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ABBREVIATIONS MADE EASY

By Tim North

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Which is better usage: USA or U.S.A.?

The punctuation of abbreviations is an area that is subject to considerable differences of opinion. For example, as demonstrated by the question above, not everyone agrees on when (or if) to use full stops.

It's an indication of just how confused this area is that even the basic terminology isn't agreed upon. You'd think that a simple term like abbreviation was easy to define, wouldn't you? Sure you would, yet some camps distinguish between abbreviations and contractions (giving each different punctuation rules), while others lump everything in together as abbreviations.

A common definition of abbreviation goes something like this:

An abbreviation is a shortened version of a word or phrase and is often followed by a period. For example, c.o.d., ft-lb, St. or publ.

Unfortunately, there is rarely any cogent explanation of what is meant by "often followed by a period", so just *when* does an abbreviation take a period, and when doesn't it?

In an effort to provide clear answers to these questions, I present the following more precise definitions:

An ABBREVIATION is a shortened form of a word that does not include the full word's final letter.

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A **CONTRACTION** is a shortened form of a word that does include the full word's final letter.

Here are some examples of abbreviations:

Tues. Tuesday approx. approximately
doz. dozen Aug. August
Prof. Professor Aust. Australia
a.m. anti meridian p.m. post meridian
i.e. id est e.g. exempli gratia

Abbreviations are followed by a full stop. You can think of the full stop as being a replacement for the missing final letter.

Note that abbreviations like "p.m." are actually two separate abbreviations: "p." for "post" and "m." for "meridian."

Here are some examples of contractions. Contractions should not be followed by a full stop as they retain the final letter of the original word.

Rd Road govt government
St Street ft feet
Mr Mister mfg manufacturing
Dr Doctor Mme Madame
Pty Proprietary Ltd Limited
dept department yds yards

* * *

Not everyone will agree with this approach. Still, in my view, distinguishing between abbreviations and contractions is a better way to proceed than the ambiguous definition quoted earlier that relies on you guessing what "often followed by a period" means.

I hope you find this useful.

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Words to Avoid in Your Online Resume

By David Green

When writing an online resume there are many words that you should try to include, and many that you

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should avoid. We will go over some of the worst possible words to use in your online resume, so that you can avoid them at all costs.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Many job seekers are quick to throw all kinds of abbreviations around thinking that it will make them sound more in tune with the industry. But too many and your online resume will start to look like secret code. Include only those that are widely known, and leave out the rest. If your industry is known for acronyms (like the computer industry) use them sparingly in your online resume.

Personal Pronouns

Yes, we understand that your online resume is actually about you, but you shouldn't use personal pronouns like I, me, or my in your writings. Using the word I can get redundant pretty quickly and can leave a recruiter uninterested. Instead, keep it concise and never refer to yourself with a personal pronoun.

Negative Words

Negativity is never a good thing when it comes to an online resume. It doesn't matter why you left your last job, never bring up words like: arrested, bored, fired, hate, or sexist. These words stick out to a recruiter, and your resume will likely only make it to the trash bin. If you had issues that you would like to bring up to your potential employer— save it for the actual interview.

Keep It Simple

While some words are unavoidable, it is important to scan your document to spot any overuse. Some of the most common offenders are: a, also, an, because, the, and very. Try to come up with a different way to say things to keep your resume interesting and well received. Remember recruiters often read hundreds of online resumes a day, so do your part to keep them awake.

Also, avoid using terms and phrases that you don't understand. Many job seekers will pick out big words to make themselves appear smarter, but it can end up backfiring in the interview. So above all else— keep it simple!

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