

ABBREVIATIONS

Below are some statements of when it is appropriate to abbreviate words in formal writing, and when it is not. After reviewing these rules, use the "Try It" exercises to practice these procedures.

Abbreviate specific titles before the names: Mr., Mrs., Ms., Dr., Rev., etc.

Examples: Sen. John Smith, Rev. Jesse Jackson, Gen. George Washington, Mr. Sam Jones

NOTE: Write military and political titles in full if you use only the person's last name: Major Copeland, Senator Wright.

Abbreviate specific titles after the name: Sr., Jr., M.A., Ph.D, M.D.

Examples: George Little, M.D.
Juanita Sanchez, Ph.D.

**Abbreviate expressions used with specific dates and numerals:
A.M., P.M., No. (number), \$, etc.**

Examples: 9:25 P.M. (or p.m.), no. 34 (or No. 34), \$2.46, year 52 B.C.

**Abbreviate government agencies and well-known companies
and organizations: FBI, IBM, IRS, PTA, USA, etc.**

NOTE: In formal writing it is always best to first write out the words for such organizations. This allows the reader to know the name of the organization. After the name has been written out once, then it is acceptable to refer to the agency's or company's abbreviation.

Example: The External Diploma Program allows Fairfax County adults to earn a high school diploma. EDP does this by giving participants credit for their life experiences.

In formal writing, it is best to avoid abbreviations as much as possible. When in doubt, write out the word. The following are examples of when not to abbreviate.

DO NOT ABBREVIATE:

Names of states, countries, months or days.
(He left Virginia on a Tuesday in June.)

Personal names.

The word Christmas (not Xmas).

The words street, avenue, road, park, and company.

Example:

The Fun Time Company is opening a new store on Charles Street.

Write out the word “and”. Write out school subjects.

Example:

Marta studies physical education and economics at Old Dominion University.

Write out these words: chapter, page, volume, house, minutes, seconds.

Example:

She found the answer on page 6 in chapter 10.

The family drove for five hours.

TRY IT

Correct each sentence to be sure words are abbreviated in an appropriate way.

1. The dr. worked on the patient for 6 hrs.
2. The ball landed 3 ft. from the base.
3. We will travel to Newark, N.J. on Sat. of next week.
4. Dec. is a month full of holiday activities.
5. John took his Econ. final at 9:00 A.M.
6. Jawad was just accepted at UVA.
7. The assignment directed the students to read chapt. 6 in the IBM Training Manual.
8. Mrs. Jane Gould lives at 630 Main St. in Fairfax, VA.
9. Dr. Morris works for the CIA.
10. We went shopping in the A.M. and played tennis in the P.M.

ANSWER KEY

1. The doctor worked on the patient for six hours.
2. The ball landed 3 feet from the base.
3. We will travel to Newark, New Jersey on Saturday of next week.
4. December is a month full of holiday activities.
5. John took his Economics final at 9:00 A.M.
6. Jawad was just accepted at the University of Virginia.
7. The assignment directed the students to read Chapter 6 in the IBM Training Manual.
8. Mrs. Jane Gould lives at 630 Main Street in Fairfax, Virginia.
9. Doctor Morris works for the CIA.
10. We went shopping in the morning and played tennis in the afternoon.