

Manuscript Preparation Checklist

This checklist for preparing manuscripts does not replace the *WHO Style Guide* but is a quick reference sheet for in-house staff and external editors and designers.

- Page through the document front to back and check that all **acronyms** and abbreviations are spelled out on first use, with the acronym/abbreviation in parentheses.

The *WHO Style Guide* contains a list of **UN and other agencies** (pp. 81–82). Some are frequently misspelled in the full form, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the United Nations Environment Programme. It also has a section on **troublesome words** (pp. 39–54).

- Use Search or Search/Replace to check for **problem words**, for example:

advice (noun) advise (verb)	per cent not percent (but % preferred)
analyse (not analyze; but: prioritize, publicize)	policy-makers, policy-making
biodegradable, biohazard, biosafety, bioethics	practice (noun) practise (verb)
bienniums (not biennia)	programme (program only for computers)
childbirth, childbearing (but: child-spacing)	socioeconomic, macroeconomic
countrywide	subprogramme, subunit
decision-makers, decision-making	subregional
forums (not fora)	towards (not toward)
health care (noun); health-care workers (adj)	undernutrition, overnutrition
intercountry, interregional	waterborne, foodborne (but: vector-borne)
Internet (capitalized)	web, web page, web site (but: World Wide Web; also, use “worldwide” in all other cases)
life-course, lifelong, lifespan, lifestyle	Workplan
multicountry, multisectoral (not sectorial)	
noncommunicable	

*Change SEAR to “SEA Region” or “South-East Asia Region”

*Refer to RD as “Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia”, **not** “Regional Director, South-East Asia Region of WHO” or “Regional Director of South-East Asia Regional Office”

- Numbers:** Make sure the number separator is a **space**, not a comma: e.g. 45 000 not 45,000. Four-digit numbers are closed up (e.g. 2400) except in tables.

Use an en dash for inclusive numerals & dates, e.g. “In 2007–2008”, “50–100 cases” (The en dash is created by pressing Alt and 0150 on the number pad on the keyboard, or Ctrl and the minus sign) Also use an en dash when a numeral meets a letter, e.g. “The meeting was held 17 August–19 August 2009.”

Use an em dash (longer dash), with no space on either side, for parenthetical remarks .“Some participants—such as representatives of UN agencies—made interventions.” (The em dash is generated by pressing Alt and 0151 on the number pad)

Years are given in full, e.g. 2008–2009 **not** 2008–09 or '08–'09

Money: Write “US\$ 5 million”, **not** “USD 5 million”.

Spell out one through nine. Use numerals for 10 and above.

Spell out ordinals, e.g. “the Sixty-first Regional Committee”, **not** 61st or 61st. (avoid superscript)
- Spacing:** Delete extra spaces between sentences. There should be *one* space only between the full stop/period and the first letter of the next sentence. As here.

There is **no space** either side of a slash, e.g. “public/private sectors”, “relief/recovery operations”.
- Capitalization:** Make sure all **headings** are initial cap only, unless proper names or titles are included, e.g.:

- Coordination of programme management
- Report of the Regional Director on issues related to WHO operations
- Activities related to the Millenium Development Goals
- Progress report on HIV/AIDS interventions from the Director-General

Avoid **overcapitalization**, e.g.:

the Country Office for Thailand; the Thailand Country Office; the country office; other country offices
the Programme of Work and Budget; the budget; the work programme
the Health Ministers Meeting; the meeting; the views of the ministers

The following are capitalized as shown:

Member States
the Region (referring to the SEA Region only)
the Organization (referring to WHO)
the Regional Office (referring to SEARO)
headquarters (referring to WHO Geneva)

The names of **things** are capitalized in abbreviations but not on their own, e.g.:

“. . . and many displaced persons (DPs) were assisted” (not “Displaced Persons”)

Similarly, injecting drug users (IDUs), avian influenza (AI), small island developing states (SIDS), voluntary contributions (VCs), assessed contributions (ACs), nongovernmental organization (NGO).

Names: Make sure **country names** are consistent with WHO style (a list with approved long and short names is available at https://intranet.who.int/homes/whp/write_edit/topics/member_states.shtml.)

Note that **Timor-Leste** is hyphenated; **Viet Nam** is two words.

Make sure country names in lists and in text are in **alphabetical** order, unless some factor is being used, e.g.:

India, Indonesia, Thailand and Timor-Leste attended the meeting.

Storm damage was heaviest in India, Bangladesh and Thailand, in that order.

Punctuation: use double quotes (inverted commas) not single, e.g.:

The topic was “International migration of health-care workers”.

No comma before the last item in a series (e.g. “food, medicine and water”)

There is no full stop after Mr, Ms or Dr or ml, km, kg, **but** there is after Prof. and in a.m./p.m.

Bulleted lists: Lists that give discrete entities/sentence fragments do not require punctuation, e.g.:

The treatment options were:

- home care
- hospice care
- hospitalization

Lists that are essentially one sentence broken into bullets are punctuated with semicolons, as a sentence is. For example:

The effects of global warming include:

- melting of glaciers and polar ice;
- more frequent and more severe storms, such as hurricanes; and
- disruption of climatic patterns, such as the monsoon.

[the last “and” is optional]

Lists that are independent full sentences (or multiple sentences) take caps and full stops:

Several issues were raised about the report:

- Some participants felt that the report did not go far enough. It summarized the problem, but failed to provide solutions.
- Questions were raised about the completeness of the technical information in the annexes.
- It was recommended that publication be delayed until further data could be gathered.