

language**wire**

STYLE GUIDE

US and UK English

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1. Applicability

The following guidelines must be applied consistently throughout all LanguageWire jobs into English – unless otherwise specified. Current customer style guides/templates should take precedence. Default spelling: UK spelling. (Use -ise rather than -ize.)

The Style Guide is not meant to be comprehensive; if you cannot find something here, please consult a standard style reference appropriate for the type of content you are translating or checking. For UK English: the Guardian Style Guide or the European Commission English Style Guide. For US English: The AP Stylebook or The Chicago Manual of Style. For UK spelling, we recommend The Oxford Dictionary of English. For US spelling, the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary.

2. General guidelines

2.1 Use active instead of passive voice

- As a general rule, use the active voice in English. The passive voice can make it difficult to figure out who is doing what to whom.
- Passive voice is not a grammatical error but has the greatest impact when used sparingly.
- It is acceptable to use passive voice to avoid an awkward sentence, when placing emphasis on the receiver of the action, or when the subject is unknown.
- When explaining how to use software, you should always clarify whether the system or the user performs a particular action.
- Address the user directly. This keeps the user's attention.
- Occasionally, you will find that it makes more sense to use the passive voice. For example, it may be useful to use the passive voice to present information in a logical order.

Examples:

- ✓ **To close the dialog box, choose OK.**
- ✗ **To close the dialog box, OK must be pressed.**
- ✗ **Closing the dialog box can be done by pressing OK.**

- ✗ **The document will be deleted by the program.**
- ✓ **The program will delete the document.**

2.2 That versus which

Use **that** for a restrictive (defining) clause. If you remove a restrictive clause from a sentence, you end up changing the overall meaning of that sentence.

Use **which** for a non-restrictive (non-defining clause). If you remove a non-restrictive clause from a sentence, you do not end up changing the overall meaning of the sentence.

Example:

- ✓ **Dates that are displayed in column C are invalid.**
(This sentence refers to dates in column C only).
- ✓ **Dates displayed in column C are invalid.**
(This sentence has exactly the same meaning as the sentence above).

However:

- ✗ **Dates, which are displayed in column C, are invalid.**
(**Which** is reserved for non-restrictive clauses, and so this sentence actually says, "Dates are invalid". The fact that the relevant dates are displayed in column C – and column C only – is given as additional, non-essential information).



Use commas with a non-restrictive clause (which). The comma indicates that a non-restrictive clause is to follow and, if omitted, the overall meaning of the sentence would not change.

- Example:** ✓ **LanguageWire München GmbH, which is based in Munich, Germany, currently employs XX people.**
✗ **LanguageWire München GmbH, that is based in Munich, Germany, currently employs XX people.**

2.3 Who versus that

Use who, not that, to refer to people.

- Example:** ✓ **Users who are competent...**
✗ **Users that are competent...**

2.4 Gender neutrality

Texts must be written in gender-neutral language. Avoid using he/she, his/her and him/her wherever possible. This can be achieved by turning the sentence around or using the plural form.

- Example:** ✗ **The customer must be given access to his contract.**
✓ **The customer must be given access to their contract.**
(despite the incongruence of the plural, this has become an acceptable usage).

Or try to avoid use of the pronoun at all.

- Example:** ✗ **The customer must be given access to his contract.**
✓ **The customer must be given access to the contract.**

It may be necessary to retain the use of he/she, his/her and him/her in legal texts to avoid ambiguity or for legal completeness. Please do not, for the sake of readability, use the masculine form with reference to the implied inclusion of the feminine form.

2.5 An versus a

Use **a** before words and acronyms with a consonant sound, including silent **y**, **h**, and **w**, no matter how the word is spelled. Use **an** before words and acronyms that start with a vowel sound.

Tip: Read your sentence out loud and you'll hear when **an** is needed.

- Examples:** ✓ **a European representative**
✓ **an Eastern European**
✓ **a utopia**
✓ **a horse**
✓ **a NATO member**
✓ **an NBA player**

Some speakers use **an** before **historic**. Although we would not do so, this is not incorrect; do not change it if you are quoting them.



2.6 Numbers

Spell out whole numbers from zero to nine. Use figures for whole numbers greater than nine. Where numbers in a range fall above and below this limit, use figures for both.

Example: ✓ **9 to 11**
✗ **nine to 11**

You should also use figures for numbers containing decimals, and for numbers written with their units of measurement. Try to avoid starting a sentence with a figure: spell it out or change the word order.

Example: ✓ **Forty-five new trees were planted.**
✓ **We have offices in 12 countries.**
✓ **Output was 250 kW.**

Use a point, not a comma, for decimals.

Example: ✓ **15.5 billion**

2.7 Formal versus informal

Translations should accurately reflect the original source text in meaning but also in writing style and tone. Depending on the context, an informal writing style (which uses contractions or slang) is acceptable.

Example: ✓ **"Hey, you, don't do that!"**
✓ **Let's rock 'n' roll.**

3. Orthography

3.1 Abbreviations

Avoid shortening words unless necessary to maintain the original style of the text or unless the abbreviation or acronym is normally used. When you shorten a word, spell it out at first use, followed by the abbreviation in brackets.

Example: ✓ **Advanced high-strength steel (AHSS) is a complex material. The AHSS family contains different grades.**

Do not use full stops after initial letters of abbreviations, except where required in US English.

Example: ✗ **I.S.O.**
✓ **ISO**
✗ **US embassy**
✓ **U.S. embassy**

To form the plural of an abbreviation or acronym, just add a lowercase **s**. Do not add an apostrophe before the **s**.

Try to avoid using Latin abbreviations in the target text.

You will also find that it's not necessary to use i.e. and etc. in one sentence.

Example: ✗ **The animal rescue team rescues animals of every kind, i.e. cats, dogs, horses, etc.**



Here, it would be better to use:

- ✔ (UK) The animal rescue team rescues animals of every kind, for example, cats, dogs and horses.
- ✔ (US) The animal rescue team rescues animals of every kind, for example, cats, dogs, and horses.

Use the following instead of the abbreviation:

✗	✔
i.e.	that is
N.B.	note
cf.	compare
	see
etc.	and so on
e.g.	for example, for instance, such as

A commonly used English abbreviation for the German "AGB" (allgemeine Geschäftsbedingungen) is "T&C" (terms and conditions).

Exercise caution where the following abbreviations are concerned:

OK	Only use to confirm an action on a user interface.
US	Only use for terms such as US dollar or US product.
MS	For legal reasons, you must not abbreviate the name Microsoft. "MS-DOS" is an exception to this rule.
a.m./p.m. am/pm	There tends to be a bit of confusion over the use of a.m. and p.m. It is equally correct to write a.m. and p.m. with or without full stops. When referring to times that are an exact number of hours, it is correct to write just the number for the hour. However, it is not incorrect to add '00' for the minutes. ✔ 6 p.m. ✔ 6 pm ✔ 6.00 p.m. ✔ 6.00 pm Note: Traditionally, midday is considered to be 12 p.m. and midnight 12 a.m. Ten minutes past midday is 12.10 p.m., 10 minutes past midnight is 12.10 a.m.

3.2 Abbreviated units of measure

In addition to the more commonly used abbreviations, such as km or cm, the following standard abbreviations also apply:

Gigabyte	GB	
Kilobyte	KB	
Kilobit	kb	
Megabyte	MB	
Megabit	Mbps, Mbit/s or mbps	Use the same format for similar units of measure.
Bits per second	bit/s or bps	
Megabits per second	Mbit/s or Mbps	
Kilobits per second	kbit/s or kbps	

Bytes per second	B/s or Bps	
Megabytes per second	MB/s or MBps	
Kilobytes per second	kbyte/s or kB/s or kBps	
Point	Pt.	No plural form
Inch	"	You can use " to denote inches on packaging or in tables, but never in descriptive text.
Hour	h	No full stop
Minute	min	No full stop, and never mins
Second	sec	No plural form
Millisecond	ms	
Day	d	
Week	wk	
Year	y, yr	
Volt	V	
Watt	W	
Megahertz	MHz	
Gramme (UK)		
Gram (UK+US)	g	
Kilogramme (UK)		
Kilogram (UK+US)	kg	Never kgs
Minimum	min.	With a full stop
Maximum	max.	With a full stop
Hectare	ha	
Litre (UK)		
Liter (US)	l	Or L if confusion with the number 1 is likely
Millilitre	ml	
Kilogramme	kg	
Tonne	t	
Pixel	px	

Do not follow symbols for units of measure with a full stop, unless at the end of a sentence. Do not pluralise a unit of measure by adding "s". Units of measure **do not have** plural forms. The plural of byte is bytes (as this is not an abbreviation).

Insert a space (and, wherever possible, a non-breaking space (CTRL+SHIFT+SPACE or ALT+160) between the digit and the unit of measurement. One exceptions to this rule is the percentage sign (%).

Example:  **12cm**
 **12 cm**

 **12 %**
 **12%**

Do not hyphenate units of measure unless the unit of measure is spelled out.

Example:  **13-cm rod**
 **13-centimeter rod**

Whether to insert a space between the digit and a temperature unit (°C, °F) is at the translator's discretion, provided this is done consistently throughout the text.

3.3 Capitalisation

Use an initial capital letter for the terms Table, Figure, Appendix, and Chapter when they are followed by a number.

Capitalise a person's professional title, but not if that term is used as a descriptor.

Example: ✓ **President and CEO Bobbi Brownie**
✓ **Brownie, president at the company ...**
✓ **He is chief executive officer of the company.**

Do not capitalise the explanation of an acronym when it is spelled out.

Example: ✗ **KPI (Key Performance Indicator)**
✓ **KPI (key performance indicator)**

In headlines, we generally distinguish between two styles of capitalisation – sentence style and title case (the latter is also referred to as headline style or initial caps).

In general, UK English uses sentence style and US English uses title case. In sentence style, only the first letter of the first word in a sentence is capitalised. Use this for software error messages, complete sentences and questions.

In title case, the first letter of every word is capitalised, with the exception of some small words such as articles and short prepositions. When using title case, use the two lists below as a rule of thumb when deciding what and what not to capitalise (note the examples in brackets).

Capitalise the following when using title case:

- Nouns
- Verbs
- Participles (Was, Had)
- Pronouns (Its)
- Adjectives (That, All, Any, Which)
- Adverbs (When, Not)
- Subordinating conjunctions (If, Since, As, Because)
- All elements of hyphenated words (E-Mail Account), except words that are not normally capitalised in title case (Up-to-Date)
- Prepositions that are part of a verb or phrase (Setting Up)
- Prepositions and conjunctions that have five or more letters (Without, During, Through)
- And words or phrases that come after a colon or semicolon

Do not capitalise the following when using title case:

- Prepositions that have four or fewer letters (with, for, to)
- Articles (the, some, a, an), unless the article is the first or last word in the title
- Coordinating conjunctions (or, and, but, for)
- The word "to" in an infinitive phrase

4. Punctuation

Full stops in sentences containing brackets: If the text within the bracket is merely part of a sentence, place the full stop **after** the closing bracket. However, if the bracket contains an entire sentence from start to finish, place the full stop directly after the last word, that is, before the closing bracket.

Put a comma outside the brackets (as demonstrated here), when those brackets appear at the end of a clause within the sentence.



4.1 Quotation marks

Double quotation marks should be used whenever something is actually being quoted from a person or other work, or to distinguish the title of a book or article, etc.

Examples: ✓ "Growth has slowed in the third quarter."
✓ Be sure to read the book "War and Peace".

Please note that quotations within quotations take single quotation marks.

Examples: ✓ "The Chairman told me 'good job'".

Please be consistent with your use of curly (ALT+0147 and ALT+0148) vs. straight (SHIFT+2) quotation marks.

Punctuation within quotation marks:

Punctuation is ALWAYS placed inside the quotation marks.

Examples ✓ "The Chairman told me 'good job.'"
✓ She said, "This is what I mean," even though she didn't think that.

4.2 Hyphens, slashes

Hyphens linking three or more words: When you are making a phrase function as a single word, you must link all the elements of that phrase with hyphens. This shows that they are functioning as a single unit.

Multi-word phrases functioning as nouns are normally hyphenated.

Examples: My sister-in-law
A jack-in-the-box

Multi-phrases describing a following noun require hyphens: **An up-to-date document.**
However, do not hyphenate such a phrase if it comes after the noun: **The document is now up to date.**

Hyphens linking two words: Numbers: Hyphenate all numbers from 21 to 99. Hyphenate all fractions.

Examples: Fifty-four
Three-tenths

Two-word compound adjectives need to be hyphenated when preceding a noun, and sometimes in other positions (for example, after the verb to be).

- Preceding a noun
Example: That's his so-called best friend.
- In other positions, for example, following a verb

In the case of an adjective and a following past/present participle or word ending in **-ed**, insert a hyphen.

Example: The wound was self-inflicted.

Insert a hyphen when combining adjective plus noun

Example: Her performance in that show was second-rate.

Conversely, when combining noun plus adjective, the hyphen is optional

Example: The water was waist-deep.
The water was waist deep.



Do not hyphenate other word groups

Example: She married the boy next door.

If the first word of a compound adjective is well, better, best, ill, worse or worst, only insert a hyphen when the compound precedes the noun. Otherwise, do not use a hyphen.

Examples: Don't you know him? He's a well-known author.

Don't you know him? He's a television presenter, although better known as an author.

When an adverb ends in **-ly**, avoid following it with a hyphen.

Example: ❌ A badly-translated document.

✅ A badly translated document.

When two or more hyphenated words appear together and have a part in common, you may omit the part they have in common in all but the last occurrence. However, you must retain the hyphen.

Example: ✅ First-rate, second-rate and third-rate actors.

You could shorten this to: First-, second- and third-rate actors.

In some cases, the presence or absence of a hyphen in these positions conveys important information. Take, for example, his mother and father-in-law (= his mother and his father-in law) and his mother- and father-in-law (= his mother-in-law and father-in-law).

Phrasal verbs are combinations of a simple verb, like take, and an adverb, such as up, or a preposition.

Example of noun formed from phrasal verb: Take-up

However, in some compounds the hyphen is optional, and nowadays the hyphen is very often omitted.

Examples: Takeaway, hideout, layout.

Important: If the verbal part of a compound noun has a word-ending added, you must always hyphenate the noun.

Example: Grown-up.

Note that US English favours the omission of hyphens where not absolutely necessary. UK English still uses hyphens quite a lot, but less so than before. If your translation is intended for the international market, follow the American style and use hyphens as seldom as possible.

In general, hyphens are not used with prefixes and suffixes (un-, dis-, re-, -ness, etc.) nor with any word-forming elements (hydro-, electro-, photo-, -logy, etc.).

Example: unwell, discontented, redistribute, sadness, hydroelectric, electrolysis

It's a good idea to insert a hyphen to avoid the juxtaposition of two identical letters. For example, **heartthrob** would be better written **heart-throb**. Choose **re-enter** instead of **reenter**.

Also, some words would be indistinguishable if you did not use a hyphen.

Example: re-count (= to count again) versus recount (= to tell)

Finally, note the position of the hyphen in the following idiom:

Example: ❌ **She sent me on a wild goose-chase**
✅ **She sent me on a wild-goose chase**

Slashes: In English, you should always avoid inserting a space before and/or after a slash.

Example: ❌ **Highlighting / Selecting Text**
✅ **Highlighting/Selecting Text**

However, if the slash is separating a phrase or multiple words on either or both sides of it, there needs to be a space on both sides of the slash – otherwise it becomes confusing about what is being differentiated.

4.3 Full stops (periods)

A full stop is known as a period in US English. Its main uses are to mark the end of a sentence and to close an abbreviation.

Three full stops are used to indicate that a sentence is incomplete or that something has been omitted from it.

Example: ✅ **I thought he would never stop talking. He just went on and on...**

Note: When a sentence ends in omission dots, you do not need to add a fourth full stop. **You should only use omission dots where absolutely necessary.**

4.4 Colons

A colon is used to introduce a part of a sentence that explains or expands on a preceding part of the sentence.

Examples: ✅ **You'll never believe this: I won the lottery!**
✅ **There is only one thing I really want to buy with my lottery winnings: namely, a massive house.**

Where there is an introductory word like namely, a comma is acceptable in place of a colon. Here, you could also say:

✅ **There is only one thing I really want to buy with my lottery winnings, namely a massive house.**

You may precede a list of items with a colon.

Example: ✅ **Ingredients: water, flour and sugar.**

Direct speech may be preceded by either a colon or a comma, although a comma is more common in UK English.

Examples: ✅ **The child shouted: "Give me my ball!"**
✅ **The child shouted, "Give me my ball!"**

A colon is usually followed by lower case letters (except for acronyms and proper nouns and where speech follows).



German source texts, in particular, often include colons in places where they would be inappropriate in an English text, for example, in a chapter heading.

Example: ❌ **1.1 Setting the clock:**
✅ **1.1 Setting the clock**

Consider carefully your use of colons, or whether a comma would perhaps be more appropriate.

Example: ❌ **In the ROAD and SPORT riding modes: the engine response is optimal and direct.**
✅ **In the ROAD and SPORT riding modes, the engine response is optimal and direct.**

4.5 Semicolons

A semicolon is used to mark a stronger and more definite break in a sentence than that made by a comma, but less of a break than that between two separate sentences.

Example: ✅ **She had a wonderful imagination; yet she never wrote any of her thoughts down.**
(Inserting a semicolon here instead of a comma makes a greater break between the two clauses, thereby emphasising the contrast between what is said in the first clause and what is said in the second.)

You can also use a semicolon to provide a balance between two clauses.

Example: ✅ **As an actor, he was wonderful; as a singer, he was wonderful.**

You can also use a semicolon where a connecting word could have been used.

Example: ✅ **You may be happy; I am ecstatic.**

Some connecting words are often preceded by a semicolon instead of being an alternative to one. These include also, consequently, furthermore, nevertheless, still, hence, moreover and however.

Example: ✅ **He was a wonderful sculptor; moreover, he painted some magnificent pictures.**

Use a semicolon in a series of items when the items themselves are complex or contain internal punctuation.

Example: ✅ **In the meeting today we have Colonel Mustard, from the army; Dr Watson, of Baker Street; his colleague, Sherlock Holmes and leading crime expert Joe Bloggs.**

4.6 Apostrophe

Use **'s** after singular words or names that end in **s** or **x**:

Examples: ✅ **boss's**
✅ **Alex's**

Use **'s** after plurals that do not end in **s**:

Example: ✅ **children's**

Use **s'** on plurals that end in **s**:

- Examples:**
- ✓ **bosses', the United States'**
 - ✓ **People's** = of (the) people
 - ✓ **Peoples'** = of peoples

Do not put apostrophes into decades:

Example: ✓ **the 1990s.**

4.7 Hyphen versus en dash

Please differentiate between hyphens (shorter: -) and en dashes (longer: –). While the hyphen is used to join words and to separate syllables, the en dash (ALT+0150) indicates a parenthetical thought.

- Example:**
- ✗ **The horizontal bar - or quotation dash - is used to introduce quoted text.**
 - ✓ **The horizontal bar – or quotation dash – is used to introduce quoted text.**

Unless otherwise specified, we do not use the longer em dashes.
In a range, the en dash without spaces should be used.

- Example:**
- ✗ **10 - 20**
 - ✓ **10–20**

4.8 Lists

The following points are important to note when writing lists:

- Always start each bullet point with a capital letter.
- If the list contains complete sentences, end them with a full stop.
- If the text lists, for example, headings, subheadings, products or similar, do not insert a full stop or comma.
- If your translation exceeds the length of the source text, or if you needed to form several sentences from one source sentence, then whether or not you insert a full stop is a matter of discretion and style.
- Never insert a full stop if the bulleted point contains just one word.
- The source text may contain the second half of the introductory sentence below the list itself – avoid replicating this structure in English. Put the entire introductory sentence before the list.
Note this example:

- Example:**
- ✗ **You need to ensure that your computer has
512 MB RAM,
at least 2 GB free disk space and
a powerful graphics card
before you continue with this download.**
 - ✓ **Before continuing with this download, ensure that
your computer meets each of the following requirements:
512 MB RAM
At least 2 GB free disk space
A powerful graphics card**

In addition, if the individual entries in a list end with a full stop, they must also start with a capital letter. The same applies for headings, titles, table entries and callouts.

Important: Do not use conjunctions in bulleted lists.



Example: ❌ Specify each of the following:

- Supplier ID,
- Shipping address and
- Telephone number.

✅ Specify each of the following:

- Supplier ID
- Shipping address
- Telephone number

If alternatives in a list are mutually exclusive, **do not** use “or”. Use the introductory sentence instead to indicate that the reader has a choice.

Example: ❌ There are two ways of accessing the details stored for a particular customer.

- You can enter the customer ID, or
- You can enter the telephone number.

✅ You can access the details stored for a particular customer using one of the following options:

- Enter the customer ID
- Enter the telephone number

4.9 Commas

A comma is used to indicate a pause or slight break in a sentence.

Examples: ✅ I would love to go away for the weekend, but I really can't afford it.

✅ If you decide to go regardless, have a great time.

You must insert a comma between the main clause and a preceding dependent clause. An example of this would be a clause beginning with **when, where, how, since, although**.

❌ When my umbrella broke I got drenched.

✅ When my umbrella broke, I got drenched.

However, if the dependent clause follows the main clause, you do not need to insert a comma.

✅ I got drenched when my umbrella broke.

Insert a comma if there is a balance or contrast between the parts of a sentence:

❌ I enjoyed the show yet I wouldn't rate it highly.

✅ I enjoyed the show, yet I wouldn't rate it highly.

When the second part of the sentence expresses a result or consequence of what is said in the first part:

❌ My umbrella broke so I got wet.

✅ My umbrella broke, so I got wet.

This does not apply in the case of **and**:

✅ My umbrella broke and I got wet.



Always consider inserting a comma where the reader may otherwise be unsure about the meaning of a sentence.

Example: ❌ **Where appropriate compensation will be paid.**
✅ **Where appropriate, compensation will be paid.**

Ensure that a comma is inserted both before and after words inserted into the middle of a sentence.

Example: ❌ **You can of course exit the screen by clicking Cancel.**
✅ **You can, of course, exit the screen by clicking Cancel.**

Important: Introductory words and words which form an inserted comment or additional piece of information should be separated from the rest of the sentence by commas.

A very common error involves wrong positioning of a comma.

❌ **He called the waiter over, and picking up the menu, ordered his meal.**
✅ **He called the waiter over and, picking up the menu, ordered his meal.**

To see just how wrong this position of the first comma is, remove the inserted clause. You are left with the following:

❌ **He called the waiter over ordered his meal.**
✅ **He called the waiter over and ordered his meal.**

Commas are essential. Don't be afraid to use them! However, make sure you use them correctly. If you say "My brother bought a new silver car", you're implying that he already had a silver car and replaced it with another one. However, saying "My brother bought a new, silver car" implies that your brother bought a new car which happened to be silver.

Note that, while UK English normally just uses obligatory commas, US English tends to use a lot of optional commas, too.

Example: ✅ **UK: She loves running, swimming and dancing.**
✅ **US: She loves running, swimming, and dancing.**

Commas in addresses: The current tendency in English is to omit the comma at the end of an address line.

Example: ✅ **Mr Sample
Sample street
Sample town
Sample country**

Commas in dates

Example: ✅ **UK: 31 December 2006**
✅ **US: December 31, 2006**

Commas in numbers

Four-figure numbers: These are written using a comma.

Example: ✅ **3,000**

Five-figures and above: Enter a comma.

Example: ✅ **44,000**

4.10 Exclamation marks

Exclamation marks in English are normally used in informal/colloquial language only.

Technical documentation in particular should NOT contain exclamation marks. Simply use a full stop. In all other cases, only use an exclamation mark when you really feel its use is justifiable.

4.11 Question marks

Do not use a question mark in an indirect question.

Example: ✓ The father asked when the child would come home.

4.12 Punctuation and brackets

Full stops in sentences containing brackets: If the text within the bracket is merely part of a sentence, place the full stop **after** the closing bracket. However, if the bracket contains an entire sentence from start to finish, place the full stop directly after the last word, that is, before the closing bracket.

Put a comma outside the brackets (as demonstrated here), when those brackets appear at the end of a clause within the sentence.

5. Localisation

5.1 Date format

There are several ways to write a date. Note that the UK and US date conventions differ.

Examples: ✓ UK English: **31/12/2006**
31 December 2006 (Note: Please avoid using 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and so on)
✓ US English: **12/31/2006**
December 31, 2006 (Again, note the use of 31 instead of 31st)

5.2 Currencies

Currency abbreviations: The abbreviation precedes the amount and is followed by a space.

Examples: ✓ EUR 3 billion
✓ USD 4,500

Currency symbols: These are placed directly before the amount, without a space.

Examples: ✓ €570
✓ \$200
✓ £50



Units and subunits: In English, these are separated with a point.

Examples: ✓ **EUR 3.1 million**
✓ **\$1.23**
✓ **£5.30**

The euro: Like all currency names in English, for example “pound” and “dollar”, the word “euro” is written in lower case without an initial capital.

In accordance with EU style guidelines, only use the plurals of “euro” and “cent” without an “s” when amending or referring to legal texts that observe this rule themselves. In all other texts, especially documents intended for the general public, use “euros” and “cents”. In documents and tables where monetary amounts are used a lot, make maximum use of the € symbol or the EUR abbreviation.

It is helpful, but not necessary, to place a non-breaking space between the letters and numbers (press Ctrl+Shift+Spacebar on a PC).

5.3 Names of countries and towns/cities

Except in the postal address, always use an English equivalent where available and verified. For example, use Munich instead of München. Where no official translation exists, use the original name of the country or town/city as provided to you.

Exception: please note that, today, we prefer Beijing rather than Peking. It is considered more polite.

5.4 Specific country features

Take special care when dealing with something that is specific to a particular country, such as maps, flags, country name, town names, languages, dialects and cultural content. Use reliable sources, and make sure that you have understood the text properly and translated it correctly.

5.5 Telephone numbers

It is normally best to retain the format of the original telephone number, but precede it with a plus sign (+) followed directly by the country code (e.g. +353). You would also normally enclose the first zero within brackets, though this can be omitted. Please use your discretion.

Example: ✓ **+49 89 2000037-0**
✓ **+49 (0)89 2000037-0**

5.6 Time

The international standard notation for the time of day is **hh:mm:ss**.

Example: ✓ **23:59:59**

In the English-speaking world, we tend to use 1 to 12 a.m. and 1 to 12 p.m. instead of the 24-hour clock.

The US uses this format a lot. However, Great Britain and Ireland, for example, use both formats with ease, and you’ll find the 24-hour clock being used at airports, in cinemas and for bus/train timetables (for example).



5.7 Copyrights and brand names

It is not normal practice to translate product names with a registered trademark. To avoid legal problems, **never** translate brand names or product names. You should also copy any superscript present in the original, for example HotJava™. Any uncertainties must be queried with the customer.

Important: Translating brand names or trademarks can have legal consequences.

When referring to a company (for example, Microsoft) and its products, use the precise trademark name of the company each time it appears in your text.

If you are unsure how to spell a company or product name, check the company's website. Always spell the product name exactly as the company in question spells it.

5.8 Product names

Always write actual name (of a program, for example) according to how the manufacturer spells it. In addition to spelling, note the manufacturer's use of upper and lower case.

Examples:  **OpenOffice**
 **HotJava™**

Be aware that a product name may be spelled incorrectly in the source text – make sure that you rectify this in your translation, and flag this error so that we can notify the author of the source text.

5.9 Special characters

In body text, spell out the name of the special character, followed by the symbol in brackets, for example **asterisk (*)**.

Avoid transferring “+” or “&” from the source when “and” would be more appropriate and stylistically more professional. Germans, in particular, tend to overuse the “+” and “&” symbols.

Example:  **Operating instructions & warranty**
 **Operating instructions and warranty**

Please note the following list of special characters:

Character	Name	ANSI code (ALT+Code)
`	Accent acute	0180
`	Accent grave	096
&	Ampersand	038
<>	Angle brackets	060, 062
'	Apostrophe (publishing character)	0146
'	Apostrophe (user-typed text)	039
*	Asterisk (not star)	042
@	At sign	064
\	Backslash	092
{ }	Braces (avoid curly brackets)	0123, 0125
[]	Brackets	091, 093
^	Circumflex	094
¢	Cent sign	0162



«	Opening chevron (Microsoft term)	0171
»	Closing chevron (Microsoft term)	0187
©	Copyright symbol	0169
°	Degree symbol	0176
÷	Division sign	0247
\$	Dollar sign	036
...	Ellipsis (s), ellipses (pl). Do not add a space between ellipsis points.	
—	Em dash	0151
–	En dash. Use an en dash if you need to insert a dash in a sentence (as opposed to the minus sign on the keyboard).	0150
=	Equal sign (not equals sign).	061
!	Exclamation mark (UK), exclamation point (US)	033
>	Greater than sign	062
≥	Greater than or equal to sign	
-	Hyphen	0173
"	Inch mark	034
<	Less than sign	060
≤	Less than or equal to sign	
×	Multiplication sign	0215
≠	Not equal to	
#	Number sign in most cases (but pound key or hash key when referring to the telephone)	035
¶	Paragraph mark	0182

6. Key differences between US and UK English

The most notable difference between standard US English and standard UK English relates to the area of spelling and grammar.

6.1 Style

6.1.1 Past participles

The past participles **got** and **gotten** are one of the most obvious differences.

Example:  **UK: She's got much better at tennis.**
 **US: She's gotten much better at tennis.**

6.1.2 Tense

US English accepts the use of the simple past tense with just, already and yet, whereas UK English requires the use of the present perfect.

Example:  **UK: Have you seen him yet?/He has just gone out.**
 **US: Did you see him yet?/He just went out.**

6.1.3 Punctuation

The only notable punctuation difference relates to the use of commas in lists.

In US English, list constructions have a comma inserted before the conjunctions **and + or**. In UK English, the comma is dropped.

Example: ✓ **UK: Enter the year, month and day.**
✓ **US: Enter the year, month, and day.**

6.1.4 Hyphenation

Although hyphens should be used sparingly as a general rule, they are used more frequently in UK English than in US English.

Examples: ✓ **UK: User-defined** **Time-based**
✓ **US: User defined** **Time-based**

6.1.5 US: Tendency to lengthen words

Examples: ✓ **UK: Oblige (verb)** **Transport (noun)**
✓ **US: Obligate (verb)** **Transportation (noun)**

6.1.6 Specific idioms and expressions

Examples: ✓ **UK: sufficient**
✓ **US: enough**

✓ **UK: comprise**
✓ **US: contain, include, is made up of**

6.1.7 Full stops (periods) in abbreviations

The US convention is to use full stops (periods) to identify almost all abbreviations.
The UK convention is to keep them to a minimum.

In US English, a full stop (period) should be inserted after title abbreviations, whereas no full stop is used in UK English.

Examples: ✓ **UK: Mr / Mrs / Ms / Dr Smith**
✓ **US: Mr. / Mrs. / Ms. / Dr. Smith**

However, please note that the abbreviated title "Prof." also takes a full stop in UK English, as the word has been truncated.

In common business titles, do not use full stops.

Example: ✓ **CEO, VP, CFO**

6.1.8 That versus which

US English favours the use of **that** above **which**. Please also refer to section [2.2 That versus which](#).



6.1.9 Choice and spelling

Before you begin translating, ensure that you know your target language. There are many spelling and stylistic differences between UK English and US English. For UK English, you are recommended to use The Oxford Dictionary of English. For US English, you are recommended to use the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary.

Note: If you are translating into English for specific English-speaking countries or regions, for example South Africa, you may decide that it is more appropriate to use the local English language standards in country-specific texts.

Here is some general information regarding the spelling differences between UK and US English. See the table below for a comprehensive list of differences.

Remember to always run the spellchecker on your computer before delivering a file.

6.1.10 -ise and -ize

US English tends to prefer **-ize** and **-ization**, while the UK English preference is for **-ise** and **-isation**.

Example:  UK: localisation
 US: localization

6.1.11 -yse and -yze

The **-yse** form is the only correct spelling in UK English.

Example:  UK: analyse
 US: analyze

6.1.12 -our and -or

Many nouns ending in **-or** in US English change to **-our** in UK English.

Example:  UK: colour
 US: color

6.1.13 -re and -er

Many nouns ending in **-re** in UK English change to **-er** in US English.

Example:  UK: centre
 US: center

6.1.14 -ce and -se (nouns)

In UK English, **-se** denotes a verb and **-ce** denotes a noun.

Example:  UK (noun): licence
 UK (verb): license

 US (noun): license
 US (verb): license (or licence)

6.1.15 -og and -ogue (nouns)

The final **-ue** is dropped from certain words in US English:

Example:  UK: catalogue, dialogue, analogue
 US: catalog, dialog, analog



6.1.16 -ll/-l

In UK English, when words ending with the consonant **l** are given a suffix beginning with a vowel (for example, **-able**, **-ed**, **-ing**, **-ous**, **-y**), the **l** is doubled. This is not the case in US English.

Example:  **UK: Cancel > Cancelled**
 **US: Cancel > Canceled**

There are some grammatical differences between US and UK English. These differences need to be taken into account.

6.1.17 Differences in vocabulary – list of examples:

Please note that the UK spelling of **programme** applies unless referring to a computer program.

UK English	US English
accounting year	fiscal year
aluminium	aluminum
amongst	among
anti-clockwise	counterclockwise
articulated lorry	tractor-trailer, semi
as at (date)	as of
autumn	fall
backwards	backward
bank holiday	public holiday
bank note	bill
bill (restaurant)	check
bill of exchange	note
billion (one million million)	billion (one thousand million)
bonnet (of a car)	hood
boot (of a car)	trunk
brackets	parenthesis
bumper (of a car)	fender
cancelling	canceling
car park	parking lot
carriage (of a train)	car
catalogue	catalog
cater for	cater to
cheque	check
cinema, pictures	movies
colour	color
commence	start
co-operation	cooperation
crossroads	intersection
current account	checking account
CV	résumé, resumé, resume
defence	defense
dialogue	dialog
engaged (phone)	busy



excess (insurance)	deductible
exclamation mark	exclamation point
expiry date	expiration date
fill in (a form)	fill out
fire brigade	fire department
firstly	first
flatmate	roommate
flyover	overpass
football	soccer
fortnight	two weeks
forwards	forward
fulfil	fulfill
full stop	period
grey	gray
head office	headquarters
hire car	rental car
holiday, leave	vacation
in future	in the future
in hospital	in the hospital
in one go	in one step
initialise	initialize
inter-company	intercompany
inter-group	intergroup
interval (theatre)	intermission
John Smith	John Doe
inverted commas	quotation marks
lavatory, loo, WC	restroom, bathroom
licence (noun), license (verb)	license
lift	elevator
litre	liter
lorry	truck
manoeuvre	maneuver
metre	meter
mid-week	midweek
motorway	highway
mould	mold
multi-level	multilevel
multi-purpose	multipurpose
nappy (for baby)	diaper
national service	military service
non-hazardous	nonhazardous
non-resident	nonresident
notice board	bulletin board
nought, nil	zero
one-off	one-time, nonrecurring
ordinary shares	common stock



organisation	organization
orientated	oriented
pavement	sidewalk
pedestrian crossing, zebra crossing	crosswalk
petrol	gasoline, gas
plaster	Band-Aid® (trademark), bandage, adhesive bandage
post (a letter)	mail
post code	zip code
pre-assembled	preassembled
pre-assign	preassign
preference shares	preferred stock
presently (shortly afterwards)	soon
programme	program
to queue	to line up, to stand in line
realise	realize
re-enter	reenter
retrospective	retroactive
to reverse the (phone) charges	to call collect
to ring	to phone, to call
roundabout	traffic circle
rubber	eraser
sceptical	skeptical
semi-finished	semifinished
shopping trolley	shopping cart
speciality	specialty
stand (at trade fair)	booth
standardise, standardisation	standardize, standardization
sub-area	subarea
sub-assembly	subassembly
sub-group	subgroup
sub-item	subitem
subway	underpass
tap	faucet
tender	bid
tick	checkmark
torch	flashlight
trade creditors	accounts payable
turnover	sales
underground, tube	subway
rubbish bin, waste bin, waste basket	trashcan
whilst	while

7. Document/text formatting

It goes without saying that the formatting of the original text should be kept as in the original – nevertheless, it happens again and again that font size, colour or type is changed, so please pay attention not to change the formatting without good reason.



Quick Style Guide Tips

English

Default spelling: **UK spelling.** Use **-ise** rather than **-ize**.

Gender neutrality: Avoid use of **he** and **she**. Replace with **they** or rewrite without pronoun.

Strive to use active voice.

Which generally takes a comma and has a different meaning than **that**.

Money: **EUR 500** (with space)
\$500 (no space because symbol)

Time: **8:00; 21:00; 9:00 p.m.** (always use colon)

Date: UK: **21 December 2018** or **21/12/18**
US: **December 21, 2018** or **12/21/18**

Capitalisation: Do not capitalise explanations of abbreviations (KPI = key performance indicator).

Spacing before units: Make sure to include a (non-breaking if possible) space before all units (but **not %**, which is not a unit).

Spacing before and after slashes: Insert a space if there are more than one word / more than one term on either side of the slash that are being separated. For single words/terms, no space is necessary.

Quotation marks should be used for quoted speech or for titles of articles and books. Use single quotation marks for quotes within quoted text.

Punctuation is placed inside quotation marks.

Final comma in list: **US English** uses a comma before the last item in a list (serial comma). **UK** does not.

Please avoid "germanisms".

The ampersand (&): German writers love to use the **&** to replace **und**. This is often an aesthetic and stylistic choice, however, the whole word should be used unless there is a clear consistent style being used for headlines and category titles. (One place it needs to be is R&D.)

Overuse of "e.g.": Just because the German uses **z.B.** does not mean we need to use **e.g.** when "such as" is a more flowing and readable alternative.

Overuse of the colon: Colons are used broadly in German. There is often no reason to cross-apply it. It should be natural for one sentence to follow the next. Only when the second part of the sentence is truly answering what the first part has set up should a colon be used.





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