** – a **considerable sum of money**

silicon, silicone These words are not interchangeable. **Silicon**, no final E, is a **naturally occurring element** and the basic material used in the production of **computer microchips**, hence **Silicon Valley**. Write **silicone**, with a final E, when referring to the **durable synthetic material** that contains silicone and is used to make artificial rubber, resins, paints and electrical insulating material; **silicone** is most commonly used as an adjective to describe **biomedical implants**, such as **breast implants**

silver screen is a term from the days of **black and white films** when **cinema screens** were coated with **metallic silver-**

coloured paint. Unless you are referring to those days, or quoting, write **cinema screen** or **big screen**

sing-song Noun and adjective, hyphenated. We all **enjoy a sing-song**; she had a **sing-song accent**

siphon Not **syphon**

Sir, Dame See **honorifics**

sitcom One word, no hyphen; short for **situation comedy** on TV or radio. See also **rom-com**

sizeable E after the Z

ski, skis, skier, skied, skiing No hyphen in **skiing**, but hyphenate **ski-lift** and **ski-run**

skilful Only one L in the middle and at the end

skin-coloured Whose skin, and what colour? Do not use this potentially **offensive phrase**

skyrocketing prices No need for **sky**, just write **rocketing**

slam, slammed Write **slam** or **slammed** only when referring to a **door**, for example; never write it to mean **criticise** or **condemn**, unless quoting

slander Noun and verb. A **spoken** (not **written**) **false statement** that **damages** someone's **reputation** or **business interests**. See also **defamation** and **libel**

slash, slashed, slashing Write **slash** only when referring to **wounds** inflicted with a **blade**; if reporting on **job losses** or **price reductions**, write **cut**. See also **axe**

slaughter is the **killing of animals** for **food**. Do not use **slaughter** when describing the **killing of humans**. See also **massacre**

slay, slain, slaying Write **kill, killed, killing** instead; **slay** belongs only in the **Bible**: "With the jawbone of an ass I have slain a thousand men." (Samson, Judges 15:16)

smartphone, smartwatch and most other such words beginning with **smart** are one word, no hyphen, but **smart TV** is two words, no hyphen

SME(s) is the abbreviation for **small and medium-sized enterprise(s)**, no need to write out fully

smelled, smelt Write **smelled** as the past tense of **smell** – the **soup smelled delicious**; use **smelt** only when referring to

extracting metal from ore by heating to a very high temperature – **smelting**

smoky No E after the K, so not **smokey**

snowflake refers to an **easily offended** or **over-sensitive person**, usually **young**, with a **sense of entitlement** to special treatment

so-called If you write **so-called friend**, for example, there is no need to add single inverted commas to **'friend'** – that would be a belt and braces approach; you can write **'friend'** on its own – the inverted commas signify **scepticism, irony** or **sarcasm**

socio-economic terminology Always be respectful of and sensitive to people's financial circumstances. We read a quote from a recent graduate who complained she earned "**only €41,000 a year**" in her first job – many families with several children have to survive on less while paying a mortgage. See **deprived, disadvantaged** and **poor**

soiree Write **party**

sojourn is a **short stay** in a place that is **not your usual home**. As you are unlikely to say it in everyday conversation, do not write it (and do not write the tautologous **short sojourn**), unless quoting

some (in front of a number) Refrain writing **some** in front of a number, especially at the start of a sentence

songstress Write **singer**

soothe, sooth Write **soothe**, verb, with a final E, when you mean to **calm someone** or a **situation** or to **relieve discomfort** or **pain**; if you write **sooth** without the final E, you are using an antiquated word that means **truth** or **reality**, hence **soothsayer** – someone who claimed they could **foresee** or **foretell the future**

soundbite One word, no hyphen

South America Twelve countries and two dependent territories make up South America. The countries are **Argentina** (capital Buenos Aires), **Bolivia** (La Paz), **Brazil** (Brasilia, not Rio de Janeiro), **Chile** (Santiago), **Colombia** (Bogota), **Ecuador** (Quito), **Guyana** (Georgetown), **Paraguay** (Asuncion), **Peru** (Lima), **Suriname** (Paramaribo), **Uruguay** (Montevideo) and **Venezuela** (Caracas). The dependent territories are the British-controlled **Falkland Islands** (Stanley) and **French Guiana** (Cayenne). See also **Central America, Latin America** and **Mexico**

south Dublin is lower case S, but write **South Dublin County Council** with upper case S

soy sauce but **soya beans** and **soya milk**

span See **spun**

spared jail When we use this phrase, usually in headlines on court reports, it can be seen as suggesting we believe a defendant **should have been imprisoned**; best avoid and write **the actual verdict** or **sentence** instead

sparks is overused in headlines, as in “Fuel price increase **sparks anger** among motorists”. Write “Fuel price increase **angers** motorists”. See also **fuels** and **triggers**

speaker When quoting, **identify the speaker immediately**, either before or after the **first paragraph of reported speech**; never leave the reader wondering – we sometimes have to read two or three quote paragraphs before we learn who the speaker is. See Appendix Quotes at end of section Q

specially See **especially**

spellcheck Every writer must **always spellcheck copy** before submitting it, and every sub-editor must always spellcheck copy before and after working on it

spelled, spelt The past tense of **spell** is **spelled**, while **spelt** is a **type of wheat**

spicy Not **spicey**

spider A **spider** is an **arachnid**, not an **insect**

Spider-Man is the correct spelling for the cartoon and film character

spilled, spilt Our style is to write **spilled** as the past tense of **spill** – he **spilled milk** all over his keyboard; use **spilt** as an adjective – it is no use **crying over spilt milk**

spin doctor Two words, no hyphen

spinster Do not use for **unmarried woman**, unless quoting. See also **bachelor**

spiralling is a verb and adjective, usually accompanied by **prices**, but prices can **spiral downwards** as well as up; write **rising** or **soaring**

split infinitives The most enduring **myth** in English grammar tells us we must **never split an infinitive**, to which we say,

split away. A split infinitive is the placing of an adverb, such as **boldly**, between **to** and a verb, such as **go**. Over the opening credits of *Star Trek* episodes, **Captain James T Kirk** tells us the starship Enterprise’s five-year mission is to “...explore strange new worlds, seek out new life and new civilisations and...” – here it comes – “...**to boldly go** where no man has gone before”. We see nothing wrong with that, although today we would write “no person” instead of “no man”. **George Bernard Shaw**, in a letter of 1892 to the editor of the *London Daily Chronicle*, denounced one of the newspaper’s journalists for upholding the **never split an infinitive** ‘rule’, writing: “The man is a pedant, an ignoramus, an idiot, a self-advertising duffer.” Author **Raymond Chandler** was unhappy about the copy-editing of a story of his that was published in 1947 in *Atlantic Monthly* magazine and wrote to the editor to say: “Would you convey my compliments to the purist who reads your proofs and tell him or her that ... when I split an infinitive, God damn it, I split it so it will remain split.” If splitting an infinitive is OK with Captain Kirk, George Bernard Shaw and Raymond Chandler, it is OK with us, so feel free to boldly split – unless it looks silly

spoiled, spoilt Our style is to write **spoiled** as the past tense of **spoil** – he **spoiled his grandchildren**; use **spoilt** as an adjective – his grandchildren were **spoilt**, and the polling station box contained 17 **spoilt ballots**

spokesman, spokeswoman, spokesperson A quote may be attributed to an organisation, as in **Met Éireann said** the roads will be icy, but it is always better to attribute it to a person. If the gender is known, write **spokesman** or **spokeswoman**; if it is not known, write **spokesperson**. See also **chair, chairman, chairwoman, chairperson**

sport utility vehicle Shorten to **SUV**

spree is OK when preceded by **shopping** or **spending**, but not **shooting** – describing a series of **killings** as a **shooting spree** trivialises an appalling crime. An acceptable phrase is **shooting rampage**

spring See **seasons**

spun is the past tense of **spin**; do not confuse with **span**, which, as a noun, refers to the **period between two dates** or **events**, such as **life span** and **attention span**, or the distance between two points, such as **wingspan**; as a verb, **span** means to **extend across**, as in **Tower Bridge spans the Thames**

[square brackets] See Appendix Quotes at end of section Q

stadium Plural is **stadiums**, not **stadia**

staff Always plural, so the **staff are**, not the **staff is**

stakeholder Use **only** in **business stories** or when quoting **stalactite, stalagmite** These are occasionally mixed up.

Stalactites are accumulations of lime that **grow from the roofs of caves**, while **stalagmites** are accumulations of lime that **rise from the floor**. An easy way to remember which is which – **stalactite** contains a C for **ceiling**, while **stalagmite** contains a G for **ground**

stalemate One word, no hyphen. **Chess term** that describes a position in which any possible moves open to a player would place his or her king in check, a hopeless and futile situation in which it is **impossible for there to be a winner** and the game is declared a draw – it has reached an **impasse** and ended in **deadlock**; do not use **stalemate** to describe a situation in which two opposing parties (union officials and employer representatives, for example) fail to reach agreement in pay talks – say the talks have **broken down** or **come a standstill**, from which they can **get started again**. Remember, **stalemate, deadlock** and **impasse** mean **progress is impossible**

stammer, stutter The only difference between these two words, which describe the **same speech disorder**, is that in **Ireland** we write **stammer**, while in the **US** they write **stutter**

stanch means to **stem the flow** of a liquid, usually **blood** from a wound; **staunch** means **dependable, firm, loyal**

stand off, standoff, standoffish Two words, no hyphen, for the verb – **stand off to the side**; one word, no hyphen, for the noun – gardaí were involved in an **armed standoff**; one word, no hyphen, for the adjective meaning **unfriendly** or **aloof** – he tends to be **standoffish with strangers**

stand-up is an adjective, not a noun, so **Dara Ó Briain** is a **stand-up comedian**, not a **stand-up**

star Give a little thought before describing someone as a star. **Taylor Swift, George Clooney, Bono** and **Saoirse Ronan** are stars. If you are tempted to describe someone who presents a radio or TV show as a star, write **presenter** instead. Also, when writing about the forthcoming release of a film, for example, an actor with a small role does not **star** in that film, they **appear** in it

starboard See **port, starboard**

start-up Hyphenated. A **fledgling company** set up to develop a unique product or service and bring it to the market

State (Irish) Upper case for the proper noun – **the State**; lower case when used as an adjective – **state pension, state benefits**. See also **Cabinet (Irish)** and **Government (Irish)**

stationary, stationery Frequently mixed up, but help is at hand – **stationary** has a second A for **at a standstill**, while **stationery** has an E for **envelopes**

statutory Not **statutory**, and definitely not **statuary**, which is a **collection of statues**

staycation One word, no hyphen

STD, STI An **STD** is a **sexually transmitted disease**, while an **STI** is a **sexually transmitted infection**. All STDs are caused by STIs, but not all infections progress to disease. Write **STI** in all instances, unless quoting

steal, rob These are often mixed up. Both mean to **take someone's property without permission**, but **steal** focuses on **what was taken** and **rob** focuses on the **person or place from which it was taken**. Therefore, we can say a **thief stole the Trócaire box** while an **armed gang robbed a bank**. If someone **takes your car** from outside your house while you sleep, your car has been **stolen**, not **robbed**; if someone pins you against the wall in a dark alleyway and **uses or threatens violence** while taking your wallet, **you have been robbed**, but your **wallet has been stolen**. We read that the **IRA robbed Shergar** – correctly, they **stole** (or **kidnapped**) **Shergar**

steamroller Despite the demise of steam power, we still use this word to describe the **heavy vehicle/machine** used to **level earth, gravel** or **asphalt**, usually in the construction of roads

sterling, the pound Lower case S

stigma, stigmata Write **stigma** when you mean a **feeling of social disgrace** – the **stigma** of having **served a prison sentence**; write **stigmata** when referring to the phenomenon of **marks or cuts** appearing **on the skin**, sometimes bleeding, that resemble the **wounds of the crucified Christ** – famously, the **stigmata** on the hands, feet and left side of **Saint Padre Pio**

stile A **stile**, spelled with an I, is a set of two or three **steps** for **crossing a fence** or **wall**, usually **between fields**

stiletto Plural is **stilettos**, not **stilettos**

storey, story When referring to **buildings**, the plural of **storey** is **storeys**; when referring to **tales**, the plural of **story** is **stories**

straitjacket Not straightjacket

strangled As with **drowning** and **electrocuting**, if someone has been **strangled**, they are **dead**, so never write the tautologous **strangled to death**

strip-search Noun and verb and hyphenated

students See **pupils, students**

students' union Apostrophe after the S

stutter See **stammer, stutter**

sty, stye You will find **pigs in a sty**, but a **stye in your eye**

sub-committee, sub-continent, sub-editor, sub-let and most other words with a **sub-** prefix are hyphenated

sub-machine gun Place a **hyphen between sub and machine**, but never between **machine and gun**

subcontinent, the No hyphen. Also known as the **Indian subcontinent**, it comprises seven countries – **India** (capital New Delhi), **Pakistan** (Islamabad), **Nepal** (Kathmandu), **Bhutan** (Thimphu), **Bangladesh** (Dhaka), **Sri Lanka** (Colombo) and the **Maldives** (Male)

subpoena, subpoenaed A **subpoena** is a **legal document** ordering a person to **give evidence in court** or to **produce or surrender documents**

such as See **like, such as**

sudoku is the correct spelling of the **numbers game** and is always lower case; the word is short for the Japanese phrase “**suuji wa dokushin ni kagiru**”, which means “**the numbers must remain single**”

sue, sued, suing Not **sueing**

suicide Never write that someone **committed suicide**, which implies a sin or a crime – the Criminal Law (Suicide) Act 1993 **decriminalised suicide in Ireland**; if it is pertinent to the story, write **she took her life** or **he died by suicide**, but only if that has been established; avoid writing **suspected suicide**. Never describe the **method of suicide**, and never refer specifically to **substances** a person consumed to end their life. In comment pieces and features that refer to **suicide** or other **distressing subjects**, we generally add an appropriate endnote containing helpline information. See **helplines**

summer See **seasons**

summer solstice In the **northern hemisphere**, the **summer solstice** is the day with the **longest period of sunlight** in the year and usually falls on June 20, 21 or 22 (in the **southern hemisphere** it is in December). See also **winter solstice**

sums Writers must always **make sure the numbers in copy add up**, and sub-editors must **double check** that they do **sun, the** Lower case, so we write **the sun**, same with **the moon**. See also **planets**

sunbed, sunburn, sunglasses, sunstroke, suntan One word, no hyphen

Super Bowl (American football) Two words, no hyphen, upper case initials for the **annual championship game** of the **US National Football League (NFL)** that is played in January or February

Supermac's With apostrophe before the S, same with **McDonald's**

supersede means to **take the place of** – Leo Varadkar **superseded** Micheál Martin as Taoiseach; the word is sometimes incorrectly spelled as **supercede** with a C

SuperValu One word, uppercase V, no final E for the supermarkets chain. See also **Dunnes Stores** and **Tesco**

supervisor Ends with **or**, not **er**, so not **superviser**

suspect See **accused, defendant, suspect**

swam, swum The past tense of **swim** is **swam** – **I swam 20 lengths** before breakfast; the past participle is **swum** – **I have swum at the Forty Foot** every Christmas morning for 20 years

swap With an A, not an O

swat, swot You **swat a fly** but **swot for exams**

swear words Cursing is common in everyday conversation, and the swear words we use range from the mildly offensive to the taboo. They appear occasionally and sparingly in comment and feature articles for emphasis or colour, but never in news stories, unless quoting. When the more offensive swear words do appear in copy, we replace core letters with **asterisks**. Those we consider taboo are written like this: **b*****ks** and **b****x**; **c**k**; **c**t**; **d**k**; **f**k**, **f**king** and **f**ker**; **motherf**ker**; **N****r** (or more preferably **the N-word**); **p****k** and **w**ker**. Asterisks are not inserted in mildly offensive swear words, which include **arse**, **balls**, **bastard**, **bitch**, **bugger**, **crap**, **piss**, **shit** and **tit**. We generally do not use swear words in headlines, standfirsts or

pullquotes. If in doubt about the use of other words not mentioned here, ask a colleague

sync is short for **synchronise**, so in **sync**, **out of sync**, **lip-sync**

systematic, **systemic** Write **systematic** when you mean **methodical** or are describing a **step-by-step procedure**; use **systemic** to mean **throughout the system**

TTt

take off, take-off Two words, no hyphen, as a verb – the **plane is about to take off**; hyphenated as a noun – **the pilot aborted take-off**

take over, takeover Two words, no hyphen, as a verb – “**I’m tired, you take over**”; one word, no hyphen, for the noun and adjective – **a hostile takeover** and **the €10m takeover bid**

taken See **brought, taken**

Tannoy is a trade name, so upper case initial, but write **PA, PA system, public address system** or **speaker** instead

Tarmac is a trade name, but the word is in common use for the **surface of a road, driveway** or **airport runway** (which is actually **asphalt**), so feel free to write lower case **tarmac, tarmacked** and **tarmacking**

tarot Lower case T for the cards

tart up is a vulgar phrase, do not use

Taser is a trade name, so upper case initial for **a Taser**, but lower case for the verb **to taser** and **was tasered**. No need to write the generic **stun gun** – **Taser** and **tasered** are what we say in conversation

taskforce One word, no hyphen

tautology refers to the **unnecessary repetition** of an **idea** or **expression** in a phrase or sentence – for example, **pair of twins, each and every, free gift, new innovation, unexpected surprise**; the adjective is **tautologous**

tax avoidance, tax evasion Be careful – **tax avoidance** is **legal**, but **tax evasion** is **illegal**

taxi, taxied, taxiing No hyphen in **taxiing**. These verbs refer to **aircraft moving slowly on the ground** under their own power before taking off and after landing

Tayto Park in Co Meath is now **Emerald Park**

teammate, teamwork One word, no hyphen, but **team-building** is hyphenated

teams In a **players context**, sports teams are regarded as **plural** – Shelbourne **were** terrible when **they** lost 4-0 to Derry City in the FAI Cup final; in a **business context**, sports teams (clubs) are **singular**, like other **companies**, so Manchester United reported **its** biggest operating loss to date

teargas One word, no hyphen

Technicolor is a trade name, so upper case initial for the now obsolete process of making cinema films in colour; usually preceded in copy by the adjective **glorious**, which is clichéd; note no U in **color**. The stage musical is *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, not *his Amazing*

Ted Talks The **Ted** part stands for **technology, entertainment** and **design**

teeth If an adult has a **complete set of teeth**, they have **32**. The top set mirrors the bottom; from the front there are **four incisors, two canines, four premolars** and **six molars**; small children have **20 baby teeth**

teetotal Starts with **tee**, not **tea**

temazepam Lower case. A **prescription tranquilliser** used mostly to treat **insomnia** and **anxiety** and can be **habit-forming**, leading to **addiction**

temperatures We use **degrees Celsius**, not **centigrade** or **Fahrenheit**, and we **do not insert the small degrees symbol** (°) after the number, so write **30C**, not **30°C**. Wire copy from the US usually gives temperatures in Fahrenheit, which we should delete and replace with the Celsius equivalent (do a Google search for “convert Fahrenheit to Celsius”)

temporary respite is tautologous – a respite is by its nature temporary, so no need for the adjective

tenpin bowling Write **tenpin**, one word, no hyphen, not **10-pin**

terraced houses Not **terrace houses**

terracotta Double R and double T. Means **baked earth** in Italian and describes **roof tiles, paving stones** and **ovenproof cooking dishes**, among other things, shaped from **clay** and **fired in a kiln**

Tesco is correct. Do not write **Tesco’s**, unless in the possessive. See also **Dunnes Stores** and **SuperValu**

text Use **text** on its own as a noun and verb, so no need to write **text message**; write “**I’ll text you**”, “**I’ll send you a text**” and “**He texted her**”

than, then Do not write that something is **better then** (or **worse then**) something else – **better than** (and **worse than**) are, of course, the correct phrases

that is an **overused** word and **often unnecessary**. Do not automatically write **that** after **said**. For example, **he said that he was tired** means exactly the same as **he said he was tired**, so no need for **that**; if you write **that** in a sentence, look again and delete if it makes sense without

that, which Writing **which** instead of **that** is a common error. The simple rule is **that defines** and **which informs** (it conveys additional but not essential information, in a clause enclosed by commas), so write “This is the rescue dog **that we adopted** two years ago”, but “This rescue dog, **which we adopted** two years ago, is part of our family”. Those two examples illustrate the rule, but the first would still be grammatically correct without **that**: “This is the rescue dog **we adopted** two years ago.” Note: **that** and **which** are not interchangeable. “This is the rescue dog **that destroyed** my new couch” is correct, but “This is the rescue dog **which destroyed** my new couch” is incorrect

The (at the start of consecutive paragraphs) The record is 13 consecutive paragraphs beginning with **The** in unsubbed copy. **Two is the maximum allowed**

theatregoer One word, no hyphen

theirs Possessive, no apostrophe, so never **their’s**

then (former) No hyphen in phrases such as **the then taoiseach** (lower case taoiseach because only the current office-holder takes upper case T) and **the then health minister**

thesp, thespian Write **actor**. See **actor, actress**

they See **personal pronouns (he, she, they)** and **gender identity**

think-tank Hyphenated

third world Lower case, but considered a condescending phrase, so write **developing countries** instead

thoroughbred (horses) One word, no hyphen

thumbs-up Hyphenated

tic, tick A **tic** or **nervous tic**, no final K, is a **habitual spasm**, commonly affecting the face, which cannot be controlled – **rapid blinking, repeated raising of the eyebrows or twitching of the nose** (or any combination); **tics** also affect **speech** – a **verbal tic**. Write **tick**, with a final K, for a **correction mark** on, say, a schoolchild’s homework; a **blood-sucking bug**; the **tick-tock** sound of a timepiece; and **credit** – buying something **on tick**

tiger, tigress A **female tiger** is a **tigress** with one E, not **tigeress** with two Es. See also **lion, lioness**

TikTok One word, two upper case Ts, no hyphen

till A **till** is a **drawer** for coins and banknotes in a **cash register**; as a verb, **till** means **to cultivate soil**. See also **until**
timber, timbre Write **timber** when referring to **wood**; use **timbre** to describe the **quality of a sound** made by a **voice** or a **musical note** or **tone** – his singing voice had a **deep timbre**, the **timbre of the cello** is more pleasing than that of the bagpipes

timebomb, timeframe, timescale, timeshare One word, no hyphen, but **time-wasting** is hyphenated

time element (in an article) See **yesterday, today, tomorrow**

time of day Avoid using the 24-hour clock (**00.00 to 23.59**). Our style for the time of day is **1am, 6.30pm, 11.45pm** and so on, with a full point, not a colon (**6:30pm** is incorrect); write **10pm yesterday**, not **10pm last night** (the **pm** makes **last night** redundant); no hyphens in **half past five** and **quarter to 11**; **noon** is **12pm**, not **12 noon** (because it could not be 11 noon); do not write **12 midnight**, as **midnight** on its own, like **noon** and **midday**, is universally understood; **one minute after midnight** is **12.01am**

tin foil One word, no hyphen

Tinseltown Write **Hollywood**

tip-off, tipped-off Hyphenated as a noun and verb – **gardai received a tip-off** and **gardai were tipped-off**

titillate, titivate To **titillate** means to **mildly excite**, while the rarely used **titivate** means to **spruce up your appearance**

together with is tautologous – just write **with**

tonne We use the metric **tonne**, not the imperial **ton**

too In the context of **also**, do not insert commas before and after **too** (“**I was there, too, and so was my cousin**”) as it serves only to slow the flow of a sentence and is generally unnecessary

tornado Plural **tornadoes**

tortuous, torturous A long and winding road pitted with potholes would make for a **tortuous** (one R) journey – it is **complicated and trying**; write **torturous** (two Rs, from **torture**) when you mean **very unpleasant** or **painful**

Tourette's syndrome, or **Tourette's** for short, is a **neurological disorder** characterised by **sudden and involuntary movements (tics) or sounds** (sometimes **screeching, howling** or the shouting of **obscenities**) that often co-exists with **ADHD**. Singer **Billie Eilish** has Tourette's. See **attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)**

towards With a final S is correct; do not write the US **toward**, but **untoward** is OK. See also **backward, backwards**

track record No need for **track**, unless you are writing about **athletics**

traffic accident See **road traffic accident**

traffic jam Two words, no hyphen

tranche Noun, means a **slice**, and is usually written when referring to **funding** awarded or drawn down in instalments – the **first tranche of the €10m allocation**, for example

tranquilliser Double L

transatlantic One word, no hyphen, and lowercase A after the S

trans, transgender, transsexual Generally, **trans, transgender** and **transsexual** refer to persons whose **gender identity or expression does not match the sex they were assigned at birth**. See also **sex change** and **gender identity**

translator A **translator** works with the **written word**, translating documents or books from one language to another. See also **interpreter**

transpire means to **emit vapour through the skin** and is not a synonym for **happen**, so avoid writing **it transpired that**, unless quoting

transport, transportation Write **transport** when referring to the **conveyance of people or goods from one place to another**; reserve the use of **transportation** to describe the historical judicial sentencing of **banishment to a penal colony**. That is why we have a **Minister for Transport**, not for **Transportation**

transvestite, cross-dresser Generally, a **transvestite** or **cross-dresser** is a person who **likes to** or **chooses to dress** on occasion or always in clothes traditionally associated with the **opposite sex**, often simply for the satisfaction of doing so. Multi-media English artist **Grayson Perry** is a **transvestite** and often performs as his female alter-ego, Claire. See also **gender identity**

Travellers Upper case T in all instances for members of the **Travelling community** (lower case C). See also **Gypsies, Travellers, Roma**

T rex No full stop or hyphen for the extinct dinosaur, full name **Tyrannosaurus rex**; the late **Marc Bolan's** 1970s pop band was **T. Rex**

Tricolour Upper case for the **Irish Tricolour**, which is **green, white** and **orange** (not **gold**); lower case for the French tricolour

triggers is overused in headlines, as in "Electricity price increase **triggers anger** among householders". Write "Electricity price increase **angers** householders". See also **fuels** and **sparks**

trillion See **million (m), billion (bn), trillion (tn)**

Trinity College Dublin can be shortened after first mention to **Trinity** or **TCD**, but choose one and stick with it

trolley Plural is **trolleys**, not **trolleys**

trolley dolly is a **sexist and outdated phrase** and should not appear in copy, unless quoting. See **cabin attendant, cabin crew**

troop, troupe A **group of soldiers** or **scouts** is a **troop**, while a **group of performers** is a **troupe** – a **circus troupe**, for example

Troubles, the (Northern Ireland) Lower case T for the, upper case T for **Troubles**

troubleshooter, troubleshooting One word, no hyphen

truck, lorry See **lorry, truck, pick-up truck**

try to Always write **try to**, never **try and**

trypanophobia is a **fear of needles, injections**. See **phobias**

tsar, Tsar Lower case when used figuratively, as in **drugs tsar** (which we discourage); upper case when used as the title of a former **Russian imperial ruler**, such as **Tsar Nicholas II**. Do not write **czar** or **Czar**

T-shirt Upper case T, lower case S and hyphenated

tsunami Japanese word meaning a large, wide and often **destructive wave** usually caused by an undersea earthquake

Tupperware Trade name, so upper case, but write instead **plastic container**

Turkey The capital is **Ankara**, not **Istanbul**

turnover in **business** (also **apple turnover**) is one word, no hyphen; **turn over** in **bed** is two words, no hyphen

tweet, Twitter, X Upper case for the social media platform that was bought in 2022 by Elon Musk for \$44bn (€42.5bn) and **renamed X** in 2023 (we write **X, formerly Twitter**); lower case for **a tweet, a tweeter, to tweet, tweeted** and **tweeting**; never write that someone **took to X** – write instead that they **tweeted**. When **reproducing** or **quoting from tweets**, we **do not correct the grammar, spelling or punctuation** and we **do not insert [sic]** to indicate errors – the temptation to ‘fix’ a tweet can be overwhelming, but resist

twenty-something and so on, not **20-something**

twofold, threefold and so on up to **tenfold** (not **10-fold**) are one word, no hyphen; beyond **tenfold** it begins to look clunky – **seventeenfold**, for example – so write that something **increased by a certain percentage** or was **X number of times bigger**

UUu

Uber, uber- Upper case for the **app-based taxi company**; lower case and hyphenated for **uber-hip** and **uber-cool**, for example, although we discourage such use

ubiquitous means **being or appearing to be everywhere at the same time** – microplastic waste is **so ubiquitous** that it is found in Arctic snow, desert sand and the stomachs of marine creatures worldwide

Uefa Pronounceable acronym for the **Union of European Football Associations**, no need to write out fully. See also **Fifa** and **acronyms**

Ukraine Not **the Ukraine**; capital is **Kyiv**, not **Kiev**

ukulele Note the two Us – not **ukelele**

Ulster Do not write **Ulster** when you mean **Northern Ireland/the North**, which comprises only six of the nine counties of **the province of Ulster** (never refer to Northern Ireland as a province). **Ulster** is acceptable when it appears in the name of an organisation – a political party or sports team, for example. See **Northern Ireland, the North** and **Irish counties and county towns**

unanimous means with the **agreement or consent of all**, as in a jury's **unanimous verdict**. See also **anonymous**

uncharted territory, waters Not **unchartered**

under-age Hyphenated

undergraduate, postgraduate One word, no hyphen

under way Two words, no hyphen

unequivocal means **clear, easy to understand**

Unesco is the pronounceable acronym for the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation**, no need to write out fully. See **acronyms**

unfeasible, untenable, unviable If you describe something as **unfeasible**, you **do not believe it can be done or achieved**; an **untenable situation** or **argument** is one that **cannot be defended against criticism or maintained** – it would be **futile** to continue; **unviable** in the strictest sense means **unable to support life**, but it also means **incapable of growth, development or survival** – a small shop might become **unviable** if a new supermarket opens in the neighbourhood

unfollow on **Twitter**, now called **X**

unfriend on **Facebook**

UNHCR Acronym, all upper case, for **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees** (not **Commission**). See **acronyms**

Unicef Pronounceable acronym for **United Nations Children's Fund** (used to be **United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund**, hence the I and E). See **acronyms**

uninterested, disinterested These two have different meanings – **uninterested** means **having or taking no interest**, while **disinterested** means **unbiased, objective**

unionist (Northern Ireland) Lower case, except in the name of a political party – **Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)**, for example. See also **loyalist, nationalist** and **republican**

unique is an absolute, so something is either unique or is not unique – there are no degrees of uniqueness, so never write **quite unique** or **highly unique**

United Arab Emirates (UAE) Write out fully on first appearance, then use the abbreviation **UAE**. The seven emirates are **Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al-Quwain, Fujairah** and **Ras Al Khaimah** (the capital cities share the name of the emirate)

United Kingdom (UK), Britain, Great Britain (GB) The **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK)** comprises **four countries** – **England, Scotland, Wales** and **Northern Ireland**. Do not confuse with **Great Britain (GB)**, also known as **Britain**, which is the island that comprises three countries – **England, Scotland** and **Wales** – so **Northern Ireland** is in the **United Kingdom**, but not in **Great Britain**. We are frequently **vague** when writing about, say, an Irish criminal arrested **in the UK** – where exactly in the UK were they arrested? Remember, there are four countries in the UK – if we know which one, tell the readers; better still, if we know the city, name it

United Nations (UN) Just use the abbreviation **UN**, unless quoting

United States of America, the (US) Never write out fully, unless quoting. We write **US** for short, not **USA**, although **the States** is OK. The **United States** comprises **50 states and the District of Columbia** (commonly known as **Washington DC**), which is the federal capital. The states, in alphabetical order, are **Alabama** (state capital Montgomery), **Alaska** (Juneau), **Arizona** (Phoenix), **Arkansas** (Little Rock), **California** (Sacramento), **Colorado** (Denver), **Connecticut** (Hartford), **Delaware** (Dover), **Florida** (Tallahassee), **Georgia** (Atlanta),

Hawaii (Honolulu), **Idaho** (Boise), **Illinois** (Springfield), **Indiana** (Indianapolis), **Iowa** (Des Moines), **Kansas** (Topeka), **Kentucky** (Frankfort), **Louisiana** (Baton Rouge), **Maine** (Augusta), **Maryland** (Annapolis), **Massachusetts** (Boston), **Michigan** (Lansing), **Minnesota** (St Paul), **Mississippi** (Jackson), **Missouri** (Jefferson City), **Montana** (Helena), **Nebraska** (Lincoln), **Nevada** (Carson City), **New Hampshire** (Concord), **New Jersey** (Trenton), **New Mexico** (Santa Fe), **New York** (Albany), **North Carolina** (Raleigh), **North Dakota** (Bismarck), **Ohio** (Columbus), **Oklahoma** (Oklahoma City), **Oregon** (Salem), **Pennsylvania** (Harrisburg), **Rhode Island** (Providence), **South Carolina** (Columbia), **South Dakota** (Pierre), **Tennessee** (Nashville), **Texas** (Austin), **Utah** (Salt Lake City), **Vermont** (Montpelier), **Virginia** (Richmond), **Washington** (Olympia), **West Virginia** (Charleston), **Wisconsin** (Madison) and **Wyoming** (Cheyenne)

unmistakable No E after the K

unprecedented (not **unpresidented**) describes something that has **never before** been done, experienced or happened

unskilled worker is a condescending term, so use only when quoting

until Not **till** or 'til and not **up until**. See also **till**

untimely death No death is timely, so write **unexpected death** or **sudden death**

unveiled We can say **statues** and **commemorative plaques** are **unveiled**, but **record profits** and **government policies** are **announced** or **reported**

unwieldy Not **unwieldly**

upmarket, downmarket Both one word, no hyphen; **upmarket** is acceptable, but be careful with **downmarket** as it could offend or be seen as condescending

upon Write **on**, not **upon**, unless quoting

urban, urbane Use **urban** as an adjective when referring to a **town or city** (see also **rural, rustic**); if someone is **urbane**, they are considered **confident, courteous** and **refined**

usable No E after the S

used to Not **accustomed to**, unless quoting

username One word, no hyphen

utilise Has a similar meaning to **use**, but there is a difference. For example, if you **cannot find a screwdriver**, you might **utilise a knife** from the kitchen drawer. **Utilise** means to **use one thing in place of another**

U-turn Upper case U, lower case T and hyphen

Uyghur, Uyghurs Oppressed **Uyghur people**, particularly of the **Xinjiang region of China**

VVv

V (versus) Our style for the abbreviated form of **versus** is simply **v**, not **vs**, so **New Zealand v South Africa** in the 2024 Rugby World Cup final

vacuum is OK as a verb, as in to **vacuum the carpet**, but how many of us say that? See **hoover, Hoover**

Valium Trade name, so upper case – it is a **brand of diazepam**

VAR Pronounceable acronym for **Video Assistant Referee**, and all upper case (an exception to the acronyms rule); do not write **Var**. See **acronyms**

various different is tautologous – if a number of things are various, they are already different. Do not pair these two words, use one or the other. To write **various different breakfast cereals** is incorrect

Vat is **Value Added Tax**, no need to write out fully. Follows the pronounceable acronyms rule, so always write **Vat**, not **VAT**. See **acronyms** and **Cab**

Velcro Trade name, so upper case (one of the best April Fool's Day hoaxes concerned the invention of **silent Velcro**)

venetian blinds Lower case V

venomous See **poisonous, venomous**

veranda Not **verandah**. An **open-air roofed porch** or **terrace** along the outside of a house or other building

vertigo is a **dizziness** that creates the false sense that you or your surroundings are moving or spinning; **vertigo is not a fear of heights** – that is **acrophobia**. See **phobias**

very is an overused and often unnecessary adjective, so avoid, unless quoting

veteran is a **former member** of the **armed forces**

veteran car, vintage car A **veteran car** is one built **before 1919**; a **vintage car** was built **between 1919 and 1930**

veterinarian Just write **vet**

VHI Our style for the **health insurer** is all upper case, not **Vhi**

via refers to **geography**, not to **modes of transport** – you might travel from Dublin to Kilkenny **via Carlow**, but you

make the journey **by car** or bus or train, not **via car** or bus or train

viable means **capable of living**, but we can use it to mean **capable of success** or **workable**, as in a **viable business proposition**

Viagra Trade name, so upper case

vice-chair, vice-chancellor, vice-president Hyphenated, like all words with the **vice-** prefix

vice versa Two words, no hyphen

vicious, viscous Write **vicious** when you mean **violent and cruel**. We occasionally see **viscous assault**, which conjures up images of the victim covered in tar – **viscous** means **thick and sticky**

video link Often seen in court reports – two words, no hyphen

virus See **coronavirus, Covid-19**

vital means **essential to life**. Do not use when you mean **important**

vocal cords Not **chords**

Vodafone With an F, not PH

voiceover One word, no hyphen

volcano Plural **volcanoes**

volume See **amount, number**

von der Leyen, Ursula is the president of the European Commission (2019-); in her surname and others that include **von** (German origin) and **van** (Dutch), use a lower case V (and lower case D for **der**); following that rule, write **Ms von der Leyen**, but in the absence of an honorific, write **Von der Leyen**

WWw

wacky Not **whacky**. Means **amusing** in an **odd, eccentric** or **unpredictable way**

Wags Upper case W. Pronounceable acronym for **wives and girlfriends**, generally of male professional footballers. A rarely seen acronym is **Habs**, for **husbands and boyfriends** of sportswomen. See **acronyms**

Wailing Wall, the is the common and inoffensive name for the ancient limestone wall in the **Old City of Jerusalem** that has been a place of prayer and pilgrimage for Jews for 2,000 years. It is a small section of the **Western Wall**. See also **Jew(s)**

waive, waiver Always with an I after the A when used to mean **give up, relinquish**, as in the witness **waived her right** to anonymity – she signed a **waiver** (document); the performers at the charity concert **waived their fees**. See also **waver**

wake of, in the Avoid writing the overused **in the wake of** when you mean **after** or **as a result of**

walkout One word, no hyphen, for the extreme form of **industrial action**

wannabe Be careful how you use this noun and adjective that refers, generally, to a **person who aspires to become famous**, usually **unsuccessfully**, as it can be viewed as condescending

warned If no **warning** or **threat** is being conveyed, just write **said**

war zone Two words, no hyphen

wars Upper case initials when referring to historical conflicts – **Irish Civil War, World War II, Cold War, Vietnam War, Gulf War**

Washington DC No comma, so not **Washington, DC**

wash out, washout Two words, no hyphen, as a verb: “Your language is atrocious – go and **wash out your mouth with soap**.” One word, no hyphen, as a noun: “It rained all day – **the barbecue was a washout**.”

Wasp Pronounceable acronym for **White Anglo-Saxon Protestant**. See **acronyms**

waver means to be **indecisive, hesitate between choices**; it also means to **weave about unsteadily** or **lose strength or determination** – “My concentration began to waver.” See also **waive, waiver**

weather does not need **conditions** tacked on the end, so do not write **weather conditions**. See also **climate, weather**

webchat, webpage, website One word, no hyphen

website addresses can be split with a hyphen at a sensible point within the name if you need to turn a line, but try to avoid doing this. If the website address appears at the end of a sentence, do not follow with a full stop. No need to put **www.** at the start of a website address

week (this and last) In our **daily print publications**, the **week begins on Monday**, so **Monday to Sunday** is expressed as **this week** (the **previous Monday to Sunday** was **last week**); in our **Sunday print publications**, the **week begins on Sunday**, so **Sunday to Saturday** is **this week** (the **previous Sunday to Saturday** was **last week**)

weigh anchor Not **weigh the anchor**. Means to **raise an anchor** from the water. The opposite action is to **drop anchor**, not **drop the anchor**

weight See **height, weight**

Weight Watchers Trade name, so upper case initials, and two words, but the lower case verb **weight-watching** is hyphenated

well, well- Write the **well-known song**, hyphenated, but the **song is well known**, two words, no hyphen (however, if something is well known, there is no need to say so – see **famed, famous**); similarly, we can write the **well-kept garden**, but the **garden is well kept**

well-being Hyphenated

well-wisher Hyphenated. Do not describe people attending a **wake, removal** or **funeral** as **well-wishers**

well wishes We express our **best wishes**; do not write **well wishes**

west, western (geography) Lower case for the **cardinal compass point** and for **the west, western Europe, the west of Ireland**

West, the (politics) Upper case W for **the West** and **Western leaders**

western (cinema) Lower case W for a cowboy film

West End Upper case initials for the **London theatre district** and **Galway's West End**

Wetherspoon, JD is the pubs company, **Wetherspoon's** refers to the pubs

wharf Plural **wharfs**, not **wharves**. See also **dwarf**

wheelchair-bound Never write **wheelchair-bound** or **confined to a wheelchair** as both phrases are demeaning. We write **wheelchair user**

when, where (placement in a sentence) Here are two examples of bad placement. **1.** "The match will be played at Croke Park on April 8, where a crowd of 45,000 is expected." **2.** "The match will be played on April 8 at Croke Park, when a crowd of 45,000 is expected." In the first example, we have turned April 8 into a place – **April 8, where**; in the second, we have turned Croke Park into a date – **Croke Park, when**. The first example should read: "The match will be played at Croke Park on **April 8, when** a crowd of 45,000 is expected." The second should read: "The match will be played on April 8 at **Croke Park, where** a crowd of 45,000 is expected."

whereabouts is singular, despite the final S, so write **his whereabouts is unknown**, not **are unknown**

whet means to **sharpen**, so the smell of a colleague's lunch might **whet** (not **wet**) **your appetite**

whether See **if**

which See **that, which**

while Never **whilst**. See also **amid** and **among**

whingeing With an E after the G, same as **bingeing** and **swingeing**

whiskey, whisky With an E for **American, Canadian** and **Irish whiskey**, plural **whiskeys**; without an E for **Scotch whisky**, plural **whiskies**

whistleblower One word, no hyphen

whizz, whizz-kid Double Z. **Whizz** means to **move quickly** – the **ambulance whizzed past**, its siren blaring; a **whizz-kid**, hyphenated, is a **young person** who is **especially good at something**

who, whom As simply as we can put it, **who** is applied to the person doing something, while **whom** is applied to the

person on the receiving end. Example using **who**: "This is the teenager **who** kicked the garda." Example using **whom**: "This is the garda **whom** the teenager kicked." Of course, we could drop **whom** and just write: "This is the garda the teenager kicked." Also, in certain constructions, **whom** appears after a preposition, so **to whom, for whom, about whom, with whom**

whodunnit One word, double N, no hyphen. Commonly refers to a **murder mystery novel**

wholly is the correct spelling, not **wholely**; the word comes from **whole** and means **completely, entirely**. See also **holy**

whopping Do not write, unless quoting

who's, whose Often confused in copy. **Who's**, with an apostrophe, is the contraction for **who is**, as in: "**Who's coming for a drink?**" It is also the contraction for **who has**, as in: "**Who's been drinking my pint?**" Do not write **who's** when you mean the possessive **whose**, as in: "**Whose pint is this?**"

widow, widower Write the **widow of Paddy Murphy**, not the **widow of the late Paddy Murphy**; a **widower** is a man whose **wife has died**

widows and orphans Make sure the first line of text at the top of each column in print publications is complete to avoid a **widow** – (in justified copy, this is a must; in ragged, the line may be slightly 'shy'). An **orphan** is an incomplete line at the bottom of a column of text, although if the line is at least half filled out, that is OK. Sub-editors must **always make a final check** for widows and orphans before submitting copy for revision, and revise subs must do the same before changing the status of an article to approved

wifi One word, lower case, no hyphen

Wii Nintendo games machine console

Wikipedia Handy online resource, but a playground for mischief-makers, so it **cannot be trusted entirely**. Always **cross-check with another resource** any 'facts' lifted from Wikipedia

will, shall Unless quoting, always write **will**

windfarm One word, no hyphen

wine Lower case when a familiar name is used in a generic way, so **beaujolais, chablis, claret, port**. When we are being specific, upper case is used, so **Rioja Reserva Viña Ardanza** from **La Rioja Alta**. See also **cheese** and **Champagne**

winter See **seasons**

winter of discontent Use sparingly

winter solstice In the **northern hemisphere**, the **winter solstice** is the day with the **shortest period of sunlight** in the year and usually falls on December 21 or 22 (in the **southern hemisphere** it is in June). See also **summer solstice**

wintry Not **wintery**, so **wintry weather** is correct

wish list One word, no hyphen

witchcraft One word, no hyphen, but **witch-hunt** and **witch-doctor** are hyphenated

withhold One word, double H, no hyphen

witness See **eyewitness**

wits' end Plural **wits**, so the apostrophe goes after the S

WMD(s) Abbreviation of **weapon(s) of mass destruction**

woke means to be **aware of** and **attentive to** racial or social **discrimination** and **injustice**

woman, women Always a noun, never an adjective, so write **female TD** or **female garda**, but only to avoid confusion with male counterparts. Never write **lady doctor**

woollies are **sweaters**. Write **woolly** as an adjective – **woolly hat, woolly jumper**

Worcestershire sauce Not **Worcester sauce**

Word document is a document produced using **Microsoft Word** software – trade name, so upper case W

work colleague Just write **colleague**

workaholic See **shopaholic, workaholic** and **chocoholic**

working class Two words, no hyphen, is the noun; the adjective **working-class** is hyphenated

World Health Organisation (WHO) Write out fully on first appearance, then abbreviate to **WHO**, all upper case

world heritage site Lower case initials; often and unnecessarily preceded by **Unesco**

World War I, World War II with Roman numerals is our style, not **1** or **2**, and not **First World War** or **Second World War**, unless quoting

world wide web Three words, all lower case, no hyphens

worldwide One word, no hyphen

would of See **could of, should of, would of**

wounded, injured Soldiers in battle can be **wounded** and receive treatment for or die from their **wounds**; gun victims suffer gunshot or shotgun **wounds**; people in a car crash (see **road traffic accident**) can be **injured** and receive treatment for or die from their **injuries**

wrack See **rack, wrack**

wreaked, wrought We write **wreaked havoc**, not **wrought havoc**

writhe means to **twist the body** or **squirm**, usually **in pain**

wrongdoing One word, no hyphen

wrung See **rung, wrung**

WWE is the abbreviation of **World Wrestling Entertainment**

XXx

X used to be **Twitter**. The name was changed to **X** in 2023.
We write **X**, formerly **Twitter**. See **tweet, Twitter, X**

Xbox One word, no hyphen. See also **PlayStation**

xenophobia Not **zenophobia**. An irrational **fear of foreigners or strangers**. See **phobias**

Xerox Trade name, so upper case, but just write **photocopy**

X Factor, The TV talent show, italicised, no hyphen between *X* and *Factor*

Xmas If you write **Xmas** instead of **Christmas** in copy or headlines, you will not be getting a visit from Santa. However, the **Slade song** is *Merry Xmas Everybody*. See also **Yuletide**

X-ray Upper case X, lower case R and hyphen

YYy

yashmak is a **veil** worn in public by some Muslim women that **covers the upper and lower face**, leaving an **opening for the eyes**. See also **burka, chador, hijab** and **niqab**

years Write in **1996**, never in **the year 1996** or **back in 1996**; when mentioning a **span of years**, write **2015 to 2018** or use a hyphen, as in **2015-18**. See also **between** and **decades**

Yemen Not **the Yemen**. Country in the south-west of the Arabian Peninsula, the people are **Yemenis** and the capital is **Sana'a**

yesterday, today, tomorrow When you place the time element in a sentence, pause for a moment and ask yourself if it reads how people speak. Consider this clunky sentence: "Gardaí **today will** continue searching for a killer who **yesterday escaped** from Mountjoy Prison." It might as well be: "I **today will** go back to the crossword I **yesterday started**." That first example should correctly read: "Gardaí **will continue searching today** for a killer who **escaped yesterday** from Mountjoy Prison." The second should correctly read: "I **will go back today** to the crossword I **started yesterday**." That is how people speak and how we should write – the **time element always goes after the verb**

yet is a word that can and should more often be used as an alternative to **but** and **however**

yeti See **Abominable Snowman**

yoghurt With GH, not **yogurt**

yoke is a **heavy piece of wood** attached to the necks of two draft animals, usually oxen, and the cart or plough they are pulling; colloquially in Ireland, **yoke** is a wonderfully vague word that means **thing** or **thingummy**, and often refers to the **TV remote control** – "Where did I leave that **yoke**?"; it can further refer to a **person** – a **mad yoke** is an **eejit** or someone who is **great craic**; also in Ireland, **yokes** are **ecstasy tablets**

yolk is the internal **yellow part of an egg** that is surrounded by the white, which is called the **albumen**

your(s), you're Write **your(s)**, never **your's**, when you mean **belonging to you** (singular and plural); **you're**, with an apostrophe, is the contraction for **you are**

yours truly refers only to **yourself**, not to someone else

YouTube One word, no hyphen, uppercase T

yuan is the Chinese unit of currency

Yuletide Upper case, one word, no hyphen, and no reason to write this instead of **Christmas** or **the festive season**, unless quoting

ZZz

zealot, zealous, over-zealous A **zealot** has very strong and often uncompromising, sometimes fanatical, opinions – that person is **zealous**. We read about a traffic warden in England who put a parking ticket on a hearse outside a church – he was **over-zealous**, and the ensuing argument with the driver, the vicar and several mourners made the deceased late for his own funeral (the traffic warden was sacked)

zeitgeist Lower case, means the **spirit of the time** – the general set of cultural, moral and spiritual attitudes, beliefs and ideas of a particular period

Zelensky, Volodymyr President of Ukraine (not **the Ukraine**). His **wife** is **Olena Zelenska**

zero The plural noun is **zeros**, without an E

zero hour No hyphen. Military term that refers to the time set for an assault on the enemy

zero-hours contract Hyphenated, and **hours** is plural

zigzag One word, no hyphen

Zimmer frame Trade name, so upper case. If it is not made by the Zimmer company, write **walking frame**

złoty Polish currency, but write **złoty** (also plural) without the stroke through the L, which is called a kreska ukośna

zodiac Lower case. See **astrology**

zoology Not **zoo-ology**