

STYLE GUIDE 2020

BASICS

Read through copy before filing: innocent mistakes get spotted this way.

Run a spell check: pretty easy to do but saves time for all.

Spell names correctly: a vital detail.

Get titles right: always important.

Right of reply: give relevant parties a chance to comment

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Try to explain matters simply.

Avoid jargon...

- 'income inequality' is 'the gap between rich and poor'.

- 'budgetary adjustment' is 'cuts and taxes'.

Avoid putting convoluted titles in the intro...

The end of the world is nigh, the OSCE has warned

The end of the world is nigh, an international watchdog has warned.

Avoid using “Ireland” or “Irish” unless it's in an international context...

- NOT The end of the world is nigh, the Irish Government says.

Ask yourself: what Government are you talking about?

MOST COMMON ERRORS

That: the most overused word in the English language. It is probable you don't need to use it.

Quotation marks: beware of stray inverted commas being put outside the full stop, when they should be inside. See entire section on quotation marks under Q.
Government: Government takes a cap G for the government of the day, but lower case for past and future governments.

Ministers: The title of a minister's office should always precede his name:
Foreign Affairs Minister Simon Coveney NOT Minister for Foreign Affairs
Simon Coveney

Acronyms: Where an acronym is spoken as a word (as in Siptu or Nama), it is treated as a proper noun and the first letter is capped.

Past tense: If you paraphrase someone by using the format of she said... the remainder of the sentence should also be in past or conditional tense, eg, She said she was sorry ... he claimed he would comply ... she said she was planning... he said he had seen...

A

A or An:

A silent H at the beginning of a word requires An, otherwise use A – so **A historic occasion, a hotel** but **an honorary title, an homage**.

Abbreviations:

Do not use full points in or after abbreviated words or acronyms such as Mr, Mrs, RTÉ, Capt, Supt, Sr.

Accents (fadas):

Ensure fadas are used in copy and headlines in the Irish Independent, the Herald, Sunday Independent and in Digital.

To insert a fada:

Alt Gr + letter (ie Alt Gr + e, i,o, u). For caps: Alt Gr + Shift + letter.

See Appendix for common Irish names and words using fadas. Consult www.focloir.ie if unsure of a spelling.

There is no need to use accents in words such as cafe, creche and other foreign-derived but common English nouns and verbs.

Accidents:

One car was “in collision” with or “collided with” another. “Struck”, “hit” or “crashed into” may become the subject of legal dispute between the drivers.

Acronyms:

Where an acronym is spoken as a word (as in Siptu or Nama, even awkward ones such as Gsoc), it is treated as a proper noun and the first letter is capped. Where all letters in an acronym are pronounced (as in INTO), it is written in upper case.

The classic example of this is HIV/Aids.

Acts/bills

Title case for the full name of the legislation, such as Offences Against the State Act 1998, thereafter “the act”. Bill is lowercase.

Advance planning/forward planning/planning ahead:

You can’t plan for the past, so write “plan” and “planning” without embellishment.

Adverse/averse:

Adverse means hostile (adversary), averse means disinclined (aversion).

Addresses:

Spell them out: O’Connell Street, Prospect Avenue, Bull Terrace.

Always give the county for towns, villages, etc. The style is Birr, Co Offaly. Don’t forget the closing comma if the address forms part of a continuing sentence, eg:

Mrs Baxter, of Naas, Co Kildare, died yesterday of heart failure.

Also, it should be Waterford city, lower case.

Adjectives:

Go easy with build-up adjectives like “key” decisions, “frantic” searches, “bitter”

feuds, “shock” decisions. Also, resist temptation to call all reports “major”.

Adviser:

Not advisor

Admitted:

Has connotation of guilt, so be careful. Note also that the word ‘to’ is superfluous after admit. People admit crimes, not admit to crimes.

Airplane/aeroplane:

We used to fly in an aeroplane. Now we use airplanes or just planes.

Affect, effect:

Affect is always a verb, meaning to influence as in ‘hot weather affects his health’. Effect is both a verb and a noun. As a verb it means to accomplish, or carry out; as a noun it means a result, consequence and outcome.

Ages:

In brackets where sentence reads “Jack Dodds (45), of, etc. Where ages are used adjectively, it should be “Mr Dodds, a 45-year-old father of three.

Aggravate:

It’s annoying when aggravate is used to mean annoy. Aggravate means to make a bad situation worse.

Ahead of/in advance of/prior to:

Use before.

Air Corps:

Aer Corps is wrong, Aer Corpse is dead wrong.

All right, not alright

Altercation:

Frequently and wrongly used to imply an exchange of kicks and punches. An altercation is a heated exchange of words, nothing more. No one is physically injured in an altercation, though feelings could be hurt. Therefore, never write verbal altercation or violent altercation.

Al-Qa’ida (or al-Qa’ida mid-sentence)

Alzheimer’s disease:

Or just “Alzheimer’s”

American spellings:

World Trade Centre, not Center. Always use English spellings for American words.

Amidst/amongst (also whilst):

These words belong in an antique shop. Use amid, among and while.

And:

Never begin a sentence with And.

Any more:

Definitely two words.

Approximately:

Use about, around or roughly.

Apostrophes:

Use in phrases such as five years' imprisonment, one week's holiday, five euros' worth. Names ending in "s" normally take an apostrophe and have another "s" added, for example: St James's Hospital. However, in some cases, it does not occur, such as "in Jesus' name" or "for goodness' sake". Remember, we celebrate St Stephen's Day not St Stephens's Day - and definitely not Boxing Day.

Autopsy:

Always use post-mortem, with a hyphen, and whatever you do, don't get autopsy mixed up with biopsy.

Average or mean vs median:

Be careful when deciphering scientific or economic reports that you don't equate average and median. The average is the sum of a list of figures divided by the number in the list – but it is not necessarily a good indicator of "the middle" because it can be distorted by extreme figures in the list.

Use median (meaning the middle number of a list of figures) where possible because it gives a better measure and especially if the original scientist or economist used it.

B

Bank holiday:

Always use lower case for bank holiday.

Baited/bated:

A fish hook is baited, breath is bated.

Basis:

Much overused word, as in “on a part-time basis” or “on a permanent basis”. Say “part-time” and “permanent”.

Benefited, benefiting**Beau:**

A word that belongs in historical French literature, not in modern speech. Don't use it to mean boyfriend, fiancé, partner or husband. In fact, just don't use it.

Beseech/besiege:

Two words that are frequently mixed up. Beseech means to ask earnestly, besiege is to surround with military forces or to overwhelm.

Between:

It's between 20 and 30, not between 20 to 30 or between 20-30.

Biannual/biennial:

Biannual is twice a year, biennial is every two years.

Bid:

Bid is acceptable for “attempt” in headlines only, generally not in copy.

Border:

Cap up only when referring to the divide between the Republic and the North, as in the Border. Also, Border poll, Border security, etc, to emphasise it's about the specific border

Brassiere/brassier/brasserie/brazier:

You really do not want to mix these up. A brassiere is a bra; brassier means more brassy; a brasserie is a bar-cum-restaurant; and a brazier is a metal drum or basket in which wood, coal or charcoal is burned.

Breeds:

Keep lower case except when they involve the use of a name or place. Thus: spaniel, poodle but St Bernard, Yorkshire terrier, Alsatian (from Alsace).

Brexit:

We cap up Withdrawal Agreement for the deal between Britain and the EU

British Isles

In Ireland, due to historical reasons, the term "British Isles" is often not seen as a neutral geographical term but an unavoidably political one. The term British Isles is not to be used. The British Isles is not an officially recognised term in any legal or inter-governmental sense. It is without any official status. Alternatives include Ireland and Britain. Where the two countries are mentioned together Ireland occurs first - "a study in Ireland and Britain..." exceptions include where it's part of a title - British and Irish Lions, etc

Budget:

Use capital B when referring to specific Budget, eg, Budget 2021, but lower-case when talking about past budgets.

Bylines:

When subbing a story with joint bylines with two names, the word 'and' should go at the start of the second line wherever possible. Try to avoid more than two names, but consult with back desk if this is unavoidable.

C

Caesarean:

Lower case the word caesarean but cap the C in C-section

Capitals:

Lower case in titles should be used whenever possible (Ryanair chief executive, RTE director-general) but there are certain guidelines:

Institutions, bodies, etc:

- Use capital letters for all bodies, buildings, structures, airports, railway stations, schools, etc when named in full.
- Local post offices and garda stations do not take capitals when named.
- Do not use capitals when the title is incomplete (usually at subsequent mention), eg: the council, the region, the monument, the castle, the airport, the assembly, the synod, the convention, the festival, the church etc.
- Use capitals for high institutions of state or government: the Government (but cap only when referring to the Irish one currently in power). The Government's decision, but the art of government, government action, government documents, etc. All foreign governments are always lower case. Also, cap the Cabinet, but it is

cabinet member, cabinet decision, etc.

- Use caps where the office is a specific post, held by one person only, in government, civil service, the churches - the Taoiseach, Education Minister, the Archbishop of Dublin, the Moderator (of the General Assembly), the Northern Secretary.

This does not apply to shadow posts in the opposition (though the term Shadow Minister for ... is never used) ALL of which take lower case, eg: Fine Gael education spokesperson.

Lower case the opposition in all instances.

- Cap the definite article in band names where it's part of their name. For example, the title of the group is The Beatles, as is The Rolling Stones (their album covers aren't consistent). But others don't use it at all, eg, Pet Shop Boys, Doves, Delays (Google the album covers if you're unsure).

See also The Late Late Show, etc.

- In relation to our own titles, it is: the Irish Independent, the Sunday Independent, The Herald.

Careen/career:

Careen means to sway dangerously, like a high-sided lorry in a gale. Career means to move in an uncontrolled way – if you left your car parked on a hill without the handbrake on, it would career down that hill.

Centred around:

You can't centre around something, you centre on it and revolve around it.

Century

Lower case unless part of a title – the 19th century, 20th Century Fox.

Choose/chose:

Choose is present tense, chose is past tense.

Churches and church titles:

When referring to a Christian church as an institution, it should take an initial capital, the Catholic Church, the Church of Ireland, etc Thereafter, we should just say the church, lower case.

Catholic priests should be referred to as “Fr Smith” whereas ministers should be referred to as “the Rev”, followed by the full name at first mention and then by the

appropriate lay title: eg, “the Rev John Moore”, then “Mr Moore”, but never “the Rev Moore”.

All Catholic prelates are Dr, hence the Archbishop of Tuam, Dr (insert name). Cardinal Eamon Martin, Primate of All-Ireland. It is sufficient to say Cardinal or Dr Martin, but NEVER Martin.

All Church of Ireland bishops are the Right Rev with the exception of the Archbishops of Armagh and Dublin and the Bishop of Meath who are Most Rev. Remember all C of I bishops are not Dr – check current directory.

Christmas:

Always Christmas, never Xmas.

Chronic:

A chronic illness is one that lingers and is not easily cured.

Climactic/climatic:

Climactic refer to a climax, climatic refers to climate.

Collective nouns:

Organisations, companies, and groups like government, cabinet, council, committee, union, etc, should be treated as singular. Thus Fine Gael “is”, the Labour Party “was”.

Only sports teams and groups of musicians should be treated as plural. Thus: Liverpool are playing Chelsea, U2 are releasing a new album. There is a temptation, when the subject sounds plural, as in Cooper & Lybrand, or General Motors, to follow it with “they” – resist it.

Colons and semi-colons:

Use after the name of a speaker for a whole sentence:

The Taoiseach said: “I’ve looked up every tree in north Dublin.”

Semi-colons should be used sparingly. In text, a full stop is almost always more suitable. But a semi-colon is useful where listing, say, the provisions of a complex proposal, as in:

The committee recommends: extending licensing hours to midnight; allowing children on licensed premises; and relaxing planning controls on new public houses.

Comma:

The correct use of the comma is crucial in achieving punctuation balance. A few

examples illustrate common pitfalls, such as:

The editor says the deputy editor is a fool. The editor, says the deputy editor, is a fool. The importance of the comma is obvious.

“Don’t eat that, grandma” is different from “Don’t eat that grandma.”

Commence:

You don’t use it in everyday speech, so don’t write it. Use start or begin.

Companies:

In describing a company, use the company name, ie, Greencore as opposed to Greencore Plc. Avoid Plc or Ltd or Limited unless it is to distinguish one company from another.

Comparatives:

Use “fewer” when comparing numbers and “less” when comparing quantities, ie less coal, fewer cars.

Compare:

Compare things with other things, rather than to them.

Compass, points of:

Should be north, south, east, etc, lower case, and then north-east, south-west, etc, hyphenated. Regional references should also be lower case, as in the midlands, the west, the south-east, BUT the North is an exception. Avoid the South (meaning the Republic) - there is no such place.

Complementary/complimentary:

Complement means to fill out or make complete, compliment means to praise. You can receive complementary information, but complimentary remarks and complimentary (free) tickets.

Comprise:

“Comprised of” is frequently written and always wrong. Comprise means to contain, therefore Independent News & Media comprises several national, regional and local newspapers.

Connacht not Connaught

Controversial:

A much overused word. In most cases, the facts speak for themselves, or the matter

is so well known as controversial that it does not need restating.

Contagious/infectious:

Contagious diseases are spread by contact. Infectious diseases are spread by air or water.

Continually/continuously:

Continually means repeatedly but not constantly. Continuously means without a break. If it rains continually for three days, the showers are punctuated by some dry spells. If it rains continuously, that's three days of non-stop rain.

Convince/persuade:

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

Cop/cops:

Never use these words, except in reported speech. Use garda, gardaí or police. Don't use policeman or police woman, use police officer or female police officer.

Cord/chord:

A cord is a length of string or other material (pyjama cord, for example). Vocal cords is correct, vocal chords is wrong. A chord is a group (typically three or more) of notes sounded together.

Coronavirus/Covid-19:

Coronavirus is the shorthand name for the virus formally known as Sars-Cov-2, Covid-19 is the disease caused by this coronavirus. Do not use the two interchangeably.

Note that there are several other coronaviruses, including Mers and the original Sars, but to avoid confusion use "coronavirus" to refer only to Sars-Cov-2.

Costa del Sol:

Always a lower case 'd'. Don't write Costa del Crime, it's old hat (sombrero viejo).

Could have/should have/would have:

Not could of/should of/would of, which are crimes against the English language, but could've/should've/would've are acceptable in reported speech.

Courts:

In civil cases, plaintiffs and defendants are referred to as Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms. In

criminal cases, defendants are extended the same courtesy until they are convicted, after which they are referred by their surnames only. Witnesses are also referred to as Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms.

High Court and Supreme Court judges and the President of the Circuit Court are titled Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms Justice John/Joan Smith with following references covered by “the judge”. Circuit and District Courts judges are called Judge John/Joan Smith and then “the judge”.

Currency:

Where possible, the euro equivalent should follow (in brackets) an amount in foreign currency. Avoid converting a specific amount in a story into a headline.

For instance, James Hewitt told US television he would consider selling his Princess Diana letters for £10m. Our headline read “Hewitt says he wants €16m for Diana letters”. This is misleading as he specifically said “£10m” and this is the figure that should have been used in the headline (€16m should have appeared in brackets after the initial mention of £10m in the text).

Euro and cent, dollars and cents, and pounds and pence are written as €24.56, \$24.56 and £24.56 respectively, whereas cent, cents and pence are written as 56c, 56c and 56p.

But unless it's vital to the story, don't slavishly convert large figures to random euro amounts, eg, £21m would be converted to €23m (not €23.061m) - because we are merely indicating the size of the amount.

Crescendo (reach a):

You can't reach a crescendo. A crescendo is a gradual, steady increase in sound or force.

Crooner:

Frank Sinatra was a crooner, Tony Bennett is a crooner and Michael Buble has been known to croon. Ronan Keating, Niall Horan and Daniel O'Donnell are not crooners. Female singers never croon.

D

Dashes:

A useful device to use as parentheses but not more than one pair per sentence. It is also good for introducing a startling end to a sentence: He had only one choice - to

resign.

Dates:

Month, day, year as June 3, 2015. Decades in the 20th century are the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s etc, never the forties, or the 1940's.

Defence Forces:

Army: Capped for (Irish) Army but lower case for foreign forces. Similarly, the Air Corps, the Naval Service.

Also, the following abbreviations: Sgt, Cpl, Pte, Maj, Brig and Sgt Maj

Defuse/diffuse:

Defuse means to make less harmful – defuse a bomb. Diffuse means to disperse something more widely (the last thing you would want to do with a bomb).

Derry

Do not use Londonderry except where a writer in an opinion piece is making a point, or in a direct quote.

Dependant:

Dependant is the noun as in 'She is a dependant of the State'. Dependent means relying on or requiring a person or thing for support, as in: 'She is dependent on the state.'

Different:

This is always followed by from, not to or than.

Distances and measurements:

For distances, all abbreviations are all singular, close up to the figure – 64km; 3.5cm; 25mm. Same for measurements of length, height, weight, time – 3hr 5min; 10lb; 6kg; 5ft 2in; 15km. Use metric instead imperial measurements unless in direct speech or phrases such as "He's put on a few pounds".

Disabilities

Never use the term handicap in reference to permanent physical or mental disability. When referring to people with disabilities used the term 'disabled', NOT 'the disabled'.

Handicap(ped) is permissible in the case of a temporary setback: "He was handicapped in the match by a pulled hamstring."

Diagnosis/prognosis:

A diagnosis identifies and defines a disease or a problem. A prognosis is a

projection of the course that disease or problem might take, and the probable outcome.

Died/passed away/passed on:

Died is not a dirty word, yet there appears to be a reluctance to write it. Let's have more people dying and fewer passing away or passing on.

Different:

An often unnecessary adjective. If someone is on a round-the-world cruise, for example, they might visit many countries, all of which are different. If someone speaks four languages, it is unnecessary to write "four different languages".

Dilemma:

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

Disappear/go missing/vanish:

People and things disappear or go missing; only a magician can make people or things vanish. Don't use vanish.

Down tools:

A perfectly acceptable phrase to describe what electricians, plumbers and other trades people who actually use tools might do when they go on strike. Not to be used in the case of striking Luas drivers or our old friends, French air traffic controllers. If they don't use tools, they can't down them.

Due to/owing to:

'His absence is due to illness' is correct. 'He is absent due to illness' is wrong (use owing to). The test is: If you can replace 'due to' with 'caused by', the usage of 'due to' is correct.

Drowning:

A terminal state. You can be in danger of drowning, but if you're drowning you're going to die. You can save someone from drowning, but you can't save a drowning man

E

Each and every:

The use of three words where one will suffice. Write "each" or "every" but not both.

Earth/earth:

Earth, upper case, is the planet; earth, lower case, is soil.

Eatery:

A ridiculous word – would you refer to a pub as a drinkery?

Ecstasy:

A state of rapture or an illegal drug, often misspelt as ecstasy.

Electrocuted:

If someone is electrocuted, they die. If they receive an electric shock, they might survive.

Embarrassed:

This is what you should be if you can't spell this word. Note also, "harassed".

Emergency

The Emergency was the state of emergency which existed in the state of Ireland during the Second World War. The state of Ireland remained neutral throughout the war. "The Emergency" has been used metonymically in historical and cultural commentary to refer to the state during the war.

End result:

"End" is unnecessary.

Enormity:

A commonly misused word that actually means "great evil", not "huge scale".

Ensure:

Ensure (make certain); insure (against risk); assure (life).

Et cetera/etc:

Use sparingly and only in features/comment.

F

Familiarity:

Don't presume to refer to someone by their first name. In most cases, use their honorific and surname. There are exceptions – children, for example.

Farther/further:

Farther concerns distance – it's 160 kilometres from Dublin to Belfast, but 280 from Dublin to Derry, so Derry is farther away. Further means additional.

Fazed/unfazed:

Fazed means worried or disturbed. Phased in this respect is wrong.

Fewer/less:

Use fewer when dealing with numbers rather “volume”, where less is correct – “There were fewer people at the party because there was less space” or “It takes less time to get to work because there are fewer cars on the road”.

Firefighters, not firemen**Flammable/inflammable:**

Use flammable.

Flaunt/flout:

If you’ve got it, flaunt it (show it off), but in so doing you might be flouting (treating with contempt) the law.

Flounder/founder:

Flounder means to flail helplessly, as a non-swimmer might do in deep water. Flounder is also a bottom-feeding flatfish. Founder means to sink, either literally (a ship) or figuratively (a project or a company).

Following, after:

Following and after are often used, wrongly, for when, in and because of. ‘Three people were killed after an explosion’ suggests they were killed in some other way. It should read ‘Three people were killed in an explosion.’

Foreign:

Use English appellations for all foreign names – Mr Schroder, Mr Chirac, Mrs Berlusconi NOT Herr, Monsieur, Signore etc.

Full points:

Use frequently. Sentences should be short, crisp and straightforward. But do not put full stops between initials, after status titles (Mr, Mrs, Ms) or between abbreviations (CIE, Siptu).

Fulsome:

One of the most frequently misused words in English, invariably followed by “praise”. Fulsome means offensively insincere, so fulsome praise is no praise at all.

G

Garda Síochána:

The force is the Garda (Síochána), not the Gardaí. Garda is always upper case when referring to the force itself, ie, the Garda Síochána. Gardaí is lower case as it is merely the Irish version of police and refers to individual police officers. Never write: “He reported the crime to the gardaí” but instead “to gardaí”.

Garda takes an initial cap when used as a rank – Garda Fred Smith, Garda Superintendent Michelle Moore, etc (thereafter, Gda Smith, Supt Moore). It is lower case when used as a common noun (a garda, plural gardaí.

Garda ranks are as follows: Garda (Gda), Sergeant (Sgt), Inspector (Insp), Superintendent (Supt), Chief Superintendent (Chief Supt). Where gardai are members of the detective branch, their titles then become Detective Sergeant (Det-Sgt), Detective Inspector (Det-Insp) etc. The Garda Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner are referred to as Mr/Ms.

General Election

Takes initial caps when referring to a specific election, ie, the 1979 General Election, but lower case when used in a general sense.

General public:

Just say “public”.

Government:

Takes a cap G for the government of the day, but lower case for past and future governments.

See also entry on **Ministers**.

Grisly/grizzly:

If you're unfortunate enough to be attacked by a grizzly bear, you might well come to a grisly end.

H

Halloween (not Hallowe'en)**Holidaymaker, homeowner****Hangar/hanger:**

Aircraft (not aircrafts) are found in hangars. Jackets are found on hangers.

Hanged/hung:

Saddam Hussein and Ned Kelly were hanged. The pheasant you ate and the picture you attached to the wall were hung.

Headlines:

Reporters shouldn't waste a lot of valuable time on headlines – but do make an effort and don't leave it to the page editors.

Historic/historical:

Something that makes history is historic – the historic events of Easter 1916. Something that is based on history or describes it is historical – a historical building, a historical novel.

Hoard/horde:

A buried hoard (accumulation) of Viking gold, but a horde (large crowd) of bargain-hunting shoppers at the January sales.

Homeschooling:

No hyphen necessary

Honorifics and courtesy titles:

Do not use honorifics in front of full names at first mention: eg, Tom Kelly said, but in subsequent mentions give the appropriate title, ie, Mr Kelly – Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms. Exceptions can be made in colour, comment or features copy.

Celebrities and sportspeople don't take honorifics.

Do not use Cllr, Sen or Minister or President after the first mention as honorifics, but do give the titles Dr, Fr, Monsignor (later Mgr), Brother (later Br), Sister (later Sr), Professor (later Prof) with the full names. Surgeons (unlike physicians who take Dr) will, uniquely, take Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms with their names. Honorifics take no full points. Women can be Mrs, Ms or Miss as they wish, but when the preference is not known use Ms.

People convicted in court lose their honorific until they've served their sentence.

Do not use courtesy titles such as Sir (so it's just plain old Paul McCartney and subsequently just McCartney)

Husband:

If you really, really must shorten the word, it's hubby, not hubbie.

Hyphens:

Use hyphens to avoid ambiguity or to form a single idea from two or more words.
Use for:

- Fractions: two-thirds, four-fifths, etc.
- Most words that begin with anti, non and neo.
- Any number used as an adjective - 10-hour, four-year-old boy, 15-man team.
- Some titles: director-general, secretary-general, but not Attorney General, general secretary, (if in doubt, ask).
- Compass quarters – south-west, north-east, etc.
- Where a prefix vowel is followed by an identical vowel – re-elect, pre-empt, co-operate.
- Compound adjectives, ie, when two or more words are used to modify a noun – eg, right-wing groups, balance-of-payments difficulties. But when the adjectives follow the noun they describe, no hyphens are needed – the right wing of the party, the State’s balance of payments.
- Email does not take a hyphen.
- –ly adverbs do not take hyphens, eg, it was a commonly observed phenomenon.
- Some words have their meaning altered if hyphens are used. For instance, “recreation” is leisure activity, while “re-creation” means making something anew; “recover” means to get better, while “re-cover” is what you do with an old sofa.

I

If or whether:

A confusing one that can be cleared up by asking yourself whether the clause makes sense with "or not" on the end of it. So you would write: "He will celebrate if he passes his exams" but "he doesn't know whether he will pass his exams", not "if he will pass".

Note that you shouldn't write “whether or not” because “whether” is sufficient.

Impact:

Don't employ as a verb – please use “affect” instead. It's not great as an adjective either – “affected” is better than “impacted”.

In addition:

Try using ‘also’ instead.

Internet:

Sourcing material or pictures from the web is fraught with dangers. Any material taken from the internet must - like all sources - be independently checked and verified before it can be repeated in print or digital. Just because a story appears on the web does not make it true. Sourcing pictures from social networking sites is also a libel minefield.

Any images taken from websites such as Facebook or Twitter must be independently verified before they can be published in our titles.

Inquiry:

Inquiry is the noun, enquiry the verb, thus: “It may be necessary to enquire of the garda where the inquiry will be held.”

Ingenious/ingenuous:

Ingenious means clever, ingenuous means frank or naive. Disingenuous means sneaky or crafty.

Intimate (wedding/gig):

Every wedding or musical performance for a small audience these days is described as intimate. Let's stop.

Ireland:

Use simply Ireland instead of the Republic of Ireland unless you're trying to make a distinction from Northern Ireland.

Islamic State:

Abbreviate to IS in all titles.

It's and Its:

We must be careful to distinguish between it's and its. Used with an apostrophe, “it's” is always an abbreviation of “it is” or “it has”: “It's good to hear that it's been dealt with at last.” Without the apostrophe, “its” is the possessive form of the pronoun “it” – the equivalent of hers, theirs, ours, yours, etc. Note that the apostrophe in plural nouns goes before the “s” in the possessive form: Old folk's home, the people's preference, children's shoes etc.

Irregardless:

No such word exists. Use regardless.

J

Jargon:

Spot jargon and avoid it. Use simple words so that the meaning is clear to all.

Job:

We want to know as much as possible about the person we're reading about, and that includes what they do for a living, if they are indeed in work. If the person who wins a €10m Lotto jackpot is a binman, that's an important piece of information. If the winner is a merchant banker who lives on Aylesbury Road, that's important too. Where possible, reporters should include a person's trade or profession.

Jobseeker's Allowance**Junior:**

Abbreviate to Jr, not Jnr (also Sr, not Snr)

Just deserts:

Has nothing to do with jelly and ice cream, so only one 's' in the middle.

Judgment:

Always without the 'e', also lodgment.

K

K:

Please do not use K or k to denote thousands in headlines or copy.

Kilometres/metres/miles/yards/kilos/pounds:

Always use metric measures and convert imperial to metric, unless it would be confusing (due to quotes featuring imperial)

King's Inns:

The school of law located in Dublin 1.

L

Last number of weeks/months/years:

Ridiculously vague. Be precise.

Launch:

Confine to missiles and ships etc.

Lead/led:

In the present tense, you lead a horse to water. In the past tense, you led the horse to water. This is one of the most common spelling mistakes.

Learn:

Learned is the past tense and adjectival form of the verb. For consistency, learnt is to be avoided - He learned his lesson. The lesson was learned.

Lebanon:

Not the Lebanon, not the Ukraine, not the Crimea.

Legend/legendary:

Cú Chulainn is a legend and a (mythical) legendary hero. Bernard Brogan and John Giles, much as they are admired, are neither legends nor legendary.

Less/fewer:

Use fewer when dealing with numbers (rather than “volume”, where less is correct) – “There were fewer people at the party because there was less space” or “It takes less time to get to work because there are fewer cars on the road”.

Licence, license:

Licence is the noun, license is the verb.

Like or such as:

When giving examples, don't use “like” when you mean “such as”. “She enjoys fruits such as apples”, NOT “She enjoys fruits like apples”.

Line breaks:

Be wary of where words break at the end of a line of text, especially with the word “therapist”. The last thing we want to read in print is this:

“Among those who attended the concert were the-
rapist Paddy Murphy, his wife Fidelma and their
three children.”

If that dash is accidentally deleted, Paddy (the rapist) and his family will be very unhappy.

Loath, loathe:

Loath means unwilling or disinclined, loathe means dislike intensely.

M

Mass:

We longer cap up mass as in the religious ceremony.

Mayday:

A mayday is a distress signal, May Day is May 1.

Metal/mettle:

An ironsmith may show you his metal, but a brave man will prove his mettle (courage or spirit).

Millions:

Use as follows in copy when referring to currencies: €24m. For billions use €24bn and trillions €10trn.

However, write it full-out when referring to non-currency amounts (Twenty-five million people tuned in ... Jupiter is 624 million kilometres from our planet)

Ministers:

The title of a minister's office should always precede his/her name: Foreign Affairs Minister Simon Coveney, Finance Minister Paschal Donohoe; NOT Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney or Minister for Finance Paschal Donohoe.

We can make an exception for unwieldy portfolios such Minister for Media, Tourism, Arts, Culture, Sport and the Gaeltacht but prefer to curtail it to Media Minister Catherine Martin, etc, when dealing with a Media story (or Sport, etc)

Thereafter, the reference should be the minister, Mr Coveney or the minister, Mr Donohoe, NOT the Minister, Minister Coveney or the Minister, Minister Donohoe. And remember, it's Taoiseach Micheál Martin and Tánaiste Leo Varadkar followed by the Taoiseach or the Tánaiste, but Mr Martin or Mr Varadkar. Similarly President Michael D Higgins, is the President or Mr Higgins.

Ministers of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs, Finance, etc, are junior

ministers and should be referred to as Junior Justice Minister AN Other, Junior Health Minister Blank Blank, etc.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is known as the Northern Secretary. Use British Prime Minister Boris Johnson initially, followed by the prime minister or Mr Johnson thereafter. Similarly, President Donald Trump, then the president or Mr Trump.

When referring to the IFA president, GAA president, etc, it is always lower case. Taoiseach Micheal Martin in the first reference, thereafter the Taoiseach or Mr Varadkar

- NEVER The Taoiseach Leo Varadkar or The Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar;

When writing a personalised piece, you will get away with just using the first name, if it's a drop-intro style and the individual concerned is extremely well known.

Minuscule, not miniscule

Miracle/miraculous:

Miracles happen only in the Bible. Use lucky escape and unexpected recovery, not miraculous.

Mohammed:

The prophet, but not Muhammad Ali.

Money:

Use €4.25, 79c, etc, but never €4.25c. Also, in seizure-type stories, use '€7m of drugs', and not '€7m worth of drugs'.

Most well-known:

That would be best-known.

Mujahideen

N

Navy:

Ireland has a navy, but it's called the Naval Service, the maritime arm of the Defence Forces, and is based at Haulbowline in Cork Harbour. Therefore, never write Irish Navy.

New:

Never say brand new. New will suffice.

No one:

two words and not hyphenated

Needless to say:

If it's needless to say, it's needless to write.

Nerve-racking:

Not nerve-wracking.

Nicknames:

Use single quotes, as in Gerry 'The Monk' Hutch, Martin 'The Viper' Foley and 'Fat' Freddie Thompson.

Northern Ireland:

In general, we refer to Northern Ireland as the North. Note that the UK minister is known as the Northern Ireland Secretary or just the Northern Secretary.

Avoid references to "the South" except in quotes.

Nuptials:

A horrible word. Don't use it.

Numbers and figures:

These are spelt out up to and including nine. Use the figure from 10 up.

Exceptions: where a figure begins a paragraph or sentence, it is always spelt out, and where it is attached to a measure, eg, 12ft, 4in. Also, write "more than 2,000" rather than "over 2,000", which is an entirely different thing.

O

Occur/occurred:

Use happen/happened.

OK, not okay or ok or Ok.

Only:

Must go next to the word it qualifies. 'He only saw three people' means that he did not hear them as well. The writer meant: 'He saw only three people.'

On to:

Two words.

Opened up (about):

Use “has told of” or “has spoken for the first time about”.

Oral/aural:

Oral concerns the mouth, aural concerns the ears.

P

Palate/palette/pallet:

Frequently mixed up. Palate is the roof of the mouth or one’s sense of taste; palette is an artist’s flat board for mixing colours; pallet is a (usually) wooden platform used for storage (or for bonfires in Belfast on the night of July 11).

Parliament:

In the context of the UK Parliament system (referring to both houses), Parliament takes a cap P because that is its official name: the Houses of Parliament. But lower case for “Boris returned to parliament...” or “He was accused of using parliamentary privilege...” Other countries have official names for their bicameral system, so use instead “Belgian parliament...”, etc, where appropriate.

Paragraphs:

In news stories, paragraphs should always be short, allowing for easier reading, simpler cutting and less laborious correction.

In general, no paragraphs should be more than 30 words long, unless they are a direct quote from some document that is central to the story.

Parentheses:

Use sparingly as they tend to interrupt the reader. In general, it is better to use dashes and commas to insert material into a sentence. Use parentheses to introduce explanatory material into a direct quote. As in: He said: “When finished, it (the tunnel) will revolutionise travel.”

Pen:

Roddy Doyle writes books, he doesn’t pen them.

Per:

Per is too often used as a clumsy replacement for ‘a’. Thus, €25,000 a year is preferable to €25,000 per year.

Per se:

Not per say.

Percentages:

Do not use %, percent or per cent – the style is for the figure followed by “pc”, 12pc, 25pc, etc. Percentages between one and nine are also represented in this manner – 4pc, 7pc, etc. However, where a sentence begins with a number or a percentage it is always spelt out (as is per cent): Twenty-five adults drank beer. Four per cent of the adults drink beer.

Be clear about the difference between percentages and percentage points. If Fianna Fáil support in the polls rises from 35pc to 38pc, that is an increase of three percentage points, not 3pc.

Personnel:

A dull term best avoided in news stories. Use workers, officials, staff, labourers, etc, which are always better and more specific.

Pictures (includes Captions):

It is vitally important to check and double check all captions taken from live pictures and from library pictures. **IF THERE IS ANY DOUBT ABOUT THE IDENTITY OF A PERSON IN A PARTICULAR PHOTOGRAPH, DO NOT USE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.**

Main display captions on live pictures should be simple and reflect that they are live, as in the following:

Trial: Jim Bloggs leaves Dublin District Court yesterday. Photo: Courtpix

Photographs longer than single column should credit the photographer in the style used above, ie: Photo: Frank McGrath. Use Paragraph Styles for credit.

Photographers should never be credited where it may expose them to risk – eg, a photo of a criminal, etc

Political parties:

Always singular unless writing in a very conversational style.

NOT FG, FF, Lab, SF - do not use acronyms for the main parties.

- Fine Gael;
- Fianna Fáil;
- Labour Party or the Labour Party in the first reference, thereafter Labour;
- Sinn Féin;
- Independent or Independents when it's a group of TDs;
- Green Party or the Green Party in the first reference, thereafter the Greens;
- Social Democrats or the Social Democrats;

- Socialist Party in the first reference, Socialist thereafter;
- People Before Profit Alliance in the first reference, thereafter PBPA because it's too long.

In headlines you'll get away with acronyms but sparingly.

Positions:

Organisation, position, name;

Department of Public Expenditure secretary general Robert Watt – NOT Robert Watt, the secretary general from the Department of Public Expenditure;

Trinity College Dublin economist Ronan Lyons.

Sinn Féin health spokesperson Louise O'Reilly - NOT Louise O'Reilly, the Health spokesman for SF;

Fianna Fail TD Michael McGrath - NOT Cork TD Michael McGrath (FF);

The exception to the rule is colour, analysis or comment pieces.

Power:

The Government - capital letter where it applies to the current administration; However, if you are referring to the parties remaining in government, then it's lower case;

The government - lower case where it applies to a previous or future administration;

The Coalition - with a Capital C.

The opposition - NOT the Opposition.

Practice/practice:

Practice is the noun, practise is the verb. A solicitor may work in a practice, but he or she practises law

Prestigious:

Much over-used and unnecessary adjective. Don't use it, unless entirely necessary.

Prior to/ahead of:

Use before.

Property-ese:

Lifestyle pieces about homes and property should always avoid (in text, captions, headlines, etc) widely used estate agent brochure-speak clichés such as: deceptively spacious, stunning views, elegantly appointed, sylvan settings, hidden

gems etc. Overused throughout media, the term ‘stunning’ should especially be avoided.

Prostate/prostrate:

Prostate is the male gland surrounding the neck of the bladder, therefore prostate cancer. Prostrate means lying face down.

Protest:

You can “protest at” or “protest against” something but don’t use the form “protest the decision”, etc, which is an Americanism.

Proved/proven:

Something can be proved, but a person can have proven abilities.

Purchase/purchased/purchasing:

Use buy/bought/buying, though the items you buy are purchases.

Presently:

Should be used (if at all) in the sense of ‘soon’ and not as a synonym of ‘now’.

Principal:

Principal (adjective) - ‘first’; principal (noun) – person in charge; principle (noun) – axiom or standard of conduct.

Program:

Computers, but programme otherwise.

Q

Queen Elizabeth:

Never use “the Queen” at first reference to Queen Elizabeth II because there are many more queens in the world. It’s fine at second reference (“the queen”). Similarly, it’s the British royals, not the “British Royals” or “Royals”.

Quotations:

Beware of stray inverted commas being put outside the full stop, when they should be inside.

Mr Kelleher said he was preparing for “an apocalypse”.

He said: “I am preparing for an apocalypse.”

- NOT Mr Kelleher said he was preparing for “an apocalypse.”

A full point at the end of a quotation goes inside the quote marks if the material quoted is a complete sentence, outside if it is not.

He said: “The minister is a complete fool.”

He described the minister as “a complete fool”.

Avoid putting unwieldy and lengthy quotes in a paraphrased sentence....

He pointed out the Taoiseach was “not making adequate preparations for the end of the world by giving homeowners a grant to build a bunker in their back garden or moving people in the north of the country to the moon”.

... better to go with

“The Taoiseach is not making adequate preparations for the end of the world by giving homeowners a grant to build a bunker in their back garden or moving people in the north of the country to moon,” he said.

Queue/queued/queuing

R

Race: Race, colour or religion should not be included in a report unless relevant to the events or the context. This is particularly important in crime and court reports. Traveller(s) always takes an initial capital (also, the Travelling community, etc).

Republican (and unionist/loyalist/national):

Always lower case.

Rapt/wrapped:

Rapt is engrossed or spellbound, wrapped is what Christmas presents are.

Relic/relict:

A relic is an artefact, usually ancient, or a bit of a saint kept in a gold reliquary. A relict is a widow.

Reopen:

No need for a hyphen.

Responsible:

Persons bear responsibility; things do not. Thus thunderstorms, earthquakes are not responsible for damage, they CAUSE it.

Right of reply:

Where a story makes allegations about an individual or entity, the response of that person or entity should never be subbed out when the story is cut. Even if the person declines to comment, that fact should be left in the story because it is an important tool in the event of any subsequent legal action.

Rob

Goods are stolen, not robbed. You cannot rob a handbag or a phone, but you can steal them. You can rob a person or a bank. Robbery entails violence.

Royalty and aristocracy:

In the first instance refer to Queen Elizabeth, Prince Charles (Not the Prince of Wales), Princess Caroline, etc, but the queen, the prince, the princess thereafter. Article 40.2 of the Irish Constitution forbids the state conferring titles of nobility and a citizen may not accept titles of nobility or honour except with the prior approval of the Government. In the main, avoid the use of class-based honorific such as “Sir”, etc. Exceptions include addresses (Sir John Rogerson Quay) or historic figures (Lord Edward Fitzgerald).

S

Said/added:

These are all you need for reported speech – he/she said or he/she added and occasionally he/she joked. Don’t use the following: explained, laughed, smiled, grinned, shrugged, quipped, giggled, sniggered, yawned, opined, averred, pointed out (there are many more).

Seasons:

Always lower case, as in autumn leaves, spring has arrived, a winter frost etc.

See:

Avoid using ‘see’ as a passive phrase, as in: “A €100m investment will see a new three-lane motorway from Dundalk to Dublin”, or “The move will see €30 added to bills”. Much better to write: “A €100m investment will fund...” or “The move will add €30 to bills”.

Set to:

Avoid using this redundant phrase (“The FAI is set to launch...” - no. Better: “The FAI will launch”).

Sewage:

Is the substance. It is carried through sewers which form part of a sewerage system. This may have a sewage works as part of a wider sewerage system.

Shoot dead:

An ill-thought-out headline informed readers that “American special forces shoot dead Iraqi soldiers”. Were there no live ones they could have shot instead?

(Sic):

Has its place, but don't use it sarcastically.

Silver screen:

An archaic term from the days of black and white films when cinema screens were coated with metallic paint. Unless you're writing about those days, use big screen or cinema screen.

Speed:

Express as kmh, as in 60kmh speed limit. NOT km/h or kmph. Miles per hour remains mph.

The speaker:

Introduce the speaker gradually where possible.

The IFA says the end of the world is nigh.

The farming organisation's president Tim Cullinan said he was basing his prediction on a reliable authority.

"I heard it from a man on Patrick Street so it must be true," he said.

Spelling:

Mistakes must be recognised before they can be corrected, so all copy must be spell-checked, corrected and checked again. Each contributor/editor will be expected to spell-check copy.

Split infinitives:

Are banned, as in "to boldly go". But inserting an adverb after an auxiliary verb ("would/should/shall/may/might/can boldly go") is perfectly all right.

Stalactite/stalagmite:

Stalactites are accumulations of lime that grow from the roofs of caves.

Stalagmites are accumulations of lime that rise from the floor. (Stalactite contains a 'c' for ceiling, stalagmite contains a 'g' for ground.)

Stalemate (break/end the):

It's impossible to break or end a stalemate. Use deadlock, which is much better than impasse.

Star:

We have a habit of elevating the most unlikely people to stardom (RTE weather star So And So, for example). Taylor Swift is a star, as are George Clooney and Twinkle-Twinkle. If you're tempted to describe someone as a star, try writing presenter instead – more often than not it will be the correct word.

State:

Use a capital S when referring to the Irish State. Also, State funds, etc.

Stationary/stationery:

Stationary means not moving. Stationery is office equipment that includes notepads and pencils. (The final vowel in stationary is ‘a’, for “at a standstill”; the final vowel in stationery is ‘e’, for “envelope”.)

Straitjacket:

Not straightjacket.

Strangled:

As with drowning and electrocuting, if someone has been strangled, they’re dead, so never write half-strangled or strangled to death.

Swat/swot:

You swat a fly and swot for exams.

Swap, not swop**Swearwords:**

Swearing is very common in modern Irish life but we get a bit squeamish when seeing the words printed on a page or screen. We should use swearwords sparingly in comment or features pieces - where they can serve as emphasis in opinion and colour in interviews – but obviously not at all in news copy unless quoting someone.

Wherever they are used, we use asterisks to give the reader just enough information to know which word we’re using but without hitting them in the face with it, eg, to distinguish between c**t and c**k.

Some words are mildly offensive but not worth hiding at all because our readers are mostly grown-ups and the terms are widely used in colourful phrases, eg, arse, balls, bastard, bitch, bugger, crap, fanny, piss, tit, wanker, whore. That said, never use them in headlines/captions, etc, without a bloody good reason.

All others in the list below should not be used in full unless completely germane to a story (such as where a politician swears in the Dáil or an atrocious would-be president uses it while unaware he’s being recorded) and even then at the editor’s discretion. The rules about headlines, etc, goes double or triple here.

So, like George Carlin's famous routine, here are the toxic seven and how we asterisk them:

B*****ks/b*****x

C**k

C**t

F**k/f**king/f**ker

Motherf*****r

N*****r (or more preferably just the N-word because it is so toxic)

P***k and its close relative D**k

T

Takeover

Temperatures:

Use Celsius for everything except quoted speech and express as 27C.

Temporary respite:

A respite is by its nature temporary, so the adjective is redundant.

Tenses:

Try to keep stories in the past tense where possible, ie, 'The Government confirmed it would, etc, etc' rather than 'The Government has confirmed it will etc, etc'. Intros are the exception and should always remain active, 'The Government confirmed yesterday it will etc, etc'.

That/which

These two are frequently confused, so use this rule: “That” defines, “which” gives extra information (often in a clause enclosed by commas). Examples: This the house **that** Jack built. The house, **which** Jack built, is located beside a river.

Thought to myself/herself:

You can’t think to somebody else, so “thought” is sufficient.

Till:

As a noun, a till is a drawer in a cash register; as a verb, it means to cultivate soil; it is not a substitute for until.

Time:

10.30pm, 9.30am, noon or midnight, you do NOT need 12.

Titles:

Print and Digital should now use italics for book, film, poem, videogame, song, as in *Goodfellas*, *Ulysses*, *Hey Jude*, Fortnite, etc.

Titles of Oireachtas Members:

TD (full Irish form Teachta Dála; plural Teachtaí Dála) is a member of Dáil Éireann, the lower house of the Oireachtas (the Irish Parliament). It is the equivalent of terms such as "Member of Parliament" (MP) or "Member of Congress" used in other states. The official translation of the term is "Deputy to the Dáil".

Fianna Fáil TD Jack Chambers, thereafter Mr Chambers or the TD – NOT the Deputy.

The deputy is a fellah on a horse riding alongside John Wayne in a posse in a Western;

Fine Gael Senator Catherine Noone, thereafter Ms Noone or the senator.

Tortuous:

Means winding, torturous means inflicting pain.

Torn apart:

Usually refers to families who have suffered a tragedy. Be careful how you use this: the family of somebody who has been attacked and eaten by lions are not the only ones who have been torn apart.

Toward:

Use toward, not towards.

Travellers:

Traveller(s) always takes an initial capital (also, the Travelling community, etc)

because they are a recognised ethnic group.

Tributes:

Never write an intro regarding someone's death beginning "Tributes have been paid...". It's a lazy and overused cliché. Find instead a detail that tells the reader something (anything) about the person.

T-shirt:

Take a capital T because that is the shape of the shirt.

U

U-turn:

Cap U and hyphenate.

Unfolded (the events/the drama):

You can unfold only something that has been folded, such as a bedsheet. Don't use unfolded to describe a sequence of events.

Under way:

Under way, not underway.

Unique:

Can never be qualified as in 'rather unique' or 'quite unique'. Use with caution.

Untimely death:

When was a death ever timely, except when you have an appointment with an executioner? Write unexpected death.

Upon:

Leave it to the fairytale writers – use just "on", unless you're writing "Once upon a time..."

V

Various/different:

If they're various, they're already different. Don't use these two words together.

VHI:

All upper case, despite what the company itself might say (see also, Eir, 2FM, PTSB, DAA, etc)

Via:

Refers to geography, not to mode of transport – you might travel from Dublin to Kilkenny via Carlow, but you make the journey by, not via, car/train/bus.

Vicious/viscous:

Sometimes we see viscous assault, which conjures up images of the victim covered in tar. Viscous means thick and sticky.

Vital:

Means essential to life. Don't use it when you mean important or essential.

W**Wars:**

World War I, World War II.

Weather:

Does not need to be followed by 'conditions' in heads or copy. Thus, "the weather will be good", not "weather conditions will be good".

Weight:

Metric should be used at all times (g, kg) but note the imperial abbreviations when used in direct speech - oz, lb, cwt, etc., 6lb 4oz (no points, close up)

Whether or if:

A confusing one that can be cleared up by asking yourself whether the clause makes sense with "or not" on the end of it. So you would write: "He will celebrate if he passes his exams" but "he doesn't know whether he will pass his exams", not "if he will pass".

Note that you shouldn't write "whether or not" because "whether" is sufficient.

Which/that

These two are frequently confused, so use this rule: "That" defines, "which" gives extra information (often in a clause enclosed by commas). Examples: This the house **that** Jack built. The house, **which** Jack built, is located beside a river.

Whiskey (Irish) and whisky (Scotch)

Whopping:

A silly word, never use it.

Widow:

It's the widow of Paddy Murphy, not the widow of the late Paddy Murphy. "The late" is unnecessary.

Widows

Ensure that the first line at the top of each column of text is completely filled out.

X

X-ray:

Cap X and hyphenated.

Xenophobia:

A fear or hatred of foreigners.

Y

Yesterday:

Try not to use 'yesterday' or 'last night'. Failing that, use it just once in a story.

Too often, we use the phrase 'last night' in par after par of a story.

Of course, you can use it when it is necessary to state the time of an event.

APPENDIX

Commonly occurring words containing fadas:

Political parties / terms

Fianna Fáil

Sinn Féin

Fís Nua

Éirígí

Dáil Éireann

Tánaiste

Teachta Dála - TD

Politicians

Aodhán Ó Ríordáin - Labour Party
Ciarán Lynch – Labour Party
Pádraig Mac Lochlainn – Sinn Féin
Seán Barrett - Fine Gael
Ciarán Cannon - Fine Gael
Seán Kyne - Fine Gael
Róisín Shortall – Social Democrats
Eamon Ó Cuív - Fianna Fáil
Seán Ó Fearghaíl - Fianna Fáil
Aengus Ó Snodaigh – Sinn Féin
Peadar Tóibín - Aontú

Government bodies / State bodies

Garda Síochána and also gardaí

Met Éireann

Aosdána - Irish artists' association

Bus Éireann

Busáras - central bus station

Bord Fáilte - tourist board

Bord na Móna - peat board

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann - organisation for promotion of Irish music, culture

Córas Iompair Éireann (CIÉ) - public transport body

Iarnród Éireann - National railway operator

Óglaigh na hÉireann - Irish term for the Defence Forces

Raidió Teilifís Éireann (RTÉ) - State broadcaster

Common phrases

Sin é - that's it

Fáilte - welcome

Sláinte - cheers

Slán - bye

Cúpla focal - a few words

Plámás - flattery

Amadán- fool

Others

An Cosantóir - Defence Forces magazine

Amhrán na bhFiann - the national anthem

Éire / Éireann

Áras an Uachtaráin - residence of the president

Brú na Bóinne

Ógra - Irish for youth, commonly used for youth wings of political parties, etc

Coláiste - Irish for college, commonly used for Gaelscoileanna or Irish language schools

Fáinne - pin worn to show willingness to speak Irish

Páirc - Irish for park, affixed to various GAA venues such as Páirc Uí Rinn, Páirc Uí Chaoimh

Seanchaí - storyteller

Dún Laoghaire

Ó in a male surname always takes a fada like in Seán Óg Ó hAilpín

Ní in a female surname is the same, as in Sharon Ní Bheoláin

Not everyone with a fada in a Christian name also takes a fada in a surname

Nóirín O'Sullivan - former Garda Commissioner

Grá - love

Bodhrán

Labhrás Ó Murchú - Fianna Fáil ex-member of Seanad

Micheál Mac Liammóir - Gate Theatre founder

Hector Ó hEochagáin - TV presenter

Eithne Ní Bhraonáin - real name of Enya

Seán Ó Faoláin - author

Pádraig Harrington - golfer