

Abbreviations

Definition: An abbreviation is a shortened form of a word or several words.

Different type of abbreviations:

- acronym
- Initialism
- Truncations
- Portmanteau

Punctuation related to abbreviations.

- An abbreviation is usually found in the written form and is not pronounced as it is written.

Example: Mr Mister

- If the abbreviation ends in the last letter of the word, then the full stop is omitted.

Example: Dr Mr Mrs

- If the initial letters of words are used, the full stop is omitted.

Example: USA United States of America
SPCA Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

- If the abbreviation consists of just the first few letters of the word it represents, you have to use a full stop.

Example: Sat. Saturday Jan. January
Mon. Monday Feb. February
abbr. abbreviation adj. adjective
adv. adverb ans. Answer
aux. auxillary P.T.O. Please turn over

- Phrases taken from other languages, and their abbreviations are also written with full stops.

Example: R.S.V.P. *Repondez s'il vous plait* (Please reply)
etc. *etcetera* (and so on)
e.g. *exempli gratia* (for example/example given)
viz. namely
NB nota bene, note well, very important

- If the abbreviation includes the first and last consonants of the word, no full stop is needed.

Example: pls please rd road
Mr Mister crt court
Dr doctor maths mathematics
n noun v verb
Sgt Sergeant Rd Road

- **However**, recent abbreviations do not use a full stop even if the last consonant is left out.

Example: cell cellular (phone)

kb	kilobyte	} Computer data-capacity units
MB	megabyte	
GB	gigabyte	
TB	terabyte	

Comment [U1]: Computer data-capacity units

Comment [U2]:

Acronym

An acronym is a word made up of the first letter (or the first few letters) of a number of words. The word is pronounced as it is spelled. No full stops are used.

Example: COSATU Congress of South African Trade Unions

 AIDS Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

 UNICEF United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

 NASA National Aeronautics and Space Administration

 SARS South African Revenue Service

 ESCOM Electricity Supply Commission

 NUMSA National Union of Mineworkers of South Africa

 laser light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation

 radar radio detection and ranging

 scuba self-contained underwater breathing apparatus

 PTY (LTD) Proprietary (Limited)

Cellphone technology has resulted in many abbreviations. These are only appropriate in text communications.

Example: cu see you

Initialism

An *initialism* is an abbreviation where the first letter of a number of words is used instead of saying the whole name out loud. With initialisms you pronounce each letter separately.

Example:

LOL	Laugh out load		
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation		
SAP	South African Police		
PTA	Parents and Teachers' Association		
FET	Further Education and Training		
ANC	African National Congress		
SMS	Short Message Service	PS	Post Script
TV	television	CV	Curriculum Vitae
IT	information technology	COD	Cash on delivery
DJ	disc jockey	ICU	Intensive Care Unit
WC	Water Closet (Toilet)	IOU	I owe you

Truncations

Truncations are words that have part of them cut off.

Example: exam for examination

Portmanteau

Portmanteau is a combination of two words.

Example: **infomercial** from **info**rmation and **commer**cial.