



Style Guide

Created: August 2024 by York Vision Editorial Team

Last Edited: 4th April 2025 by Josh Turner

Introduction

The [York Vision Style Guide](#) contains documentation of all the grammatical, semantic, and stylistic rulings which the Chief Subeditors of the past and present have made for our output over the years. This document outlines a simplified version.

The key tenets of subediting are consistency and explainable decisions. The style guide helps us maintain this and ultimately saves each individual subeditor a lot of time and effort looking for an answer.

This style guide applies to our print and online content.

Updating the Style Guide

If you see that a decision on a certain stylistic choice has not been made, then contact the Editors immediately.

Our usual barometer for style is the publicly-available *Guardian* Style Guide but this is simply advisory and can be overruled.

Our reference point unless a different spelling is stated in the Style Guide is the Oxford English Dictionary. For grammar queries, we use Seely's Oxford A-Z of Grammar and Punctuation for reference.

When sub-editing another writer's work, you must add your corrections as suggestions rather than edits to give the writer a chance to review your feedback.

Every online article must be subbed at least once and every print article must be subbed at least twice.

At least one of the Editors must read over each article before publication.

All online articles must include alt text and a photo credit.

Headlines + Subheadings:

- For online articles, only capitalise the first letter of the first word and any proper nouns

→ eg Another disappointing afternoon for York Students' Union.

→ for print, there is more individual freedom, but the standard will be the same as online unless the capitalisations are part of a page design

- The first letter of the first word must always be capitalised.
- There must be a period (or '?' or '!') at the end of each subheading.
- There must not be a period at the end of a headline ('?' or '!' are fine).
- The intro (the bolded sentence(s)) after the heading and subheading should be 25-30 words for news articles.

Speech:

- Always use “.” [double speech marks] regardless of if you're quoting speech or the written word.

→ EXCEPTION: If you're using a quote in a headline, it must be done using single quotations [this applies to Main and SCENE]

- Punctuation marks such as commas and full stops must come inside the quote marks when a full sentence is quoted, but outside if just a phrase or partial sentence is quoted.

→ Include the quote is four words or fewer.

- If you are quoting several paragraphs worth of text, use speech marks at the start of each paragraph, but only do one set of closing speech marks on the final paragraph.

a) “I really enjoyed making the show because...

“It was a lot of fun because...

“I would do it again...”

- When the description goes before the speech, use a colon to introduce the speech [no comma].

a) Smith said: “The email was sent by him.”

- When the description goes after the speech, use a comma.

b) “The email was sent by him,” said Smith.

- Always use a capital letter after a colon.

Re-occurring words:

- The first time you refer to the ‘University of York’ you need to write it as the ‘University of York’. Every time after, you can simplify it to the ‘University’.

→ This rule also applies to ‘York Vision’, which must be simplified to ‘Vision’ after its first use. It must also be italicised.

- Refer to the different campuses as ‘Campus West’ and ‘Campus East’

- If you're referring to a specific university, you need to capitalise the 'u', if you're talking about universities generally, the 'u' must be lowercase.
- a) 'The student attended the **U**niversity'.
- b) 'Many young people go to **u**niversities'.
- Make sure you write 'the University of York' and not 'York University'
- For key figures in the University, write their position/title first followed by their name, with no commas.

a) Union Affairs Officer John Smith attended the protest.

→ After the first use, you must refer to them by just their last name (Smith).

→ If you are writing a SCENE article or a more lighthearted piece, you can call them by their first name when appropriate. If you are referring to children, you must also refer to them by their first name.

- For key figures outside of the University, write their name first, followed by their position/title. Add commas when necessary.

b) Keir Starmer, the UK Prime Minister, attended the protest.

- Capitalise 'Union' [as in Student Union] even when it appears by itself.
- Use an uncapitalised 'f' if you're talking about freshers (as in 'first year students').
- Societies are one word

a) BandSoc, not Band Soc

- Write 'the Piazza' with a capital 'p', but not a capital 't'.
- Refer to Pierrick [+ others] as the former YUSU President.
- Include a capital letter on Editor
- Write other newspapers like *The Sun* and *The Independent* in italics

Acronyms:

- Lesser known acronyms should be explained first, followed by the acronym in brackets. After the first time, the acronym will be used by itself for the rest of the article.
- → This rule does not apply to well-known acronyms such as UoY, YSTV, URY, EU, LGBTQ+.

→ This rule does not apply to the SU (Student Union). You can just write SU.

→ This rule does not apply to 'Sabb'. 'Sabb' stands for 'sabbatical officer', so it is not an acronym and should not be capitalised.

→ The **OPPA (Office of Philanthropic Partnership)** is a department at the University of York.

- Write 'e.g.' lower case and with two full stops. The same applies for 'i.e.'. 'For example' is preferred.

Punctuation:

Brackets:

- Punctuation stays outside the brackets. (A complete sentence that stands alone in parentheses starts with a capital letter and ends with a stop).
- Use square brackets in direct quotes when a note from the writer/editor which has not been mentioned by the speaker is added for grammatical purposes.

Commas:

- Use the Oxford Comma.

Ellipsis:

- Use one space after an ellipses.
- Don't write a capital letter on the next sentence after an ellipsis

Hyphens:

- Use one word wherever possible, so as few hyphens as possible.
→ Be careful with ambiguity, one *Guardian* example was of a review of Chekhov's *Three Sisters* where they referred to 'the servant abusing Natasha' not 'the servant-abusing Natasha'.

Online Content:

- Every photograph must include a photo credit.
- Every photo must have alt text.
- Use captions to provide additional information, not simply to state the obvious.
- Articles should include a featured image wherever possible.
- The opening sentence of the article should be its own paragraph which is bolded.
- Make sure that the article is in the correct section and that is only in one section.
- News and opinion articles should be verified by the Student Union before publication.

Word Choice:

- You may begin sentences with the word 'and' or 'but'. But not too often please.
→ ADVICE: Advice (noun) is what you *ask* for and advise (verb) is the act of *giving* it. This also applies to 'liscence' and 'liscense'.
- CONVINCE: You convince someone *of* the fact; you do not convince them to do something, you *persuade* them.
- DISINTERESTED: Means impartial, and should not be confused with *uninterested*, which means bored or not interested.
- FEWER: Means smaller in numbers (so you can count them) e.g. fewer trees and should not be confused with less which means to a smaller degree, e.g. less oxygen.
- GCSEs: No apostrophes, all capital letters except for the final 's'.
- MEDIA: Plural - The media *are*, not *is*. The same applies to the Police.
- POSTGRADUATE: Write as one word, unhyphenated.
- THAT/WHICH: *That* defines, *which* informs.
- VERSUS: Use 'versus' the first time and then swap to 'v'. Never write 'vs'

SCENE.:

- Use the Chicago reference style to refer to books.
→ For help on referencing, please use:
<https://subjectguides.york.ac.uk/referencing-style-guides/chicago>
- Write book titles, songs, albums, chapters and films in italics.
→ Italicise bands on the first mention, but not after that.
- SCENE. must always be capitalised, never italicised

- Film seasons should be written with digits e.g. 'season 6'. However, if you're referring to the amount of seasons e.g. 'seven seasons', then the number should be written as a word.
 - When SCENE is used in the middle of a sentence, it should be capitalised but the full stop should be left out, as shown in this sentence.
 - The first letter of SCENE sections should be capitalised e.g. Music
 - Italice productions.
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COVID-19:

- Refer to it as 'COVID-19', with no other variations

Dates and Times:

Dates:

- Do not specify the year if what you're talking about is the same year that the article is written
- Write dates as '24th June' rather than 'June 24' or '24 June'
 - Use the same format but add a year if you're referring to a different year.
 - Do not insert a comma between month and year.
- Only use days of the week if it is important for the article.
- Use a hyphen, not a slash, for academic years (e.g. 2018-2019).
- Use AD or BC only if needed. AD is written before the year (e.g. AD75), BC is written after (e.g. 1000BC).
- Write decades as: 1960s, 1970s, 1980s etc. (no apostrophe)

Times:

- Write using the 12-hour clock system and then specify whether you're talking about the morning or afternoon e.g. '6:30 pm' and '10.45 am'.
 - Use 'noon' and 'midnight' instead of '12:00 pm' and '12:00 am'.
- Use '2hr 30min 6 sec' format

FOI:

- Use 'freedom of information' (lower case) to refer to the concept.
 - Use 'Freedom of Information Act' (capitalised) to refer to the U.K. legislation.
- USE 'Fol' after first use of Freedom of Information Act or request.

Helplines:

- Give a helpline at the end of an article if it touches upon sensitive matters.
 - a) **Domestic violence helpline: 0808 2000 247**
 - b) **Samaritans: 116 123**
 - c) **Mind: 0300 123 3393**

Jeffery (Charlie):

- When referring to the Vice-Chancellor, note the spelling - NOT 'Jeffrey' or 'Jeffries'.

Lists:

- If you're writing a list and each item is its own proper sentence, use a period at the end of each number/bullet point.
- If the list is made up of one-word phrases, don't use a period at the end of each number/bullet point.

Measurements:

- For long distances, use miles; people's heights, use feet and inches; for people's weight use stones and pounds; for drinks, use pints; otherwise use metric measurements.
- Use metric measurements and convert on the first mention to imperial in brackets.
- Write 'metre' in full, rather than shortening it to 'm' because this may be confused with 'million'.

Numbers:

- Numbers one to nine inclusive should be spelt out; 10 to 999, 999 should be given in numbers, with commas to mark the thousands; then 2 million, 4.5 billion etc.
 - There are exceptions when you're referring to money or writing a street address
 - If you're starting the sentence with a number, it should be written in words (or else re-word the sentence so that the number isn't the first thing in the sentence) e.g. 'Twenty-one students have filed complaints'
 - You can make a stylistic exception when writing fractions, percentages or sports scores
- Use 'zeros' for the plural of zero. DO NOT USE zeroes.
- If referring to a currency, use 'k,' 'm,' and 'b' when working with figures of 100k or more.

→ The previous rule must be used in headlines. When using figures in the body of the text there is more leeway (decided on by looking at the context of the article).

- If you're saying someone's age, you should write it straight after their name with commas either side
 - a) John Smith, 30, said: 'x..'

Sport:

- Use 'Rugby Union Women's 1st match' or the equivalent to describe Roses or College Varsity events.
- USE 'sport' (the section) as singular as it refers to all sports.

→ Use 'FIFA World Cup' for football.

→ Use 'Cricket World Cup' for cricket.

→ Use 'Rugby Union World Cup' for rugby union.

→ Use 'Rugby League World Cup' for rugby league.

→ Avoid using 'World Cup' without the clarification. It tends to refer to the FIFA World Cup if it is used.

- Unless stated explicitly, you should assume that the reader has a general knowledge of the sport
- When you mention the sport for the first time, specify the gender, e.g. 'Women's Football'. After first use, this can be shortened to 'football'.
- Hyphenate 'kick-off'