



OIAD-21

9(2)(a)

Dear 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 07 May 2021 requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

Under the Official Information Act I request the following information.

- **Style guides for the use of the following words: 'New Zealand', 'Aotearoa', and 'Aotearoa New Zealand'.**
- **Naming conventions for use of the following words: 'New Zealand', 'Aotearoa', and 'Aotearoa New Zealand'.**

The Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) has identified the document *Ministry for the Environment Style Guide 2020* in scope of both parts of your request.

Please find this document attached along with this response. Information on using the term Aotearoa is on page 30 of the guide.

The Ministry does not have an explicit policy on the use of *Aotearoa*. However, the general convention is to use *Aotearoa New Zealand* in the first instance and just *New Zealand* in following iterations. Please note, this convention is not captured in the style guide currently in use by the Ministry.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of my decision to withhold information relating to this request, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on their website at: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz

Please note that due to the public interest in our work the Ministry for the Environment publishes responses to requests for official information on our [OIA responses page](#) shortly after the response has been sent. If you have any queries about this, please feel free to contact our Ministerial Services team: ministerials@mfe.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely

Katie Mathison
Director - Customers



Ministry for the
Environment
Manatū Mō Te Taiao

Ministry for the Environment STYLE GUIDE

2020

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

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Introduction

This *Style Guide* will help Ministry authors, and consultants under contract to the Ministry, produce professional documents. It provides the Ministry's minimum standards for writing and formatting documents, as well as good practice guidance and helpful advice.

The way we write and present information says a lot about our organisation. Regardless of whom you are writing for or to, it's important that your document is appropriate for its intended audience, is clear, accurate and as concise as possible. Following this guide will help you achieve this.

Advice and support on communications and publishing is available from the communications account managers and Publishing, Brand and Experience team. If your document is going to be distributed to an external audience you will need to work with both teams.

You can also visit the [publishing and brand hub](#) on the intranet for publishing templates, tools and guidance on how to get something published at the Ministry.

Briefing consultants

When preparing a contract for a consultant, the contract should include a brief which sets out the nature and scope of the document required, its audience, and key messages. The brief should also specify that the consultant writes the report in plain English with minimum jargon, and ensures it is edited and proofed before being submitted. The Publishing, Brand and Experience team can provide the names of contract writers and editors, if required.

Ensure each consultant has a copy of this *Style Guide*.

At the contract writing stage, discuss and assign authorship of the report, particularly if the report provides national guidance and authorship is assigned to the Ministry. See [Assigning authorship of externally authored reports published by the Ministry for the Environment](#) for more information.

If the report will be published as a Ministry for the Environment report the consultant should use our report template. See [Word template for Ministry documents](#).

If the report is going to be published on our website the consultant must supply the report in Microsoft Word and as a PDF.

Cabinet requirements

This *Style Guide* is compatible with Cabinet Office requirements. Where there is any difference, this has been clearly identified. For a guide to writing Cabinet papers see [CabGuide](#) on the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet website.

Abbreviations

An **abbreviation** is a shortened form of a word or phrase. Usually, but not always, it consists of a letter or group of letters taken from the word or phrase. The following are forms of abbreviations.

Acronyms

An **acronym** is a form of abbreviation made up of initial letters or syllables which results in another, pronounceable word. An acronym will often be incorporated into common usage as a word in its own right. It may be written with all but the initial letter in lower case unless this would cause confusion.

Examples

Anzac Unicef WHO

Initialisms

An **initialism** is similar to an acronym but does not form a pronounceable word. It is a recognisable group of letters.

Examples

ACC PSA

Contractions

A **contraction** consists of the first and last letters of a word and sometimes other letters in between.

Examples

Mr Dept St

There are also abbreviations which consist of the first letter of a word and usually some other letters, but not the last letter.

Examples

Mon Dec Hon tel

Use of abbreviations

See appendix A for a list of [common Ministry abbreviations and their meanings](#).

Try to avoid abbreviations, except the very common ones. Their use should be appropriate for the audience. Writing aimed at a specialised audience (eg, a technical guide) can contain more abbreviations than that aimed at a general audience (eg, a newsletter).

Spell out the full name of an organisation, body or term the first time you use it in a document. If it has a common abbreviated form, place this in brackets after the name and use this abbreviation in the rest of the chapter or document.

Examples

Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ)

the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA)

Remember, the same abbreviation may mean a different thing to different audiences – for example, CD can mean civil defence or compact disc.

If a document contains many abbreviations, compile a list of them at the front of the document.

If the document has an executive summary or abstract that may be read separately, define all abbreviations there as well as in the body of the document.

‘New Zealand’ should be written in full, except when part of a longer abbreviation, for example, ANZECC.

Use of full stops with abbreviations

In Ministry style, full stops are not used after abbreviations unless one is needed to avoid confusion – for example ‘no.’ for ‘number’.

Latin forms (eg, ie, etc)

Many shortened Latin forms are used regularly in publications. Do not use full stops with these forms.

Examples

eg ie etc PS [postscript] am [before noon] pm [after noon]

Using eg and ie

Use these abbreviations in brackets, followed by a comma.

Examples

The aim is to reduce the risk of contaminating sources of human drinking water (eg, rivers and groundwater).

Two-thirds of lakes with sufficient monitoring data to determine trends have stable water quality (ie, are neither deteriorating nor improving).

Try to avoid using ‘eg’ or ‘ie’ in main text. Instead of ‘eg’ use ‘for example’, ‘for instance’, or ‘such as’; and instead of ‘ie’ use ‘that is’.

Using etc

‘Etc’ means ‘and so on’. It is used to indicate that there are more items than you have mentioned. You don’t need it if you have already used ‘including’ or ‘for example/eg’.

Example

Generally, most district plans divide a district into activity areas or zones (eg, residential, rural, business).

or

Generally, most district plans divide a district into activity areas or zones (residential, rural, business etc).

Note: When ‘etc’ comes at the end of a list of items, do not insert a comma before it.

Ampersand (&)

Use 'and' instead of an ampersand unless '&' is part of a formal name.

Examples

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management

Symbols

Symbols and abbreviations for units of measurement (eg, m, km, ha, °C) are the same in the singular and plural. Insert a space between the number and the symbol. Do not use full stops with these abbreviations.

Example

10 km *not* 10 kms *or* 10 km. *or* 10km

There may be problems with the abbreviation for litre. The lowercase 'l' may be mistaken for the numeral '1'. Either write 'litre' in full, or use an italic 'l'. There is no problem where a prefix is used (eg, ml).

Exceptions

With some symbols, there is no space between the number and the symbol.

Examples

10% 28°C

See also [Numbers](#).

Acknowledgements

If they fit, place acknowledgments on the back of the title page of a publication (its technical name is the 'verso title page'). Otherwise place them on a separate page before the contents list.

Acknowledgment can be given:

- to recognise ideas and assistance
- for sources of copyright material (eg, for use of a Crown research institute's data)
- to external authors who contributed to a first draft or report that has had significant changes to it by the Ministry, and been assigned Ministry for the Environment authorship:

Example

Based on a report prepared for the Ministry for the Environment by [author, organisation].

- to external authors of reports providing national guidance that have been assigned Ministry for the Environment authorship:

Example

Prepared for the Ministry for the Environment by [author, organisation].

The external author(s) can then follow this with their own acknowledgements recognising ideas/assistance and any copyright statements, if required.

See also [Assigning authorship of externally authored reports published by the Ministry for the Environment](#).

Active and passive verbs

Active sentences are more direct and concise and make your writing more effective. In active sentences, the subject does the action and the object is the thing acted on:

subject	active verb	object
The Ministry	prepared	the regulations.

In passive sentences, the subject receives the action. The actor may be omitted, or may be included after 'by':

subject	to be	past participle	[actor]
The regulations	were	prepared	[by the Ministry].

Active sentences encourage us to use more names and pronouns (such as 'we' and 'you'), which makes our writing more personal.

Compare

Passive

It was found that data concerning the stocks of fish **was not obtained**. This action **is needed** so that a determination of re-allocation **is permitted** on a timely basis when populations change. A system **must be established** so that data on fish stocks **may be gathered** on a regular basis.

Active

We found that the Ministry for Primary Industries **did not obtain** data about stocks of fish. The Ministry needs this data so that **it can determine** how to re-allocate these resources when populations change. The Chief Executive of the Ministry **must establish** a system so staff **can gather** data of fish stocks regularly.

It is boring to read: *The production of carbon dioxide **was increased** [passive voice]. The factory **produced** more carbon dioxide [active voice]* is more vigorous and gives us more information.

However, there are some situations in which passive verbs are more appropriate (eg, where the identity of the actor is unimportant).

Example

Sets of back-up CDs **should always be kept** in a fireproof safe.

The important character is the sets of back-up CDs. Who does the keeping is irrelevant.

Apostrophes

The use of the apostrophe is essentially simple, but causes problems for many writers.

Use apostrophes to:

- show possession

Examples

the Government's policies (the policies of the Government)

the boy's book (the book of the boy)

the boys' game (the game of the boys)

James's lesson

- show where a letter or letters have been omitted to turn two words into one.

Examples

it's been a long time (it has)

I'll email you later (I will)

she won't be at work tomorrow (she will not)

When not to use an apostrophe

Don't use an apostrophe to denote a plural.

Examples

a group of MPs accompanied the Prime Minister (*not* MP's)

since the 1990s (*not* the 1990's or the 1990s')

'Its' in the possessive

The word 'its' does *not* take an apostrophe when used in the possessive.

Examples

The Court reviewed its decision due to new information.

Its aim is to help the disadvantaged.

Appendices

Appendices usually consist of material supplementary to the text of a book or report. They may also include matter which is too long to be conveniently set as footnotes, lists or tables and would interrupt the text's flow. An appendix should be referred to in the main body of the publication. If not, it may be irrelevant, so consider if it is needed at all.

As a general rule, appendices should have the same page dimensions as the text and be set in the same typeface. The headings to appendices should be in the same style as the chapter headings.

Begin the first appendix on a new, preferably right-hand page. Other appendices may also begin on new pages, or, if only short, may be run on.

If you use a numbering system for chapters, figures and diagrams in the main body of the publication, then use letters for appendices (eg, Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C...).

The numbering sequence for any tables or figures presented in an appendix does not continue the numbering from the body of the document, or from a previous appendix. That is, for each appendix, table and figures begin at '1' or 'A' (eg, Table A1.1 Figure A1.1).

In most technical and research reports, the appendices are placed at the end, before the glossary and reference list (bibliography).

Assigning authorship of externally authored reports published by the Ministry for the Environment

Figure 1: Assigning authorship of externally authored reports published by the Ministry for the Environment



Assigning authorship based on the level of author contribution

The way we acknowledge external authors of Ministry publications depends on the level of their contribution.

1. If the external author has made a substantial contribution to a report (ie, if the Ministry is publishing a document without making substantial changes to it) then the Ministry will assign authorship to the external author and place their name and organisation on the title page.

Examples

- (a) Verso title page bibliographic reference / Reference list:

Scarsbrook MR. 2006. *State and Trends in the National River Water Quality Network (1989–2005)*. Wellington: Ministry for the Environment.

- (b) Within text citation:

(Scarsbrook, 2006)

2. If the Ministry is publishing a report based on a first draft or report by an external author but has made **substantial** changes to it, then the Ministry is assigned authorship and the external author is recognised in the report's acknowledgements.

Examples

- a. Verso title page bibliographic reference / Reference list:
Ministry for the Environment. 2002. *A Study into the Use of Infringement Notices under the Resource Management Act 1991*. Wellington: Ministry for the Environment.
- b. Within text citation:
(Ministry for the Environment, 2002)
- c. Acknowledgements:
Based on a report prepared for the Ministry for the Environment by Karenza de Silva, Environmental Lawyer.

Assigning authorship for 'national guidance'

If the externally contracted report provides 'national guidance' then authorship will be assigned to the Ministry, and the external author recognised in the acknowledgements and the bibliographic reference.

Examples

- a. Verso title page bibliographic reference / Reference list:
Ministry for the Environment. 2004. *Coastal Hazards and Climate Change: A Guidance Manual for Local Government in New Zealand*. Prepared for the Ministry for the Environment by NIWA, Beca Consultants Ltd, DTec Consultants Ltd and Tonkin & Taylor Ltd. Wellington: Ministry for the Environment.
- b. Within text citation:
(Ministry for the Environment, 2004)
- c. Acknowledgements:
Prepared for the Ministry for the Environment by NIWA, Beca Consultants Ltd, DTec Consultants Ltd and Tonkin & Taylor Ltd.

Brackets

See [Parentheses and brackets](#).

Brand

Our brand guides how we approach our work. It embodies who we are and what we stand for, it determines what we look and sound like, how we behave and engage with others, and how we prioritise our work.

Our brand is applied to everything we do – through the way our products look, our language, and our tone.

A strong brand is supported by good design. In addition to our logo, our brand is expressed through a series of visual components including colour, imagery, typography, and a weave pattern. Our design toolkit sets out how these should be applied so we create a consistent and recognisable look across everything we do.

Read [Our design toolkit](#) [PDF, 7 MB]

Read [Our brand story](#) [PDF, 4 MB]

Please contact the Publishing, Brand and Experience team for further information or advice.

Briefing notes

See [Ministers](#).

Bullet points

See [Lists](#).

Cabinet papers

See [Ministers](#).

Capitalisation

The Ministry's standard in headings is sentence case – the minimum use of capital letters.

In text, upper case letters are used for:

- the initial letter of the first word of a sentence, or a sentence fragment, or the initial letter of proper nouns – personal names of people, countries, towns, nationalities
- honorifics and titles

Examples

Mr

Ms

Mrs

Professor

the Hon, the Rt Hon

Sir

- the titles of offices, when they refer to specific office holders, and not the office in general

Examples

The Prime Minister of New Zealand ... *but* Under the Westminster system, the prime minister is the leader of the Government.

The Chief Executive of the Ministry said... *but* The head of a government ministry is now often referred to as the chief executive.

- the name of a specific organisation, but not the type of organisation in general

Examples

The Government decided today... *but* The government of New Zealand is elected democratically.

The Taranaki Regional Council discussed the matter today ... *but* Under the Act, a regional council is responsible for resource management.

- the initial letter of important words in titles and subtitles of books or periodicals

Examples

Waste Management and Minimisation Planning: A Guide for Territorial Authorities, The Dominion Post, the New Zealand Journal of Crop and Horticultural Science

- Acts of Parliament, both in their full names, and subsequently when referring to 'the Act' or 'the Bill'. 'Part' and 'Schedule' are capitalised, but 'section' and 'subsection' are not.

Note: Don't use initial capital letters for tables, figures, appendices, sections, chapters, and parts when they occur in the body text, unless they begin a sentence.

Examples

In figure 12, the Ministry shows...

See appendix B for details of the survey.

Captions

See [Tables and figures](#).

Collective nouns

Collective nouns name groups of people or things treated as one entity.

Examples

team

Ministry

Government

Cabinet committee

Collective nouns are usually treated as singular and take singular verbs.

Examples

the Government **has** decided

Cabinet **has** discussed

the Ministry **believes**

Thus, a government department, council, company or organisation is referred to as 'it', not 'them' – unless you have referred to 'Department of Conservation officials' or 'council staff', in which case a plural verb is used.

The exception is where the individuals in the group are seen to be acting separately.

Example

The committee **were** joined by their partners for dinner.

Quantifying expressions

Where singular quantifying expressions (such as 'a number of', 'a group of', 'the majority of', 'a lot of') are used with plural nouns, they take plural verbs.

Examples

a number of people **have**

a group of parliamentarians **are**

the majority of people **believe**

a lot of problems **are**

Colons and semicolons

Colons

Colons indicate that something else is following in the sentence.

Use a colon to:

- introduce a list
- introduce a quotation if set off from the text
- connect two parts of a sentence, especially if the second part is an amplification of the first (what follows the colon does not have to be a complete sentence).

The word following the colon will usually begin with a lower case letter, unless it is a proper name.

Examples

You will develop a reputation for being responsible and trustworthy if you remember these three rules: fix or replace what you break, return what you borrow, and put away what you take out.

The sign at the campsite left no room for ambiguity: "Absolutely no littering!"

Music is more than a mechanical arrangement of sounds: it is an expression of deep feelings and ethical values.

Semicolons

As with colons, short sentences are preferable to the use of semicolons. However, there are times, especially in technical reports, when semicolons are appropriate. Use them to:

- mark a pause longer than a comma and shorter than a full stop
- separate elements in a complex list when the phrases already have commas
- join two independent clauses with words such as 'however', 'nevertheless' and 'therefore'.

Examples

Businesses will take part in several ways: some will be required to buy and give up emission units to cover their own emissions obligations; some trade-exposed firms will be given free units to compensate for increase costs, which they can on-sell; and some will facilitate the trading process by acting as brokers, market advisors or developing electronic trading platforms.

New Zealand has more than 50,000 lakes; however, only 40 are larger than 900 hectares.

Commas

If commas are used well, people should need to read a sentence only once. While the modern tendency is to use minimal commas, sensible use can aid clarity.

Serial commas

In a series of three or more items, place a comma after each item *except* the second to last (ie, there is no comma before the final 'and' in a list of more than two items).

Example

It will minimise waste, pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

Exception: In more complex sentences, it is sometimes appropriate to use a comma before the last item to clearly separate it and also to avoid confusion. In the following example 'the development and retention of skilled employees' is one item so placing a comma before the 'and' makes this clear.

Example

The organisational development programme will address staff turnover, lack of the right skills, and the development and retention of skilled employees.

Parenthetic expressions

Commas should be used to separate words that are not critical to your sentence, but which add to it – known as parenthetic expressions.

Example

The magpie, although not native to New Zealand, is a common sight in rural areas.

Introductory clause

A comma should mark off an introductory clause. The best test is to read your writing out loud. If you naturally pause, use a comma.

Examples

Finally, the long discussion came to an end.

Before you shoot, the gun must be loaded.

Note: In the second example above, the comma prevents confusion: ‘the gun’ is clearly linked to ‘must be loaded’, not to ‘shoot’.

Use of commas with words such as ‘therefore’ and ‘however’

Use commas surrounding words such as ‘*therefore*’ and ‘*however*’ when they are used as ‘interruptors’ in a sentence.

Examples

I would, therefore, like a response.

The land areas in surface mines and landfills, however, reduced over this same period.

See *also* the section [Semicolons](#) for the punctuation of words such as ‘therefore’ and ‘however’ when they are used to join two independent clauses.

Commas can change the meaning of a sentence

The position of commas, or a lack of commas, can completely change the meaning of a sentence. The example below tells us that only motorists who knew about the floods took the other road, and implies that there were other motorists who did not know and who took the flooded road.

Example

The motorists who knew about the floods took another road.

In the next sentence the use of commas enables us to understand that all the motorists knew about the floods and took the other road.

Example

The motorists, who knew about the floods, took another road.

Commas with names of people and their positions

When giving a person’s name and his or her position place commas around the name of the person or their position, depending on the order in the sentence.

Example

Mary Smith, Chief Finance Officer, spoke at last week’s meeting...

Commas with quotation marks

Use a comma to separate the speaker from direct speech.

Examples

“No electrical wholesaler in New Zealand has seen anything like it,” he said.

“All styles are good,” Voltaire wrote, “except the boring”.

Common problems

Its or it's

‘Its’ is the possessive of ‘it’ and does **not** have an apostrophe before the ‘s’.

Example

The Court reviewed its decision due to new information.

‘It’s’ is the contraction of ‘it is’ or ‘it has’. Only use ‘it’s’ if the words ‘it is’ or ‘it has’ can be substituted into the sentence.

Examples

it’s been a long time (it has)

it’s raining again (it is)

See also [Apostrophes](#).

Like or as

Both ‘like’ and ‘as’ are used to make a comparison with something else. However, they are often confused.

Use ‘like’ to make a comparison with a thing or a state of being.

‘As’ is used to make a comparison with an action, so it is always followed by a verb. ‘As if’ or ‘as though’ may also be used in this way.

Examples

The programme is like last year’s. (Describes a thing – the programme resembles last year’s in content.)

They attended the same programme as they did last year. (Describes an action – they attended last year’s programme.)

It is important to use these correctly because they can alter meaning.

In the following examples, both ‘like’ and ‘as’ are used correctly, but the sentences have very different meanings.

Examples

Like your father, I’m giving you some advice... (I am like your father in that I too am giving you some advice.)

As your father, I'm giving you some advice... (I am your father and I am giving you some advice.)

That or which

'That' and 'which' are often used incorrectly. Sometimes the impact on sense or meaning is slight, but sometimes it can alter the meaning completely.

The example using 'that' below shows that the reports discussed are all those prepared in June, not some of them, and not reports prepared at any other time.

Example

The reports that are prepared in June are submitted to...

Note: 'That' is often over used. If the sentence makes sense without it, leave it out. For example, *he said that we should all read more* reads just as well without 'that'.

The example using 'which' below introduces a descriptive statement about the reports – it does not define which of the June reports are submitted.

Example

The reports, which are prepared in June, are submitted to...

Contents list

The table of contents is best prepared using Word's automatic feature. No more than three levels of heading should be included. If you use the Ministry's report template the styles for each heading level are automatically generated. See [Word template for Ministry documents](#).

Dashes

The dash is not the same as a [hyphen](#). It is a longer line – also called an 'en' dash (as it is the width of the letter 'n').

To set your computer up to automatically create an en dash: in the Microsoft Word 'File' ribbon, select > Options > Proofing > AutoCorrect Options > AutoFormat As You Type, and tick the box and tick the box 'Hyphens (--) with Dash (–)'.

Or, to insert an en dash manually, ensure the 'Number' keypad on the right of your keyboard is turned on (use 'Num Lock' to do this). Type Ctrl and numeric minus.

You can also insert a dash by using the 'Insert – Symbol' command.

Use of dashes

Use two dashes to separate text where you are adding something separate and supplementary. See also [Dashes as parentheses](#).

Example

The need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport – a major contributor to emissions – is likely to drive greater effort to improve fuel efficiency.

Use a single dash to indicate a sudden pause or change in a sentence.

Example

The size of the engines in the vehicles we drive determines the amount of fuel the vehicles consume – smaller engines generally consume less fuel.

Use a dash to indicate ranges in spans of figures and in expressions relating to time or distance. Note that with figures there is no space either side of the dash.

Examples

pages 62–66

2008–10

48–57 kg

Note: Don't use an en dash following the words 'from' or 'between'.

Examples

the period between 2005 and 2008

from 1995 to 2006

Disclaimers

If the Ministry does not want to 'own' the content of a consultant's report, then include a disclaimer on the back of the title page. We do not have a standard disclaimer as each case is usually considered on its merits. The disclaimer may need to refer to both the information in the report and the views of the author expressed within.

Example

All reasonable measures have been taken to ensure the quality and accuracy of the information contained in this report. The views expressed, however, are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Ministry for the Environment or any other government department.

For further information or advice on the use of disclaimers contact the Legal team.

Ellipses

An ellipsis consists of three dots that indicate some text has been left out of a quotation or a sentence has been left unfinished. If the ellipses are at the beginning or end of a phrase, do not leave a gap between the dots and words. If they are in the middle, then leave a gap at each side of the ellipses.

Examples

...leave no gap between the last dot and the first word.

Don't leave a gap if the ellipsis is at the end...

If it appears in the middle, then ... leave a gap at each end of the ellipsis to indicate that some text has been left out.

Email etiquette

10 rules for good emailing

1. Be clear and concise. Provide recipients with sufficient information to take appropriate action in response but do not make an email longer than it needs to be.
2. Ensure the subject heading is relevant. It should provide key information on the subject, action and timeframe (eg, 'Ministry draft Style Guide – for review and comment by 30 August')
3. Answer all questions in an email you receive, to avoid multiple emails on a single topic.
4. Limit abbreviations, 'emoticons' (eg, 😊) and capitals. In business emails, particularly, these may lead to misinterpretation.
5. Do not contribute to 'corporate spam'. Use the cc field only for people who need to be kept in the loop.
6. Likewise, only use 'Reply to all' when the information is relevant to all.
7. Do not overuse 'urgent' and 'important' flags.
8. Do not request read or delivery receipts.
9. Never discuss confidential information by email: if you do not want it made public, do not send it.
10. Always read through your email twice before pressing the 'Send' button.

Email signatures

We have a standard email signature format which all staff must use. The standardised format has been designed to ensure a consistent presentation is used in our emails

name – job title

Ministry for the Environment – Manatū Mō Te Taiao

Mobile: 021 000 0000 Email: firstname.lastname@mfe.govt.nz Website: www.mfe.govt.nz

23 Kate Sheppard Place, PO Box 10362, Wellington 6143



*Making Aotearoa New Zealand
the most liveable place in the world*



Further help

For guidance on how to set up your email signature, please read [Setting up a signature for email](#) on the intranet. If you're still not sure, please contact the IT Service Desk for further help.

E-terminology

When using e-terminology, take care that the language you use is precise and unambiguous.

Generally when an 'e' is inserted before a word to denote 'electronic', also insert a hyphen (eg, e-government, e-business). The exception is 'email'.

Spell the following words as shown (note the use of lower-case initial letters).

Examples

online	email	website
web page	home page	user ID
the web	the internet	our intranet

When writing a website address or URL (uniform resource locator) that follows the standard format, give the full internet address from 'www'. When writing a non-standard URL (without 'www'), give the full address from 'http'.

Examples

www.mfe.govt.nz

<http://cabguide.cabinetoffice.govt.nz>

Do not underline URLs or email addresses. This obscures the underscore (_) character that is included in some URLs.

If a sentence finishes with a website address, use a full stop. If the website address is a hyperlink make sure the full stop is not included as part of the hyperlink.

Word may automatically create a link (and thus an underline). You may sometimes wish to retain the link. However, if you do not want a link, it can be removed by highlighting the link then selecting Insert>Hyperlink>Remove. Make sure you click away from the link before you continue typing.

You can also turn off this function. In the Microsoft Word 'File' ribbon, select > Options > Proofing > AutoCorrect Options > AutoFormat As You Type, and uncheck 'Internet and network paths with hyperlinks'.

Executive summaries

Any document that is more than 10 pages long should have an executive summary. The length of the executive summary will depend on the length and complexity of the document. For short documents it should be no more than a page long; for longer documents it may be up to three or four pages.

The purpose of the executive summary is to convey the main points of the document as succinctly as possible. The main point should be stated in the first paragraph – in the first sentence if the summary is short.

Exception: In a Cabinet paper, an executive summary must be provided if the paper, including appendices, is more than four pages long, or the paper is particularly complex. The executive summary in a Cabinet paper should be a few paragraphs in length and succinctly explain the main issues.

Fonts

The primary fonts for externally produced publications are Merriweather and Lato. Internally produced publications use Calibri.

Footnotes and endnotes

Footnotes appear at the bottom of a page. Endnotes appear at the end of a chapter or a document (before the appendices, glossary and reference list).

Use a footnote or an endnote when you consider it necessary or useful to provide additional information which is not an essential part of the main text.

Use footnotes if the entries are brief (occupying no more than 4 cm of the page) and endnotes if the entries are lengthy. Even so, use footnotes and endnotes sparingly.

Formatting footnotes and endnotes

Use superscript numerals and place them in the text after any punctuation mark and outside closing brackets. If the footnote refers to a specific word, place the superscript numeral immediately after the word.

You can insert a footnote or an endnote automatically in Microsoft Word via the 'References' ribbon.

The Ministry's report template pre-sets footnote and endnote styles. See [Word template for Ministry documents](#).

When citing references in the body text of Ministry documents, do not use footnotes and superscript numbers. Rather, use the author-date system outlined in the References section of this guide under the heading: [Citations in the text](#).

Foreword or preface

If a foreword or preface is necessary, the author should draft the foreword for the Minister or Chief Executive as appropriate, and have it signed off by its 'author'. Once this is done the Publishing, Brand and Experience team will insert the signature in the final text.

The Ministers are signed off as:

Hon David Parker
Minister for the Environment

Hon Nanaia Mahuta / Hon Eugenie Sage
Associate Minister for the Environment

Hon James Shaw
Minister for Climate Change

The Chief Executive is signed off as:

Vicky Roberston
Chief Executive

The foreword should fit on one page, so must be less than 500 words long. It is placed in the document after the title page and the back of the title page (the title verso, which carries publication information) and before the contents page.

This part of the document is technically a foreword and not a preface. A preface is background material written by the author of the document.

Glossaries

A glossary lists and explains technical or unfamiliar words and terms used in a publication. It is usually arranged in alphabetical order and placed at the end of a document after the appendices and before the reference list. A short glossary, no more than one page long, can be placed at the beginning of the document.

Headings

The Ministry's report template pre-sets heading styles. See [Word template for Ministry documents](#).

If formatting a document from scratch, the font size will depend on the level of heading and there should be a clear, descending order – that is, main document or chapter headings will be in a larger font than subheadings.

Suitable sizes for headings are 24 pt or 22 pt bold, 18 pt bold, 16 pt bold, 14 pt bold and 12 pt bold. Italic and italic bold headings are also acceptable.

Note also that:

- headings and subheadings are always aligned left
- headings and subheadings are in 'sentence case' or 'downstyle': only the first word will have a capital letter unless a word in the heading is a proper noun (eg, names of people, organisations)
- titles and subtitles of documents and publications should be in 'title case': the first letter of each word should be a capital letter
- there should be more space before a heading or subheading than after it
- headings and subheadings are not underlined.

If your document requires numbered headings use the decimal style and avoid Roman numerals:

1.

1.1.

1.1.1.

Hyphens

The main uses of hyphens are to:

- join certain words together (eg, **compound** adjectives)
- clarify the meaning of certain words (eg, recollected and re-collected)
- join a prefix to a proper noun, number or abbreviation (eg, pre-1990)
- avoid ambiguity in pronunciation.

Compound adjectives

Compound adjectives are composites of two or more descriptive words. They offer specific descriptive information, yet in concise language.

Compound adjectives should be hyphenated when they appear **before** the noun they qualify, especially if they contain numbers.

Examples

up-to-date information	three-year-old data	long-term plans
four- to six-month courses	site-specific measurements	an earthquake-prone site
an on-site inspection	a 40-litre container	

Hyphens are often needed when the addition of a prefix brings two vowels together.

Examples

hydro-electricity, state-owned

Some familiar words in this category, such as 'cooperate' and 'coordinate' are acceptable without a hyphen. Problems can also arise when the compounding creates combinations such as 'cell-like' or 'un-ionised' (versus 'unionised').

Prefixes should always be followed by a hyphen when they modify a capitalised word.

Examples

mid-February, non-Newtonian

As shown below, compound adjectives that are hyphenated or become one word before the noun they describe, are separated into two words when they come after the noun.

Example

land-use regulations, *but* regulations controlling land use.

When not to use hyphens

Hyphens are not used:

- when the compound adjective comes after the noun

Examples

The information was up to date.

The site was earthquake prone.

- if one unit of the compound adjective is an adverb ending in *ly*.

Examples

a severely polluted stream

a previously arranged appointment

Tips on using hyphens

Do not:

- leave a space before or after a hyphen. Treat a hyphen as though it were another letter within the word. There are some exceptions to this rule, such as 'four- to six-month courses'. This indicates that four-month and six-month courses are held, as opposed to courses that run over 4–6 months
- insert a hyphen into a longer word to make it sit on two lines of text
- break a word, even into its syllables.

Jargon

The distinction between technical terms and jargon lies in the intended audience of the publication. Technical terms convey precise meanings to a specialist audience, but the same terms used for a general audience can cause confusion and reduce the precision of the information conveyed. Err on the side of simplicity. Use technical terms only if they are essential and only if your audience will understand them. Create a glossary to clarify the definition for technical terms used within your document.

Lists

There are two main types of lists: bulleted and numbered. They help break up long sentences and create white space which makes the text easier to read.

Bulleted lists

Create a bulleted list when:

- you wish to emphasise a number of related items
- there are three or more items to be listed
- the items have no particular ranking.

But – avoid lengthy bulleted lists. If the material is paragraph length you should write a paragraph not a bullet point.

The second to last bullet point does not end with ‘and’ or ‘or’ – this should be implicit.

When the lead-in statement is not a complete sentence

With this type of bulleted list:

- end the lead-in statement with a colon
- set the tab space 0.7 cm from the bullet point to the first word of text
- ensure all items in the list have the same grammatical structure (ie, each one begins with either a noun or verb – in the same tense)
- if the first word of every item is the same, place the common first word in the lead-in statement
- begin each item of the list with a lower case letter (unless it is a proper name)
- do not use any punctuation (such as a semicolon) at the end of each item, except after the last item, when a full stop is inserted
- if a bullet point consists of more than one sentence, place a full stop after the first part but not after the second. If your bullet points are becoming this wordy, you may need to rethink whether bullet points are appropriate for the information you want to convey
- place a full stop at the end of the last bullet point.

When the lead-in statement is a complete sentence

When the lead-in statement is a complete sentence, the bullet list becomes a separate entity. Sometimes, instead of a lead-in sentence, there will just be a heading.

- End the lead-in sentence with a full stop.
- Each bulleted item is a complete and grammatically correct sentence.
- Each bulleted item begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop.

Examples

The following are rules for handling hazardous and toxic substances.

- Hazardous substances should be handled with care.
- Toxic materials should be used only if an antidote is available.
- Radioactive materials must be encapsulated.

Alternatively, the rules could begin with verbs.

- Handle hazardous substances with care.
- Use toxic material only if an antidote is available.
- Encapsulate radioactive materials.

When independent list items are not complete sentences

The items in these lists are usually brief. There may not be a lead-in statement but if there is it will be a complete sentence. The lead-in statement ends with a colon, each item begins with a lower case letter and punctuation (a full stop) is only added to the final statement.

Example

Nominations can be made in the following categories:

- protecting our biodiversity
- minimising our waste
- caring for our water.

For a list within a list

For a second-level bullet list, use a dash aligned with the text of the first level bullet. There is no punctuation at the end of each item.

Example

The functions of the Ministry as set out in the Act are to:

- advise the Minister on:
 - management policies ...
 - significant environmental impacts ...
 - ensuring that effective provision ...

Numbered lists

Sometimes it is appropriate to use numbered lists instead of bullet points. Ministry style is to use alphanumeric lists which combine Arabic digits (0–9) with Latin letters (a-to-z).

Create a numbered list when there is a:

- sequence of events (ie, steps to follow, such as in a recipe)
- hierarchy of importance
- need to refer back to particular points.

Example

1.
 - a.
 - i.

Use a full stop, not a bracket, after the numbers in a list.

Note: Don't confuse numbered lists with numbered headings and numbered paragraphs. See the sections [Headings](#) and [Paragraphs](#) for the formatting of these.

Māori

Māori became an official language of New Zealand under the Māori Language Act 1987. This Act also established the Māori Language Commission Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori to promote the language and encourage correct usage. Māori words and expressions in both English and Māori documents must be written in accordance with guidelines from Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori.

Plurals do not take an 's' in Māori.

Don't capitalise Māori words unless they are proper names (same as for English).

Remember 'te' is an article (the) and should not be capitalised unless it forms part of a person's name. It is not prefaced by 'the'.

When using the term Aotearoa, write Aotearoa New Zealand, not Aotearoa/New Zealand or New Zealand Aotearoa.

Macrons

Macrons indicate a long vowel. Use macrons and not double vowels.

To use macrons, place the cursor in the text where you wish to insert the letter with the macron and then go into the 'Insert' menu and select 'Symbol'. Ensure the 'Font' field says either '(normal text)' or 'Calibri' (if it doesn't, click on the downwards arrow and select either of these from the dropdown list), then scroll down until you find the required letter with macron. Click on this, then on 'Insert' and 'Close'. If the font field is not set at '(normal text)' or 'Calibri' the letter with the macron will look different from the rest of your text.

Alternatively you can activate the Māori keyboard by following these steps:

1. Start Control Panel.
2. Click Change keyboards or other input methods (under the Region and Language heading).
3. Click on the Keyboards and Languages tab
4. Click Change keyboards.
5. If it already says English (New Zealand) – Maori, then it's already set up. Don't continue.

6. Otherwise, scroll to Maori (New Zealand), expand Keyboard.
7. Find Maori in the list and tick it, then click OK.
8. Change the Default input language to English (New Zealand) – Maori.

Now you can easily enter a macronised vowel by pressing ` (the key with ~ on it) and then the vowel.

Common words that contain macrons include:

hapū	wānanga	rūnanga
Māori	ngā	whānau
Ngāti	Pākehā	kaumātua

See also [appendix C: Māori words relevant to Ministry writing](#).

Te reo greetings

Use te reo greetings as shown:

Tēnā koe	to address one person
Tēnā kōrua	to address two people
Tēnā koutou	to address three or more people
Kia ora	informal address for any number
Nāku noa, nā	yours sincerely (formal)
Nā māua noa, nā	yours sincerely (two signatures)
Nā mātou noa, nā	yours sincerely (three or more signatures)
Ngā mihi	kind regards or thank you

Ministers

Briefing notes, Cabinet papers and ministerials

Specific instructions for [preparing briefing notes](#) are available on the intranet.

Cabinet Office has prepared a [guide on writing Cabinet papers](#).

Note: Where the prescribed style for briefing notes and Cabinet papers differs from the Ministry's generic style in this *Style Guide*, the former has precedence and must be followed.

Information on [writing ministerials](#) is available on the intranet.

Templates for briefing notes, Cabinet papers, and ministerials are available in Te Puna – 01 Templates – 03 Ministerial Servicing. All Ministers have their preferred style and you should check this before you begin writing.

For other useful information about writing ministerials and Cabinet papers, see [Supporting Ministers](#) on the intranet or contact the Executive Relations team.

Non-sexist language

All Ministry documents must be written in non-sexist language.

Avoid using a single personal pronoun (he, him, his, she, her, hers) wherever possible. You may include pronouns of both genders to ensure your sentence is not gender-specific, but take care that it does not become clumsy.

Examples

Everyone has a right to his or her opinion.

Everyone has a right to say what he or she thinks about this topic.

All people have a right to say what they think about this topic.

Choose alternative words so you avoid personal pronouns altogether.

Examples

No one should hesitate to offer an opinion.

Everyone has a right to an opinion.

Use plurals wherever possible to generalise the meaning (but be consistent – continue to use plurals throughout your text).

Example

The students should not hesitate to offer their opinions.

Numbers

General

Spell out numbers from one to nine, except when they are:

- followed by a unit (see also [Measurements](#))
- part of a numbered section of a document.

Use figures for numbers 10 and over.

Examples

five dogs

32 sheep

3 kilograms (kg)

6 per cent or 6%

5° (use a space between the number and the unit except for % or °)

Chapter IV

Section 3 (follow the style of the original document when quoting)

Exception: The exception to spelling out numbers from one to nine is when they are part of a sentence where a figure is also included – it is important to be consistent within a sentence.

Examples

The man used 3 eye dogs and 2 huntaways to help manage his flock of 2000 sheep.

This is equivalent to tourism supporting around 1 in every 10 jobs in New Zealand.

Treat ordinal numbers the same as cardinal numbers (first, ninth, 24th, 73rd).

Example

Climate change is possibly the most significant environmental issue of the 21st century.

Where the number and the unit form a **compound adjective**, join them with a hyphen.

Example

a 5-kg dog

Spell out numbers when they begin a sentence, unless the numbers are a calendar date.

Examples

Twenty-five contaminated gasworks sites have been analysed in the past 15 years.

2002 was an exceptionally bad year for droughts in Australia.

Numbers between twenty-one and ninety-nine should be hyphenated when spelt out.

Currency

The country abbreviation comes first followed by the currency symbol with no spaces.

Examples

NZ\$100

AUS\$100

US\$100

Fractions

Spell out simple fractions with a hyphen.

Examples

About one-third of those present supported the motion.

The glass is three-quarters full.

Use figures, not words, for any mixed number containing a fraction.

Example

5¾ hours late

Using hyphens with numbers

Take care to use hyphens correctly – punctuation can alter meaning.

Examples

three-quarters (means one amount, three-quarters of a whole)

three quarters (means three amounts, each a quarter of a whole)

three hour intervals or three hourly intervals (both mean three intervals of one hour each)

three-hour intervals (means an unspecified number of intervals, each lasting three hours)

Large numbers

Four-digit numbers do not have a comma or space when they are used in text.

Example

4200 20,123,456

Exception: In tables, four-digit numbers should have a comma to allow the values to be easily recognised.

Avoid large numbers by using the words 'thousand' or 'million', for example 20 million instead of 20,000,000. Avoid using 'billion' if possible; there is confusion between traditional British and American usage, though the American usage is now more widely accepted. (A British billion is a million million; an American billion is a thousand million.)

In tables, avoid large numbers by using larger units (eg, use tonnes *instead of* kg (1 tonne is 1000 kilograms)).

Scientific notation can be used if the publication is exclusively for a technical readership.

Example

1.46×10^6 *instead of* 1,460,000

Measurements

Use numerals for a number when it is followed by a unit of measurement such as kilometre (km), centimetre (cm), kilogram (kg), gram (g), or degree (°).

Spell out the measurements in text but use the abbreviations in tables.

Examples

the course is 10 kilometres long

60 grams of sugar

9 cm

25°

Per cent

Use the words 'per cent' in text. Note it is two words. The symbol % is acceptable in tables and graphs.

Note: in the Environmental Reporting series we use Stats NZ style for spelling where per cent is spelt as one word: percent.

Dates and time

The style for dates is: 18 May 2018.

Where early historic dates are used, the form is: AD 440, 1500 BC (*note* small capitals.)

Days of the week

Do not abbreviate days of the week.

Examples

Monday 28 March 2016

next Tuesday

Decades

Do not place an apostrophe before the 's'.

Example

the 1990s (*not* the 1990's)

Time

Write am and pm in lower case with no full stops and a space after the figures.

Example

The office opens at 8.30 am.

Timespan

Use a slash for a period that spans two years if the two years are within the same century.

Use an **en dash** with no spaces either side to signify a period of more than two years.

Write both dates in full if they are in different centuries.

Examples

the 2008/09 financial year

the period 1998–2001

Addresses

Postal address

Use:

- initial capitals
- no space and no full stops between 'P' and 'O' in PO Box.

For a number which has five or more digits, leave a space (not a hyphen) after the first two (which signify the postal centre at which the box is located)

Examples

PO Box 332

PO Box 12 345

Street address

(eg, for hand delivery)

Example

Ministry for the Environment
Environment House
23 Kate Sheppard Place
Thorndon
Wellington 6011

Telephone numbers

Use the form: 04 917 7400. If you are writing for an international audience, use the form: +64 4 917 7400.

Page numbering

The preferred style is to include the page number as a footer at the bottom right (or bottom outside edge of the text if setting up mirror pages).

If you are using the Ministry's report template this will be set for you. See [Word template for Ministry documents](#).

Paragraphs

Paragraphs are used to break text into easily assimilated segments, to aid comprehension and make the page of type less visually daunting. Each paragraph should have a single topic which should be stated clearly in the first sentence. Subsequent sentences discuss and develop the topic.

The number of sentences in a paragraph should usually be between three and six. Paragraphs longer than this should be checked to ensure they have not lost their focus.

A single-sentence paragraph is a useful way of emphasising a point.

Certain documents, such as Cabinet papers and some technical reports, will require numbered paragraphs. If you do need to include numbered paragraphs:

- use a decimal style to the third level of numbering
- don't indent the numbers
- set the tab space after the number to 1.5 cm
- if a fourth level is required, use bullets or letters of the alphabet.

Example

- 1.
- 1.1.
- 1.1.1.

If you need to insert bulleted text in numbered paragraphs, align the bullet points with the indented text.

Example

7. Other structural and over-arching issues were considered by Cabinet on 29 October, including:
 - Parliamentary Commissioner for Biotechnology
 - biotechnology strategy
 - liability issues.

Paragraph spacing

Microsoft Word allows you to insert paragraph spacing automatically. In publications, this produces a more professional finish than using the enter key twice between paragraphs. Use Paragraph in the 'Home ribbon' to insert 6 pt of spacing before and after paragraphs.

Use the enter key only once for a new paragraph. To override the automatic spacing (eg, in typing addresses in letters) use shift + enter.

If you are using the Ministry's report template this will be set for you. See [Word template for Ministry documents](#).

Parentheses and brackets

A parenthesis (plural 'parentheses') is a word, clause or sentence inserted as an explanation or afterthought into text that is grammatically complete without it. A parenthesis is usually marked off by brackets, dashes or commas, depending on its importance. It is up to you, as the writer, to decide the level of importance you wish to give the parenthetical material.

Commas as parentheses

Use commas to separate words that are not critical to your sentence, but which add to it. Commas disconnect the material only slightly from the main text and expect the reader to take account of it.

Example

The magpie, although not native to New Zealand, is a common sight in rural areas.

Dashes as parentheses

Use two en dashes to set the parenthesis a little further aside from the main text. The reader is expected to take account of it even though it is not the primary information in the sentence.

Example

The need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport – a major contributor to emissions – is likely to drive greater effort to improve fuel efficiency.

See also [Dashes](#).

Round brackets as parentheses

Use round brackets to set the additional material even further aside. It expands or clarifies the information in the rest of the sentence but is not essential and the reader can almost ignore it.

Example

Fishing methods are damaging to the marine environment and bycatch (when an animal is caught unintentionally in fishing gear) is an ongoing pressure on marine animals.

Use of a full stop with brackets

If the bracketed material is not a complete sentence, it will not include a full stop. The full stop goes outside the brackets, ending the main sentence.

Example

The Ministry is required to prepare a regulatory impact statement for all proposed regulations (or changes to regulations).

If the bracketed material is (or ends with) a complete sentence, place the full stop at the end of that sentence (ie, within the brackets).

Example

The Ministry convened the first Meeting ... with Thailand. (This took place under the Closer Partnership Agreement between New Zealand and Thailand.)

Square brackets

Use square brackets for inserting editorial comment or clarification into the text – usually into quoted text – and for years in Court cases.

Examples

He said, “I was born in London [Ontario]”.

North Shore City Council v Auckland Regional Council [1997] NZRMA 59

Photos

Whenever we include imagery in our publications or online, we try to ensure people are featured to help tell our story. We want to show a diverse range of New Zealanders enjoying, interacting with, and caretaking our environment.

Here's some links to Ministry photos plus photo libraries we use to purchase photos.

All the photos in these folders on the M drive belong to us so you are free to use them:

M:\Photo library - Comms\02 PUBLICATIONS PHOTOS/Communications/03 Neil Mackenzie photos

M:\Photo library - Comms\02 PUBLICATIONS PHOTOS/Communications/04 Jeff McEwan photos

M:\Photo library - Comms\02 PUBLICATIONS PHOTOS/Communications/05 Staff holiday photos

You can also use photos from [NIWA's photo gallery](#), provided you acknowledge NIWA and the photographer

Other photo libraries we purchase photos from are:

[mychillybin](#)

[Nature's Pic Images](#)

[photonewzealand](#)

[David Wall](#)

[Imogen Warren Photography](#) (New Zealand birds)

[Rod Morris Photography](#) (nature photography)

[Dave Allen Photography](#)

International photo libraries (include 'New Zealand' in your search so you see only New Zealand images)

[iStock](#)

[Alamy](#)

[shutterstock](#)

[Adobe Stock](#)

[Getty Images](#)

[Unsplash](#) (free images)

[Pexels](#) (free images)

Plain English

Plain English is language that is clear, concise and easy to read. Using common words and everyday language that is natural will mean the widest range of people can understand your information, including those for whom English is not their first language.

How we sound is an important part of our brand. Our writing should be clear and easy to understand, and our tone should be conversational and to the point – but not colloquial or casual. If you can't imagine yourself saying it out loud, then there is probably a better way to write it.

When we all write this way, our work sounds consistent and part of the same team and our readers can easily understand what we are saying.

Our shared voice principles

- We always write with our audience in mind. Our subject matter may be technical, but our explanations are not. We get to the point quickly and we're bold with our advice.
- We don't use jargon, and we check our work carefully to make sure it is error-free and of the highest quality.
- We're less formal, but we're not too casual. We use everyday language that is natural so that we sound like a real person.

Style tips

- Get to the point – our readers don't always have a lot of time.
- Put the most important thing in the most noticeable spot. Make recommendations, decisions and next steps obvious.
- Give the reader just enough information to make decisions confidently.
- Choose conversational language. Use contractions, and sentence-style capitalization.
- Avoid overusing acronyms.
- Simpler is better – use short sentences and paragraphs.

See also [Active and passive verbs](#) and [Jargon](#).

Keep sentences short

As a general guide, limit your average sentence length to about 15 to 20 words. Try to vary the length of your sentences. A paragraph of long sentences can be difficult to read, particularly if they are poorly constructed. A series of short sentences sounds abrupt and disconnected.

If you use longer sentences, they must be well constructed. A sentence should move from a short, specific subject to a strong verb, after which you can add secondary ideas.

Consider the following:

High light levels and lack of flushing flows in lowland rivers of the North Island lead to excessive growth of periphyton.

The growth of periphyton is excessive in lowland rivers of the North Island, because of the high light levels and lack of flushing flows.

Periphyton grows excessively in lowland rivers of the North Island, because of the high light levels and lack of flushing flows.

In the first sentence, the inclusion of supplementary information before the verb creates a long, diffuse subject. The shorter subject leading directly to the verb makes the second sentence crisper. The third sentence has been further improved by replacing the abstract noun 'growth' with an active verb.

If you join several subordinate phrases in a sentence, try to arrange them so that the **longest** is at the end. For example:

Urquhart Castle stands on the banks of Loch Ness, which is long, of unknown depth, **and reputed to hide a mysterious underwater monster.**

Less is more

Unnecessary words and verbose expressions gum up your prose. A major component of editing is removing words. Some sources of useless words can be classified as follows.

Redundant pairs

Two words that both mean the same thing. Use one or the other, not both together.

Examples

full and complete	true and accurate	each and every
first and foremost	various and sundry	basic and fundamental
questions and problems	true and correct	and so on and so forth

Redundant modifiers

A 'modifier' is a word, phrase, or clause that limits or qualifies the sense of another word or group of words. In these phrases, the meaning of the modifier [in italics] is already implied in the word it modifies.

Examples

<i>completely</i> finish	<i>past</i> memories	<i>forward</i> planning
<i>each</i> individual	<i>basic</i> fundamentals	<i>true</i> facts
<i>important</i> essentials	<i>component</i> part	<i>consensus of</i> opinion
<i>sudden</i> crisis	<i>terrible</i> tragedy	<i>end</i> result
<i>final</i> outcome	<i>initial</i> preparation	<i>past</i> history

Redundant categories

If specific words imply their general categories, we don't have to state both. The redundant words are italicised.

Examples

<i>red in colour</i>	<i>large in size</i>	<i>a period of time</i>
<i>heavy in weight</i>	<i>round in shape</i>	<i>at an early time</i>
<i>research activities</i>	<i>unusual in nature</i>	<i>in a confused state</i>

Noun strings

Noun strings are groups of nouns (and adjectives) used successively. Technically, this turns all but the last noun into adjectives. Many readers will think they've found the noun when they're still reading adjectives, and will become confused. Limit noun strings to three consecutive nouns.

Examples

Pest control trainee best practice guidelines manual

should be rewritten as

The best practice guidelines for pest control trainees

National air quality environmental reporting research

should be rewritten as

Research into environmental reporting on national air quality

Keep it simple

Replacing formal words with more common ones will reduce wordiness and increase clarity.

Example

Pursuant to the recent memorandum issued August 9, 1996, because of financial exigencies, it is incumbent upon us all to endeavour to make maximum utilisation of telephonic communication in lieu of personal visitation.

This means:

As the memo of 9 August said, to save the company money, use the telephone as much as you can instead of making personal visits.

Here are examples of unnecessary, formal words and phrases and their plain language alternative.

Instead of:

advert to

apprise

ascertain

assist

at the end of the day

at this point in time

cease

cognisant of

Use:

mention

inform

find out

help

finally, ultimately

now, currently

stop

aware of, knows about

Instead of:

commence
contingent upon
discontinue
endeavour
envisage
eventuate
facilitate
has the capability of/to
implement
in as much as
in close proximity to
in order to
initiate
lacked the ability to
large numbers of
notwithstanding the above
on a regular basis
owing to the fact that
prior to
render
request
subsequent to
termination
transmit
transpire
utilise
whether or not
with regard to

Use:

start
 depends on
 stop
 try
 think, regard, see, imagine
 happen
 help
 can
 start, carry out, begin
 since, because
 near, close
 to
 begin
 could not, was unable to
 many
 nevertheless, all the same
 regularly
 because
 before
 make, give
 ask
 after
 end
 send
 happen
 use
 whether
 about

A word instead of a phrase

The phrases below can often be replaced by single words, sometimes with a bit of sentence reconstruction.

Replace

the reason for
for the reason that
due to the fact that
owing to the fact that
in light of the fact that

With this

because, since, why

Replace	With this
<i>considering the fact that</i> <i>on the grounds that</i> <i>this is why</i>	
<i>despite the fact that</i> <i>regardless of the fact that</i> <i>notwithstanding the fact that</i>	although, even though
<i>in the event that</i> <i>if it should happen/transpire that</i> <i>under the circumstances in which</i>	when, if
<i>as regards</i> <i>in reference to</i> <i>with regard to</i> <i>in terms of</i> <i>concerning the matter of</i> <i>where — is concerned</i>	These phrases can usually be replaced by 'about'. Sometimes they can be omitted. <i>Plant size increased in terms of dry weight</i> means 'Plant dry weight increased'
<i>it is crucial that</i> <i>it is necessary that</i> <i>there is a need for</i> <i>it is important that</i> <i>it is incumbent upon</i> <i>cannot be avoided</i>	must, should
<i>is able to</i> <i>is in a position to</i> <i>has the opportunity to</i> <i>has the capacity for</i> <i>has the ability to</i>	can
<i>it is possible that</i> <i>there is a chance that</i> <i>it could happen that</i> <i>the possibility exists for</i>	may, might, can, could
<i>prior to</i> <i>in anticipation of</i> <i>subsequent to</i> <i>following on</i> <i>at the same time as</i> <i>simultaneously with</i>	before, after, as

Hedges and emphatics

Hedges

Most of us love to hedge. We protect our backs by modifying the most straight-forward statement with words such as:

<i>usually</i>	<i>often</i>	<i>sometimes</i>	<i>almost</i>
<i>virtually</i>	<i>possibly</i>	<i>perhaps</i>	<i>apparently</i>
<i>seemingly</i>	<i>in some ways</i>	<i>to a certain/unknown extent</i>	<i>more or less</i>
<i>for the most part</i>	<i>in some respects</i>	<i>can</i>	<i>could</i>
<i>considerably</i>	<i>rather</i>	<i>relatively may</i>	<i>might</i>
<i>generally</i>	<i>seem</i>	<i>tend</i>	

Some qualification is necessary at times, but these words are often used so extensively they become meaningless.

Emphatics

On the other hand, there are the emphatics:

<i>as everyone knows</i>	<i>it is generally agreed that</i>	<i>it is quite true that</i>	<i>it is clear that</i>
<i>it is obvious that</i>	<i>it is important to note that</i>	<i>the fact is</i>	<i>essential</i>
<i>literally</i>	<i>clearly</i>	<i>obviously</i>	<i>undoubtedly</i>
<i>certainly</i>	<i>of course</i>	<i>indeed</i>	<i>inevitably</i>
<i>very</i>	<i>invariably</i>	<i>always</i>	<i>crucial</i>
<i>basic</i>	<i>fundamental</i>	<i>major</i>	<i>principal</i>

These words can be removed without changing the meaning of your sentence – though they will change the tone. They generally mean no more than ‘believe me’ or ‘I think this is a good bit’. Used to excess they will make you seem arrogant, or insecure and defensive. When you read over your writing, see how many of them are really necessary.

Words to watch

Chameleon words

Beware of words that change their meaning from audience to audience. The following words all have well defined meanings in technical use, but they also have much more diffuse meanings in general speech.

<i>bug</i>	<i>organic</i>	<i>aromatic</i>	<i>reduction</i>	<i>cell</i>
<i>parameter</i>	<i>variable</i>	<i>integrated</i>	<i>basic</i>	<i>acid</i>
<i>constant</i>	<i>alcohol</i>	<i>negative</i>	<i>significant</i>	<i>error</i>

Other irritants

It...

Beginning a sentence with 'It ...' is quite acceptable, but often signals a vacuous phrase such as 'It is considered...', 'It should be noted...', 'It has been shown...'. Almost always these phrases can be deleted without changing the meaning of the sentence. Ask yourself what noun it refers to and then try, if possible, to use the noun or other words that state your meaning directly.

However,

A weak start to a sentence. 'However' is usually better placed within the sentence. A change to 'though', 'although' or 'but' can also help.

Facility

Hospitals, prisons, schools, laboratories and toilets have all become 'facilities'. Use a term that says what you mean.

Complex

A 'facility' with more than one part. Hospital complex, prison complex, research complex. Say what you mean.

Function

Often used for the vague type of activity you would expect to find in a facility. 'Social function', 'managerial function', 'research function'. Be precise. Be even more precise when you use the word mathematically. Not all relationships are technically 'functions'.

Feature

Some property of a 'facility', 'complex' or 'function'. The word is usually unnecessary. 'A feature of this theory is its simplicity' means 'This theory is simple'.

Character, property, nature

Other words for a 'feature'. 'The nature of these notes is pedantic', if true, would be better written 'These notes are pedantic'.

Conditions

Can (and should) be avoided. Instead of 'Under conditions of severe soil waterlogging' try 'If (or where) the soil is severely waterlogged'.

Situation

Usually unnecessary. 'In a drought (crisis, emergency, shortage) situation' simply means 'in (or during) a drought...'

Event

As with 'situation', usually unnecessary. 'In a storm event...' simply means 'in a storm...'

Etc

Putting 'etc' at the end of a list merely means that you don't know what else to list, or you can't be bothered. Either list the whole lot, or make it clear that what you are doing is giving a few examples, by using 'such as' or 'for example'.

Point of view

Only people have a point of view. Avoid trying to give activities or objects points of view. 'From a pollution control point of view' can be rephrased.

Problem

A word that tends to be overused. If you mean a difficulty or dilemma that needs a solution, use it, but if you can substitute more specific terms such as pest, danger, shortage, do so.

And/or

If you want to write in symbols, become a mathematician. In English, write A or B, or 'both'.

Case

Unless you mean a box, be specific. 'In this case' can mean 'In this experiment', '... treatment', '... hypothesis', '...set of circumstances'. or practically anything else. It is acceptable only in medical and legal contexts: 'Reported cases of tuberculosis have increased' 'In the case of *Smith v Jones*'.

While

While means 'at the same time'. If you don't mean this, use whereas, and, but, or although. It doesn't make much sense to write: 'Resource consent was granted before the factory was constructed, while emissions were measured when it was operational'.

Varying, various

The first means 'changing'; the second means 'different'. If you apply 'varying' rates of fertiliser, I assume the rates on each treatment changes during the course of the experiment. 'Various' rates are different at the start of the experiment, but remain constant.

Count the number of means 'count'.

Results in an increase means 'increases'.

Quite

Usually quite unnecessary and possibly confusing.

Only

Be careful where you put this word. Consider the sentence:

I hit him in the eye yesterday.

You can add *only* at the beginning of the sentence, at the end, or between any two words, but the meaning will be very different.

Respectively

Sentences for the form 'The values of A, B and C were 54, 15 and 78 respectively' make the reader pause, go back to the beginning of the sentence and match up the pairs. Use 'respectively' rarely, and only if there are no more than three sets of values to match up and the matches are obvious. Misuse can lead to utter incomprehensibility, as in the following real example:

Sulphuric acid mist and sulphur dioxide are trapped separately in isopropanol and three per cent peroxide in the first and second and third train impingers respectively.

PowerPoint template

We have a PowerPoint template which should be used for all Ministry presentations.

Accessing the template

The template is available in the templates folder in Te Puna: 01 Templates – 02 Standard Templates –Powerpoint master template 2018. You can also find instructions on using the template in the same folder.

To use the template download it to your desktop then save into Te Puna.

The template has pre-populated slides. Delete the slides that you don't need for your presentation.

Quotation marks and quoted material

There are three main uses of quotation marks.

1. To enclose the exact words of a writer or speaker.
2. To give emphasis to a word or several words.
3. To enclose titles of chapters and articles when they appear in text. However, don't use quotation marks for journal, magazine or newspaper articles in the reference list.

See also [Commas with quotation marks](#).

1. To enclose the exact words of a writer or speaker

Use quotation marks ('quotes' or inverted commas) to indicate the beginning and end of a quotation, whether from direct speech or from printed material.

The Ministry's preferred style for short quotations is for double quotation marks. If you have a quotation within a quotation, use single quotation marks. Make sure, particularly when text is

brought in from other word-processing applications, that the quotation marks are ‘curly’ (“ ” – these are also known as ‘smart quotes’) rather than straight (" ").

In the following example, as the quoted material is part of a sentence that also contains unquoted material, place the full stop outside the quotes to indicate that it marks the end of the longer sentence.

Example

Joanna Blogs said, “The survey showed most New Zealanders believed the New Zealand ‘way of life’ would be lost if the proposal went ahead”.

If the quotation is a complete sentence, place the full stop inside the closing quotation mark

Example

“I’ll keep my tyres inflated to the correct level.”

Layout of longer quoted material

For quoted material more than three lines in length, indent the text 1 cm on both sides and don’t use quote marks at the beginning or end of the extract.

Example

The Ministry’s preferred style for short quotations is for double quotation marks. If you have a quotation within a quotation, use single quotation marks. Make sure, particularly when text is brought in from other word-processing applications, that the quotation marks are “curly” (“ ” – these are also known as ‘smart quotes’) rather than straight (" ").

2. To give emphasis to a word or several words

Use single quotation marks to indicate words that are new or unusual, or are being used outside their original context

Note: generally enclose the word or words in quotes only the first time you use them. If your document is long and you are repeating the word later in the document, use quotes again.

Example

We know that population ‘explosions’ of rats and stoats are associated with ‘mast’ events.

Quotation marks draw particular attention to the quoted material. If you use them too freely you may draw the reader’s attention away from your intended meaning by causing them to focus on the quoted material.

3. To enclose titles of chapters and articles when they appear in text

Use single quotation marks for titles of journal, magazine and newspaper articles, and for book chapters and parts when you refer to them within a sentence.

Example

see chapter 11, ‘Oceans’ and chapter 12, ‘Biodiversity’

In web writing, use single quotation marks to enclose the title of a publication, rather than italics, as italics can be hard to read on the screen.

References

This section lists examples of bibliographic references, with specific guidance for Ministry for the Environment published reports. The Ministry uses the Harvard system of citing references.

The following elements must be included in a reference:

- author's or editor's name (or names)
- publication year
- title of the item
- publication information:
 - for books, give the publisher's name and place of publication and if two or more publisher locations are given, give the location listed first in the book
 - for journals, give volume, issue number and page numbers
 - for websites, give the full web address (URL).

Citations in the text

When citing references in the text, give the author(s) and year of publication, with a comma between name and year:

Hydrogen sulphide smells (Smith, 2016).

Or, if the author's name is integrated into the text:

Smith (2016) found that hydrogen sulphide smells.

Two authors

If the reference has two authors, cite both:

Smith and Brown, 2016.

More than two authors

If there are more than two, use et al. A paper by Smith, Brown and Jones should be cited as:

Smith et al, 2016.

Two or more publications by the same author(s)

If you cite two or more publications by the same author(s), published in the same year, distinguish between them by a lower case letter after the date:

Smith, 2016a, 2016b.

If you cite, for example, Smith, Jones and Brown, 2016, and Smith, Jones and White, 2016, both will appear in the text as Smith et al, 2016, and will need to be distinguished in the text citation and in the reference list:

Smith et al, 2016a, 2016b.

List of references

When citing a list of references, separate them with semicolons:

Brown, 2016; Jones, 1999; Smith, 2016b.

Quotation

When citing a quotation, include page numbers (*note* there is no full stop after the 'p' for page):

Jones, 1999, p 42.

Several references from one publication

If you are citing several references from a large publication, you may want to include page numbers:

Smith, 2016, p 53.

If you are citing a large publication only once, include the page number in the reference list, not in the text.

No author for cited work

Where no author is given, cite by the corporate author (eg, Ministry for the Environment) or the publication's title:

According to *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (2008)...

Personal communication

Cite personal communication in the text, not in the reference list. Note that the initial precedes the surname. Details of the organisation that the person represents may also be included:

Funding was not provided as the walk was nowhere near silly enough (J Smith, Ministry of Silly Walks, pers. comm., 31 July 2015).

Cabinet minute

When citing earlier decisions Cabinet has made, always quote the most relevant Cabinet or committee minute reference.

Example

[CAB Min (08) 26/10]

Where the Cabinet minute confirms decisions made by a Cabinet committee, quote the appropriate Cabinet committee minute reference of the decision.

Example

[EDC Min (08) 24/8]

Legal citations in text

(Note that 'judgment' in legal usage is spelt without an 'e'.)

A full law case reference for a reported judgment has the following parts:

- the *names of the parties* (case name) (in italics)
- the year of publication (in square brackets)
- volume number (if applicable)
- the initials of the report series
- a page reference (the page number where the case starts).

Example

Jones v Alabaster [1998] 3 NZLR 424

The parties' surnames are Jones and Alabaster. The case is reported in volume 3 of the 1998 cases, in the *New Zealand Law Reports* (NZLR) series, starting at page 424.

The reference list or bibliography

A **reference list** is a list of publications cited in the text of your document. These references may be to work presented in books – or specific chapters of books, articles in journals or newspapers, government reports, theses, proceedings from conferences, material from the internet and so on.

A **bibliography** includes, as well as the works that have been specifically referred to, other works that were consulted in the writing of the document. Bibliographies have the same format as reference lists and include relevant items that have not been cited.

The reference list or bibliography is usually at the back of the document, after the appendices and glossary. Only use separate reference lists at the ends of chapters in very large documents.

Always keep the original spelling of the title. If the book is American and the title uses American spelling, don't change it.

References are listed in alphabetical order for all authors, and then in order of date of publication. Use initials only for the author's first names and don't use full stops, except after the last initial before the date of publication:

Brown AB. 2011.

Brown AB. 2016a.

Brown AB. 2016b.

Brown AB, Jones CD. 1987.

Brown AB, Smith EF, Jones CD. 2008.

Book or report

Darwin CR. 1859. *The Origin of Species*. London: Somepress.

Statistics New Zealand. 2015. *Statement of Strategic Intentions for Statistics New Zealand: 2015–19*. Wellington: Statistics New Zealand.

Edited book

Note that editor (ed.) has a full stop but editors (eds) does not.

Keller L. (ed.) 1999. *Levels of Selection in Evolution*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Soons JM, Selby MJ. (eds) 1992. *Landforms of New Zealand*. Auckland: Longman Paul.

Book chapter

Note that the editors' initials precede their surnames (unlike the previous example).

Jeanne RL. 1991. Polyethism. In: KG Ross, RW Matthews (eds) *The Social Biology of Wasps*. New York: Cornell University Press. pp 389–425.

Ministry for the Environment published report written by Ministry staff

Ministry for the Environment. 2007. *Environment New Zealand 2007*. Wellington: Ministry for the Environment.

Ministry for the Environment published report written by an external consultant

Include 'Prepared for the Ministry for the Environment' after the report's title, and if relevant also acknowledge the external consultant's organisation.

Snelder T, Mason C, Woods R, Robb C. 2001. *Application of the River Ecosystem Management Framework to Water Allocation Management*. Prepared for the Ministry for the Environment by the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research. Wellington: Ministry for the Environment.

Ministry for the Environment published report written by an external consultant that provides national guidance

The Ministry for the Environment is assigned authorship of reports written by consultants that provide national guidance. Acknowledge the external consultant(s) and their organisation(s), if relevant, after the report's title.

Ministry for the Environment. 2004. *Climate Change Effects and Impacts Assessment: A Guidance Manual for Local Government in New Zealand*. Prepared for the Ministry for the Environment by the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research, MWH New Zealand Ltd and Earthwise Consulting. Wellington: Ministry for the Environment.

Journal article

Include author(s), year of publication, title of article, title of publication (in full), volume and number of first and last page of the article. Include the issue number only if the page number starts from 1 in each issue (most scientific journals continue page numbering throughout a volume). If the publication has no volume or issue numbers, identify the issue by the month(s) of publication.

Nonymous A. 1997. Whyter than the lilie flour: Agriculture and horticulture in the Middle Ages. *Bulletin of Agricultural Science* 15(3): 4.

Magazine article

Henry WA. 1990. Making the grade in today's schools. *Time* 135: 28–31.

Newspaper article

Tobler K, Kerin J. 2002. Hormone alert for cancer. *The Australian* 10 July. p 1.

If the newspaper article does not have an author:

The Australian. 2002. Hormone alert for cancer. 10 July. p 1.

Internet reference

European Environment Agency. 1999. *A Checklist for State of the Environment Reporting*. Retrieved from http://reports.eea.europa.eu/TEC15/en/tech_15.pdf (22 June 2007).

Conference proceeding

Harris W. 1993. Effects of quantity and pattern of herbage removal on botanical composition of a temperate pasture. In: *Proceedings of the XVII International Grassland Congress*. Wellington: SIR Publishing. pp 322–326.

Unpublished document

Use this format for items that have not been, and are not intended to be, published. (See appendix F for the process a work goes through to be published; see also 'In press' below.)

Ministry for the Environment. Unpublished. The Ministry's Plans for Published Regular Environmental Reporting and Monitoring of Key Environmental Programmes. Background paper submitted for Cabinet meeting EXG (06) 30.

In press document

Use this format for items that have been accepted for publication. Once published, the 'In press' is replaced by the year of publication, and all else stays the same.

Scarsbrook M, Mittinty M, Wadhwa S. In press. *An Assessment of Regional Council Water Quality Data (1996–2002) in Support of National State of Environment Reporting*. Prepared for the Ministry for the Environment by the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research. Wellington: Ministry for the Environment.

Unknown author

If no author is given, the title is used as the first element of a citation. Alphabetise the entry by the first main word of the title in the bibliography. In the example given here, the work would be listed under 'C'.

The Concise Oxford English Dictionary. 2008. 11th ed. Revised. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cabinet minute

New Zealand Cabinet. 2006. *Plans for Published Regular Environmental Reporting and Monitoring of Key Environmental Programmes*. Cabinet Committee on Government Expenditure and Administration Minute of Decision EXG Min (06) 3/9. Wellington: Cabinet Office, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Cabinet paper

Minister for the Environment. 2007. *Towards a Sustainable New Zealand: Next Steps*. Cabinet Paper CAB (07) 15. Wellington: Cabinet Office, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Scientific names

Scientific names of genera, species, subspecies and varieties of organisms are italicised.

Generic names have an initial capital; names of species and subspecies do not.

Abbreviations are:

sp (species – singular)	spp (species – plural)	ssp (subspecies)
var (variety)	cv (cultivar)	

The above abbreviations, and abbreviations for names of authorities, are not italicised.

Names of cultivars (varieties bred or selected) are not italicised, but are enclosed in single inverted commas.

Examples

Grevillia robusta

Gorilla gorilla gorilla

Triticum aestivum L cv 'Gabo'

Trifolium sp

Lolium spp

Names of taxa higher than species are not italicised, but have initial capitals, for example, Mollusca, Gymnospermae, Mammalia, Insecta.

Sentences and spacing

Sentence length

Keep your average sentence length about 15 to 20 words, and your longest sentences under 30 words. *See also* [Keep sentences short](#). If writing for the web aim for sentences about 12 words long. Vary sentence length. A paragraph of long sentences can be difficult to read, particularly if they are poorly constructed. A series of short sentences sounds abrupt and disconnected.

If you use longer sentences, they must be well constructed. A sentence should move from a short, specific subject, to a strong verb, after which you can add secondary ideas.

Non-breaking spaces

When Word calculates line width and wraps text to the next line, it tries to break the line at either a space or a hyphen. Sometimes, however, you may not want Word to break a line at a certain space. For instance, you may want to make sure that two adjacent words appear on the same line as each other. The answer is to use non-breaking spaces. To do this, hold down the **ctrl** and **shift** keys as you press the **spacebar**. The non-breaking space which appears on the screen as a ° between the two items ensures they stay together on the same line.

Examples

500 kg 60 km
20 July 2008
New Zealand

When you have finished writing your document, look over it carefully to check that elements that should be kept together are not broken over two lines.

Spacing between sentences

Use one space only after a full stop, colon or semicolon.

Spelling

The Ministry uses New Zealand English spelling, which is based on British English.

Set your computer default to 'English – New Zealand'. In the Microsoft Word 'File' ribbon, select > Options > Language > Choose Editing Languages.

Use American spelling only to preserve the correct spelling of book titles, official names (eg, World Health Organization) and so on.

Key differences between American and New Zealand spelling

'-ise' or '-ize'?	Use '-ise'	organise summarise emphasise
'-yse' or '-yze'?	Use '-yse'	analyse
learnt or learned?	Use the -t ending for 'learnt' and similar words when they are used in the past tense.	learnt smelt burnt spoilt
'ae' or 'e'?	Keep the 'a' in 'ae' clusters (American spelling uses just 'e').	anaesthetic paediatrician
ageing or aging?	Use 'ageing' which is the British English form.	
trialled or trialed?	Use the '-ll' form for words like this.	trialled travelled cancelled equalled signalled propelled
judgement or judgment?	Retain the 'e' in 'dge' when it is used in 'judgement' and similar words. <i>Note:</i> For a legal 'judgment', the word is spelt without an 'e'.	judgement abridgement acknowledgement
colour or color?	Retain the 'ou' in words ending in 'our'	colour honour labour behaviour
focused or focussed?	'Focused' is the correct spelling in New Zealand.	
'-ice' or '-ise'?	New Zealand spelling is practice (noun) practise (verb) licence (noun) license (verb) advice (noun) advise (verb)	

See also [appendix D: Commonly confused words](#) and [appendix E: Commonly misspelt words](#).

Split infinitives

A split infinitive is formed when an adverb is placed between *to* and the other element of the infinitive of a verb, for example *to sometimes go*.

A good rule is to try to avoid splitting an infinitive and only do it when good sense and the natural flow of words require it.

Example

We expect the advantages to more than compensate for the cost.

Probably the most famous split infinitive comes in the opening sequence to *Star Trek*:

'to boldly go where no man has gone before'

The grammatically correct version, which clearly lacks the impact of the original, would be:

‘to go boldly where no man has gone before’

In some cases, the effort to avoid splitting the infinitive alters the meaning of the sentence. Compare the following examples.

He failed completely to follow the instructions.

[He didn’t follow the instructions at all]

He failed to completely follow the instructions.

[He partially followed the instructions]

Stacked modifiers

Stacked modifiers are strings of words used as adjectives to modify a noun.

Examples

innovative policy implementation recommendations

recreational shellfish gathering

water quality guidelines

improvement initiative.

These can often lead to confusion. For example, is an ‘automatic cow identification device’ a ‘device for identifying automatic cows’?

To improve clarity, move one or more of the modifiers behind the noun, and turn abstract nouns into verbs.

Examples

innovative recommendations for implementing policy

an automatic device for identifying cows.

Tables and figures

The style for tables created in the Ministry’s report template is Calibri bold 9 pt for headings and Calibri regular 9 pt for text.

As a general rule, left align columns with text and right align columns with figures. Digits of four or more numbers should have commas inserted to allow the values to be easily recognised.

The format for source notes below figures is Source: Name, date. The font is Calibri regular 8 pt.

The Ministry’s report template pre-sets these styles. See [Word template for Ministry documents](#).

Captions

Captions for tables, figures, graphs, diagrams and photographs should be in Calibri bold 10 pt.

Place captions above tables, figures, graphs, diagrams and below photographs.

Tables and figures should be identified by number followed by a colon before the rest of the caption.

Example

Figure 6: The change in native forest cover in the past 200 years

Note: When referring to tables or figures in the body text don't use an initial capital letter.

Examples

figure 6; table 2.

Depending on the publication, photographs may be numbered as figures, or may be independent.

Text style

Alignment

Body text is aligned left for all letters, briefing notes, and Cabinet papers.

Headings are always aligned left.

Body text

Use Calibri as the body text typeface for all documents produced in Word. The size of font used may vary, depending on the width of text in the column – for letters 12 pt is the standard size. Use 11 pt for reports.

Note: The prescribed style for briefing notes, Cabinet papers and Ministerials may differ from the Ministry's generic style in this *Style Guide*, including the required font type and size. If so, the external style has precedence and must be followed.

See *also* the section [Ministers](#).

Bold

Bold typefaces are best restricted to headings and subheadings. Bold can also be used, very sparingly, to emphasise words or phrases (see *also* [Italics](#) and [Underline](#)).

Limit the use of bold to make particular words stand out from the main body of the text. If used too freely such highlighting loses its force and becomes unattractive. However, there are occasions when emphasising words is necessary.

Boxed text

The Ministry's report template includes a style for boxed text as shown here. See [Word template for Ministry documents](#).

Text in boxes needs space around it, and should be set 15 pt away from the borders and shading. A different size or style of type can be used in boxes, for example, Calibri 10 pt.

Increase the spacing in the body text before and after the text box to ensure there is sufficient space between the body text and the box. The body text style uses 6pt before and 6pt after, so increase this to 12pt respectively with text boxes.

To create a box if you are not using a template: select the text you want in the box, choose 'shading' from 'Borders and shading' in the Format menu, choose 'Fill'; 'More colours'; 'Custom' and change to the colour you want to use. Then click 'Ok'.

Italics

Do not use italics when writing for the web. The Ministry's style for online content is straight text with no italics or underlining, and to adopt brackets, apostrophes or dashes as devices to differentiate text, if required.

Use *italics* in non-web writing for:

- words given a special meaning, especially if new to the subject under discussion, the first time they appear
- titles of books, bulletins, newspapers, journals, university theses
- foreign words and phrases not yet accepted as English words, but not Māori or Pacific Island words
- the names of parties in the citation of law cases
- see and see also when used for cross references
- scientific names of genera, species, subspecies and varieties of animals and plants, such as *Apteryx owenii*. See also [Scientific names](#).

Use single quotation marks instead of italics for:

- articles in magazines, journals and newspapers
- chapters and sections of books (see also [Bold](#) and [Underline](#)).

Limit the use of italics to make particular words stand out from the main body of the text. If used too freely such highlighting loses its force and becomes unattractive. However, there are occasions when emphasising words is necessary.

Underline

Do not underline words in the text to give them emphasis or make them stand out in any way.

Do not underline headings or subheadings. (See also [Bold](#) and [Italics](#).)

Do not underline URLs or email addresses. This obscures the underscore(_) character that is included in some URLs. See also [E-terminology](#).

Title page and verso title page layout

The following information applies to reports published by the Ministry.

The title page will contain:

- Ministry for the Environment logo and any partner logos
- contracting organisation's logo, if appropriate (if report is externally authored)
- Government logo
- full title and sub-title of the work, and any other information about the report that you want included in the citation (eg, *Climate Change: Likely Impacts on New Zealand Agriculture*. A report prepared for the Ministry for the Environment as part of the New Zealand Climate Change Programme)
- author(s) and their organisation, if report is externally authored (may or may not be preceded by 'By'). Do not include the external author's or organisation's address or email details – the Ministry owns the report and is, therefore, the first point of contact
- any other information required, if report is externally authored (eg, client report number, project number).

The verso title page is the reverse of the title page and will contain:

- [disclaimer](#) (if required)
- [acknowledgements](#) (if required)
- bibliographic reference (This report may be cited as:)
- publisher's imprint (publisher's name and address, and date of publication)
- lists of editions or reprints (if required)
- ISBN numbers (for a non-serial publication)
- ISSN numbers (for a serial publication)
- Ministry publication number (or contract report number)
- list of other publications in the series (if required)
- copyright notice
- Ministry's web address
- Ministry's logo
- any other information if required.

The Ministry's report template follows this title page and verso title page layout.

Using the Ministry's logo

If you need to use the Ministry's logo, contact the Publishing, Brand and Experience team. The logo should not be given to external people to use on their documents or web pages without approval from the Publishing, Brand and Experience team, even if you are working with them on something.

Writing for the web

The Ministry's websites and intranet provide information in a completely different medium from printed publications. People read information on a computer screen differently from how they read a printed document.

While the basic rules of writing simply, clearly and concisely are universal, web based information is often presented differently from printed material. This includes the order pages are structured in (called their 'architecture') and the way information on each page is structured and formatted – headings are used to break up information within a page, italics and underlining are not used online, and short paragraphs are preferred.

There are also special devices available when writing online information, such as hyperlinks.

Web writing is the opposite of formal writing. The tone of all online content should be friendly, straightforward and credible. The level of formality or chattiness may differ depending on the intended audience.

Who needs to be involved

If you are preparing content for the web, the Digital and Insights team and communication account managers need to be involved from the beginning to help decide the best structure (architecture) and help you write your content.

Accessibility

From 1 July 2019, all government websites and all the content on them must fully comply with the [Government Web Standards](#) for accessibility.

Accessible online content makes it easy for users with disabilities – such as blindness, low vision and mobility impairment – to read, listen to, and interact with the content, with or without the aid of assistive technologies like screen readers.

Making content accessible to people with permanent or temporary disabilities, makes the content better for all users.

For more information see [What you need to know about accessibility](#) on the Intranet Publishing and Brand hub.

Tips and guidelines

Write for the reader – think about:

- What is the purpose of the page?
- Who is your audience?
- What do they want from this page?
- What words would your target audience use?

Say it as concisely as possible

- Don't waste a word. Ask always: what am I **really** trying to say, what do my readers **really** need to know?
- Focus on essential messages only — ones that meet the purpose of the page and the readers' needs. Ask: is this content relevant, do readers really need to know this, would they be interested?

Introduce each page with a short summary

- Introduce each page with a short summary about the purpose of the page and what information it will provide the reader. Place this summary at the top of the page, below the title.
- Aim to give the most important information in the first 10 words, and keep the entire summary within about 25 words.

Use plain English

- Structure content for your intended reader, with the most important messages first (both within the page and under each heading).
- Use frequent, concise, informative headings that describe content that follows.
- Use simple, familiar words.
- Speak directly to the reader by using personal pronouns where possible (eg, 'you'). This will also help you focus on the reader as you write.
- Keep sentences short – aim for a maximum of 20 words – and one idea per sentence.
- Keep paragraphs short – maximum of six lines of text.
- Use the active voice where possible. For example, instead of: "The report was written by the Ministry", write: "The Ministry wrote the report".
- Use positive language – try to say what people should do, not what they shouldn't.
- Spell out acronyms and abbreviations when first used in a page.

Create white space around your text

- Chunk text under regular headings to break up walls of text.
- Keep paragraphs short.

- Use lists to grab attention, but keep them short (two–five items). If a list needs to be longer, group items under informative sub-headings.

Link well and match menu text with page titles

- Avoid ‘link splatter’ where your links are splattered throughout your content. Keep links separate from paragraph text, to prevent readers being confused about whether to read text or leave the page via the link now.
- Write informative link text that describes where the link will take the reader. Never write ‘click here’.
- Make sure link names match destination page titles.

Create accessible graphs, images and tables

- Provide a text description for graphs and images that describes what information the graph or image is conveying.
- Limit the size of tables — try to make them short and narrow enough to fit on most screens.

Write correctly, format text for web readers

- Use correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Avoid using italics, which are hard to read online. Try using single quote marks or brackets around text instead.
- Don’t underline words, as this formatting can make text look like a hyperlink.
- Use bold for emphasis but sparingly
- Don’t use all capitals — which ‘shout’ online.
- Follow our Style Guide.

Word template for Ministry documents

We have a template that should be used for the preparation of all Ministry documents.

Accessing the template

The template is available in the templates folder: **Te Puna: 01 Templates – 02 Standard Templates – MfE report template.**

To use the template:

- download it to your desktop
- open the template, and select ‘save as’ Word document.

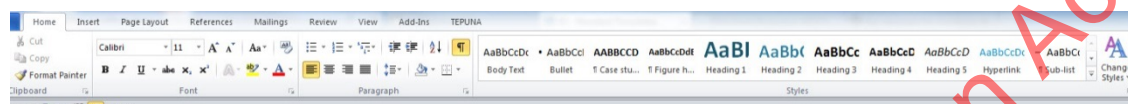
The template is now ready to use.

The template has pre-populated content illustrating the styles. You may find it easier to keep this content in the document for your reference until you have finished writing your text. We advise not to delete the title page, imprint page (inside cover), and contents page.

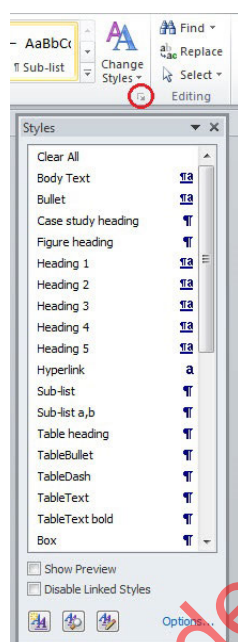
Styles

The template has built-in styles, and these should not be changed. If you need formatting that isn't available from the pre-set styles, please talk to the Publications, Band and Experience team.

The most commonly used styles are displayed in the 'Home' ribbon under 'Styles'.

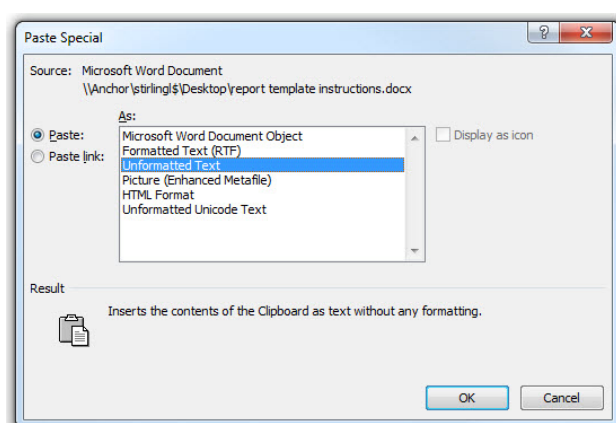
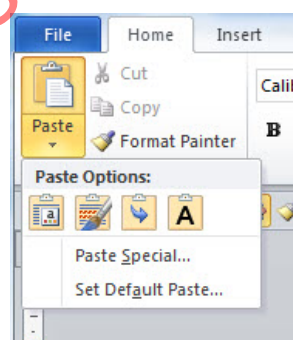


To access all the available styles in the template, click on 'Show styles' in the 'Home' ribbon (shown in the red circle). This opens the full 'Styles' pane on the right-hand side of your screen.



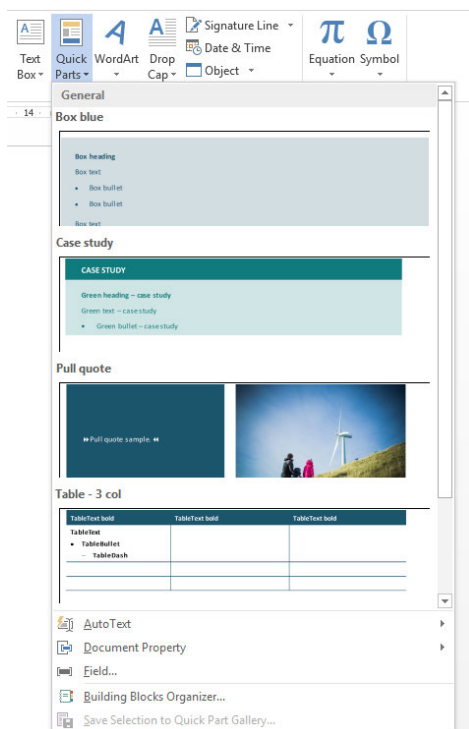
Inserting text from another document

Always use Paste Special [unformatted text] when pasting text in to the template from another document. (The keyboard quick keys for this are 'Alt' + 'E' + 'S'.)



Inserting pre-formatted tables, case study and shaded boxes

Go to the 'Insert' tab on the ribbon and click on 'Quick Parts'. You will see a selection of tables and box styles is available. Click on the option you would like to use to insert it.



Further help

If you need further help using the template, please contact the Publishing, Brand and Experience team.

Appendix A: Common Ministry for the Environment abbreviations and their meanings

AEE	assessment of environmental effects
ANZECC	Australia and New Zealand Environment Committee Council
CCP–NZ	Communities for Climate Protection – New Zealand
CCRA	Climate Change Response Act 2002
CEF	Community Environment Fund
CEEF	Chief Executives’ Environment Forum
COP	Conference to the Parties (to a convention)
CRI	Crown research institute
CSRF	Contaminated Sites Remediation Fund
DOC	Department of Conservation
EECA	Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
ELA	Environmental Legal Assistance Fund
ELT	Environment Leadership Team
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority
GHG	greenhouse gas
GMO	genetically modified organism
HAIL	Hazardous Activities and Industries List
HAPiNZ	Health and Air Pollution in New Zealand
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LAWF	Land and Water Forum
LGA	Local Government Act 2002
LINZ	Land Information New Zealand
LTCCP	long-term council community plan
LUCAS	Land Use and Carbon Analysis System
LULUCF	land use, land-use change and forestry sector
MBIE	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
MEC	Marine Environments Classification
MPI	Ministry for Primary Industries
NES	national environmental standard
NGAs	negotiated greenhouse agreements

NGO/NGOs	non-government organisation(s)
NIWA	National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research
NOF	National Objectives Framework (for freshwater)
NPS	national policy statement
NPS-FM	National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management
NRS	Natural Resources Sector
NZ ETS	New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme
NZU	New Zealand Unit
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCE	Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment
POP	persistent organic pollutant
ppb	parts per billion
ppm	parts per million
QMS	quota management system
RIS	regulatory impact statement
RMA	Resource Management Act 1991
RONZ	Recycling Operators of New Zealand
TSP	total suspended particulate
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VOC	volatile organic compound
WMF	Waste Minimisation Fund
WCO	water conservation order
WHO	World Health Organization

Appendix B: Common Ministry for the Environment words and terms

See also [appendix C: Māori words and terms relevant to Ministry writing](#).

A

Act (of parliament)

acknowledgement

AD (eg, 1000 AD)

afforestation

ageing (with an e)

airborne (note the e)

air conditioning (noun); air-conditioning (adj)

air quality standard

airshed

ammoniacal

at risk

B

backyard (one word)

baseline

bathing-water (hyphen only when adj, as in bathing-water quality)

benzene

Bill (parliamentary)

billion (= one thousand million)

biochemical oxygen demand (BOD₅)

biofouling

biogas

biogeographical

biomass

Biosecurity Act 1993

biosolids

bio-accumulate

bottom trawl, bottom-trawling

broadleaved

Building Code

buy-back

bycatch

by-product

bylaw

C

Cabinet (as in 'Cabinet paper') always has a capital 'C'

call in (noun); call-in (adj)

Campylobacter

century (19th, 20th)

chlorophyll-a (chl-a)

clause, clauses (in a Schedule to an Act)

'clean and green' or 'clean, green' (New Zealand's international branding)

cleanfill(s)

Climate Change Response Act 2002

co-exist

coliform

compared with (*not* compared to)

comprise (*not* comprise of)

Conservation Act 1987

continental shelf

coordinate

cooperate

cost-effective

council (initial caps only for a particular one, eg, Nelson City Council)

crop lands

Crown entity

Crown research institutes

Cultural Health Index

D

data are (always plural)

dataset

daytime

decision-makers

decision-making

de-couple

deepwater (adj)

degrees Celsius

Department of Conservation (DOC *not* DoC)

discernible

dispersion (of air pollution)

Dobson units (DU)

Douglas-fir

downstream

drinking water standards

drinking water supply

dry stock (noun); dry-stock (adj)

E

Earth (not the Earth)

east coast (South Island)

eco-labelling

eco-toxic

ecosystem

eliminated from *not* eliminated in

El Niño

email

end-of-life (eg, 'end-of-life oil')

end user

Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act 2000

Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority

enterococci

Environment Act 1986

Environmental Protection Authority Act 2011

equivalent to *or* the equivalent of (as appropriate)

erosion-prone (adj)

Escherichia coli

E. coli

et al (not italics and no full stops)

exceedances

Exclusive Economic Zone (use initial caps)

Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Act 2012

F

farmland

Fiordland (Te Moana o Atawhenua) Marine Management Act 2005

firewood (one word)

floodplains

floodwater

freshwater (always one word)

freshwater bodies

focused, focusing

framework

G

gasfield

gazetted airshed

Government (a specific government; 'the Government')

gram *not* gramme

grassland

greenhouse gas emissions

gross domestic product

ground-level ozone

groundwater

groundwater take

H

halon

Hawke's Bay

Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996

high-temperature (hyphenated before noun)

high-water mark
hill-country (adj)
home heating (noun); home-heating (adj)
homeowners (one word)
home page (two words)
human-made (*not* man-made)
hydro-electricity

I

in-depth knowledge
increased – ‘increased 5 per cent’ not
‘increased by 5 per cent’
inshore
in-stream (adj)
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate
Change
inter-governmental
internet (lower case i)
intranet (lower case i)

J

judgement [but note: ‘judgment’ in a legal
context]

K

kilogram *not* kilogramme
kilometre, kilometres (in full; not km)
(not kilometer) but use km² for square
kilometres
kiwi (lower case k for bird, but capital K for
Kiwi person)
Kyoto Protocol

L

land-base species
land-base (adj)
land-care
landcare group
Landcare Trust
land cover
land-cover classes
Land Cover Database (LCDB) / national
Land Cover Database

Land Cover Database series 1 (LCDB 1)
Land Cover Database series 2 (LCDB 2)
Land Environments of New Zealand
landholder
land owners
land use, land-use change and forestry
(LULUCF) sector
land-use map

landfill

La Niña

levelling-off (adj)

licence (n)

licensing

life-cycle (adj) / life cycle (noun)

life force

lifetime

light-absorbing gases

liquid petroleum gas

litre in full or /

long-term council community plan
(lower case)

long-term plan

low-lying (adj)

M

macroalgae (no hyphen)

macroinvertebrates

Marine Environment Classification

marine protected areas (initial caps only for
a particular one, eg, Tapuae Marine
Protected Area)

marine reserve (initial caps only for a
particular one, eg, Akaroa Marine Reserve)

Marsden Point oil refinery

Māui dolphin

Maui gasfield

megawatts

memorandum of understanding (singular),
memoranda of understanding (plural)

metre, metres (in full in text)

MfE (do not use; use 'Ministry for the Environment' or 'the Ministry')

microgram

micrograms per cubic metre ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ used in tables)

micro-organism

mid-1990s (hyphenated, no apostrophe)

mid-latitudes

mid-point

milligrams per cubic metre (mg/m^3 used in tables)

millilitres (ml in tables)

millimetre, millimetres (in full rather than mm in main text)

Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry, *not* MfE)

Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer 1987

more than not 'over' (eg, '~~over~~ more than 10 per cent of pests')

N

national environmental standard(s) (initial caps only for a particular one)

National Exotic Forest Description

National Grid

National Pest Management Strategy

national policy statement (initial caps only for a particular one)

nationally endangered

nationwide

New Zealand (use *non-breaking space* so does not break over line)

New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2000

New Zealand Gazette (italics)

New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement

New Zealand Land Cover Database

New Zealand Threat Classification lists

night time

nitrogen-fixing crops

NO_x (oxides of nitrogen, nitrous oxides) – use subscript 'x' in this expression

non-consumptive

non-ferrous

non-fossil

non-government organisations

non-point-source

non-threatening

North and South islands

northern hemisphere

north-east / north-easterly

noticeable

a number of (be specific or use 'several')

NZ\$218 million

O

ocean-going

offshore

on-site inspection *but* on site (noun)

one-third

ongoing

online

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

outfall (one word)

override

ozone-depleting (hyphenated before noun)

Ozone Layer Protection Act 1996

Ozone Layer Protection Regulations 1996

P

Parliament

Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (the commissioner)

Parliamentary Counsel (*Note*: Counsel not Council)

particulate matter

parts per million (ppm)

parts per billion (ppb)

per cent (two words) but % can be used in tables and graphs) (*Note*: an increase from 57 per cent to 61 per cent is a

4 percentage point increase, not a 4 per cent increase)

perfluorocarbons (PFCs)

Permanent Forest Sink Initiative

Permitted activity rules [council regional plans]

persistent organic pollutants (POPs)

persistent organochlorines

pest populations

petrochemical (one word)

petrol-fuelled vehicles

photochemical

point-source

policy-maker

policy-making

PM₁₀ – also PM_{2.5}

premature (*not* hyphenated)

pre-human

pre-industrial

primary energy supply

primary production sector

prior to – use ‘before’

Projects to Reduce Emissions programme

protocols

Q

Queen Elizabeth II National Trust (QEII Trust)

R

Radiata pine

rainfall

rainfall depth

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (1971)

Regulations (spelt with an initial capital)

reinvasion

remediated

Reserves Act 1977

resource efficiency

resource intensity

Resource Management Act 1991

reuse

risk of *not* risk due to

riverbed

river water

River Environment Classification

rohe (area)

run-off (noun)

rush hour (no hyphen)

S

saltmarsh

saltwater

sand spit

sandstone

Schedule (to an Act)

sea floor

seabed

seabed trenches

seabird

seafloor

sea-level (hyphenate as adj)

seamounts

seaports

seawater (adj and noun)

section, sections (of an Act)

set net fishing

soilforms

shelterbelts

shorebird

shoreline

shrubland

single-source discharges

slowdown (*not* hyphenated)

smoky

snowmelt

SO_x (oxides of sulphur) – use subscript ‘x’ in this expression

socio-economic

Soil Conservation and Rivers Control
Act 1941

solid fuel burner

songbird

southernmost

Southern Hemisphere

southeast

southwest

species names (non-scientific common
names): no caps unless they contain proper
nouns (eg, Hector's dolphin)

spinoff

springtime (one word)

square kilometres – can be abbreviated to
km² in text

stabilisation

standard-scale topographic map

state-owned

Stats NZ (not Statistics New Zealand)

stopbanks

stormwater

stream-bank planting

streambed

subdivision

sulphur (*not* sulfur)

sulphur dioxide concentrations

sub-alpine

subantarctic

subcategory

subspecies

subtropical

subsurface

sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆)

summertime (one word)

sundown (one word)

swampland

T

Tb (tuberculosis)

territorial sea/waters

three-and-a-half

timeframe

time lag (*not* hyphenated)

timescale

time series

topsoil

tonne, tonnes (in full)

total allowable catch

Treaty of Waitangi (the Treaty)

tree line

Trophic Level Index

two-thirds

U

ultramafic (soils)

ultraviolet (one word)

up-to date information *but* the information
is up to date

unflued

under-represented

under way (always spelt as two words)

unitary authorities

un-shaded

upstream

uptake

useable

V

vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT)

volatile organic compounds

Volcanic Plateau

W

waste-to-energy projects

waste flow

waste hierarchy

Waste Minimisation Act 2008

waste stream

wastewater

water body

water conservation orders (initial caps only
for a particular one, eg, Buller Water
Conservation Order)

water cycle

water flow

waterfront

waterway (one word)

web page (two words)

website (one word)

wellbeing

well-developed (ie, 'well-developed
systems', but 'the systems are well
developed')

widespread

wintertime (one word)

wood burner

workstream

World Health Organization (note American
spelling)

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Appendix C: Māori words relevant to Ministry writing

The following is a list of Māori words and terms that are relevant to Ministry writing. It shows which words require a macron.

A

awa

H

Hakaterere River

hāngi

hapū

harakeke

Hau Nui

Heretaunga

hihi

hoki

Horowhenua

Hōteao

huia

Hūnua

I

iwi

K

Kaikōura

kaimoana

Kaitiāia

Kaitiaki

kaitiakitanga

kākā

kākāpō

Kākāriki

Kakaunui River

kānuka

Karori

Kā Tiritiri o te Moana (Southern Alps)

kaumātua

kauri

Kawarau

kea

kererū

kiwi (lower case 'k' for bird, but capital 'K' for Kiwi person)

kōkako

Kopuatai

kōrero

korimako

koura

kūmara

M

mahinga kai

Mahurangi

mana

mana whenua

Manapōuri

Manawatū

Mangawai

Mangawhero River

mānuka

Māori

matagouri

mātaitai

Mātakitaki

Mataura River

Mātauranga Māori

Māui dolphin

maunga

mauri
moa
moana
Mōhaka
mōhua
Monowai River

N

Ngā
Ngā Kaihautū Tikanga Taiao
Ngā Whenua Rāhui
Ngāi
Ngāi Tahu
Ngāti
Ngāti Kahungunu
Ngāti Konohi
Ngāti Tūwharetoa
ngutu pare

O

Ōhau (Lake)
Ōhau River
Okakari (Point Marine Reserve)
Ōkarito
Ōmāpere
Ōmārama
oneharuru
Onetea
Ōpihi
Ōpōtiki
Orēti
Ōtaki
Ōtago

P

Pākehā
Papatipu Rūnanga
Papatūānuku (Earth mother)
Paru
pāua

pekapeka
pepeketua
Piako
Pōhara
pōhutakawa
pōpokatea
pounamu
pua o te reinga
Pūkaki (Lake)
Pūkaki River
Punakāiki

R

Rāhui
Rangaitata
Ranginui (Sky father)
Rangitaikī
Rangitikei
rangatiratanga
Rēinga
rohe
Rotoiti
Rotorua
rowi
Ruamāhanga
Rūnanga

T

Tāhunanui
taiāpure
Taieri River
Takapuna
takiwā
tangata whenua
taonga
tapu
tarakihi
Taranaki
Tatarua

Tatapouri Heads

Taupō

Tauranga

tauranga waka

Tawharanui

te ao Māori

Te Aroha

Te Heuheu Tūkino IV

Te Korowai o Te Tai o Marokura

Te Kūiti

Te mana o te wai

Te Moana o Atawhenua

Te Puke

Te Puni Kōkiri

Te Pūrengi

Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu

Te Tapuwae o Rongokako Marine Reserve

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Te Wānanga-o-Raukawa

Te Whanganui a Hei Marine Reserve

Tekapō (Lake)

tī kouka

tīeke

tikanga Māori

Timaru

tio

tītī

tohu

Tongariro

tōtara

tuātara

tūi

Tukituki River

tupuna (singular); tūpuna (plural)

Tūtoko

U

urupā

W

wāhi tapu

wāhi taonga

Waihou

Waikare

Waimakariri

Waipā

Waipaoa River

Waipoa

Wairākei

Wairarapa

Waitakere Ranges

Waitangi

Waitara River

Waitomo

Waituna

Wānaka

Wanganui

weka

wētā

Whakanewha

whakapapa

Whakatāne

whānau

Whangamarino

Whanganui River

Whangarā

Whangārei

whio

Appendix D: Commonly confused words

Words that sound alike or nearly alike but have different meanings can cause writers trouble. Some of the more common ones are listed below.

Word	Meaning	Example
advice	(noun) Words offered or given as an opinion or recommendation.	The Ministry for the Environment provides advice, information and leadership on New Zealand's environment.
advise	(verb) To give advice, recommend or inform.	I advise you to do nothing about this until you've discussed it with your lawyer.
affect	(verb) To attack or touch the feelings of, or produce an effect on something.	Tree growth is affected by wasp populations.
effect	(noun) The result of an action.	The effects of transport pollution include irritated eyes, throat and lungs.
	(verb) To bring about or to accomplish.	He effected a quick retreat.
alternate	(adj) Every other.	She was asked to report on alternate Saturdays.
alternative	(adj) Available as a choice.	Alternative arrangements will be made if necessary.
amount	(noun) Use only for quantities that cannot be counted.	A large amount of paper work.
number	(noun) Use for quantities that can be counted, followed by a plural.	A number of suggestions.
biannually	(adv) This term is ambiguous with some dictionaries giving twice-yearly as the meaning and others giving 'every two years'. To avoid confusion, it's safer to use an expression such as 'twice annually' or 'twice a year'.	The newsletter is published twice annually (or twice a year) – in May and December.
biennially	(adv) Every two years.	An international art exhibition is held biennially in Venice, hence its name the Venice Biennale.

Word	Meaning	Example
complement/ complementary	(verb/adj) Suggests the addition of something to make it whole or complete.	Her skills complemented those of the other team members. Her skills were complementary.
compliment/ complimentary	(verb/noun/adj) Refers to an expression of praise or admiration.	The teacher complimented the pupil on her piano playing. The teacher was complimentary about the pupil's piano playing.
confidant (fem: confidante)	(noun) A person you trust with private information.	She was confident (sure, trusting) that her confidant (the person she had shared secrets with) would not reveal what she had said.
confident	(adj) Trusting, fully assured.	[see example above]
council	(noun) A body/assembly of people meeting for discussion and consultation.	It is a free service provided by councils so householders can safely dispose of their hazardous waste.
counsel	(noun/verb) Advice/or to give advice.	They said he always gave wise counsel. The lawyer counselled me not to give evidence. <i>Note: Parliamentary Counsel (not Council).</i>
dependant	(noun) Someone who relies on another person for support (often financial).	She has four dependants.
dependent	(adj) Reliant, usually followed by 'on'.	Many of New Zealand's economic activities are dependent on the sea.
discreet	(adj) Prudent, circumspect.	I'm too discreet to mention who confused these two words.
discrete	(adj) Separate, distinct.	The atmosphere is layered into a series of discrete zones where gases of different densities tend to cluster.
disinterested	(adj) Free from personal bias.	Since the judge stands to profit from the sale of the company, she cannot be considered a disinterested party in the dispute.
uninterested	(adj) Caring nothing for the matter in question.	She sat there looking bored and uninterested in the discussion.

Word	Meaning	Example
fewer	(adj) Refers to a number or something that can be counted.	There were fewer than 50 people at the meeting.
less	(adj) Refers to an amount that cannot be counted.	He did less work than the others.
method	(noun) One method.	
methodology	(noun) Methodology is <i>about</i> the methods of doing something; it is often incorrectly used to mean 'method'.	Most sciences have their own specific methods, which are supported by methodologies (ie, the rationales that support the method's validity).
forward	(adv) Toward or at a place, point, or time in advance. (adj) Describes something that is in front or advanced.	Let's move forward to get a better view. The forward part of a ship.
foreword	(noun) A short introductory statement in a published work, as a book, especially when written by someone other than the author.	The report began with a foreword by the Minister.
formally	(adv) In a formal manner.	Formerly the smallest planet in the solar system, Pluto is now formally known as a dwarf planet.
formerly	(adv) At an earlier period or age.	(see above).
imply	(verb) To suggest or hint at something.	His tone implied a reluctance to talk about the event.
infer	(verb) To deduce or to pick up a hint.	From his tone she inferred he might have something to hide.
lead	(verb) The same spelling is used for present and future; always sounds like 'ee'.	She leads the race. The proposal will lead to significant developments.
lead	(noun) A metal substance. Pronounced 'led'.	Hazardous substances in products include lead, mercury, cadmium and hexavalent chromium.
led	(verb) The simple past tense and past participle of the verb 'to lead'.	Two committee members led the inquiry.

Word	Meaning	Example
licence	(noun) A printed form giving permission to do something.	Her driver's licence would not expire for a further two years.
license	(verb) To grant authoritative permission to do something.	He is not licensed to drive that vehicle.
loose	(adj) Not held by any bond or restraint.	She likes to wear her hair loose.
lose	(verb) To cease to have, or to be unable to find something.	Leave the key at Reception in case you lose it.
passed	(verb) The simple past tense and the past participle of the verb 'to pass'.	He passed his final examination.
past	(adj) Usually refers to a former time.	She is the past president.
	As a preposition, means beyond in time or place.	She walked past the officer.
personal	(adj) Of, or pertaining to, a particular person.	Personal cleanliness; one's personal life.
personnel	(noun) A body of employees as in 'personnel division or department'.	
practice	(noun) A habit, a custom or a repeated exercise.	The guidelines illustrate and promote best practice in soil analysis.
practise	(verb) To perform habitually; to carry out in action.	He practises law.
principal	(adj) First in rank or importance.	My principal objection is the cost of the project.
principal	(noun) A head or ruler; head of a school.	Teachers are hitting out at school principals who strike up corporate-style pay deals.
principle	(noun) A fundamental truth or standard.	The Act incorporates sustainability as its underlying principle.
	'In principle' means 'in theory'.	The two nations agreed in principle to the ceasefire terms with the details still to be worked through.
	'On principle' means 'because of the principle'.	I won't buy Australian wine on principle (they beat us at the last World Cup).

Word	Meaning	Example
sort	(verb) To arrange something systematically or according to type, class and so on.	He sorted the books according to author.
sought	Past participle of the verb 'to seek'.	She sought advice from her supervisor.
substantial	(adj) Of considerable size or importance.	A substantial reduction in her workload meant she could work three instead of five days a week.
substantive	(adj) Real, firm or meaningful.	There were substantive issues under discussion.
stationary	(adj) Remaining in one place, not moving.	House prices have remained stationary for a while.
stationery	(noun) Writing materials.	See if there are any staplers in the stationery cupboard.
their	(pronoun)	What time is their departure for Rome?
there	(adv)	When do they arrive there?
they're	(contraction of pronoun and verb)	They're still waiting for the aircraft to depart.
who's	(contraction of pronoun and verb)	Who's [who has] left their book on the table?
whose	(pronoun)	Whose book is on the table?
your	(pronoun)	It's going to rain. Take your umbrella with you.
you're	(contraction of pronoun and verb)	You're going to get wet if you don't take your umbrella with you.

Appendix E: Commonly misspelt words

The correct spelling is given below of words that are often misspelt. See also [appendix D: Commonly confused words](#) and '[Key differences between American and New Zealand spelling](#)'.

A

abattoir
abbreviate
absence
accommodate/accommodation
acknowledgement
address
adrenalin
advisor, advisory
aesthetic
ageing (but caging, paging, raging, waging)
agri-business (not agro-business)
amiable
amid (not amidst)
among (not amongst)
annex (verb), annexe (noun)
appal, appals, appalling, appalled
arrangement
artefact
assistance
attendance

B

balk (not baulk)
balloted, balloting
bandwagon
battalion
benefiting, benefited
biased
bicentenary (noun, not bicentennial)
billeting, billeted
blanketing, blanketed
block (never bloc)

business

by-election, bypass, by-product, bylaw, byword

C

calendar
cancelled, cancellation
cappuccino
carcass
changeable
channelling, channelled
characteristic
choosy
cipher
column
combating, combated
commemorate
commission
connection
consensus
cooled, cooler, coolly
courteous

D

daytime
defendant
de rigueur
desiccate, desiccation
dexterous (not dextrous)
dignitary
dilapidate
disk (in a computer context), otherwise disc (including compact disc)
dispatch (not despatch)

dispel, dispelling

distil, distiller

divergences

dryer, dryly

dwelt

dyeing (colour)

E

embarrass (but harass)

encyclopedia

enrol, enrolment

ensure (make certain), insure (against risks)

F

farther (distance), further (additional)

favour, favourable

ferreted

filleting, filleted

flotation

flyer, frequent flyer, high-flyer

focused, focusing

forbear (abstain), forebear (ancestor)

forbid, forbade

foreboding

foreclose

forefather

forestall

forewarn

forgather

forgo (do without), forego (precede)

forsake

forswear, forsworn

fuelled

-ful, not -full (thus armful, bathful, handful)

fulfil, fulfilling

fullness

fulsome

funnelling, funnelled

furor

G

glamour, glamorous

grey

H

harass (but embarrass)

high-tech

honour, honourable

hotch-potch

humour, humorous

I

inadvertent

incur, incurring

innocuous

inoculate (but immunise)

install, instalment, installation

instil, instilling

intransigent

J

jail (*not* gaol)

jewellery (*not* jewelry)

judgment (made by judge)

judgement (other than judicial)

L

labelling, labelled

laissez-faire

levelled

libelling, libelled

limited

literal

loth (reluctant), loathe (hate), loathsome

low-tech

M

manoeuvre, manoeuvring

mayonnaise

mileage

millennium, but millenarian

minuscule
modelling, modelled
mould

N

naivety
nought (for numerals), otherwise naught

O

occur, occurring
online (*not* on-line)

P

panel, panelled
parallel, paralleled
pastime
pavilion
plummeted, plummeting
predilection
preferred (preferring, but proffered)
preventive (not preventative)
proffered (proffering, but preferred)
profited
programme (only use program in a computer context)
protester

Q

queuing

R

rack, racked, racking (as in racked with pain, nerve-racking)
racket
rankle
recur, recurrent, recurring
regretted, regretting
restaurateur (but restaurant)
resuscitate

S

seize

shaky

siege

sieve

smelt

smidgen (not smidgeon)

smoky

smooth (both noun and verb)

soothe

specialty (only in context of medicine, steel and chemicals), otherwise speciality

spoil

storey (floor)

straitjacket and strait-laced but straight-faced

supersede

swap (*not* swoop)

swathe

synonym

T

tariff

threshold

transferred, transferring

travelled

U

unnecessary

unparalleled

until (not til)

V

vacillate

W

wilful

withhold

- able –

debatable
dispensable
disputable
forgivable
imaginable
implacable
indescribable
indictable
indispensable
indistinguishable
movable
tradable
unmistakable
unshakable
unusable
usable

- eable –

bridgeable
knowledgeable
likeable
manageable
rateable
serviceable
sizeable
traceable
unenforceable
unpronounceable

- ible –

accessible
convertible
digestible
inadmissible
indestructible
investible
irresistible
permissible

Appendix F: Publishing steps

If you are producing a publication you'll need to work with the Publishing, Brand and Experience team. They'll provide advice and guidance and manage the production process (steps 3 – 5) for you.

Step 1: Planning

Good planning is the key to a successful, quality publication. Set clear objectives for your publication and be clear about who the audience is and what they need. The Publishing, Brand and Experience team can help with this and can advise how much you should budget.

Step 2: Drafting your content

Make sure your content meets our standards.

- Refer to this style guide as you write.
- Write in [plain English](#).
- Use the [Ministry report template](#) to draft your content.

Step 3: Editing and proofreading

Everything we publish is edited and proofread to make sure it's grammatically correct, the language is appropriate for the audience, it's easy to understand, and it meets the Ministry's style requirements.

Step 4: Design and formatting

Everything we publish is either formatted in Word or designed to ensure it complies with our [brand](#). Word documents use the styles set in our report template.

Step 5: Web publishing and printing

All our publications are published on our website. Our approach to publishing is to think 'digital first' and only print if there is a need (eg, to use at consultation hui). Providing our content online rather than printing helps minimise our environmental footprint which supports our sustainability strategy.

Step 6: Promotion

There are many ways to promote your publication and the best method will depend on the purpose and intended audience. Your Publishing and Communications Advisors will be able to advise you.

Step 7: Evaluation

Evaluating the success of your publication will tell you if it achieved its aims, met the needs of the audience, and was understandable and useful to them.

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