

the dtic

EDITORIAL STYLE GUIDE



the dtic

Department:
Trade, Industry and Competition
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

the dtic - together, growing the economy

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This editorial style guide provides a set of guidelines to ensure that the content of the department is consistent and of high quality, no matter who is writing or editing it. It includes standards for grammar, spelling and sentence structure, as well as lists of acronyms and abbreviations, **the dtic** branches, leadership and agencies.

WRITING STYLE

- **the dtic** USES BRITISH not American SPELLING.
e.g. apologise (not apologize), emphasise (not emphasize), programme (not program, except for computer program), centre (not center), colour (not color) etc.
- Language should be clear, unambiguous, logical, consistent and concise. Use short sentences and vocabulary that everyone can understand.
- USE **ACTIVE** instead of passive VOICE, i.e. '**the dtic** invites investors' rather than 'an invitation is extended to investors'
- Reported speech is written in the past tense, i.e. "...," said the minister OR "the minister said that..."
- **CHECK** all facts, figures, dates, telephone numbers, citations, titles, initials and spelling of names.

AVOID:

- **Contractions:** DO NOT use contractions, i.e. 'don't', 'can't', 'won't'. The words must be written out in full, i.e. 'do not', 'cannot', 'will not'. The only instance in which contractions may be used is in direct quotes.
- **Redundancies** that repeat what the initials stand for, e.g. 'ID document', 'HIV virus', 'ATM machine', 'ISBN number' etc. – which should simply read: 'ID', 'HIV', 'ATM' and 'ISBN'.
- **Redundant phrases** or words, such as 'begin to be seen', 'basically', 'in terms of' etc. (For a complete list of redundant phrases or words, refer to Annexure 4.)
- Following two nouns with a singular verb. Two nouns joined with 'and' must be followed with a plural verb: i.e. **the dti** and XYZ invite (NOT invites) you to the launch of the ABC.
- **Using the 'http://' prefix** in URLs, for example 'www.thedti.gov.za'
- **Ambiguities** when referring to dates, such as 'two years ago', 'currently', 'recently', etc. – be specific and refer to the actual month and year.
- **Using gender-sensitive words:** Use *Ms* instead of *Miss* or *Mrs*, *chairperson* instead of *chairman* or *chairwoman*, and *spokesperson* instead of *spokesman* or *spokeswoman*.
- Using too many adjectives and adverbs (i.e. descriptive words).
- **Split infinitives:** A verb preceded by "to", as in *to like*, is called an infinitive verb. Do not split infinitives, i.e. 'He really seems *to like* it' NOT 'He seems *to really like* it'
- **Jargon and clichés:** they often contain "hidden" meaning that not everyone can understand.
- Amongst – use *among* for more than two things and *between* for two people or things.

BRANDING THE DEPARTMENT CORRECTLY

- At first usage, the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition must be written out in full, followed by the acronym '**the dtic**' in bold, inside brackets (do not bold the brackets).
i.e. the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (**the dtic**)
Only the acronym should be used thereafter.

- **FONT – ARIAL**

- 'the dtic' must ALWAYS be written in **lowercase, bold Arial** typeface, even at the beginning of a sentence.
- If a heading is bolded Arial, then 'the dtic' should be written in Arial Black.
- Headings – 12pt; sub-headings – 10pt; body text – 9pt
- Line spacing: 1,5 lines

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

- Names must be written out in full at first usage, followed by the acronym in brackets, Only the acronym should be used thereafter.
- When acronyms are used in the plural form, they do not take apostrophes, e.g. **FTAs** NOT FTA's, **MECs** NOT MEC's, **NGOs** NOT NGO's.
- Spell out all abbreviations the first time you use them, with the abbreviation in brackets; and abbreviate thereafter, e.g. the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK).
- Use capital letters if an abbreviation is pronounced as the individual letters, e.g. CSIR, HSRC
Note that there are exceptions to this rule, such as dplg, pdf and plc.
- Acronyms that are spoken like a word must be written with an initial capital letter, e.g. 'Armscor', 'Nepad', 'Cosatu'
- Abbreviations that end in the final letter of the full word, for example, 'Mr', 'Ms', 'Mrs' and 'Dr', **DO NOT** take full stops – however, those that do not end in the final letter of the full word, such as 'Prof.' and 'Hon.', do carry full stops.
- DO NOT use full stops in abbreviations such as the US, the UK, IMF, mph, 4am etc.
- Use full stops in the abbreviations e.g., i.e., etc.
- A list of acronyms should be incorporated in the prelims of each publication, with the exception of brochures, leaflets and other short marketing materials. (See Annexure 1 for a complete list of acronyms.)

ACTS

- Write the title of an Act, at first usage, as follows: The Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act No. 66 of 1995). It can thereafter be referred to as: the Labour Relations Act.

ADDRESSES

- In numbered addresses, abbreviate Street ('St', NOT 'Str'), Road (Rd), Avenue (Ave), Boulevard (Blvd), Crescent (Cres), etc.
e.g. 'Our offices are at 21 Main St', but 'They live in Main Street'.
- For URLs, delete http://

CAPITALISATION

- **CAPITALISATION IN HEADINGS:**

* CONSISTENCY IS CRITICAL *

- **EITHER** the first word is capped and subsequent words not
e.g. Rand climbs to new high

- **OR** use initial caps for all principal words - this includes the first and last words of a headline, and all nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs and subordinating conjunctions (if, because, as, that etc)
e.g. Rand Climbs to New High

- Articles ('a', 'an', 'the'), coordinating conjunctions ('and', 'but', 'or', 'nor', 'for') and prepositions are to remain lower case. However, if any of these are at the beginning of the headline they must be capitalised.

- Where words are separated by a hyphen, both words should be capitalised.

- Capitalise the first word after a colon

- Capitalise the 'South African Government' or 'Government of the Republic of South Africa'
- government departments NOT Government Departments.
- Capitalise ethnic names and nationalities derived from the name of a continent,
e.g. African, Indian
BUT white, coloured, black people etc. should remain lowercased.
- Capitalise the initial letter in the names of political parties, i.e. African National Congress etc.
- Capitalise the full titles of people, ranks, offices, countries and buildings.
e.g. Attorney-General, Department of Trade and Industry, Directorate of Public Prosecutions, Union Buildings, Department of Education (but education department), Ministry of Justice (but justice ministry).
- Capitalise titles that precede or are part of the name,
e.g. Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe.
BUT titles that follow names or stand by themselves should be lowercased, e.g. the chief executive officer, etc.
- Capitalise personal titles when they come before a name: e.g. Mr Nkosi, Dr Khoza, Ms Khan, Prof. Jones (but Jones, a professor of political studies).

DO NOT CAPITALISE THE FOLLOWING:

- Former, ex- or -elect when used with titles:
former Telkom boss, ex-president Mandela, president-elect
- Points of compass (north, south, east, west)
- Seasons of the year (spring, summer, autumn, winter)
- Occupational titles: teacher, nurse, lawyer, doctor etc.

CROSS-REFERENCES

ALWAYS CHECK THESE to ensure that they are identical

e.g. if a graph is referred to make sure that the caption on the graph is the same as that in the expository text. In terms of cross-referencing page numbers, ensure that any pages referred to in expository text are correct.

DATES

- Dates should be written as DAY/MONTH/YEAR without punctuation:
i.e. 27 July 2010
NOT July 27, 2010 or 27th of July 2010.
- Financial years should be written as follows:
2008/09, 2009/10, 2010/11 etc.
NOT 2008/2009 etc.
- Use an en dash between years, with a space before and after the en dash: e.g. 2010 – 2013.

HYPHENATION

- Hyphenate compound adjectives: i.e. macro-economic stability, day-to-day activities, cost-effective manner, customer-centric, inward-bound, medium- and long-term frameworks etc.
- Hyphenate 'e-words', such as e-commerce, e-business, etc.
- When pro means in favour, use a hyphen, e.g. pro-life
- Compound nouns should be hyphenated (i.e. when two or more nouns are joined)
e.g. buy-out, cross-reference, cost-effectiveness
- A hyphen should be inserted between numbers written out in full such as thirty-eight, three-quarters.
- Hyphenating re- words:

Why do we write "reopen" and "reiterate" and "reassess" when we write "re-edit", "re-enter" and "re-educate", on the one hand, and "re-bound", "re-create" and "re-sort", on the other.

When the last and first vowels of a prefix and a verb root are different (as in "reopen"), then there's no need to hyphenate the two components.

When the two vowels are identical, it is clearer to the reader to hyphenate them (eg "re-educate"). For this reason, we follow a general rule that two e's like this must be hyphenated.

The problem to avoid with "re-sort" and the other examples is different: resort, rebound and recreate all have distinct meanings from the root verbs with "re-" attached

WHEN NOT TO USE A HYPHEN:

- After an adverb ending in -ly:
e.g. widely read report, genetically modified food, wholly owned subsidiary
- Instead of a hyphen between figures (including dates) to mean "to", use an en-rule (e.g. 3 – 12 March) (press Ctrl and the minus key on the numeric keypad)

Exceptions: Much and well when used before a noun, e.g. a much-loved character (but a character who is much loved), a well-founded suspicion (a suspicion that is well founded), etc.

ITALICS

- Foreign words should be written in italics, with the necessary accents, e.g. '*Fédération Internationale de Football Association*', *fait accompli* or *mutatis mutandis*.
- The titles of journals, books and other publications should be italicised, e.g. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*. The title of an article or chapter should not appear in italics, but in quotation marks.
- Use '*et al.*' when three or more authors'/editors' names are used, e.g. Brown *et al.*

LISTS (Bullets)

- **Lists in expository text:** Use commas between short items, but semi-colons between lengthily described items or complex phrases, or in a list of items that itself contains commas. Use a colon before a list.
- **Punctuation of bulleted lists:**
 - Use a colon (:) to introduce a list of items or bullet points.
 - Incomplete sentences:** Initial letter lower case; end all items in semi-colons, except the final item, which ends in a full stop.
 - Full sentences:** Initial letter upper case; end all items in full stops.
 - One- or two-word items:** Initial letter lower case; no end punctuation, except a full stop after the final item.

MEASUREMENTS

- Never use plurals for measurements – 5 000km NOT 5 000kms, 32mm NOT 32mms; 47kg NOT 47kgs.
- Do not abbreviate measurements unless used with figures:
e.g. 45km, 126ml BUT five kilometres and three millilitres.
- Use a decimal comma in 2,3kg or 15,75ml.

NAMES

- Surnames such as De Klerk, Van Rensburg and Van der Merwe are not capitalised if used with the first name, title or initials of the person.
e.g. FW de Klerk, Ms HF van Rensburg.
However, if the surname is used on its own or at the beginning of a sentence it should be capitalised.
e.g. Last year, De Klerk addressed the panel.
- Initials do not take full stops
e.g. Mr RM Smith NOT Mr R.M. Smith

NUMBERS

- Numbers one to nine must be written out in full (one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine); thereafter numerals must be used (i.e. 10, 11, 12, 13 ...).
Exception: when there is a string of three or more numerals in a single paragraph, then, to make comparison easier, make them all figures.
- 10th, 5th, but 'the **fifth** time ...'
- Thousands:
 - Must be written as figures not words, i.e. 10 000 NOT ten thousand
 - Use a space, not a comma, to indicate thousands, i.e. 2 638 NOT 2,638
- Millions:
Write out as R10 million NOT R10 000 000.
- Use numerals with million (e.g. 'The deal was worth R4 million'), but use a hyphen when it is used adjectivally ('It was a R4-million deal').
- Decimal points:
 - Use a decimal comma for millions, billions, etc.:
e.g. South Africa's population comprises 48,7 million inhabitants.
 - Use a decimal comma for figures less than one but greater than zero,
e.g. 0,5%
- Do not begin a sentence with a numeral:
EITHER write out the number,
e.g. 'Fifty-five per cent of the population' or 'Eight-hundred farms'
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.
- Percentages are always written as figures, e.g. 35%
- Per cent must be written as two words: i.e. two per cent
- Numerical plurals do not take apostrophes.
i.e. 1990s NOT 1990's
- Elision of numbers: Use an en rule with a space before and after between number ranges, e.g. 26 – 65.
- Fewer than/more than: Use 'fewer than' when referring to people, numbers of objects; 'less than' usually applies to sizes and quantities. Use 'more than' rather than 'over' when referring to a number of things, e.g. South Africa currently exports vehicles to **more than** 70 countries.

QUOTES

- Direct quotes are not usually edited, but can be tightened using ellipsis.
- Double quotations, not single, must be used for direct speech.
- Lengthy block quotes must not carry quotation marks, must be indented on either side and appear in a font size smaller than that of the general body text.
- Single quotation marks should be used for terms, e.g. 'green economy'.
- In the case of a full sentence, punctuation should always appear inside the double quotation marks, e.g. "That is a lie!"
- Use single quotation marks for quotes within direct quotes.

SUMS OF MONEY

- DO NOT leave a space between the currency symbol and the number:
i.e. R55 000 NOT R_55 000 (also applicable to other currencies: US\$450, €420)
- Large sums of money:
Write in figures, followed by either 'million' or 'billion', whichever is applicable.
e.g. R89 million or R5 billion.
- In documents where information is being abbreviated to save space or for style reasons, large sums of money can be written as:
currency, figure, no space and either 'm' or 'bn', whichever is applicable.
e.g. R89m or R5bn
BUT write it out in full first: 19 million (m) and thereafter 19m; 19 billion (bn) and thereafter 19bn.
- Write out cents, as in 'the toy cost 99 cents'.

TIMES

- Times should be written using the 24-hour clock:
08:00, 16:30
NOT 8'o'clock, half past four, 8am or 4.30pm

the dtic LEADERSHIP

- The Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, Ebrahim Patel (MP)
'MP' stands for Member of Parliament and should be used in legal documents/those to be tabled in Parliament. (Note: Do not use Minister of the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition – the same applies for Deputy Ministers.)
- Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition Nomalungelo Gina
- Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition Fikile Majola
- Director-General (to be updated after appointment of Director-General)
- A Deputy Director-General (DDG) is the highest chain of command within an internal division of **the dtic**
- Director-General and Deputy Director-General must always be hyphenated.
- In the plural, it should read Deputy Directors-General, **NOT** 'Director-Generals'.
- **DO NOT** use the following titles: 'His Excellency', 'H.E.', 'Deputy Minister Ms ...', 'Minister Mr ...', 'Highly esteemed', etc.

the dtic BRANCHES

the dtic comprises 10 divisions:

1. Administration
2. International Trade and Economic Development
3. Spatial Industrial Development and Economic Transformation
4. Industrial Competitiveness and Growth
5. Consumer and Corporate Regulation
6. Industrial Financing
7. Export Development. Promotion and Outward Investments
8. Inward Investment Attraction, Facilitation and Aftercare
9. Competition Policy and Economic Planning
10. Economic Research and Policy Coordination

the dtic AGENCIES

the dtic has the following 17 agencies:

1. Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC)
2. Companies Tribunal (CT)
3. National Empowerment Fund (NEF)
4. Export Credit Insurance Corporation of South Africa SOC Limited (ECIC)
5. South African Bureau of Standards (SABS)
6. National Credit Regulator (NCR)
7. National Lotteries Commission (NLC)
8. National Gambling Board (NGB)
9. South African National Accreditation System (SANAS)
10. National Consumer Tribunal (NCT)
11. National Consumer Commission (NCC)

12. National Metrology Institute of South Africa (NMISA)
13. National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS)
14. International Trade Administration Commission (ITAC)
15. Competition Commission (CC)
16. Industrial Development Corporation (IDC)
17. Competition Tribunal

ANNEXURE 1: the dtic ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS LIST

A

AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AGOA	Africa Growth and Opportunity Act
AGSA	Auditor-General of South Africa
AIS	Automotive Investment Scheme
ANSA	Affiliated Network for Social Accountability
APDP	Automotive Production and Development Programme
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
AsgiSA	Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa
ASP	Automotive Supplier Park
AU	African Union

B

BAS	Basic Accounting System
B-BBEE	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
BBSDP	Black Business Suppliers Development Programme
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
BER	Bureau for Economic Research
BIT	Bilateral Investment Treaty
BLNS	Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland (members of SACU)
BPO	Business Process Outsourcing
BPO&O	Business Process Outsourcing and Offshoring
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
BTA	Bilateral Trade Agreement

C

CASE	Community Agency for Social Enquiries
CAV	Centurion Aerospace Village
CCA	Customs-Controlled Area
CCRB	Consumer and Corporate Regulation Branch
CDC	Coega Development Corporation
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
CIP	Critical Infrastructure Programme
CIPC	Companies and Intellectual Property Commission
CIS	Co-operative Incentive Scheme
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CoS	Cost-of-Sales
COTII	Council of Trade and Industry Institutions
CP&EP	Competition Policy and Economic Planning
CPPP	Community Public-Private Partnerships

CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
CSP	Customised Sector Programme
CTFL	Clothing, Textiles, Leather and Footwear
CTCIP	Clothing and Textiles Competitiveness Improvement Programme
CTCP	Clothing and Textiles Competitiveness Programme

D

DDG	Deputy Director-General
DEPP	Developmental Electricity Pricing Programme
DG	Director-General
DIRCO	Department of International Relations and Co-operation

E

EAC	East African Community
ECIC	Export Credit Insurance Corporation
EDP&OI	Export Development, Promotion and Outward Investments
EE	Employment Equity
EEP	Equity Equivalent Programme
EFTA	European Free Trade Agreement
EG&S	Environmental Goods and Services
EIEC	Economic Investment and Employment Cluster
EIP	Enterprise Investment Programme
ELIDZ	East London Industrial Development Zone
EMIA	Export Market and Investment Assistance
ENE	Estimate of National Expenditure
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
ERPC	Economic Research and Policy Coordination
ERRP	Economic Reconstruction Recovery Plan
EU	European Union
ExBo	Executive Board of the dtic

F

FER	Foreign Economic Representative
FETCs	Further Education Training Colleges
FICA	Financial Intelligence Centre Act
FTA	Free Trade Agreement

G

GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GCIS	Government Communication and Information System
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFS	Government Finance Statistics
GWEAC	Gender and Women's Empowerment Advisory Committee

H

HDIs	Historically Disadvantaged Individuals
HDP	Heilingendamm Dialogue Process
HRDP	Human Resource Development Plan

I

IC&G	Industrial Competitiveness and Growth
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDC	Industrial Development Corporation of South Africa
IDZ	Industrial Development Zone
IF	Industrial Financing
IIF&A	Inward Investment Attraction, Facilitation and Aftercare
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMC	International Marketing Council of South Africa
IMS	Integrated Manufacturing Strategy
IPP	Industrial Participation Programme
IPRs	Intellectual Property Rights
IRBA	Independent Regulatory Board for Auditors
IRPS	International Relations, Peace and Security
ISO	International Organisation for Standardisation
ITAC	International Trade Administration Commission
ITED	International Trade and Economic Development

K

KAP	Key Action Plan
Khula	Khula Enterprise Finance Ltd

L

LBSC	Local Business Service Centres
LED	Local Economic Development
LOGIS	Logistical Information System
Logis	Logistical Information System
LRA	Labour Relations Act
LSM	Living Standard Measure

M

Mercosur	Mercado Común del Sur/Customs Union of Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay
MERS	Micro-Economic Reform Strategy
MFN	Most-Favoured Nation
MIDP	Motor Industry Development Programme
MIP	Manufacturing Investment Programme
MoA	Memorandum of Agreement
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
MTSF	Medium-Term Strategic Framework

MVA Manufacturing Value-Addition

N

NAAMSA National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa
NAFCOC National African Federated Chambers of Commerce
NAMA Non-Agricultural Market Access
NCR National Credit Regulator
NCT National Consumer Tribunal
NDA National Development Agency
Nedlac National Economic Development and Labour Council
NEF National Empowerment Fund
NEMA National Environmental Management Act
Nepad New Partnership for Africa's Development
NFVF National Film and Video Foundation
NHRDS National Human Resource Development Strategy
NGB National Gambling Board
NGO Non-Governmental Organisation
NIPF National Industrial Policy Framework
NIPP National Industry Participation Programme
NLB National Lotteries Board
NMISA National Metrology Institute of South Africa
NRCS National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications
NRDS National Research and Development Strategy
NRF National Research Foundation
NSDF National Spatial Development Framework
NSDS National Skills Development Strategy
NSPF National Supplies Procurement Fund
NT National Treasury

O

OBSSA Ombudsman for Banking Services of South Africa
OCIPE Office of Company and Intellectual Property Enforcement
OCP Office of Consumer Protection
OD Organisational Design/Development
OEMs Original Equipment Manufacturers
Opscom Operations Committee of **the dtic**

P

PAA Productive Asset Allowance
PFEE Project Funding for Emerging Exporters
PFMA Public Finance Management Act
PGD Partnership for Growth and Development
PIPA Provincial Investment Promotion Agency
PoA Programme of Action
PRECCA Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act

PSA	Public Service Act
PSA	Public Service Association
PSR	Public Service Regulations
PTA	Preferential Trade Agreement
R	
R&D	Research and Development
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RMC	Risk Management Committee
RoI	Return on Investment
S	
SABS	South African Bureau of Standards
SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
Samaf	South African Micro-Finance Apex Fund
SANAS	South African National Accreditation System
SAPS	South African Police Service
SAQI	South African Quality Institute
SARS	South African Revenue Service
SAWEN	South African Women Entrepreneurs' Network
SCOA	Standard Chart of Accounts
SDI	Spatial Development Initiative
SDIP	Service Delivery Improvement Programme
seda	Small Enterprise Development Agency
Seta	Sector Education and Training Authority
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SIDET	Spatial Industrial Development and Economic Transformation
SIP	Strategic Investment Programme
SLA	Service-Level Agreement
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SMS	Senior Management Service
SMEDP	Small and Medium Enterprise Development Programme
SMMEs	Small, Medium and Micro-sized Enterprises
SoNA	State of the Nation Address
SPF	Sector Partnership Fund
SPII	Strategic Partnership for Industrial Innovation
SQAM	Standards, Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Metrology
SSAS	Sector-Specific Assistance Scheme
STC	Secondary Tax on Companies
T	
TDCA	Trade, Development and Co-operation Agreement
the dtic	The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition
THRIP	Technology and Human Resources for Industry Programme

TNCs	Trans-National Corporations
TRIMS	Trade-Related Investment Measures
TRIPS	Trade-Related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
TTC	Technology Transfer Centre
TWIB	Technology for Women in Business

U

UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation

V

VAT	Value-Added Tax
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W

WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WTO	World Trade Organisation

ANNEXURE 2: 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.* If the sound of the first letter of an abbreviation is a vowel, write “an” before it: *an MP.*

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

accept, except. *Accept* means “receive” or “agree with”: *I accept your opinion; except* means “to make an exception of”: *Except for his tantrums, he’s a great fellow.*

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.* You do take action, though.

additionally, in addition. Use *additionally* before an adjective to intensify it: *The patient’s condition is additionally worrying in view of his medical history.* Use *in addition* as a connector: *In addition to going to gym, Joe runs 10 km twice a week.*

adverse, averse. *Adverse* means “opposing” or “unfavourable”: *They played the game in adverse weather conditions, and lost.*

Averse means “reluctant; unwilling”: *I’m not averse to eating spicy foods.*

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.*

advocate, advocate for. The first can be either a verb or a noun: *I advocate rights for animals; that makes me an animal rights’ advocate.* The second can be only a noun: *He is an advocate of change.* Incorrect: *He advocates for change.*

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); but *We’re witnessing a renaissance of literature in South Africa.*

ages. Should always be given in figures. Hyphenate: *The 40-year-old unionist,* but don’t hyphenate: *He was 21 years old.*

agree to, agree with. *Agree to* means “consent to”: *Do you agree to support us? Agree with* means “have the same opinion as”: *I agree with you that we must uphold the Constitution.*

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.*

all together, altogether. *All together* means “simultaneously” or “in the same place”: *We were huddled all together in the small tent.* *Altogether* means “entirely; with everything included”: *I shall have flown to Lanseria nine time altogether this year.*

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

alot, a lot, allot. *Alot* does not exist; *a lot* means a large quantity or amount: *He puts in a lot of time as a volunteer*; *allot* means to parcel out: *We were each allotted a small patch of land.*

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.

Exception: in the case of agreements, pacts or contracts, the correct idiomatic use is “between”: *The agreement was signed between the SADC member states.* 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), not italics

appendices (the plural of appendix)

approximately. Use *about.*

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

as well (as). Use “and” unless “in addition” or “over and above” is meant: *He was impolite, dirty, foul-mouthed as well as dishonest.* Don’t end a sentence with *as well.* Incorrect: *aswell* (one word).

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

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

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.*

B

backlog (one word)

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

basis. Avoid phrases such as *on a regular basis* (use regularly) and *on an annual/weekly/daily basis* (use annually/weekly/daily).

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.*

between ... and. not *between ... to:* *Identify the prime numbers between 16 and 49.*

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

Bible, bible. Use *Bible* (not italics) to refer to the Holy Bible; use *bible* as a metaphor for a fundamental or indispensable work: *This handbook is the motor mechanic’s bible.*

bid, bade. *Bid* (n. or v.) refers to an offer (*At the auction I bid for the diamond pendant; as it turned out, my bid was not the highest*) or a greeting (*I bid you farewell*). The past tense verb form of *bid* (the greeting) is *bade:* *On his retirement he bade his colleagues farewell.*

Big Five (upper-case initials)

bilateral (one word)

Bill (upper-case initial). A draft of legislation presented to the members of Parliament for comment and possible amendment prior to enactment is a *Bill*.

binational (one word)

black people. lower-case *b*.

blind. Use *visually impaired*.

borrow, lend. You *borrow from* someone; you *lend to* someone.

British spelling throughout. Use *-ise* not *-ize*, *metre* not *meter* (except for *meter* as a measuring device), *colour* not *color*.

Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE)

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

burn, burned, burnt. *Burned* and *burnt* are both past participles of *burn*. *Burned* is used more as a verb (*His house burned as everyone looked on.*); *burnt* is used more as an adjective (*On my plate were burnt offerings instead of a hearty dinner.*).

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* (past tense: *might*) expresses permission: *You may leave early*. *Might* also expresses possibility, though with less certainty than *may*: *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)

census

centre (not *center*). *Centre on*, not *centre around*.

century. Spell out in full and 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.

cohort, cohorts. Use *cohort*, which refers to a group not to individuals: *The cohort of militiamen came marching up to us*.

colour. not *color*.

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. *The team comprising 11 athletes left for New Delhi today. The whole team, including the coach and their manager, has left for overseas*.

consensus

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

or events immediately following something.

Constitution. Use a capital letter, but do not capitalise *constitutional*, other than in *Constitutional Court*.

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

interruption. *I can't stand his continual moaning and groaning in the office! The continuous drilling sound is disturbing us.*

cooperate (one word)

coordinate (one word)

cornerstone (one word)

cost-effective

council, counsel

countrywide (one word)

criteria. Is the plural form of the singular *criterion*. *There can be either one criterion or several criteria.*

critique. It is a noun, not a verb. It does not mean purely criticise.

currency. Lower-case initial when written out: *dollar, rand, euro*. Symbols upper case. 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

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

dates. *16 June 1976; 1990s; Tuesday, 14 August.*

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*; *1 234,56* not *1,234.56*.

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*. **Initial upper-case in full title; Director-General of Basic Education**

disabled. People with a disability or disabilities.

disinterested, uninterested. *Disinterested* means unbiased or neutral about an issue: *Judges should be disinterested – they can't afford to take sides while hearing trials! Uninterested* means not interested. *I'm not interested in your excuses.*

doctoral degree, doctorate

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*; *what on earth do you mean?*

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.* stands for the Latin *id est*, meaning *that is* – it should be followed by a clarifying statement, not an example: *His recent bad behaviour, i.e. his rudeness and lack of consideration for others, is totally out of character.*

elections. Use instead of *polls*.

endeavour (n.). Use the plainer *try* or *attempt* instead.

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

equally, equally as. Use *equally*. *Peter and Paul are equally clever.* Or *Peter is as clever as Paul.* Or *Paul is just as clever as Peter.*

etc. Use with a full stop after and a comma before. Do not use *etc.* if a list is preceded by “for example”, “for instance” or “such as”; only actual examples should follow.

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

except, accept. *Except* means *to make an exception of*: *Except for his tantrums, he’s a great fellow.* *Accept* means “receive” or “agree with”: *I accept your opinion.*

F

farm workers

farther, further. Use *farther* for physical distance and *further* to mean additional or continued: *travel farther down the road* 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.* *Less power is needed to warm the water.*

First Economy

first world

flout, flaunt. *Flout* means “to break rules openly and even with contempt”: *Flouting the law regarding after-hours liquor sales could land you in trouble.* *Flaunt* means “display oneself ostentatiously; show off”: *The young billionaire flaunts his wealth in the form of flashy clothing and motor cars.*

focus, focused, focusing. One s.

forego, forgo. *Fore* means before. *The foregoing text provides the background to the story.* But: *In prison he had to forgo the luxuries in life.*

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

fractions. Hyphenate fractions: *one-half, two-thirds*. Treat them as singular: *two-thirds is greater than one-quarter.*

from ... to. *The distance from A to B is a day’s journey.*

fulfil. But *fulfilled, fulfilling*.

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

G

G5 (no hyphens)

G8 (no hyphens)

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

glamorous. Not *glamorous*.

go-ahead (n.), go ahead (v.). *The department has received the go-ahead ...;* but: *go ahead with executing the board's instructions.*

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 from the Gospel every night.*

got, gotten. Use *got*, not *gotten*. The latter is American English; South African English has its roots in British English, so *got* is the acceptable option.

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

governance, government. *Governance* is the action or manner of governing: *Sound corporate governance*. But: *Since 1994, South Africa has had a constitutional system of government*.

grassroots (one word)

Green Paper (initials upper case)

gross domestic product (GDP)

ground-breaking

H

handicapped (person). Use *person with a disability*.

hectare (ha). No space between number and abbreviation: *700ha*.

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

Ways to avoid *he/she* and *him/her*, if so required: use plural nouns and pronouns; use *the* instead of pronouns; or remove the pronoun entirely: *Students should study hard if they want to pass the examinations*.

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*.

highveld

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

honours degree. No apostrophe.

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

HRD Strategy

I

i.e., e.g. Do not confuse these two abbreviations – i.e. means “that is” and introduces an explanation or clarification; e.g. means “for example” and simply introduces one or more examples.

immunise

impact is a noun, not a verb: *The impact of the fuel and energy price increases will be enormous.* Not: *The fuel and energy price increases will impact us greatly.*

incidence, incident. They should not be used interchangeably as synonyms. *Incidence* (an abstract n.) can mean “the rate or frequency of occurrence of a phenomenon”; “incident” means “a distinct occurrence or event”: *The greater the number of incidents of crime, the higher we can say the incidence of crime is.*

independent

in-depth

Indian (n. or adj.). 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. One “l”; but *instilled, instilling*.

inter alia. Rather use *among other things* (and certainly not *among others*).

interactive

interdepartmental

interdependent

intergovernmental

Internet (upper-case initial)

intra-racial

intra-sectorial

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

italics. Should be used sparingly to emphasise the meaning of words. Always use for non-South African words and phrases; titles of publications, albums of music recording, operas, ballets, and movies; *the titles* of Green and White papers; lawsuits (*Smith v Jones; Ex party Lawson*); website addresses (*www.sayearbook.gov.za*); and the names of ships (*SAS Protea*), 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

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

K

Khayelitsha

kick off. Soccer events and projects *kick off*, but conferences and campaigns *open, begin* or *start*. The noun form is *kick-off*. *The kick-off is due at 15:30.*

kilolitre (kl). Not the American or Afrikaans spelling, *kiloliter*.

kilometre (km). Not the American *kilometer*. Non-breaking space (Shift+Ctrl+Spacebar) between the figure and the km: 3 000 km. Never use *kms*.

knobkierie

knock-and-drop

knockout (boxing)

KwaZulu-Natal (with a hyphen in the position shown).

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

latter, last. *Latter* is used of two people or things; *last* of three or more. *Of feathers and lead, the latter is the denser matter.*

lead, lead, led. *The metal is lead (Pb); I'll lead the way, provided you're prepared to be led by me.*

leaders, leadership. *The trade union has several leaders, but they are sadly lacking in leadership* (ie the quality of leading) skills.

learn, learned, learnt. *Learned* and *learnt* are both past tense forms of *learn*: *At school we learned arithmetic and spelling. Have you learnt nothing about good manners? Learned* is used in a special way as an adjective (to mean "wise"), with the stress on the "ed": *the learned professor, my learned colleague, the judge.*

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 pencil?*

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

letsema. Communal volunteerism.

licence (n.), license (v.).

lifelong

life-size

light. Correct: *In the light of that information, we must act.* Incorrect: *In light of that information ...*

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

Limpopo. Not *Limpopo Province*.

Limpopo River. But *Limpopo and Orange rivers*.

line-up (n.), line up (v.). *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 ending*: *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 (v.), loose (adj.). *I often lose my keys. My shoelace is loose.*

lowveld

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.*

mealiemeal

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 tons (Mt). Write in full, separately from numerals: *32 million*.

Minister. Capitalise when used as a title: *the Minister of Finance, Mr Govan Reddy, or Minister of Finance, Pravin Gordhan*; but *the finance minister and the 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: *moneys*, not *monies*.

moneylending

Mpumalanga. Not *Mpumalanga Province*. Note the spelling.

multidimensional

multilingualism

multimedia, multimillion (one word)

multitude. Is a singular concept: *A multitude of ideas is buzzing in my head*.

myself, I. Incorrect usage: *Myself and Susan will be attending (Susan and I will be attending); my friend and myself are going (my friend and I are going)*. Otherwise, use only in the reflexive form, as in *I baked the cake myself, I myself do that regularly*.

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 *nonconformist*, *nondescript*, *nonentity*.

non-governmental organisation (NGO). Lower-case initials. Plural: *NGOs*.

no one (two words)

North West (the province). No hyphens. *Not North West Province*. But: *North-West University*.

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* can be an adverb or a preposition. Avoid mistakenly using *off* as a preposition, as in *I picked it up off the floor*. *Off the top of my head, I'd say we made R2 million profit last year*.

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

ongoing

online (one word)

onset, outset. Do not confuse them. *Onset* means "commencement, outbreak"; *outset* means "start, beginning". *The onset of influenza is characterised by headache and fever. From the outset, the project has been beset by delays*.

organise, organisation. See *-ise*.

overcrowded (no hyphen)

overexpenditure (no hyphen)

P

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

passed, past, last. *Passed* is the past tense form of *pass*; *past* is the adjective derived from *pass*, and it means "the time gone by"; *last* means "final". *I passed him in the corridor on my way to the office. This past year has been so busy. In the last few months of his life, he was fit and active*.

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 it is explained in full below or first.

per cent (two words); but *percentage*.

peri-urban

persons, people. Both are plural forms of "person", but *persons* belong more to legal or official documents and notices (*Admission only to persons over the age of 18*), whereas *people* should be a part of in everyday usage (*there are too many people who drive alone to work*).

PhD

phenomenon (singular), **phenomena** (plural)

plus-minus. *About* or *approximately*. Do not use \pm .

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

post-apartheid

practice (n.), practise (v.). *At soccer practice we practised our dribbling.*

premise, premises. A *premise* is a previous statement or proposition from which another is inferred or follows as a conclusion: *You can't operate on the premise that women are less productive than men.* *Premises* (only plural) comprise a house or building together with its grounds, or a building housing a business, for example.

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

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

principal, principle. *Principal* means "main, head". Use *principal* as a synonym for most important or main, or instead of *headmaster/headmistress*. *Principle* means a moral guideline or fundamental truth.

prizewinner (one word)

proactive (no hyphen)

probably, likely. In South African English, each of these words belongs to a unique phrase: *That mine will probably close. That mine is now likely to close.* Incorrect: *That mine will likely close.*

Prof. (with a full stop). Abbreviation of *Professor*.

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

prove, proven, proved. *Proved* is the past tense form of *prove*: *He proved me wrong at our meeting yesterday.* In front of a noun, *proven* tends to be preferred: *It is a proven fact that water freezes at 0°C.*

public service. Use instead of *civil service*.

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

Q

quite, quiet. *Quite* is an adverb meaning *very* or *fairly* (*you are quite right, that was quite good*); *quiet* is an adjective meaning *making little or no noise*: *You are quite right. She is a quiet person.*

R

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

reason. The construction *the reason being is ...* is incorrect. Replace it with *the reason is ...* or *the reason being put forward is ...*

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

regard, regards. These two words each belong to unique contexts and phrases and cannot be used interchangeably: *I regard you as my friend.* It is usually safer and better to use "about" or "regarding" instead of *with regard to/as regards* in contexts such as: *With regard to our friendship, I can say little more. As regards our friendship, what else is there to say?* A letter may be ended with the phrase *Kind regards*. Incorrect: *With regards to this matter ...*

reign, rein. To *reign* is to *rule* or *govern*; a *rein* is a *leather strap* used to control a horse when riding it: *The dictator's reign ended abruptly in a coup d'état.*

renaissance. Capitalise only if it is used with *The* and refers either 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 (v.), roll-out (n.)

S

savanna. Also *savannah* – use one or the other consistently in a single document.

school-leaver

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

Section 21 company

Section. Section of an Act takes an upper-case initial: *As we read in Section 15(1)(e) of the Act.*

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*. (See also 4.3.2 Commas, semi-colons and colons.)

service delivery. But *service-delivery programme*.

shareholder

since. Do not use *since* to mean “because”; this can lead to ambiguity: *Since he has been promoted, he no longer greets me.* (because, or from the time?)

small, medium and micro-enterprise (SMME). Plural: SMMEs.

southern hemisphere (lower-case initials)

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

stakeholder

State, state. Capitalise when referring to an organised political community under or belonging to or in the interests 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 supplied by a stationer.

storeroom (one word)

subdirector

subprogramme

substantial, substantive. *Substantial* means of solid material or structure; ample and nourishing of ample or considerable amount or size: *Have a substantial meal before you start fasting; It was so substantial that it took two men to push it. Substantive* means “having a separate and independent existence; self-sufficient; important, significant, considerable”: *He wrote volumes of substantive essays that contribute to the world of learning.* Incorrect: *The facilitator played a substantive role in their learning experience.*

supersede. Not *supercede*.

T

taxpayer (one word).

than, then. *Than* is used to indicate comparison: *His work is better than mine.* *Then* indicates a time-based sequence: *They ate dinner, then they went out dancing.*

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*.

that, who. Use *that* with animals and inanimate objects; *who* with people: *This is a man who cares for his staff and his family. People who say that are stupid.*

there, their. *There* is an adverb meaning “in, at or to that place”: *Look there; There’s where you’ll find your pen.* *Their(s)* means “belonging to them”: *Those are their books; The books are theirs.*

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

time frame (two words)

time limit (two words)

to, too. *Too* is an adjective that means *also* (*he went too*) or *excessively* (*too much*). *To* is a preposition used to introduce a noun (*He went to the office*) or as part of an infinitive verb (*to go, to report*).

turnaround (n.), **to turn around** (v.)

U

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

underprivileged

underqualified

under-resourced (hyphenated)

underserviced

underused. Use instead of *underutilised*.

under way (two words)

unfazed

upside down (not hyphenated)

United States (US)

Use – instead of *utilise*, unless to convey the meaning “to make practical and effective use of”: *We must utilise the resources we have to best advantage.*

V

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

voters’ roll. Apostrophe after the s.

W

webmaster

website (one word). For website addresses, use *italics* and exclude *http.www.gov.za*

well-being

whereas. Use it instead of *while*, to avoid ambiguity. *Michael is an architect, whereas Sara is a doctor.*

whereby, whereupon, etc. Use *by which, upon which, etc.*

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* (as explained above) introduces alternatives; *if* introduces a condition: *I don’t know whether it’s going to rain today; If you do your homework, you can watch TV.*

while. Avoid the use of *whilst*. Do not use *while* to mean *whereas* (see above).

White Paper on Arts, Culture ... Italicise White Paper titles.

white people. lower-case *w*.

who, that. Use *who* to refer to people; *that* to refer to animals and things: *The person who committed the crime should be punished. It is behaviour that should not go unpunished.*

will. Avoid the use of *shall*.

winegrowers

winemaking

withhold

woman. Plural *women*; possessive is either *woman’s* (singular) or *women’s* (plural – the apostrophe before the s).

workforce

workplace

worldwide
wrongdoing

X

xenophobia

Xmas. Do not use as an abbreviation for Christmas.

X-ray. Upper-case X.

Y

year-end

years. Financially speaking, use 2009/10; otherwise 2001 – 03. When used adjectivally, hyphenate age: *The 10-year-old boy couldn't swim*, but *He was 10 years old*. *Incorrect: The 10-year old boy.*

yield

your, you're. *Your* is a possessive pronoun: *Is this your book?* *You're* is a contraction of *you are*: *You're my best friend.*

Z

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

ANNEXURE 3: WORDS OFTEN MISSPELLED

A

abattoir
abovementioned
absolutely
accede
access
accidentally
accommodation
acquaintance
acquainted
acquiesce
acquire
advice (noun), advise (verb)
affect (make a difference to)
ageing
albumen (egg white; protein found in egg white)
albumin (form of protein soluble in water)
allomorph
allopathic
alumni, alumnus
anaesthetic
analogy, analogous
analyse
anoint
appearance
appropriate
arbiter, arbitrator
archaeology
architecture
arrest
asbestosis
assess

B

battalion
beach
beauty
been
beginning
being
belief (a firmly held/religious conviction)
benefited, benefiting

biased
breath (n.), breathe (v.)
by-law

C

cacao
cache
campaign
canister
census
centre, centring
challenge
chauffeur
citation
colossal
coexist
combating
complement (to add to or bring out the best in something)
compliment (praise)
comprise
concomitant
conducive
connoisseur
consciousness
conscientious
consensus
cooperate
coordinate
copyright
cost-benefit
criticise
critique

D

deceive
definite, definitely
dependant (n.)
dependent (adj.)
descendant
develop, development
dialogue
diarrhoea
dietician
disappoint
disc (flat, thin, round object)

disk (storage device for computers)
dissatisfaction
dissipate
drunkenness
dual (purpose)
duel (contest)

E

ecstasy
effect (a change that something causes in something else)
eligible
eliminate
embarrassment
encyclopaedia
enquiry (general questioning)
enrol, enrolment
entrepreneur
exacerbate
exceed
existence
extant (adj.)
extend (v.)
extent (n.)
extension

F

faecal
faeces
feisty
fiery
focuses
focusing
foetal
foetus
foreseeable
forego (precede)
forgo (do without)
formally
formerly
forthcoming
franchise
frenzied, frenzy
fulfil, but: fulfilled, fulfilling
full-time

G

gauge

goodwill

gorilla (animal)

gouge

guerrilla (fighter)

gynaecologist, gynaecology

H

haemorrhage

harass

height

heist

helpdesk

helpline

high-risk

homeopath

homogeneous

honorary

humorous

hygiene

hypocrisy

I

Idiosyncrasy

idiosyncratic

immediately

illegible

inadvertent

inauguration

incidentally

independent

indigenous

indispensable

infra-red

innate

inoculate

inquiry (official investigation)

insistent

install

instalment

irresistible

J

jealous
jeopardy
jewellery
judgement (more legal)
judgment (general)

K

ketchup
Kimberley, kimberlite
knowledgeable
knuckle
kwashiorkor

L

lead (present tense and the metal)
led (past tense)
liaise, liaison
licence (noun), license (verb)
lifelong
life-size
liquefy
liquidise
loath (adjective), loathe (verb)
lose (to no longer have)
loose (not tight)

M

marginalised
marquee
metaphor
methamphetamine (tik)
micro-enterprises
millennium
millionaire
minuscule
miscellaneous
misdemeanour
monetary
myriad

N

nauseating, nauseous
nautical
necessary (adjective), necessity (noun)

neighbour
neglect
nemesis
nuclei, nucleus

O

oblivious
obvious
occasion
occult
occurred
occurrence
ongoing
online
organogram
outcast

P

parallel
paralysed
Parliament
pastime
pavilion
penetrate
perpetrator
perseverance
personal
personnel
pertinent
playwright
possession
postgraduate
post-mortem
post-partum
preceding
precis
predominantly
prejudice
principal (head of school, or a main element)
principle (a rule or belief governing one's behaviour)
prise (force)
privilege
prize (award)
proactive
proceeding

procreate
professional
professor
program (computers)
programme (radio, concert, theatre)
prominence, prominent
promiscuity, promiscuous
pronounce
pronunciation
prophecy (n.), prophesy (v.)
psyche
psychiatry
psychoanalysis
psychology
purge
pursuant, pursue

Q

quality
quandary
quantify
quantum
quarrel
quarter-final
quartermaster
questionnaire
queue
quiet (silent)
quintile
quite (rather or extremely)
quorum

R

racecourse
radioactive
ratepayer
re+e: re-edit, re-educate, re-embark, re-enter
re-bound vs rebound
recede
receipt
receive
reception
recession
recommend
re-create vs recreate

referral, referred
reign (of a ruler; of terror)
rein (with which to lead a horse)
renaissance
repetition, repetitive
re-sent vs resent
re-sort vs resort
restaurateur
rhyme
rhythm
ridicule, ridiculous
rogue

S

sacrilegious
scholar
school-leaver
schoolteacher
seismic
seize
seizure
semi-final
separate, separation
shepherd
sheriff
siege
sight (view)
significant
similar
simile
site (place)
skilful
social
sort (kind or type)
sought (past tense of seek)
specialise (v.), specialist (n.)
sphere
stationary (not moving)
stationery (writing material)
storey (of a building)
subcommittee
sub-contract
subpoena
subtle
subsection

sub-standard
succeed
succession
summon (call)
summons (order to appear in court). Past tense: summonsed
superintendent
superior
supervisor
supposedly
surreptitious
syndrome
systemic

T

tariff
taught (past tense of teach)
taut (tight)
teamwork
tempestuous
thematic
theory, theoretical
threshold
thumb
thyroid
toll-fee
toll plaza
toll road
tortuous
trial (in court)
trail (of an animal or a hiker)
truly
tranquillity
tyranny, tyrant

U

ubiquitous
unanimity
unanimous
uncooperative
undoubtedly
unilateral
unique
unshakeable
usually

V

vicissitude

victoriously

villain

visitation, visitor

vociferous

voluminous

W

woman abuse (not women)

weird

who's (who is)

whose (which person's)

withdrawal

withhold

workforce

workplace

Y

yearbook

youngster

youth, youthful

ANNEXURE 4: REDUNDANCIES (OR TAUTOLOGIES) AND PLAINER ALTERNATIVES

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
advocate for
afforded the opportunity
approximately
around
as to whether
at this point in time
attached herewith
attempt
basically the same, etc.
basis, on an annual/a regular, etc
biography of her life
by means of
circle around
close proximity
compartmentalise
completely unanimous
concretise
conceptualise
consensus of opinion
conversationalise
cooperate together
each and every
enclosed herewith
end result
endeavour
enhance
escalate
exactly the same
final completion
for the purpose of
frank and honest exchange
free gift

Rather use

midnight
noon
many, most or much
a few, some, many, or several
an honest person
14 birds
spectacular or phenomenal
advocate
given the opportunity
about
about, on
whether
at this point or now
attached
try
the same, etc.
annually, regularly
biography
by
circle
proximity, closeness
divide into compartments
unanimous
make concrete, give a concrete example
think up, think of
consensus
converse, make conversation
cooperate
each
enclosed
result, outcome
try
improve
increase in importance (or urgency)
the same
completion
for, to or of
frank exchange or honest exchange
gift

Avoid

he/she is a person who ...
implement
important or basic essentials
in many cases/instances
in order to
in spite of the fact that
in terms of
in the context of
in the event that
in the first place
inception
incorrect
infrastructure

job functions
maximilisation
month of June, etc.
new innovations
numerous
one and the same
operationalise
participate (in)
particular interest
period of four days
personal opinion
personally I think/feel
pertaining to
purchase
puzzling in nature
the reason being is that
reasons why
reconstruct
refer back
your letter refers
in regard to, with regard(s) to
relating to
repeat again
return again
revert back
shorter/longer in length
small/large in size
square/round/rectangular in shape

Rather use

he or she
carry out
essentials
often, frequently
to
although or despite
on, about, regarding
for or about
if
first or firstly
start or beginning
wrong
be specific in the context (e.g. roads, railway lines, buildings, telecommunications links)
job or functions
maximise, make the most of
June, etc.
innovations
many
the same
put into operations
take part in
interest
four days
opinion
I think or I feel
relating to or belonging to
buy
puzzling
the reason being that, the reason is that
reasons
rebuild
refer
I/we refer to your letter
of, on, about, under, according to
about
repeat
return
revert
shorter or longer
small or large
square, round or rectangular

Avoid

structures

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

Rather use

*be specific in the context (eg street committees,
planning committees, community groups/
representatives)*

summarise

surrounded

circumstances

organised

that

the future

no doubt

largely

custom

use

we have received