

NEW DELHI REVIEW OF BOOKS

Editorial Style Guide

All contributors and editors are required to adhere to this guide without exception. Queries should be directed to the editorial team at submissions@newdelhireviewofbooks.in

1. General Principle

The *New Delhi Review of Books* follows Oxford conventions adapted for the Indian context. British English is the house standard throughout.

2. Spelling

British spelling is mandatory throughout. Use '-ise' not '-ize' (organise, realise). Use '-our' not '-or' (colour, honour). Use '-re', not '-er' (centre, theatre).

Foreign and classical spellings are replaced by common British equivalents except where the foreign form is the standard technical term.

Use: encyclopedia, medieval, archaeology, orthopaedics

Retain: nucleus/nuclei; alumnus/alumni /; alumna/alumnae

Foreign, Latin, and Sanskrit phrases embedded in English prose are italicised. Grammatical additions to italicised terms are not italicised. Sanskrit and classical Indian terms in common scholarly use need not be italicised once established in a piece.

the je ne sais quoi of the work; in loco parentis; Panthera leo

*the concept of dharma as elaborated in the Mahabharata; the Arthashastra's account of statecraft;
the notion of rita in Vedic thought*

3. Abbreviations and Acronyms

Full stops are not used in abbreviations, acronyms, or contractions in any language.

UK, USA, eg, ie, etc, ibid, 10am, Dr, Mr, Mrs, Prof

Every abbreviation or acronym must be written out in full at first mention, with the shortened form following in parentheses. Thereafter, the short form alone is used.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) raised rates last month. The RBI cited inflation concerns.

Initials in personal names carry no full stops and no spaces between letters, unless the individual's established usage differs.

RK Narayan, VD Savarkar, RC Majumdar

The ampersand (&) is confined to: (a) titles that use it in their original published form; (b) names of institutions or companies that use it formally. It must not appear in body text as a substitute for 'and'.

4. Capitalisation

Capitalisation is restricted to proper nouns, formal titles, and the names of specific institutions. Common nouns and conceptual terms are lowercased.

Formal titles are capitalised when used directly before or as part of a name, and lowercased when used generically.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the nation. / The prime minister addressed the nation.

Title capitalisation (for works, sections, headings): capitalise all words except articles, prepositions, and coordinating conjunctions, unless these are the first word.

The Discovery of India; A Corner of a Foreign Field; On the Origin of Species

Trademarked terms follow their registered form.

Wi-Fi, iPhone, WhatsApp

5. Names and Titles

The full name and any relevant title of an individual must be given at first mention. Thereafter, the person is referred to by surname alone, unless context requires otherwise. First names alone are not used. For figures known by a single name or honorific, as is common in Indian tradition, that established form is used throughout.

Tagore outlined his position in his 1917 lectures. Tagore's critique of nationalism has since...

Rajagopalachari founded the Swatantra Party in 1959. Rajagopalachari's economic arguments...

Courtesy titles (**Dr, Mr, Mrs, Ms, Prof**) take no full stop and are always followed by the surname only.

6. Punctuation

Apostrophes

Apostrophes indicate either omitted letters (contractions) or possession. They are not used to form plurals.

Possessives: Add 's to nouns not ending in s or z. Add an apostrophe alone after nouns ending in s or z.

the editor's decision; the committee's report; the Mahabharata's central narrative; Kalidasa's Abhijnanasakuntalam

Compound nouns: The apostrophe appears only after the final noun of the compound.

Mills and Boon's catalogue; my mother-in-law's opinion

Time expressions: An apostrophe is used where 'of' could replace it without changing meaning.

three weeks' notice; two years' work

Quotation Marks

Single quotation marks are used for all direct quotations. Double quotation marks are used for quotations within quotations. Alternate single–double–single for further nested levels.

She said, 'He told me, "I never agreed to this," and left.'

Punctuation falls inside quotation marks only if it belongs to the quoted material. If the punctuation belongs to the surrounding sentence, it falls outside.

She described it as 'a landmark work'. / Did he really call it 'a failure'?

Single quotation marks are used for titles of articles, essays, poems, short stories, and songs. *Italics* are used for titles of complete published works: books, journals, films, albums, newspapers.

Double quotation marks may be used sparingly as scare quotes to signal that a term is contested or being used with reservation. Avoid overuse.

the so-called "reforms" of that period

Commas

Use commas to set off introductory and subordinate clauses, non-defining relative clauses, and parenthetical phrases. Do not use a comma to join two independent sentences without a coordinating conjunction (comma splice); use a semicolon or a full stop instead.

Although the argument is compelling, it lacks sufficient evidence.

The Oxford comma (before the final 'and' in a list) is used when its omission would cause ambiguity. Where no ambiguity arises, its use is optional but consistent within a piece.

The volumes cover history, economics, and political theory.

Colons and Semicolons

Colon: Links two clauses where the second follows logically from the first, or introduces a list or quotation. The clause preceding the colon must be grammatically complete.

The evidence pointed in one direction: the amendment had been deliberately suppressed.

Semicolon: Links two independent clauses that are closely related but do not depend logically on one another. Also used in long lists where commas already appear within items.

The first report was thorough; the second was cursory.

The delegation included representatives from Delhi, India; Karachi, Pakistan; and Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Dashes

Hyphen (-): Links elements of compound adjectives and compound nouns. Used with prefixes before proper nouns, numbers, or dates.

well-known author; first-class scholarship; anti-colonial; pre-1947; mid-twentieth century

En-dash (–): Denotes ranges of numbers, dates, or time. Also links compound concepts where one element is itself hyphenated.

pages 112–145; 1947–1952; the Delhi–Mumbai corridor

Em-dash (—): Sets off a parenthetical clause or aside — no spaces on either side — more emphatically than commas. May replace a colon for dramatic or rhetorical effect. Use sparingly.

The committee's findings—if they can be trusted—suggest otherwise.

Hyphens are used with compound adjectives preceding a noun. When the compound follows the verb, the hyphen is generally dropped. Adverbs ending in -ly do not take a hyphen.

a well-documented case; the case is well documented; a finely argued thesis

Brackets

Parentheses (): Enclose brief non-defining information. The sentence must be complete and coherent with the parenthetical material removed. Not used in place of commas or em-dashes to mark a subordinate clause.

Square brackets []: Used within quotations to indicate editorial additions, corrections, or the notation [sic]. Not used for authorial asides.

He stated that 'the ruling [in the Ayodhya judgment] had been anticipated for decades'.

[sic]: Inserted immediately after an error reproduced from the original, to signal the error is not the current author's.

Punctuation falls outside brackets unless the bracketed material is a complete sentence in its own right.

Ellipses

An ellipsis (...) marks an omission from a quoted passage. When the omission falls within the passage, enclose the ellipsis in square brackets. At the beginning or end of a quotation, square brackets are not required.

'The state [...] has consistently failed to address this question.'

'It was the most consequential decision of the decade...'

Ellipses are not used for stylistic effect or trailing off in analytical prose.

Other Punctuation Notes

Only one terminal mark ends a sentence. Full stops are not used in headings or titles. Reported speech and indirect questions end with a full stop.

Bullet-point lists are strongly discouraged in submitted prose. Where they appear in quoted material, items that form complete sentences end with a semicolon; the final item ends with a full stop.

7. Word Usage

The following distinctions must be observed:

affect/effect: Affect is a verb meaning to influence or alter. Effect as a noun means a result; as a verb (rare) means to bring about or cause.

The Partition affected millions across the subcontinent. / The judgment had no measurable effect on land acquisition. / The 1991 reforms effected a structural change in the economy.

imply/infer: The writer or speaker implies; the reader or listener infers.

The Arthashastra implies a sophisticated theory of statecraft. / One infers from the Supreme Court's reasoning that the question remains open.

less / fewer: Fewer for countable nouns; less for uncountable nouns.

fewer seats in the Lok Sabha; less administrative clarity; fewer submissions to the committee

among/between: Among for unspecified or more than two; between for specified or exactly two.

disagreement among the state governments; a distinction between executive and legislative authority

mutual/reciprocal: Mutual describes a shared feeling towards a third party or shared quality; reciprocal describes corresponding action between two parties.

mutual regard for the Constitution; a reciprocal exchange of diplomatic notes between Delhi and Colombo

compare to/compare with: Compare to highlights similarities; compare with examines both similarities and differences.

He compared the new legislation to the Government of India Act, 1935. / The committee compared the two draft bills with each other.

I/me/myself: I is a subject pronoun; me is an object pronoun. Myself is reflexive and used only when the subject and object are the same. It is not a formal substitute for I or me.

The editor and I reviewed the draft. / He sent the proof to the editor and me. / I verified the Sanskrit citation myself.

8. Numbers

Spell out whole numbers from one to ten. Use numerals for 11 and above, and for all numbers in statistical, technical, or tabular contexts. Always use numerals for percentages, measurements, monetary amounts, dates, and page references.

three chapters; 15 volumes; 48 per cent; Rs 12,000; 200 BCE; page 34

Never begin a sentence with a numeral. Recast the sentence if necessary.

Forty-seven delegates attended. NOT: 47 delegates attended.

Use 'per cent' (two words) in body text, not the symbol %. The symbol is acceptable in tables and figures.

Dates: Day Month Year, no ordinal suffixes. Use a comma to separate a day-and-month date from the year in running prose only where ambiguity would otherwise arise.

15 August 1947; the events of 26 January 1950

For ranges of numbers, use an en-dash with no spaces.

pp. 112–145; 1920–1935

9. References and Citation

The *New Delhi Review of Books* uses **hyperlinks** for all citations and bibliographic references. Footnotes are not used. It is for editorial reference only.

While every claim requiring attribution must be cited. Quotations must be cited precisely, including page numbers where available. A paraphrase does not remove the obligation to cite.

Quotations of four lines or more are set as block quotations: indented, no additional quotation marks, followed by the citation.

10. Emphasis and Formatting

Bold and underlined text are not used in submitted copy except with explicit prior editorial sanction. Italics are used as described in Section 6 (quotation marks) and Section 2 (foreign terms), and are not otherwise used for emphasis. Structural elements of the piece (headings, subheadings) are agreed with the editors before submission. Authors do not apply their own heading hierarchy to submitted drafts.

Submissions must be in EB Garamond, Garamond, 12pt, double-spaced, with 2.5 cm margins on all sides, in .docx format.

11. Precise Language

Avoid vague quantifiers and intensifiers that weaken analytical precision.

Avoid: very, quite, rather, somewhat, a lot of, many—replace with specific or qualified terms where possible.
