



Editorial Style Guide



government
communications

Department:
Government Communication and Information System
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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1. GOLDEN RULES FOR GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATORS

- Produce well-researched information based on facts.
- Check all facts, figures, dates, citations, titles, initials and the spelling of names.
- Your writing should be brief and clear. Use direct expressions and avoid unnecessary words and phrases. Use the correct word order to avoid ambiguity. Punctuate sentences correctly.
- Government publications should provide a balanced presentation without bias, distortion, undue emphasis or omission. Any defamatory information based on hearsay, unsubstantiated allegations or claims is prohibited.
- Defamatory, racist, gender-insensitive, blasphemous or offensive material is prohibited.
- In reporting and commenting, all government publications should be fair, honest and considerate.
- Use short sentences and simple language that everybody can understand.
- Use simple vocabulary: *help* not *assist*, *often* not *frequently*, *use* not *utilise*.
- Do not copy text from other sources without acknowledging the source. Always acknowledge the source or original report you are referring to.
- All sources of information, unless stated otherwise, must always be acknowledged.
- In any piece of writing, bear in mind the five *Ws* and an *H* (*what, where, who, when, why* and *how*). Answer these questions to make sure you have covered everything.
- The introduction must be brief and logical – and less than 30 words.
- Use *the* to precede a noun when referring to a specific or known instance: *the former President of South Africa, Mr Nelson Mandela*.
- Avoid redundant words that repeat what the initial words stand for: *ATM machine, HIV virus, PIN numbers, ID document, etc.*
- In formal or official writing, write out words in full: *was not* instead of *wasn't*.
- Avoid using gender-sensitive words. Use *Ms* instead of *Miss* and *Mrs*, *chairperson* instead of *chairman* and *chairwoman/lady*, and *spokesperson* instead of *spokesman*.
- Spell out all abbreviations the first time you use them, with the abbreviation in brackets; and abbreviate thereafter. Use capital letters for abbreviations (e.g. *CSIR, HSRC*), but upper and lower case for acronyms (e.g. *Nepad, Cosatu*). Note that there are exceptions to this rule (e.g. *AsgiSA, dplg, AIDS* etc.).
- Spell out numbers from one to nine; use figures from 10 upward. Write decimal and negative numbers as numerals: *3,3* and *-4*.
- Do not begin a sentence with a numeral: either spell out the number or rewrite the sentence to move the number from the beginning. Hyphenate written-out numbers from twenty-one to ninety-nine. Do not hyphenate *one hundred, two hundred, etc.*
- Use numerals with *million* (*The deal was worth R4 million*), but use a hyphen when it is used adjectivally (*It was a R4-million deal*).
- No space between number and % e.g. *5%*
- Use a space, not commas, to indicate thousands: *20 000*.



- Double-check your work for correct spelling and punctuation.
- Use double quotation marks. “...” For quotes within a quote, use double outer quotation marks and single inner quotes.
- Reported speech is written in the past tense.
- Avoid using too many adjectives and adverbs. These may be used to a limited extent in subjective stories or essays, usually published under a byline (e.g. in internal newsletters), but not in official brochures, posters, etc.
- Avoid redundant phrases or words such as *begin to be seen to, basically, in terms of, essentially, in accordance with, etc.*
- All titles (e.g. *Dr, Mr, Ms, Rev.* etc.) must be acknowledged at all times.
- *Mr, Mrs, Miss* and *Dr* do not take a full stop because the last letter is also the last letter of the title. Titles like *Prof.* and *Rev.* do take a full stop because the word is cut off in the middle.
- Words from languages other than South Africa’s 11 official languages must be written in italics.
- Use British, not American, spelling (e.g. *apologise* not *apologize, programme* not *program, centre* not *center*).
- Every sentence must have a verb. Sentences can be active or passive, e.g. *The professor teaches the students* (active); *The students were taught by the professor* (passive). Try to use active verbs where possible.

Standard reference tools

South African Concise Oxford Dictionary (2002)

2. CHECKLISTS FOR VARIOUS FORMS OF WRITING

2.1 Writing a communication strategy

The following is the official format for writing a communication strategy:

- background
- objectives
- environment
- communication challenges
- messages and themes
- messengers, audiences and channels, types of event
- a phased communication programme
- structures and processes
- action plan, including budget implications.

Use decimal numbering. Indent subcategories such as *1.1*, with a further indentation for subsequent subcategories, such as *1.1.2*. After this level, use *a, b, c* or *bullets*. This allows for easier reference. The complete guideline on strategising for communication is available from the GCIS Project Desk.



2.2 Writing articles

A successful article includes:

- a clear introductory paragraph that answers the five *Ws* and an *H* (*what, where, who, when, why* and *how*). Keep it short.
- a coherent and logical development of ideas
- the correct facts and details
- simple language and sentences
- a powerful concluding paragraph that draws together the main ideas
- a readable layout
- perfect grammar and spelling.

2.3 Writing reports

A report is always written for a specific audience and has a definite purpose. Reports are often used to help in decision-making.

Reports:

- have clearly defined sections
- are clearly and logically written and organised
- are objective and use a formal, impersonal style
- are based on careful research and facts
- do not use:
 - abbreviated grammar
 - first-person reporting (*I, me, we.*)
 - colloquialisms or slang
 - jargon
 - opinions.

The traditional format of reports is as follows:

- title page
- terms of reference (brief)
- summary of the report
- table of contents
- introduction listing the background and the aims
- main text of the report
- findings
- conclusion
- recommendations
- list of sources consulted
- appendices.



2.4 Writing proposals

A proposal is similar to a report, but a proposal is a document to motivate or persuade the reader. The format of a preliminary proposal is usually:

- a statement of the problem and objectives
- methods to be used and recommendations
- projected costs.

The traditional format of a full proposal is the following:

- title page
- table of contents
- summary of the proposal
- background to the research
- proposed action to be taken
- project budget
- schedule of work with time frames and deadlines
- evaluation of the success of the project
- appendices.

2.5 Writing minutes

Minutes are not a verbatim account of proceedings, but a written record of decisions taken. They may serve as a legal document and should therefore be accurate. Minutes ensure that proposed actions and responsibilities are recorded and should have an action and deadline column.

Minutes should:

- Be concise (without being too brief).
- Cover all the major points discussed.
- Be objective and factual. They should not contain opinions about matters or people.
- Be accurate, so that there can be no argument or misinterpretation.
- Be detailed regarding all contracts and financial matters, appointments to positions, authorised actions and resolutions passed.
- Be written in the past tense.
- Have a list of actions to be taken and by whom, as well as decisions made, at the end of the minutes.

2.6 Writing business correspondence

Business correspondence is often the only communication people have with an organisation. Any written communication serves as a legal document. Correspondence includes business letters, memos and e-mail.

2.6.1 Business letters

- Use simple language and short sentences and paragraphs.
- Ideas must flow logically. Give a clear, sensible subject line and put the most important information first.



- Never use jargon, clichés or abbreviations.
- Do not rely on your spellchecker – always read the documents through and check for errors.

2.6.2 Memos

- Memos are used internally to pass on information and request action, or serve as a record or reminder.
- They follow a fixed format.
- Memos use clear writing and a friendly tone, without being colloquial.

2.6.3 E-mail

- Give a suitable subject line.
- Use full sentences.
- Confirm with recipients whether they want an attachment e-mailed.
- Print all messages that have instructions or policy decisions.
- Double check if people received their e-mail.

3. USING PLAIN LANGUAGE

3.1 Do not assume your reader will understand what you know

You must guide your readers through the information you give them and point out what is relevant to them. Do not just refer to graphs, tables or pictures in the document. Your readers will not give them more than a quick glance unless you point out what is relevant, interesting or important about them.

3.2 Write as you speak

This does not mean you should use slang, bad grammar or poor English, but you can use a more personal tone to address your readers. By using personal references such as *we* and *you*, readers will feel that you are talking to them personally. If you use words that are too difficult for or not familiar to your readers, you will frighten them off or make them feel inadequate.

3.3 Plan before your write

Plan what you are going to write before you start. The more you plan, the more organised and effective your writing will be.

Asking questions is a good way to plan:

Who am I writing for?

- Who are my readers? Look at factors such as age, gender, culture and education.
- What do they need to know?
- Do I need to address problems they might have with the information?
- Will they understand the technical terms I use?



- What is their attitude to the topic?
- Have I answered all their questions?

Why am I writing?

- What am I trying to achieve with my writing?
- Will I be able to achieve my aim with the information I have or do I need to gather more information?
- What response do I want from my readers when they finish reading my document?
- Will my readers be clear about what I want when they finish reading my document?

What is the most important point?

- What is the most important thing I want my readers to know?
- Am I clear about the central issue of my document?
- Am I going to overload my readers if I give them all the details of my research?
- Can I cut out some of the information?
- What is the one thing I want my readers to remember?

3.4 Principles of writing in plain language

- Write informative headings.
- Use plain words.
- Avoid jargon and clichés.
- Minimise acronyms and abbreviations. If you want to use an abbreviation or acronym, write out the word in full and put the contracted term in brackets after it, or use a glossary.
- Get rid of needless words.
- Use the active voice.
- Use strong verbs.
- Write short sentences and paragraphs.

4. PRINCIPLES OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR

4.1 Parts of speech

4.1.1 Noun

A word used for naming objects such as people, animals, places or things: *Harry, cat, dog, store, ladder.*

4.1.2 Pronoun

A word taking the place of a noun and used to refer to a person or thing without giving a name: *he, she, them, him, it.*



4.1.3 Adjective

A word used to describe a noun or pronoun: *beautiful, old, oily, big*. An adjective is a describing word.

4.1.4 Verbs and tenses

A word used to describe an action or existence: *is, are, was, kicked, run, have*. A verb is a doing word.

There are different types of verbs:

4.1.4.1 Normal verbs

Most verbs are “normal verbs”. These verbs are usually physical actions that you can see somebody doing. They can be used in all tenses.

Examples: *to run, to walk, to eat, to fly, to go, to say, to touch*.

- I **eat** dinner every day.
- I **am eating** dinner now.
- I **ate** dinner at 6pm yesterday.
- I **was eating** dinner when there was a knock at the door.

4.1.4.2 Non-continuous verbs

These verbs are things you cannot see somebody doing. For example, *to be, to want, to cost, to seem, to need, to care, to contain, to owe, to exist, to have, to own, to belong, to like*.

Using non-continuous verbs correctly:

- He **is needing** help now. **WRONG**
- He **needs** help now. **RIGHT**
- He **is wanting** a drink now. **WRONG**
- He **wants** a drink now. **RIGHT**

4.1.4.3 Mixed verbs

Mixed verbs are verbs that have more than one meaning, depending on whether they are used as non-continuous verbs or as normal verbs.

For example:

to have:

- I **have** a lot of things to do. (Non-continuous verb)

THERE ARE MANY THINGS I NEED TO DO.

- I **am having** fun now. (Normal verb)

I AM EXPERIENCING FUN.

to look:

- The minister **looks** tired. (Non-continuous verb)

THE MINISTER SEEMS TIRED



- Faraaz **is looking** at the pictures. (Normal verb)
SHE IS LOOKING AT THE PICTURES WITH HER EYES.

to see:

- I **see** her. (Non-continuous verb)
I SEE HER WITH MY EYES

- I **am seeing** a lawyer. (Normal verb)
I AM VISITING OR CONSULTING WITH A LAWYER. (ALSO USED WITH DENTIST AND DOCTOR.)

- I **am seeing** her. (Normal verb)
I AM HAVING A RELATIONSHIP WITH HER.

- He **is seeing** ghosts. (Normal verb)
HE SEES SOMETHING OTHERS CANNOT SEE. FOR EXAMPLE, GHOSTS, AURAS, A VISION OF THE FUTURE, ETC.

to think:

- He **thinks** the test is easy. (Non-continuous verb)
HE CONSIDERS THE TEST TO BE EASY.

- She **is thinking** about the question. (Normal verb)
SHE IS PONDERING THE QUESTION.

4.1.5 Adverb

A word used to describe or tell you more about the verb: *faster, slowly, very, soon.*

4.1.6 Preposition

A word used for showing what one person or thing has to do with another person or thing, usually where they are in relation to one another: *with, under, on, above, in, beside.*

4.1.7 Conjunction

A word used to join words and clauses: *and, but, when, while, therefore.*

4.1.8 Article

Use the definite article *the* to precede a noun, implying a specific or known instance. Use the indefinite article *a* before a consonant sound: *a lovely day, a hotel, a union.* Use the indefinite article *an* before a vowel sound: *an African trip, an heir, an FA Cup final.*

4.2 Verb agreement (concord)

Singular subjects have singular verbs, and plural subjects have plural verbs: *The man is working, but the men are working.* However, not all sentences are that simple. Fortunately, there are some easy rules to follow.

- (i) Two nouns joined by *and* are followed by a plural verb: *The politician and the farmer **have** arrived* i.e. two people have arrived. If you were to write *The politician and farmer has arrived*, it implies that one person, who is both a politician and a farmer, has arrived.



- (ii) Collective nouns (*army, crew, herd, team, committee, group*) take a singular verb if the collection is thought of as a whole. It is not, however, wrong to use a plural verb. As a guide to deciding which form to use, decide whether you want to emphasise the unit or the individuals who make up the unit: *The South African cricket team is going to Australia* i.e. one team is going to Australia, however, *The South African team were unanimous in their condemnation of Australian umpiring*, i.e. all the members of the team agreed that the umpiring was bad.
- (iii) Two or more singular nouns joined by *or* or *nor* are followed by a singular verb: *Peter or Bill is going to pay*.
- (iv) When a singular and plural noun are joined by *or* or *nor*, the verb takes its number from the noun next to it: *Either the workers or the supervisor is wrong* (*supervisor* is singular, so you must use *is*); *Neither Mr Jones nor the boys were there* (*boys* is plural so you must use *were*).
- (v) *Each, every, either, neither, nobody, everything, anybody* and *everybody* all imply one thing and, as such, take singular verbs: *Every worker receives his or her wages*; *Nobody is able to answer*.
- (vi) *Much* and *little* are singular; *many* and *few* are plural: *Much time is wasted on petty details*; *Only a few were willing to take the plunge*.
- (vii) Plural nouns denoting a whole usually take singular verbs: *R1 000 is a large sum of money*.
- (viii) *None* means no one, and is singular: *No one is going to take responsibility*.
- (ix) A verb preceded by *to*, as in *to like*, is called an infinitive verb. Do not split infinitives: *He really seems to like it*, not *He seems to really like it*.

4.3 Punctuation

4.3.1 Full stops

Do not use full stops in abbreviations: USA, UN.

Do not use full stops after initials: NR Mandela.

4.3.2 Apostrophes

Apostrophes (') are often misused. Apostrophes should be used in the following ways:

- To show possession (singular): *the cat's whiskers, the boss's view*; (plural): *business partners' investment; provinces' MECs*.
- To show that a letter has been left out: *don't* (contraction of *do not*), *it's* (contraction of *it is*).
- To show time or quantity: *one month's notice, five metres' worth of fabric*.

When NOT to use an apostrophe:

- In words that are not contracted: *Whose package is most profitable?* Not *Who's package is most profitable?*; *Its campaigns help create jobs*, not *It's campaigns help create jobs*.
- To show the plural of letters and words: *There are two ns in Johannesburg* (not *n's*); *These are the dos and don'ts of writing* (not *do's* and *don't's*).
- For decades: *1990s* not *1990's*.
- Plurals: *Ptys* not *Pty's*; *photos* not *photo's*; *SMSs* not *SMS's*.



4.3.3 Commas, colons and semi-colons

Use commas (,) to:

- separate items in a list
- separate a phrase that explains what went before
- avoid ambiguities.

Use a colon (:) to introduce a list of items or bullet points: *I will ensure that our services have the appropriate:*

- *focus*
- *integrity*
- *professionalism.*

Use commas to separate items in a simple list (e.g. *the ocean, deserts, mountains and grasslands*), but use semi-colons (;) to separate items in a list of items which themselves contain commas (e.g. *Our journey took us to Italy, where we discovered the Roman civilisation; Egypt, which introduced us to some of the wonders of pre-history; and Greece, where we explored the early roots of Hellenism*).

4.3.4 Hyphens and dashes

Use hyphens (-) for:

- e-words: *e-mail, e-business, e-commerce*
- compound nouns (where two or more nouns are joined): *buy-out, cost-effectiveness, cross-reference*
- compound adjectives (where two or more adjectives are joined) ONLY where the noun it describes follows it: *cost-effective project* (but *the project was cost effective*), *risk-based portfolio, long-term commitment*.

The following are a few basic guidelines:

- hyphenate compound adjectives: *old-fashioned clothes, so-called champion*
- hyphenate prefixes to proper names: *un-Christian*
- when *pro* means in favour, use a hyphen: *pro-life*
- *non-smoker*
- use a hyphen when writing figures (e.g. *thirty-six, three-quarters*) and between figures in the place of *to* (e.g. *3-12 March*)
- hyphenate titles such as *director-general*
- use a dash to draw attention: *The Budget will rise – from R10 billion to R15 billion – next year.*

See “Words often misspelled” for words that are not hyphenated, including:

- abovementioned
- postgraduate
- subsection.

When NOT to use a hyphen:

- When compound adjectives do not come before the noun they refer to: *day-to-day problems* but *from day to day*, higher-rate tax but the higher the rate of tax, *long-term insurance* but *in the long term*, *up-to-date system* but *keep up to date*.
- After an adverb ending in -ly: e.g. *widely read report*.



4.3.5 Question marks

These are used only after actual questions: “Is it raining?”; “Are you coming?” No question mark in: He asked if I was coming.

4.4. The correct form

4.4.1 The capital letter

Capital letters are used to indicate a specific as opposed to a common object; a particular example (*African Hoopoe*), as opposed to a class of things (*bird*). The modern journalistic trend is to use capitals as sparingly as possible. When in doubt, DO NOT capitalise.

Capitals are used in the following cases:

- At the beginning of a sentence.
- After a question mark or an exclamation mark: *Goodness! Now what?*
- For the names of people: *Lerato, Wilson*.
- For the names of places: *Asia, Sunnyside, KwaZulu-Natal*.
- For the names of nations, languages and historical events: *The French speak a Romanic language; The Battle of Britain*.
- For the names of days and months, religious festivals and other holidays: *Tuesday, May, Good Friday, Workers’ Day, Women’s Month*.
- For the full titles of people, ranks, offices, countries and buildings: *Attorney-General, Directorate of Public Prosecutions, President, Union Buildings, the Department of Education* (but education department).
- For personal titles when they come before a name: *Mr Nkosi, Dr Khoza, Ms Khan, Prof. Jones* (but *Jones, a professor of political studies*).
- Titles that precede and are part of names. Titles that follow names or stand by themselves should be lower case. E.g. *President Jacob Zuma, Chief Justice Sandile Ngcobo*, (but *the chief executive officer, the minister, the directors, the chairperson*).
- Names of religious denominations, and nouns, pronouns and adjectives used to designate the Supreme Being in any religion: *Methodist, Catholic Church, Christianity, Muslim, Hindu*, etc.
- Ethnic names and nationalities derived from the name of a continent: *African, Indian*.
- Names of political parties, but not the same words when used in a general sense: *Republican Party, Mr John Nkosi is a Republican/Democrat* (but *republican system and democratic ideologies*).
- The names of academic subjects: *Maths, Science, Botany, Sports and Recreation*.

Do not capitalise the following:

- *former, ex-*, or *-elect* when used with titles: *former Telkom boss, ex-president Mandela, president-elect*
- point of compass (north,south,east,west)
- seasons of the year (*spring, summer, autumn, winter*)
- occupational titles: *teacher, nurse, lawyer, doctor*.

For animals and species



- Use initial capitals for multi-word specific names: Burchell's Zebra, African Elephant, Blue Wildebeest, Cape Robin.
- Do not use an initial capital for generic names of animals of which there are a number of species: zebra, elephant, wildebeest, robin.
- Do not use an initial capital for species with single-word specific names: giraffe, kudu, eland.
- When both classes of words appear in a single list, place the capitalised names at the beginning of the list and the non-capitalised names together at the end: *We saw Blue Wildebeest, Burchell's Zebra, elephant, impala, kudu and eland drinking at the waterhole.*

4.4.2 Surnames

Surnames such as *De Klerk*, *Van Rensburg* and *Van der Merwe* are not capitalised if they are used with the first name or initials of the person, e.g. *FW de Klerk* or *Ms HF van Rensburg*; but if the surname is used at the beginning of a sentence, or on its own, then it should be capitalised, e.g. *Last year, De Klerk addressed the panel.*

4.4.3 Bullets

When using bullet-points, every item in the list should follow logically and grammatically from the lead sentence and every list should follow the same grammatical structure. Capitalise the first letter of each bullet if it contains separate sentences, and end each bullet sentence with a full stop.

E.g.:

Specialist institutes:

- *The ARC-Agrimetrics Institute provides an integrated biometric and datametric service. It includes the planning of experiments, a wide spectrum of statistical advice and analyses, as well as the interpretation of the processed results. This is supported and enhanced by an electronic data-processing service and the development and maintenance of a scientific database and data system.*
- *The ARC-Institute for Soil, Climate and Water promotes the characterisation, sustainable use and protection of natural resources.*

Do not capitalise when bullets are not a full sentence.

Do not use semi-colons, commas or full stops at the end of each bullet sentence.

Do not insert "and" after the second-last bullet sentence. The last bullet gets a full stop. E.g.:

These include access to:

- *a range of payment options*
- *a high-quality service with quick turnaround time between application and first payments*
- *information regarding the full range of welfare services offered in South Africa.*

4.4.4 Dates, times, initials, numbers, addresses and measurements

- Use the following abbreviations: *in 30 BC*, *player No 7*, *on January 21*.
- *Tuesday, 27 April 2008* (not *Tuesday, April 27, 2008* or *Tuesday, 27th April 2008*).
- In numbered addresses, abbreviate *Street (St)*, *Road (Rd)*, *Avenue (Ave)*, *Boulevard (Blvd)*,



Crescent (Cres), etc: Our offices are at 21 Main St, but They live in Main Street.

- Write out and capitalise streets with numbers as names: *21 Fifth St, 53 Third Ave.*
- Numerical plurals do not take an apostrophe: *1970s, the mid-1990s.*
- Write time as *11:45.*
- Do not abbreviate measurements unless used with figures: *45km, 126ml.* Never use plurals (*kms, mms, kgs*). Use a decimal comma in *2,3kg* or *15,75ml.*
- Write millions and billions out in full: *R26 million.* Write out cents, as in *The toy costs 99 cents.*
- Write *per cent* as two words, as in *60 per cent.*

5. A TO Z GUIDE

A

abbreviations. Write out the first instance in each chapter/section, with the abbreviation in brackets; thereafter use the abbreviation only (except in headings). When abbreviating names of organisations, use the abbreviation only after the full name has been used first: *The headquarters of the United Nations (UN) is in New York. The UN, the international body, announced that ...* Plurals of abbreviations are written without an apostrophe: *MECs, MPLs, SGBs, NGOs.*

about. Use in place of *approximately, in the region of* or *around.*

Act. When used in the legislative sense, the first letter is always capitalised: *The Act provides for ...* When mentioned for the first time, the Act must be named in full: *the Revenue Laws Amendment Act, 2003 (Act 45 of 2003), was recently signed into law* (note the comma after the last bracket).

action. This is a noun, not a verb. You do not action something, you *do it, or carry it out, or implement it.*

advice, advise. *Advice* is a noun: *I will ask for her advice.* *Advise* is a verb: *I will advise her what to do.*

adviser. Not *advisor.*

affect, effect. *Affect* is a verb meaning to make a difference to: *The decision did not affect the outcome.* *Effect* is both a noun, meaning a change that something causes in something else, and a verb, meaning to make something happen: *The decision has a significant effect* (noun); to effect changes (verb).

African (upper-case initial), Indian, but coloured, black and white (lower-case initials).

African Renaissance (upper-case initials).

ages. Should always be given in figures. Hyphenate *The 40-year-old unionist*, but don't hyphenate *He was 40 years old.*

AIDS. Upper case, as is HIV.

all of the. Use *all the, all, or every.*

all right. Always use *all right*, written as two words; not *alright.*

allude, elude. *Allude* means to mention indirectly: *allude to a book.* *Elude* means to escape: *elude pursuers.*

alternate, alternative. *Alternate* (adjective) means going back and forth between two things, as in



alternate weekends (every other weekend). Alternative means “other” and applies when there are two opinions, as in an *alternative plan*.

among, between. Use *among* for more than two people or things and *between* for two people or things. Avoid *amongst*.

and/or. Avoid using, except in a legal document.

anticipate, expect. *Anticipate* means foresee or regard as possible yet not sure, such as *rain*. If you *expect* something, you are sure about it happening, such as *expecting a visitor*.

antiretroviral (one word).

apartheid (lower-case initial).

appendices (the plural of appendix).

approximately. Use *about*.

archaeologist.

as. Do not use *as* for *because*: *He left because he was tired* not *He left as he was tired*.

as yet. Use *yet*, not *as yet*.

Asian (adjective. and noun). Upper case. Refers to people or products from Asia.

assure, ensure, insure. You *assure* (promise) a person that things will go well (instil confidence). You *ensure* (make sure) that work is done. You *insure* (guarantee or protect) something against loss or damage.

ATM. Stands for automated teller machine, therefore don't write *ATM machine*.

averse, adverse. If you do not like something, you are *averse* (opposed) to it. *Adverse* (bad) is an adjective, as in *adverse conditions*.

avocados.

B

backlog (one word).

basically, essentially, totally. Avoid. These do not add any meaning to a sentence.

belief (noun), **believe** (verb). *It is my belief that it will rain tomorrow; I believe in God.*

benefit, benefiting, benefited (single *t*).

besides, beside. *Besides* means in addition to, apart from, moreover or other than. *Beside* means next to.

biannual, biennial. *Biannual* refers to something occurring twice a year or half-yearly. *Biennial* means occurring every two years.

bid, bade. *Bid* refers to an offer, and the past tense is *bade*.

Big Five (upper-case initials).

bilateral (one word).

Bill (upper-case initial).

binational (one word).

black people. lower-case *b*.

Black Economic Empowerment (BEE).



British spelling throughout. Use *-ise* not *-ize*, *metre* not *meter* (except for *water meter*), *colour* not *color*, etc.

BuaNews. Always write as one word with a capital *n*. Word should be written in normal font and not italics.

Budget. Use upper-case initial when referring to the national Budget or the Budget Speech.

bushveld.

by the fact that. Avoid. Instead of *I am surprised by the fact that the report is incomplete*, write *I am surprised the report is incomplete*.

C

Cabinet (upper-case initial).

can, may. *Can* (past tense: *could*) expresses ability: *She can play the piano*. *May* expresses permission: *You may leave early*. *Might* expresses possibility: *It might rain*.

canvas, canvass. *Canvas* (noun) is a type of cloth. *Canvass* (verb) means to visit someone to ask for their vote.

cellphone (one word).

centre (not *center*).

century. Use lower-case *c*: *19th century*.

certainly. Try to avoid using.

chairperson. Use in place of *chairman*, *chairwoman* or *chairlady*.

close corporation (CC). Not closed

coloured people, coloureds (lower-case initials).

communication, communications. *Communication* refers to written, spoken or non-verbal communication, whereas *communications* refers to technological communication.

compared to, compared with. *Compared to* expresses similarities: *Compare the landscape to a Monet painting*. *Compared with* assesses the relation or difference between things: *Compare radio with television*.

complement, compliment. To *complement* means to add to or bring out the best in something: *Fish and tartare sauce complement each other*. *Compliment* means to praise, and *complimentary* means something given away for free.

comprise. Use *comprise(s)* and not *comprises of*. e.g. *The Olympic team comprises 90 athletes*.

comprising, including. *Comprising* is used when all the components of the whole are mentioned. *Including* does not presume that everything has been mentioned.

consequent, subsequent. *Consequent* refers to the result or logical conclusion of something. *Subsequent* refers to the events immediately following something.

Constitution. Use a capital letter, but do not capitalise *constitutional*.

continual, continuous. *Continual* means happening over and over again. *Continuous* means happening constantly without interruption.

cooperate (one word).

coordinate (one word).



cornerstone (one word).

cost-effective.

countrywide (one word).

criteria. Takes the plural. *Criterion* is the singular. You can have one criterion or several criteria.

critique. It is a noun, not a verb.

currency. Upper-case initial when written out and preceded by *the*: *Dollar, Rand, Euro*. No space between abbreviation and the figure: *R500*.

currently. Use *currently* or *now* instead of *presently, at this point in time, at this juncture, at the present moment* or *at this point*.

D

darkroom (one word).

data. Takes the singular. *The data is complete*.

dates. 16 June 1976; 1990s.

daycare (one word).

D-Day.

deaf. Rather use *hearing impaired* or *hearing challenged*.

decimal commas. Use decimal commas, not points: *R300,45* not *R300.45*.

degrees. Use the degree symbol: 40° C or 30°S.

Democratic Republic of Congo (not *the Congo*).

denotation. connotation. *Denotation* is the exact meaning. *Connotation* is the implied meaning.

Department, department. When referring to a specific department by its correct title, e.g. *Department of Justice and Constitutional Development*, use upper-case initials. When referring to a department generically or in the plural, use lower case: *the justice department, the departments of labour and of education*.

dependant, dependent. *Dependant* (noun) means a person who is *dependent* (adjective) on someone else.

director-general. Plural: directors-general.

disabled. People with disabilities.

disinterested, uninterested. *Disinterested* means unbiased or neutral about an issue. *Uninterested* means not interested.

downscaling, downsizing (one word).

due to. Use *owing to* or *because of*. *The prices have escalated because of increased demand*.

E

each other, one another. Two people talk to *each other*; more than two talk to *one another*.

Earth. Upper-case initial when referring to Earth, the planet; lower case when referring to the soil: *tilling the earth*.

economic, economical. *Economic* is used in relation to finances and cost. *Economical* refers to giving good value or avoiding wastage.



educators. Not teachers.

e.g. and i.e. *E.g.* stands for the Latin *exempli gratia*, meaning *for example*; *i.e.* is for the Latin *id est*, meaning “that is”.

elections. Use instead of *polls*.

endeavours.

enquiry, inquiry. *Enquire* is a formal word for ask; *Inquire* is used for an investigation. However, for simplicity, it is acceptable to use only *enquire*.

etc. Use with a full stop after and a comma before.

every day, everyday. *Everyday* (adjective) means occurring every day, not out of the ordinary: *An everyday event happens every day.*

F

farm workers.

farther, further. Use *farther* for physical distance and *further* to mean additional or continued: *travel farther* but pursue an *issue further*.

fewer, less. Use *fewer* with numbers of items or people: *Fewer than 10 delegates attended.* *Less* refers to quantity: *Less than half the delegates arrived.*

First Economy.

first world.

focus, focused, focusing. One *s*.

formula, formulae. Use *formulae* not *formulas* as the plural of *formula*.

fractions. Hyphenate fractions: *two-thirds*.

fulfil. But *fulfilled, fulfilling*

fully. *Fully fledged programme.* Don't use a hyphen because of the *-ly*.

G

G5 (no hyphens).

G8 (no hyphens).

GCIS. Government Communication and Information System. There is no *s* suffix on Communication and System. A shorter version can be used: *Government Communications (GCIS).*

*Glamorous, **Not glamorous.***

go-ahead. The department has received the go-ahead ...

gold mining, gold mines, but goldfields.

Gospel, gospel. Capitalise when referring to the Bible, use lower case when using as an adjective: *The gospel singer reads the Gospel every night.*

government. Use lower-case initial in all cases except when referring specifically to *the Government: the South African Government*, but *government projects*.

grassroots (one word).

gross domestic product (GDP).

ground-breaking.



H

hectar (ha). Space between number and abbreviation: 700 ha.

he or she and **his or her.** Using *they* instead of *he or she* and *their* for *his or her* is grammatically incorrect.

head. People *head* committees, they do not *head up* committees. Use lower-case initials for *head of department* (HoD).

headings. First initial upper case, all other words in heading lower case, except names: *Arts and culture*, *National symbols*, but *Department of Arts and Culture*. Do not use abbreviations in headings.

healthcare (one word).

historic, historical. *Historic* means a significant or important event that will stand out in history: *the historic democratic election*. *Historical* refers to any past occurrence.

HIV (upper case).

HIV and AIDS. Not *HIV/AIDS*.

home owner. But *home-owner's allowance*.

honorary. *Honorary degree*, not *honourary degree*.

human-resource development (HRD). Not resources; use lower-case initials.

HRD Strategy.

I

immunise.

in-depth.

Indian (noun or adjective). Upper case.

informal settlement. Use in place of *squatter camp*.

information and communications technology (ICT). Lower-case initials.

information technology (IT). Lower-case initials.

Install. But *instalment*

Instil. Rather use *among other things*.

interactive.

interdepartmental.

interdependent.

intergovernmental.

Internet (upper-case initial).

intra-racial.

intra-sectorial.

-ise, -ize. Use *-ise* for all words spelt with *-ize*: *organise* not *organize*.

italics. Should be used sparingly to emphasise the meaning of words. Always use for non-South African words and phrases; titles of publications, songs and movies; green and white papers; law-suits; website addresses; and the names of ships, aircraft and spacecraft.

its, it's. *It's* is a contraction of *it is*: *It's hot today*. *Its* is a possessive meaning of *it*: *Among its various provisions, the Constitution ensures equal rights for all*.



J

JSE Securities Exchange Limited (JSE). This is the official name.

jewellery.

judgment, judgement. *The driver's judgement was impaired by alcohol; The court's judgement is due in two weeks.*

K

kick off. Soccer events and projects *kick off*, but conferences and campaigns *open, begin or start*.

kilometre (km). Not the American *kilometer*. Space between the figure and the *km*: *3 000km*.

Never use *kms*.

knobkierie.

knock-and-drop.

knockout (boxing).

KwaZulu-Natal (with a hyphen).

L

landowners (one word).

land-users (hyphenated).

languages. There are 11 official languages in South Africa:

- Afrikaans
- English
- isiNdebele
- isiXhosa
- isiZulu
- Sesotho sa Leboa (Sepedi)
- Sesotho
- Setswana
- siSwati
- Tshivenda
- Xitsonga.

lekgotla. Gathering. Plural: *makgotla*.

lend, borrow. You lend something to someone and borrow something from someone: *I lend my pen to you; May I borrow your pen?*

less, fewer. *Less* refers to quantity, *fewer* refers to number: *Fewer than 10 delegates attended; Less than half the delegates arrived.*

letsema. Communal volunteerism.

licence (noun), **license** (verb).

lifelong.

life-size.

like. Avoid using to mean *such as* or *as if*.



Limpopo. Not *Limpopo Province*.

Limpopo River. But *Limpopo and Orange rivers*.

line-up, line up. *The police line-up was delayed; We had to line up to see Oprah.*

loan, lend. Use *loan* as the noun and *lend* as the verb. *Lent* is the past tense.

locally. No hyphen when used adjectivally because of *-ly*: *locally developed vaccines*.

longstanding (one word).

long-term. Hyphenate when it's used as an adjective, otherwise write as two words: *long-term investment; In the long term, my finances will be fine.*

lose, loose. *I often lose my keys; My shoelace is loose.*

M

macrobenefits.

macroeconomic.

maize meal.

mangoes.

may, might. *May* expresses both permission and possibility, while *might* expresses only possibility: *May I leave the room? It might rain today.*

medium (singular), media (plural)

media conference. Covers both print and electronic media.

Medium Term Budget Policy Statement and **Medium Term Expenditure Framework.** No hyphens. But *medium-term arrangements*.

megalitre (ml). Refers to a million litres.

Mercosur. The trading block. Not *MERCOSUR*.

microlending.

millennium.

million ton (Mt)

Minister. Capitalise when used as a title: *Minister of Finance, Mr Trevor Manuel*, but *the finance minister*. Also use lower case when the plural is used: *the ministers of health and of communications*.

ministry, Ministry. Capitalise only when written out in full: *The Ministry of Justice*, but *the justice ministry* or *the ministry*.

money, Plural: *money, not monies*.

moneylending.

Mpumalanga. Not *Mpumalanga Province*.

multidimensional.

multilingualism.

multimedia, multimillion (one word).

multitude. Is a singular concept: *A multiple of ideas is ...*

myself. Use only in the reflexive form, as in *I baked the cake myself*. Otherwise, *Pat and I baked the cake*.



N

National Budget (upper-case *n*).

national Department of Human Settlements (lower-case *n*).

nation-building.

nationwide.

New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad).

newsroom.

non-. The prefix “non” indicates the negative sense of words with which it is combined. Hyphenate, as in *non-smoker*. But *nonentity*.

non-governmental organisation (NGO). Lower-case initials.

no one (two words).

North West (the province). No hyphens. Not *North West Province*.

northern hemisphere. Lower-case initials.

numbers. Use words for one to nine, numerals from 10 onwards. Decimal and negative numbers are rendered as numerals. Write out numbers at the beginning of a sentence. For millions, use the numeral: *R4 million*. Hyphenate million only when used adjectivally: *R4,5 million* but *R4,5-million investment*. Use a space for thousands: *R168 050*.

numerous. Rather use *many*.

O

of, off. *Of* is a preposition, *off* is an adverb. Avoid mistakenly using *off* as a preposition as in *I picked it up off the floor*.

one another, each other. Two people talk to *each other*; more than two talk to *one another*.

ongoing.

online (one word).

organise, organisation. See *-ise*.

overcrowded (no hyphen).

overexpenditure (no hyphen).

P

pandemic. Use to denote the *global* AIDS problem. Use epidemic to denote the problem in South Africa.

Parliament, parliament. *The South African Parliament* or *the Parliament*, but *parliamentary briefings*.

peacekeeping (no hyphen).

per annum (pa). In text, use *a year* or *each year*, not *per annum* or *per year*. However, *pa* may be used in tables or where space is limited, provided you explain it in full below or first.

per cent (two words).

peri-urban.

PhD.



phenomenon (singular) **phenomena** (plural).

plus-minus. Approximately or about. Do not use \pm .

police, police officer. Use instead of *policeman, policewoman* or *cop*.

post-apartheid.

practice (noun), **practise** (verb). *At soccer practice we practised our dribbling.*

The *Presidency* (upper-case initial when referring to the institution) President's Office (upper-case initials)

President, president. *President Jacob Zuma* but *our president*, or *the president of a company*.

principal, principle. Use *principal* instead of *headmaster/headmistress*. *Principle* means a moral guideline or fundamental truth.

prizewinner (one word).

proactive (no hyphen).

Prof. (with a full stop).

programme, program. *Programme* on TV or radio, but computer *program*.

public service. Use instead of *civil service*.

publications. Titles of publications go in italics: *Vuk'uzenzele, South Africa Yearbook*, etc.

Q

quatercentenary. 400th anniversary. No *r* between *qua-* and *-tercentenary*.

quite, quiet. *Quite* is an adverb meaning very or fairly, *quiet* is an adjective meaning making little or no noise: *She is quite a quiet person*.

R

R500 (no space).

race. *African, Indian* and *Asian* get an upper-case initial; *black, coloured* and *white* are lower case.

recently. Use instead of *yesterday* or *last week*, depending on the degree of urgency.

renaissance. Capitalise only if it is used with *The* and refers to the historic period or the *African Renaissance*.

Rev. (with a full stop). Abbreviation of *Reverend*.

ringleader.

role player. two words. but role-playing game

roll out (verb), **roll-out** (noun).

S

savanna. Also *savannah*.

school-leaver.

schoolteacher, schoolmaster, schoolchildren, schoolboy, schoolgirl (one word).

Section 21 company.

Section. Section of an Act takes an upper-case initial.

Sector Education and Training Authority (Seta).



semi-arid.

semi-colons. Use *commas* to separate items in a simple list, but use *semi-colons* to separate items in a list of items which themselves contain *commas*.

service delivery. But service-delivery programme.

service-providers (hyphenated).

small, medium and micro-enterprise (SMME).

South Africa Yearbook. *African* is incorrect.

southern Africa.

southern hemisphere (lower-case initials).

spokesperson. Use instead of *spokesman* or *spokeswoman*.

stakeholders.

State, state. Capitalise when referring to an organised political community under or belonging to or in the interest of one government: *The building belongs to the State, but state visit* or *state-owned*.

stationary, stationery. *Stationary* means standing still. *Stationery* is writing material.

storeroom (one word).

subdirectorate

subprogramme.

subtropical.

sugar cane.

supersede. Not *supercede*.

T

talk show (two words).

taxpayers (one word).

technikons. Now universities of technology.

that, which. Use *that* to introduce a defining clause: *This is the house that Jack built*. Use *which* to introduce a qualifying clause: *This house, which was built by Jack, is up for sale*. As a general rule, where a phrase can be put in parenthesis or between commas, it is introduced by *which*.

there, their. *There* is an adverb meaning in, at or to that place. *Their* means belonging to them.

till, until. Avoid using *till* as a substitute for *until*.

time frames (two words).

to, too. *Too* means *also* (*he went too*) or *excessively* (*too much*). *To* is a preposition used to introduce a noun. (*He went to the office*.)

turnaround (noun), **to turn around** (verb).

U

ubuntu (Nguni), **botho** (Sotho). Means humanity.

underprivileged.

underqualified.



under-resourced (hyphenated).
underserviced.
underused. Use instead of *underutilised*.
underway.
unfazed.
upside down (not hyphenated).
US (adjective), **USA** (noun).

V

very. Avoid. It has been so overworked it often weakens the sentence rather than strengthening it.
voters' roll.

W

webmaster.
website (one word). For website addresses, use *italics* and exclude *http.www.gov.za*
well-being.
whether, weather. *I do not know whether they have arrived or (whether) they have not; The weather is sunny but cold. Avoid whether or not*
whether, if. *Whether* is explained above and *if* introduces a condition: *If you do your homework, you can watch TV.*
while. Avoid the use of *whilst*.
White Paper on Arts, Culture ... Italicise white-paper titles.
white people. lower-case *w*.
will. Avoid the use of *shall*.
winegrowers.
winemaking.
withhold.
workforce.
workplace.
worldwide.
wrongdoing.

X

xenophobia.
Xmas. Do not use as an abbreviation for Christmas.
X-ray.

Y

yearbook.
year-end.



years. Financially speaking, use 2009/10. When used adjectivally, hyphenate age: *The 10-year-old boy couldn't swim, but He was 10 years old.*

yellowwood.

yesteryear.

yield.

Z

zero tolerance. Hyphenated only when used adjectivally; *zero-tolerance campaign.*

zookeeper.

zoom lens.



6. WORD LISTS

6.1 Words often misspelled

A

abattoir
abovementioned
absolutely
access
accidentally
accommodation
acquaintance
acquainted
acquire
advice (noun), advise (verb)
affect (make a difference to)
anoint
appearance
appropriate
archaeology
assess

B

battalion
beginning
belief (a firmly held/religious conviction)
benefited
breathe

C

campaign
challenge
chauffeur
colossal
coexist
combating
complement (to add to or bring out the best in something)
compliment (praise)
concomitant
conductive



connoisseur
consciousness
conscientious
consensus
cooperate
coordinate
copyright
cost-benefit
criticise

D

deceive
definite
definitely
descendant
develop
diarrhoea
dietician
disappoint
dissatisfaction
dissipate
drunkenness
duel (contest) but dual purpose

E

ecstasy
effect (a change that something causes in something else)
eligible
eliminate
embarrassment
enrol, enrolment
entrepreneur
exacerbate
exceed
existence

F

fiery
focuses
focusing



foreseeable
forgo
formerly
forthcoming
fulfil
full-time

G

goodwill
gynaecology

H

haemorrhage
harass
helpline
homeopath
homogeneous
honorary
humorous
hygiene
hypocrisy

I

immediately
inadvertent
inauguration
incidentally
independent
indigenous
innate
inoculate
insistent
irresistible

J

jealous
judgment
judgment (more legal)



K

ketchup
knowledgeable
knuckle
kwashiorkor

L

lead (present tense)
led (past tense)
liaison
lifelong
life-size
lose (to no longer have)
loose (not tight)

M

marginalised
metaphor
micro-enterprises
millennium
miscellaneous
misdemeanour
monetary

N

nauseous
necessity
neighbour
neglect
nucleus

O

obvious
occasion
occurred
occurrence
online
organogram



P

parallel
Parliament
pastime
perpetrated
perseverance
personnel
playwright
possession
postgraduate
post-mortem
preceding
predominantly
prejudice
principal (head of school, or a main element)
principle (a rule or belief governing one's behaviour)
privilege
proactive
professional
professor
programme (but computer program)
pronunciation
psychiatry
psychology
pursue

Q

quantify
quarrel
quarter-final
quartermaster
questionnaire
queue

R

racecourse
radioactive
ratepayer
receipt
receive
recession



recommend
referred
renaissance
repetition
restaurateur
rhyme
rhythm
ridiculous

S

school-leaver
seize
seizure
semi-final
separate, separation
shepherd
siege
significant
similar
simile
skilful
specialise
sphere
stationary (not moving)
stationery (writing material)
subpoena
subsection
succeed
succession
summon (call)
summons (order to appear in court). Past tense: summonsed
superintendent
superior
supposedly

T

tariff
teamwork
threshold
toll-fee



toll plaza
toll road
truly
tyranny

U

unanimous
undoubtedly
usually

V

victoriously
visitation
vociferous
voluminous

W

woman abuse (not women)
weird
withhold
workforce
workplace

Y

yearbook
youthful

6.2 Redundancies

Avoid

12 midnight
12 noon
a great deal of
a number of
a person who is honest
a total of 14 birds
absolutely spectacular or phenomenal
afforded the opportunity
approximately
as a result of

Rather use

midnight
noon
many, most or much
a few, some, many, or several
an honest person
14 birds
spectacular or phenomenal
given the opportunity
about
because, because of or since



as to whether
at this point in time
attempt
biography of her life
by means of
circle around
close proximity
completely unanimous
consensus of opinion
cooperate together
each and every
enclosed herewith
end result
endeavour
enhance
exactly the same
final completion
for the purpose of
frank and honest exchange
free gift
he/she is a person who...
implement
important or basic essentials
in many cases
in order to
in spite of the fact that
in the context of
in the event that
in the first place
inception
incorrect
infrastructure
job functions
month of June
new innovations
one and the same
participate
particular interest
period of four days
personal opinion

whether
at this point or now
try
biography
by
circle
proximity
unanimous
consensus
cooperate
each
enclosed
result
try
improve
the same
completion
for, to or of
frank exchange or honest exchange
gift
he or she
carry out
essentials
often
to
although or despite
for or about
if
first or firstly
start or beginning
wrong
be specific in the context
job or functions
June
innovations
the same
take part in
interest
four days
opinion



personally I think/ feel
 pertaining to
 purchase
 puzzling in nature
 reasons why
 reconstruct
 refer back
 relating to
 repeat again
 return again
 revert back
 shorter/longer in length
 small/large in size
 square/round/rectangular in shape
 summarise briefly
 surrounded on all sides
 surrounding circumstances
 systematic
 the fact that
 the future to come
 there is no doubt about that
 to a larger degree
 usual/habitual custom
 utilise
 we are in receipt of

*I think or I feel
 relating to or belonging to
 buy
 puzzling
 reasons
 rebuild
 refer
 about
 repeat
 return
 revert
 shorter or longer
 small or large
 square, round or rectangular
 summarise
 surrounded
 circumstances
 organised
 that
 the future
 no doubt
 largely
 custom
 use
 we have received*

6.3 Common abbreviations

A

AA	affirmative action
AA	Alcoholics Anonymous
AA	Automobile Association
AAA	Association of Advertising Agencies
ABC	Agricultural Business Chamber
ABC	Audit Bureau of Circulation
Abet	Adult Basic Education and Training
ACDP	African Christian Democratic Party
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific states
ACS	Agricultural Credit Scheme
Acsa	Airports Company South Africa



AEC	African Economic Community
AFP	<i>Agence France-Presse</i>
AFU	Asset Forfeiture Unit
A-G	attorney-general
A-G	auditor-general
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
AIDS	acquired immune deficiency syndrome
Alssa	Association of Law Societies of South Africa
AMPS	All Media Products Survey
ANC	African National Congress
ANCWL	ANC Women's League
ANCYL	ANC Youth League
AO	accounting officer
AP	Associated Press
Apla	Azanian People's Liberation Army
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
ARC	Agricultural Research Council
Arm Scor	Armaments Corporation of South Africa
ART	antiretroviral treatment
ASA	Advertising Standards Authority
ASD	assistant director
Asean	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AsgiSA	Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa
ATKV	Afrikaanse Taal- en Kultuurvereniging
ATNS	Air Traffic and Navigational Services Company
AU	African Union
Azapo	Azanian People's Organisation

B

BA	Bachelor of Arts
BA	British Airways
BAC	Business Against Crime
BAS	Basic Accounting System
Basa	Business and Arts South Africa
BBBEE	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
BBC	Black Business Council
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BBi	Black Business Initiative
Bcawu	Building Construction and Allied Workers' Union
BCCSA	Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa



BCEA	Basic Conditions of Employment Act
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
BEEC	Black Economic Empowerment Commission
Bifsa	Building Industries Federation of South Africa
BLNS	Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland
BMF	Black Management Forum
BNC	binational commission
Brig.	Brigadier
C	
CAADP	Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme
CAF	Confederation of African Football
Capt.	Captain
Caricom	Caribbean Community
CBO	community-based organisation
CBRTA	Cross-Boarder Road Transport Agency
CC	Competition Commission
CC	Constitutional Court
CCF	credit-card format
CCMA	Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration
CCTV	close-circuit television
CDA	Central Drug Authority
CDW	community development worker
Cedaw	(United Nations) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEF	Central Energy Fund
GEM	Council of Education Ministers
CEO	chief executive officer
CFO	chief financial officer
CGE	Commission on Gender Equality
CGIC	Credit Guarantee Insurance Corporation
CHE	Council of Higher Education
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of State and Government Meeting
CIO	chief information officer
CISA	Consumer Institute of South Africa
Cites	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
CJS	criminal justice system
ClARA	Communal Land Rights Act
CIlr	councillor



Cmr	commissioner
CNN	Cable News Network
Col	Colonel
Contralesa	Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa
COO	chief operating officer
Cope	Congress of the People
Cosab	Council of South African Banks
Cosafa	Council of Southern African Football Associations
Cosas	Congress of South African Students
Cosatu	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CPA	Cotonou Partnership Agreement
CPF	community policing forum
CPI	consumer price index
CPO	citizen's post office
CPU	Child Protection Unit
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRC	Criminal Record Centre
CRLR	Commission on the Restitution of Land Rights
CSA	Communication Service Agency (GCIS)
CSBP	Centre for Small Business Promotion
CSG	Child Support Grant
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
CWC	Chemical Weapons Convention

D

DA	Democratic Alliance
DBSA	Development Bank of Southern Africa
DC	diplomatic corps
DCEO	deputy chief executive officer
DCF	District Communicators' Forum
DD	deputy director
DG	director-general
Dir	director/directorate
Dissa	Disability Sport South Africa
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo

E

EAP	Employee Assistance Programme
EC	European Commission
ECD	Early Childhood Development



Ecosocc	(United Nations) Economic, Social and Cultural Council
Ecowas	Economic Community of West African States
Efta	European Free Trade Association
EIA	environmental impact assessment
EIP	environmental implementation plan
eNaTIS	Electronic National Traffic Information System
ENE	Estimates of National Expenditure
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
ESI	electricity supply industry
EU	European Union
EWT	Endangered Wildlife Trust

F

F	Fahrenheit
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FAS	Foetal Alcohol Syndrome
Fawu	Food and Allied Workers Union
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FBO	faith-based organisation
FCA	Foreign Correspondents' Association
FCI	Federated Chamber of Industries
FDI	foreign direct investment
Fedhasa	Federated Hospitality Association of South Africa
Fedsal	Federation of South African Labour Unions
Fedshaw	Federation of South African Women
Fedusa	Federation of Unions of South Africa
FET	Further Education and Training
FETC	Further Education and Training Certificate
FF+	Freedom Front Plus
FFC	Financial and Fiscal Commission
FICA	Financial Intelligence Centre Act
FIFA	<i>Fédération Internationale de Football Association</i>
FIG	foreign investment grant
FRU	Film Resource Unit
FSB	Financial Services Board
FSI	Foreign Service Institute
FTA	free trade agreement
FTFA	Food and Trees for Africa
FXI	Freedom of Expression Institute



G

GAP	Gender Advocacy Programme
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GCF	Government Communicators' Forum
GCIS	Government Communication and Information System
GCP	Government Communication Programme
GCS	Government Communication Strategy
GDP	gross domestic product
GDS	Growth and Development Summit
Gems	Government Employees Medical Scheme
GEPF	Government Employees Pension Fund
GET	General Education and Training
GG	Government Garage
GIC	Government Information Centre
G&ML	Government and Media Liaison
GLTP	Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park
GMT	Greenwich Mean Time
GNP	gross national product
G77	Group of 77
G8	Group of Eight

H

HDI	historically disadvantaged individual
HDP	historically disadvantaged person
HITB	Hospitality Industries Training Board
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
HoC	head of communication
HoD	head of department
Hospersa	Health and Other Service Personnel Trade Union of South Africa
HPCSA	Health Professions Council of South Africa
HR	human resources
HRD	human-resource development
HRIS	Human-Resource Information System
HRM	human-resource management
HSGIC	Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council

I

IAAF	International Association of Athletics Federations
IAJ	Institute for the Advancement of Journalism



IBO	International Boxing Organisation
IBSA	India-Brazil-South Africa
Icasa	Independent Communications Authority of South Africa
ICC	International Chamber of Commerce
ICC	International Cricket Council
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICD	Independent Complaints Directorate
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICT	information and communications technology
ID	identity document
ID	Independent Democrats
Idasa	Institute for Democracy in South Africa
IDB	illicit diamond buying
IDC	Industrial Development Corporation
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IDT	Independent Development Trust
IDZs	industrial development zones
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMC	International Marketing Council
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMR	Institute for Medical Research
Interpol	International Criminal Police Organisation
IOC	International Olympic Committee
IOL	Independent Online
IOR-ARC	Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation
IPO	initial public offering
ISBN	International Standard Book Number
ISO	International Organisation for Standardisation
ISP	Internet service-provider
ISRDP	Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Programme
ISSN	International Standard Serial Number
IT	information technology
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
J	
JBC	Joint Bilateral Commission
JCC	Joint Commission of Cooperation
JCPS	Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster



Jipsa	Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition
JPC	Joint Permanent Commission
JPCC	Joint Permanent Commission for Cooperation
JSC	Judicial Service Commission
K	
Kat	Karoo Array Telescope
KNP	Kruger National Park
kWh	Kilowatt hours
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
L	
LED	Local Economic Development
LCC	Land Claims Court
LHR	Lawyers for Human Rights
LHWP	Lesotho Highlands Water Project
Liasa	Library and Information Association of South Africa
LLIM	Local Liaison and Information Management
LPG	liquid petroleum gas
LRA	Labour Relations Act
LRAD	Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development
LRC	Legal Resources Centre
LSM	Living Standards Measure
M	
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MCC	Medicines Control Council
MDB	Municipal Demarcation Board
MD	managing director
MDDA	Media Development and Diversity Agency
MDGs	millennium development goals
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
Mercosur	South American Common Market
MFMA	Municipal Finance Management Act
MFRC	Micro-Finance Regulatory Council
MHSI	Mine Health and Safety Inspectorate
MIDP	Motor Industry Development Programme
MinMec	Minister and Member of the Executive Council
Misa	Media Institute of Southern Africa



MISS	Minimum Information Security Standards
MK	Umkhonto weSizwe
MLC	metropolitan local council
MLO	ministerial liaison officer
MoU	memorandum of understanding
MP	Member of Parliament
MP	Military Police
MPC	Monetary Policy Committee
MPRDA	Minerals and Petroleum Resources Development Act
MRC	Medical Research Council
MRM	Moral Regeneration Movement
MSc	Master of Science
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework

N

NA	National Assembly
NACF	National Anti-Corruption Forum
Nactu	National Council of Trade Unions
Nafcoc	National African Federated Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Nafu	National African Farmers' Union
Nam	Non-Aligned Movement
NAMC	National Agricultural Marketing Council
Nampo	National Maize Producers' Organisation
Napwa	National Association of People Living with HIV/AIDS
Nasasa	National Stokvels Association of South Africa
Nasrec	National Sports, Recreation and Exhibition Centre
Nato	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NBFET	National Board for Further Education and Training
NBI	National Botanical Institute
NCACC	National Conventional Arms Control Committee
NCCS	National Crime Combating Strategy
NCOP	National Council of Provinces
NCPS	National Crime Prevention Strategy
NCRF	National Community Radio Forum
NDPP	National Directorate of Public Prosecutions
NDA	National Development Agency
NEC	national executive committee
Nedlac	National Economic Development and Labour Council
NEF	National Empowerment Fund
Nehawu	National, Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union



Nemisa	National Electronic Media Institute of South Africa
Nepad	New Partnership for Africa's Development
Nersa	National Energy Regulator of South Africa
NFVF	National Film and Video Foundation
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NHBRC	National Home-Builders' Registration Council
NHC	National Heritage Council
NHF	National Heritage Foundation
NHFC	National Housing Finance Corporation
NIA	National Intelligence Agency
Nicoc	National Intelligence Coordinating Committee
Nicro	National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders
NIPILAR	National Institute for Public Interest Law and Research
NLS	National Language Service
NLSA	National Library of South Africa
NMT	non-motorised transport
Nocsa	National Olympic Committee of South Africa
Nosa	National Occupational Safety Association
NPA	National Ports Authority
NPA	National Prosecuting Authority
NPI	National Productivity Institute
NPO	non-profit organisation
NPS	National Prosecuting Services
NPU	Newspaper Press Union
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NRF	National Research Foundation
NRSC	National Road Safety Council
NSA	National Skills Authority
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NSNP	National School Nutrition Programme
NSRI	National Sea Rescue Institute
NUF	National Union of Farmworkers
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
Numsa	National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa
Nurcha	National Urban Reconstruction and Housing Agency
NYDA	National Youth Youth Development Agency
NZG	National Zoological Gardens

O

OAU	Organisation of African Unity
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ODA	overseas development assistance
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
Opec	Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries
OPSC	Office of the Public Service Commission
OSD	Occupation Specific Dispensation
OSEO	Office for Serious Economic Offences

P

PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
Palama	Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy
PanSALB	Pan South African Language Board
PAP	Pan-African Parliament
PAYE	Pay As You Earn (income tax)
PC	Project Consolidate
PCC	Presidential Coordinating Council
PCF	Provincial Communication Forum
PDI	previously disadvantaged individual
PEC	Provincial Executive Committee
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
PGA	Parliamentary Gallery Association
PGDP	Provincial Growth and Development Plan
PGDS	Provincial Growth and Development Strategy
PGM	platinum-group metal
PHC	primary healthcare
PHP	People's Housing Process
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
Pillir	Policy on Incapacity Leave and Ill-health Retirement
PLL	Provincial and Local Liaison
PMS	Performance Management System
PMTCT	Preventing Mother-To-Child Transmission
Popcru	Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union
Potwa	Post and Telecommunications Workers' Association
Powa	People Opposed to Women Abuse
PPC	Presidential Press Corps
PPP	public-private partnership
Prisa	Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa
Prof.	Professor (note full stop)
PSA	Public Servants' Association
PSA	public service announcement
PSC	Peace and Security Council (AU)



PSC	Public Service Commission
PTA	parent-teachers' association
R	
RAF	Road Accident Fund
REC	regional economic community
RDC	regional district council
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RRU	Rapid Response Unit
RTMC	Road Traffic Management Corporation
S	
SAA	South African Airways
SAAO	South African Astronomical Observatory
SAAU	South African Agricultural Union
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SABS	South African Bureau of Standards
SACAA	South African Civil Aviation Authority
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SACE	South African Council for Educators
Sacob	South African Chamber of Business
SACP	South African Communist Party
Sactwu	Southern African Clothing and Textile Workers' Union
Sacu	Southern African Customs Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
Sadtu	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
Safa	South African Football Association
Safcol	South African Forestry Company Limited
Sagda	South African Graduates Development Association
SAGNC	South African Geographical Names Council
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
Salga	South African Local Government Association
SALRC	South African Law Reform Commission
Salt	Southern African Large Telescope
Sama	South African Medical Association
Samsa	South African Maritime Safety Authority
SANAC	South African National AIDS Council
Sanap	South African National Antarctic Programme
SANC	South African Nursing Council
Sanco	South African National Civic Organisation



SANDF	South African National Defence Force
Sanef	South African National Editors' Forum
SANParks	South African National Parks
Sanral	South African National Roads Agency Limited
Sanrec	South African National Recreation Council
Santaco	South African National Taxi Council
Sapa	South African Press Association
Sapohr	South African Prisoners' Organisation for Human Rights
Sapp	Southern African Power Pool
SAPS	South African Police Service
Sapu	South African Police Union
Saqa	South African Qualifications Authority
SARB	South African Reserve Bank
SARCC	South African Rail Commuter Corporation
Sarfu	South African Rugby Football Union
SARPCCO	Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organisation
Sars	South African Revenue Service
SAS	South African Ship
Sasar	South African Search and Rescue Organisation
Sasco	South African Students Congress
Saspu	South African Students Press Union
SASS	South African Secret Service
Sassa	South African Social Security Agency
Sati	South African Translators' Institute
Sawen	South African Woman Entrepreneurs' Network
SAWS	South African Weather Service
SDI	spatial development initiative
Seda	Small Enterprise Development Agency
SET	science, engineering and technology
Seta	Sector Education and Training Authority
SFF	Strategic Fuel Fund
SHI	Social Health Insurance
SIPP	special integrated presidential project
Sita	State Information Technology Agency
Site	Standard Income Tax on Employees
SIU	Special Investigation Unit
SMMEs	small, medium and micro-enterprises
SOEs	state-owned enterprises
SoNA	State of the Nation Address
SPCA	Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals



SRSA	Sport and Recreation South Africa
S&T	science and technology
STIs	sexual transmitted infections
T	
TB	tuberculosis
TDCA	Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement
Tefsa	Tertiary Education Fund of South Africa
TFCA	transfrontier conservation area
Thrip	Technology and Human Resource for Industry Programme
Ticad	Tokyo International Conference on African Development
Tisa	Trade and Investment South Africa
TKC	Trans-Kalahari Corridor
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
TRP	Taxi Recapitalisation Programme
Twib	Technology for Women in Business
U	
UCB	United Cricket Board
UCDP	United Christian Democratic Party
UDM	United Democratic Movement
UIF	Unemployment Insurance Fund
UK	United Kingdom (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland)
Umalusi	General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Council
UN	United Nations
Unctad	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
Unep	United Nations Environment Programme
Unesco	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
Unga	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees
Unicef	United Nations Children's Fund
Unido	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
Unifem	United Nations Development Fund for Women
Unisa	University of South Africa
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSG	United Nations Secretary-General
URL	Uniform Resource Locator
URP	Urban Renewal Programme
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development



V	
VAT	value-added tax
VCT	voluntary counselling and testing
VEP	Victim Empowerment Programme
VIP	very important person

W	
Wan	wide area network
WEF	World Economic Forum
WHO	World Health Organisation
WHP	Women's Health Project
WID	Women in Development
Wims	Ward Information Management System
WRC	Water Research Commission
WTO	World Trade Organisation
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

Compiled by Wordsmiths Publishing Services, www.wordsmiths.co.za and the Directorate: Content Development, Government Communication and Information System

Acknowledgements:

Plain Language Communications (Pty) Ltd

South African Concise Oxford Dictionary, 2002, Oxford University Press