BBC Focus magazine style guideban

Style help: New Oxford Dictionary For Writers & Editors (by no means the be-all and end-all, but very useful).

if in doubt, have a poke around here:
https://www.theguardian.com/guardian-observer-style-guide-a

or just ask

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Section 1: General rules

Abbreviations

• Unless an abbreviation is familiar (BBC, CIA), write the words in full on first appearance with the abbreviation in brackets.

• Try to avoid repeating abbreviations too often to avoid littering the page with capital letters.

• If an abbreviation can be pronounced (NASA, NATO), it does not generally require the definite article. Other organisations, except companies, should usually be preceded by the (the NHS).

NOTE: WHO… the World Health Organization. Normally, we'd Anglicise the spelling of organisation, but it this case it's the official name of the body so Organization keeps its z

• Those abbreviations that can be pronounced and are composed of bits of words rather than just initials should generally be spelled out in upper and lower case: Unicef, Unison. But write AIDS and NASA.

• Abbreviations of government departments take upper case for the nouns, lower for the prepositions. Ministry of Defence, MoD. The exception is Defra.

• Most upper-case abbreviations take upper-case initials when written in full (the LSO is the London Symphony Orchestra), but there are exceptions (the CAP is the common agricultural policy).

• When abbreviating titles (Prof, Dr, St) do not add a full stop. To avoid confusion, do not abbreviate street.

Accents

• If you use one accent, use every one that is needed: émigré, mêlée.

• Any foreign word in italics should be given its proper accents, as should any foreign place names.

An

• Use ‘an’ before any word beginning with a vowel sound (an egg, an MP) or an ‘h’ if the h is silent (ie: a hospital, a hotel, but an honorary degree).

Animals and plants

• If provided, Latin names should be written in italics, with a capital letter for the first word (*Bigus nosus*, the song thrush).

• Italicise Latin names if that’s the only one they are known by. Eg. *T. rex*, *Stegosaurus*.

BBC boxes (at end of article)

• TV/radio shows in italics. Website links in bold. Add fullstop at the end of the box

BBC Science Focus

• When referencing the magazine in the copy, list as *BBC Science Focus* (not just *Focus* or *BBC Science Focus Magazine*… unless it’s the subs page).

Biography boxes/discover more boxes (at end of article)

• Always in italics, so un-italicise any books/tv shows. Add a fullstop at the end.

Body copy of bio must start with writer’s first name. Eg.

by COLIN STUART *(@skyponderer)*

Colin is an astronomy writer. His latest book, How To Live In Space *(£16.99, Andre Deutsch), is out now.*

Capital letters

• Generally, use an initial capital for organisations and institutions, but not groups of people. If in doubt, use lower case unless it looks absurd.
• People. Use upper case for ranks and titles when written in conjunction with a name or if it is clear who is being referred to, but otherwise lower case. The associated definite article does not take a capital. Thus, President Bush and the President, when referring to him specifically, but the presidents of various countries…; Queen Elizabeth, the Queen, but ancient Incan queens
• Organisations and departments generally take upper case when their full name is used. Thus Ministry of Agriculture (but the ministry), House of Lords. But lower
case should be used for relatively insignificant groups: the Oxford University bowls club, the international economic subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.
• Parliament and Congress are upper case, but the opposition, government and cabinet are always lower case.
• The planets, stars and moons all take capitals, including Earth, the Sun and the Moon. Similarly, if you're talking about the Universe or the Solar System, use a capital. When talking about parallel universes, use lower case initials. With most astronomical terms just decide whether you're naming something or describing it – the Orion Nebula is one of many nebulae; the Galaxy is one of many galaxies.

Theories:
These are correct:
"Special Relativity"
"The Special Theory of Relativity"
"the theory of Special Relativity"

Similarly (and no less crucially) the following are also correct:

"General Relativity"
"The General Theory of Relativity"
"the theory of General Relativity"

The following are NOT correct, and those who commit these blunders should be shot:

"The theory of special relativity"
"The theory of general relativity"

Standard Model of particle physics

Collective nouns

• There is no firm rule about the number of a verb governed by a singular collective noun, alas.

• A government, a party, a company and a partnership are all it and take a singular verb.

• The police, military, fire brigade et al are also all it and take a singular verb.

• Sporting teams take a plural verb, because it is more clearly a group, human effort rather than a semi-faceless organisation.

• If in doubt, it is best to go by the sense. So, the staff is loyal, but the staff are at each other's throats. If a verb really clangs, then go with the common usage.

Dates

• Day month year, in that order with no commas. eg: 5 July 1998.

• Write 20th century, 5th century.

• 20th-Century ideas.

• A man in his 20s, a man in his early-20s.

• A 29-year-old man.

• In 100 years' time.

• Prefer to write decades in full: 1940s, 1920s. If abbreviated, do not include apostrophe. Eg. in the 20s.

• 400 BC (include space)

Directions

If you're referring to a specific region or a country then use upper case: The North, the Southwest, North America, West Africa. If you're indicating a direction only, then keep it lower case: Go to the southeast, then picnic on the south coast. The star can be seen if you look north. If you're using a directional adjective with 'ern' at the end, that's lower case again: northwestern Scotland, southeastern California.

Dog breeds

All lower case, even those named after places, unless that place is a country. So Yorkshire terrier but German shepherd; corgi, chihuahua but Irish wolf hound

Fewer/less

• Use fewer, not less, with numbers of individual items or people. So fewer than seven speeches, but less than £200.

Figures

• Never start a sentence with a figure; write the number in words instead or rewrite the sentence.
• Use figures for numerals from 10 upwards, and for all numerals that include a decimal point.
• Use figures below 10 when dealing with quantities that have an abbreviated unit of measurement: 5kg, not five kg. Alternatively, use five kilograms.
• Otherwise, use words for simple numerals from one to nine.
• If there are a selection of numbers in a sentence (numbers over and under 10) then go for numerals, eg. Deaths from this cause in the past three years were 14, 9 and 6. Do the same when expressing proportions, eg, 1 in 10 people contracted the flu; one in nine people contracted the flu.
"The snail advanced one inch,"
If you added a number over nine to that sentence, then you would use numerals instead of words when you write: "The snail advanced 1 inch on the first day and 12 inches on the second day."

If you have a third number that would normally be written as a word in the example sentence above, and if it isn't referring to inches, you would still write it out as a word. You only normalize to numerals if the numbers are referring to the same thing: The five researchers noted that the snail advanced 1 inch on the first day and 12 inches on the second day.

• It is permissible to use words rather than numbers when referring to a rough or rhetorical figure (such as a thousand curses).
• Fractions should be hyphenated and spelled out in words: two-thirds, nine-tenths. Only use fractions when referring to rough or rhetorical figures.
• Use m for million, bn for billion, tr for trillion only when referring to money: £8m, $10bn, £12tr.
• Thousands: write 130,000 and never 130 thousand.
• Four-figure numbers require a comma: 3,000. This doesn’t apply to years: 2000 BC
• Ranges. It is acceptable to mark ranges as 5,000-6,000 in boxes of statistics, but not in body copy. Write it out in full, eg: between 5,000 and 6,000 years ago.
• Figures over 1,000 take a comma to mark each set of thousands. (14,210, 1,000,000, etc) but dates do not.
• Percentages should always be written as a number. 5 per cent, 12 per cent.

Headlines

Headlines take sentence case: ‘New squid on the
block’, not ‘New Squid on the Block’

Hyphens (-) and dashes (– and —)

• Sub’s note: Hyphens, as in half-baked, are input with the minus key (beside 0 on the numeral strip of the keyboard). For dashes – which look like this – *BBC Focus* uses en dashes (–) [alt + minus key] rather than the longer em-dashes (—) [alt + shift + minus key]. Em-dashes are never used.

• En dashes are used with a leading and trailing space – not butted up against adjacent words. Hyphens are used tight with figures – there were 600-700 soldiers in the battle.

• Generally, hyphenate only when necessary. If it reads correctly without it, that’s fine. However, there are some rules to follow.

• Hyphenate fractions: two-thirds.

• Hyphenate words that begin with prefixes like ex, non (but not over, under, sub). anti, neo and many others are variable (anticlimax, but anti-virus, for example) – if in
doubt, consult the official dictionary.

• Hyphenate if it avoids ambiguity (a third-world war is not the third world war).

• Compound adjectives take a hyphen: right-wing groups, a 70-year-old judge, a 20th-Century novel.

• However, adverbs don’t need to be linked to participles or adjectives in simple constructions: the regiment was ill equipped; the principle is well established. But if the adverb is one of two words being used adjectivally, a hyphen may be used: the ill-equipped regiment; all well-established principles. Hyphenate if the adverb is short and common, such as ill, little, much and well. Less common adverbs, as well as all those that end -ly, are unlikely to need hyphens.

• The stringing-together-of-lots-and-lots-of-words diminishes authority. Keep it to three or four words at most.

• Hyphenate to separate identical letters: book-keeping, pre-eminent. (Exceptions: cooperate, coordinate, filmmaker, override, overrule, underrate, withhold.)

• Hyphenate nouns formed from prepositional verbs: bail-out, build-up, buy-out, call-up, set-up. (NB: setup as a noun in a technology/computing context has no hyphen)

• Makers, miners, owners and workers don’t need a hyphen and will take a space (car makers, coal miner) except for: policymakers, bookmaker, codemaker, filmmaker,
peacekeeper, troublemaker.

• When making an aside, try not to use en-dashes too much, as they quickly become noticeable if used too liberally. See Punctuation.

Initials

Don't use a point after initials, and/or close them up: PG Wodehouse not P. G. Wodehouse.

-ise / -ize

• Use -ise, not –ize endings wherever there is a choice.

Italics

• Italicise foreign words and phrases, unless they are so familiar they have become anglicised, such as ad hoc, glasnost, apartheid.

• Italicise albums, but list 'song titles' in single quotes.

• Italicise works such as books, films, newspapers, magazines, poems, short stories, works of art and academic journals.

• Italicise the names of ships and boats eg. *HMS Illustrious*

• Italicise the names of important planes eg. *The Spirit of St Louis, Hindenburg*

• The names of spacecraft and space shuttles do not take italics

• If a word requiring emphasis is used in copy already set in italics, use roman instead for the affected word.

Journals

• Italicise journal names, eg. *British Medical Journal* and cap up first letter of each word

• Journal articles - put the title in single quotes, with first word capped up. Eg.

A massive review of studies, 'Coffee consumption and health: umbrella review of meta-analyses of multiple health outcomes', published in the *British Medical Journal*.

Latin names

• Be careful about over-use of Latin names when they are not absolutely required, as this can impact heavily on readability and make us sound stuffy.

• Italicise Latin names if that's the only one animals are known by. Eg. *T. rex*, *Stegosaurus*.

Letters-page specifics

• In brackets, put issue name, then page eg. (Summer, p69)

• When relating something to a previous article, cap up first letter of first word and put in single quotes Eg. 'Cheese is dull'

• When relating to a whole section of a magazine, use italics. Eg. "In the *Discoveries* section of the January issue"

• When specifying an issue that is being discussed, do so thus: "In your recent news article 'Cheese is dull' (*BBC Focus*, November), you state that…" Don't bother with issue numbers – the readers don't care, as long as they know to which issue we're referring.

• Use common sense when specifying where someone comes from – if it's a tiny village in the Orkneys, just say Orkney Islands, for instance. Counties are as general as it should get, and include the country for anywhere not part of mainland UK (so say if it is Northern Ireland)

Names

• Write in full on first occurrence: Kylie Minogue.

• After first mention refer to readers, amateurs and subjects of 'light' articles by first names. Be aware that by this judgment you could insult your subject.

• After first mention refer to experts by last name.

• Drop Mr/Mrs wherever possible, but always use Prof/Dr to add weight to quoted experts. Note - you only need to include the title the first time you mention them.

So:

Prof John Jellybean, who likes to research confectionery, has discovered that red gummy bears are the best. "We discovered that red sweets are the best because they are strawberry-flavoured," Jellybean said.

• For people with honorary titles eg Prof Dame Sue Black, use their full title in first instance, then surname thereafter. Eg. Prof Dame Sue Black is an anatomist and forensic anthropologist. "I like studying bones," Black said.

May and might

• These two words are not always interchangeable, but if in doubt, try may first.

• Use might in the past tense: I might have gone to Leeds.

• Conditional sentences using the subjunctive also need might: If I go to Leeds, I might have to stand all the way.

• Conditional sentences stating something contrary to fact need might: If pigs had wings, birds might raise their eyebrows. [birds have eyebrows?]

Measurements

• All measurements in *Focus* should be metric (kilometres, metres, centimetres), followed by the imperial equivalent in brackets (for Brexiteers and, more importantly, our many friends across the pond). So: Neil Armstrong walked a total of 5km (approx 3 miles) on the Moon's surface.
Side note… no need for a full stop on abbreviated approximately)

• Temperature is measured in degrees Celsius (°C), but again followed by Fahrenheit equivalent. So, Water boils at 100°C (212°F)

• Width x height x depth: 6 x 7 x 8mm. (note the spaces and units only at the end after the final dimension)

• Either give speeds only in a 'real-world' measurement – such as km/h – or, at the least, give both: 20 metres per second (approx 100km/h)

• km/s (not km/sec)

• Close up units of measurement when used with figures (10kg, 20km, 45km/h, 7°C) except 10 tonnes.

• When using inches due to convention (TV screens etc), lead with quoted imperial dimension, shorten to 32in (for example) and follow with metric equivalent in brackets.

• When referring to the apertures of amateur telescopes tradition demands that you use inches: An 8in Cassegrain. Otherwise stick with the preferred metric system.

Money

Write 50p not 50 pence; £5 not £5.00; £5m not £5 million; £5bn not £5 billion.
Keep monetary units consistent throughout a feature. Prefer sterling to dollars, and if you need to write both put the dollars afterwards in brackets.
Approx goes after the value. For example: £9 approx.
And if the currency mentioned isn't pounds sterling, provide the £ equivalent in brackets afterwards

Orphans

Avoid leaving the first line of a paragraph at the bottom of a column. Try to have at least two lines of body copy (ie: not including a crosshead or similar) before the turn.

Percentage sign

• Write 58 per cent not 58% in body copy. The % symbol is okay in headlines or boxouts etc.

• Percentages should be spewlled out for one to nine then as a number for the rest. So five per cent; but 12 per cent. UNLESS it's in a range, in which case it's 5–12 per cent.

Prepositions

Prepositions at the end of sentences are permissible: an example such as this is a good one to go by.

Pull quotes (subs)

• Pull quotes should have quote marks ("XXXXX") even if the words aren't actually spoken by someone

• They use minimal punctuation to avoid looking cluttered: no comma or full stop before the closing inverted commas, no ellipsis to introduce it or mask edited sections, no punctuation after the name of the person.

• Slight paraphrasing of the body copy is fine (such as omitting unimportant words), but if you substantially rewrite the structure/flow of the quote, the body copy should change as well. Do this rarely, mind

Punctuation

• Apostrophes. Use the normal possessive ending 's after singular words or names that end in s: Paul Parsons's, boss's, Robert Matthews's, St James's. Use it after plurals that do not end in s: children's, media's. Use the ending s' on plurals that end in s where the s is specifically sounded already – bosses', Joneses' – and also plural names that take a singular verb: Reuters', Barclays'.

• Do NOT put apostrophes into decades: the 1990s.

• Or DVDs.

• Brackets. If a whole sentence is within brackets, put the full stop inside.

• Square brackets should be used for interpolations in direct quotations: "Let them [the poor] eat cake."

• Colons. Use a colon "to deliver the goods that have been invoiced in the preceding words" (Fowler). They brought presents: gold, frankincense and oil at $35 a barrel.

• Use lower case following a colon, unless it's a proper noun. Knight Rider: a shadowy flight into a dangerous world of a man who does not exist.

• Commas. Use commas as an aid to understanding. Too many in one sentence can be confusing.

• It is not necessary to put a comma after a short phrase at the start of a sentence if no natural pause exists there: On 2 August he invaded. Next time the world will be prepared. But a breath, and so a comma, is needed after longer passages: When it was plain that he had his eyes on Saudi Arabia as well as Kuwait, America responded.

• Use two commas, or none at all, when inserting a clause in the middle of a sentence.
• If the clause ends with a bracket, which is not uncommon (this one does), the bracket should be followed by a comma.
• Do not put a comma before and at the end of a sequence of items unless one of the items includes another and. Thus The doctor suggested an aspirin, half a grapefruit and a cup of broth. He ordered scrambled eggs, whisky and soda, and a selection from the trolley.
• Do not put commas after question marks, even when they would be separated by quotation marks: "May I have a second helping?" he asked.
• Dashes. You can use dashes in pairs for parenthesis, but not more than one pair per sentence, ideally not more than one pair per paragraph. Leave a space around each dash – like that. Hyphens are used for elision if you have to; omit the spaces: 5-7 July. But 5 to 7 July is preferable.
• Use a dash to introduce an explanation, amplification, particularisation or correction of what immediately precedes it.
• Use it to introduce a paradoxical or whimsical ending to sentences.
• Full stops. Use plenty. They keep sentences short. They help the reader. Do not use full stops at the end of headings, straps or captions.
• Inverted commas (quote marks). When quoting speech, use double quotes except for quotations within quotations. "When I say 'immediately', I mean some time before April," said the spokesman.
• Double quotes for referring to newspaper headlines. Eg. "Seagull terror: lock up your babies", "Giant gulls ate my dog" and "Seagull flew off with cat" are among the many sensational headlines of recent years.
• Do not use double quotes when explaining a term or referring to slang, etc. Use single quotes – eg: This so-called process of 'self-catalysation' is unique only to…
• If an extract ends with a full stop or question mark, put the punctuation before the closing inverted comma. His maxim was that "love follows laughter." In this spirit
came his opening gambit: "What's the difference between a buffalo and a bison?" If a complete sentence in quotes comes at the end of a longer sentence, the final stop should be inside the inverted commas. Thus, The answer was, "You can't wash your hands in a buffalo." She replied, "Your jokes are execrable."
• If the quotation does not include any punctuation, the closing inverted commas should precede any punctuation marks that the sentence requires.
• Semi-colons. Semi-colons should be used to mark a pause longer than a comma and shorter than a full stop. Don't overdo them. Use them to distinguish phrases listed
after a colon if commas will not do the job clearly. Thus, They agreed on only three points: the ceasefire should be immediate; it should be internationally supervised,

preferably by the OAU; and a peace conference should be held, either in Geneva or Ouagadougou.

Q&A

- Fullstop at end of World Records and In Numbers boxes

Said/says

In Discoveries, use said. In everything else, use says.

Standfirsts

Anything more than 25 words in length is a feature in its own right. Keep it short, sharp and engaging.

Split infinitives

Are officially okay now, but they're still a bit clumsy so try and avoid them if possible.

Theories

Lower-case. Eg. theory of evolution. Second law of thermodynamics

EXCEPT Relativity (see relativity)

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Time

8:05pm not 8.05pm (colons not fullstops)

8am, not 8:00am (not double-zeros when it's on the hour)

Please do not use 24-hour clock

Midday, noon, midnight - not 12.00 or 00.00

Titles

Use title case and italics for titles of books, plays, TV shows, movies etc (see also Italics), *Lord of the Rings; Close Encounters of the Third Kind; Who Wants to be a Millionaire*

Websites

• Do not put a fullstop if at end of sentence

• Use bitly link for complicated or long web addresses

• If website still works without www. and/or http://, then remove.

Which/that

'Which' informs, 'that' defines. This is the house that Jack built. This house, which Jack built, is now falling down.

Widow

• Avoid leaving the last line of a paragraph at the top of a page or column.

• Also avoid leaving a single word or part of a word at the end of a paragraph on a line on its own. At least two words or a third of a line (whichever is longer) is recommended. Subs may use soft returns if required.

Word breaks

Breaking a word at the end of a line, using a hyphen, is ugly and should be avoided if at all possible. However, in extremis, here are some guidelines…

• The aim should be to make these breaks as undisruptive as possible, so that the reader does not stumble or falter. Whenever possible, the word should be broken so that, helped by the context, the reader can anticipate the whole word from the part of it given before the break.

• Words that are already hyphenated should be broken at the hyphen, not given a second hyphen.

• Words can be broken according to their pronunciation, thus aristoc-racy rather than aristo-cracy.

• Words of one syllable should not be broken.

• Words of five or fewer characters should not be broken.

• At least three characters should be taken over to the next line.

• At least three characters should be left at the end of the line.

• Words should not be broken so that their identity is confused or their identifying sound is distorted.

• Personal names should not be broken.

• Figures should not be broken or separated from their unit
of measurement.

• A word formed with a prefix or suffix should be broken at that point: thus, bi-furcated, ante-diluvian, convert-ible.

• If a breakable word contains a double consonant, split it at that point: thus, ship-ping, prob-lem.

Banned words and phrases

• metaphors, similes, clichés and other figures of speech which you are used to seeing in print but should be used with care.

• 'a must-have gadget'.

• Our: in relation to the magazine itself: *Focus*'s columnist, not our columnist.

• very: use sparingly, it is very often unnecessary.

• etc: if it's important, list it. If it isn't why are you telling us about it?

Section 2: Greek alphabet

alpha	a
beta	b
gamma	g
delta	d
epsilon	e
zeta	z
eta	h
theta	q
iota	i
kappa	k
lambda	l
mu	m
nu	n
xi	x
omicron	o
pi	p

rho	r
sigma	s
tau	t
upsilon	u
phi	f
chi	c
psi	y
omega	w

For ease of use write out in full where possible. Use the symbols in brackets afterwards if you wish, and at a push in tables. Otherwise try to keep things as user-friendly as possible.

Section 3: General spellings

• Always prefer -ise to –ize endings where there is a choice.

• -able

debatable

dispensable

disputable

forgivable

imaginable

implacable

indescribable

indictable

indispensable

indistinguishable

movable

tradable

unmistakable

unshakable

• -eable

likeable

manageable

rateable
serviceable
traceable
unpronounceable
• -ible
accessible
convertible
digestible
inadmissible
indestructible
investible
irresistible
permissible
submersible
• The following list contains style decisions made on plurals, capitalisation, whether a prefix should be followed by a hyphen, and so on. Please send any suggestions for the list when you find it wanting.
addenda
adrenaline (Adrenalin is a trademark)
affect (verb, as in: this affected that.)
ageing
agendas
AIDS (not aids nor Aids)
aka not AKA
alumni
ambience (not ambiance)
amid (not amidst)
amoebae
among (not amongst)
Ancient Egypt
Ancient Greece
anti- (usually use hyphen)
anticlimax
antigravity
antimatter

antidote
anti-Semitic
antiseptic
antisocial
antitheses
anti-virus
appalling
appendices (printed)
appendixes (anatomy)
archaeology
archipelagos
arenas
artefact
auroras, not aurorae
avocados
bacilli
backup (noun)
back up (verb) so: I back up my files to disc, the disc becomes the backup. Simples
bacteria
balk (not baulk)
the Bar
bed bugs
bestseller
best-selling
Big Bang
bluish, not blueish (having a blue tinge)
bot (not ’bot)
brainwave
breakup (noun) is one word; break up (the verb) is two. So after you break up, you’ve had a breakup
breastmilk (but, cow’s milk, goat’s milk, etc)
buffaloes
bulletproof
bumblebee
bureaus (but bureaux de change)
by-product

cabinet

cacti

cafe

calves

cargoes

Catholics

CD-ROM

chateaux

chilli, chillies

Christmas day

cliché

Cloudcuckooland

Cold War

commandos

common sense (noun) It is just plain common sense

commonsense (adjective) Let’s take a commonsense approach

communiqué

consortia

constitution

conundrums

cooperate

coordinate

counterproductive

COVID-19

crematoriums

crowdfunding

cruise missile

curriculums

cyberspace

data are plural, a datum is singular, but please don’t use it

debatable

deepfake

deorbit

desperadoes

dialled

dietitian (not dietician)

disk (in a computer context), otherwise disc (eg slipped disc, protoplanetary disc). But it's a compact disc.

dispatch (not despatch)

Drugs: Class A drugs; Class B drugs (not class a; class b)

dwarfs

dynamos

earth-shattering (no cap 'e')

ebikes (Think we've reached a point now where people are familiar enough with products attaching the prefix 'e' to connote its digital/electric facility, so let's lose the hyphens and odd capitalisation of the second letter – especially as it makes starting a sentence with such words a frakking nightmare. If it's good enough for the broadsheets (or Berliners), it's good enough for us. The only exception being products from a certain company that add the prefix 'i', since that's a trademark.)

ebook, email but e-cigarette, e-commerce, e-learning, e-petition, e-reader

ebusiness

E. coli - do not italicise when talking about the bacterial infection. Italicise when talking about the bacteria specifically.

ecommerce

elibrary

email

ereader

echoes

ecu

effect (noun, as in: the effect of this was that.)

elite

$E = mc^2$

embargoes

embryos

émigré

encyclopaedia

equator

errata

Eskimos

et al

the euro (currency)

Euro- (generally no
hyphen)
Europhile
Europhobe
Eurosceptic
ex- (generally use hyphen)
exoplanet
extrasolar
façade
farther (distance), further (additional)
feted
foetuses
fiascos
flamingos
flatscreen
flotsam (wreckage or debris floating at sea or washed up on shore; not jetsam)
flyby
focused
focuses
folios
formulae
forums
fps (not FPS)
free fall (noun)
free-fall (verb, intrans)
french windows
fulfilling
fungi
gamma-ray bursts

GAMES – Games like *Monopoly, Trivial Pursuit* and *Articulate* should be capped up and italicised. But things like chess, poker and draughts should be lower-case and not italicised. Go is a weird one. cap up the first letter, but don't italicise ie. Go

gases (not gasses)
genera (plural of genus)
general synod
geniuses
gentlemen's agreement
g-force
ghettos
Google - only cap this up if referring directly to the company or the search engine. Eg. Google is the most popular search engine. Larry Page and Sergey Brin are the founders of Google. If you're just talking about googling something, then make the 'g' lower case.
government (lower case, all the time – unless it's at the start of a sentence.)
gram (not gramme)
Great Red Spot (as in Jupiter's storm)
guidebook
half-baked
half-board
half brother
half-century
half-cut
half-dozen
half-hearted
half-mast
half-measures
half-pint
half size
halftime
half-volley
halfway
half-wit
haloes
handheld
handkerchiefs
hand-sanitising
hand-washing
hard-wired

heartbeat

heart rate (not heartrate)

heatwave (not heat wave)

heroes

hiccup (not hiccough)

high-tech (not hi-tech, that's a brand of shoes)

holy grail (eg. The holy grail of physics). Unless you're talking about the *actual* Holy Grail that Jesus quaffed from, in which case, cap up.

home-made

home page

Homo sapiens

honeybee

hooves

household

hurrah (not hooray)

hurricanes – use numbers to depict category (Category 5, Category 4, etc. not Category Five, Category Four.)

impresarios

Incan (adj)

Incas (plural, the people)

indexes (of books), indices are indicators of index numbers

Industrial Revolution

infrared

innuendoes

inquire, inquiry (not enquire or enquiry)

inter- (no hyphen necessary)

internet (NB lower case)

jail (not gaol)

jetsam (goods or belongings thrown overboard, from a shortening of jettison)

jet stream

jewellery (not jewelry)

judgment

KB (kilobyte)

kb (kilobit)

kick-off

kick-start
kilogram (not kilogramme)
km/h (not kph)
lacunae
laptop
the left (politics)
librettos
life form (not lifeform)
lifelike
life-size
light bulb
light-year
light-speed
licence (noun, as in I have a licence to sell alcohol)
license (verb or adjective, as in: after an officer licenses (verb) this premises to sell alcohol, this licensed (adjective) premises has a licence (noun) to sell alcohol)
LIDAR
liquorice (not licorice)
loathe (hate)
longlist
loath (reluctant)
low-tech (not lo-tech)
makeup
manifestos
man-made
manoeuvre
MB (megabyte)
mb (megabit)
medieval
mêlée
mementoes
memoranda
meta-analysis
microorganism
mid-west

milieus
mind-bending (not mindbending)
mind-boggling
mind reader
mind-reading machine
mini-brain
minuscule NOT miniscule
MOD, Ministry of Defence
Moon phase: the phase is lower case, the Moon always takes a capital, so full Moon, new Moon, half Moon
moratoriums
mosquitoes
mottoes
multi- (usually no hyphen, so multitasking is thus)
NASA (not Nasa)
naught (for nothing), nought (for zero)
nebulae
neo- (usually use hyphen)
neoclassicism
neolithic
neologism
nerve-racking
the net (the internet)
the Netherlands (don't use Holland)
net zero
neuron (but Motor Neurone Disease)
Nobel Prize
Try to avoid Nobel Prize-winner as looks horrible. 'A winner of a Nobel Prize' is better
noes (plural of no – looks awful, so avoid if possible)
non- (usually use hyphen)
nonaligned
nonconformist
nonplussed
nonstop
no one (no hyphen)

northern lights (and southern lights)

northern hemisphere, southern hemisphere

North Star

nostrums

nuclei

okay (not OK)

online

opposition

oratorios

orientated

over (no hyphen)

Palaeolithic

panaceas

pâté

pay-off

peccadillos

peninsula (noun), peninsular (adj.)

phenomena

phoney (not phony)

pianos

plateaus

plug-in

the pope

potatoes

the press

practice (noun, as in a Doctor's Practice: the place where a doctor administers medicine)

practise (verb, as in I practise playing the piano, or more confusingly: a doctor practises medicine at his or her pratice.)

preventive (not preventative)

program (in a computer context only, otherwise programme)

prospectuses

Protestants

protoplanet

provisos

pummelled

quangos

quanta

the Queen

quorums
quotas
Qur’an
RAM
radios
rare earth metals (not rare-earth or rare Earth, because they are hard to find earth metals, not metals from a hard-to-find home planet)
re- (no hyphen necessary unless re-e… or meaning is different)
real-time (adjective) otherwise real time
Red Planet (initial caps when referring to Mars)
referendums
the right (politics)
roofs
ropey (not ropy)
saccharin (noun) saccharine (adjective)
salmonella - do not italicise or cap up when talking about the bacterial infection. Italicise when talking about the bacteria specifically.
salvoes
sanatoria
sat-nav
savannah
scarves
the Second World War (but World War II or WWII is preferred)
seawater
seabed
semicircle, semicircular
Semitic (-ism)
shock wave (two words)
shortlist (but Shortlist magazine)
short-term, long-term
side effect
silos
sit-ups

smartwatch, smartphone

smart home, smart glasses

solos

sopranos

space age (noun)

space-age (adj)

space capsule

spacecraft

spaceman

spaceport

space probe

spaceship

Space Shuttle (when referring to Columbia et al)

space station

spacesuit

space-time

spacewalk

spectra

spiky

stadiums

start-up

stilettos

stimuli

storytelling

strata

studios

subatomic, suborbital etc (not sub-atomic, sub-orbital)

sunbeam, sunshine, sunlight etc.

supermoon (not super Moon)

supernovae (not supernovas)

symposiums

tableaux

telltale

termini

Test match

Texas Hold ’em poker
textbook
think-tank
third world
time-lapse
tomatoes
tornadoes
touchscreen
transatlantic
T-shirt
turfs
Tutankhamun
type 1 diabetes. type 2 diabetes.
ultimatums
under- (no hyphen necessary)
ultraviolet
USA (noun)
US (noun or adjective)
usable
vaccines - these are tested in different phases: Phase 1, Phase 2, Phase 3, etc. Note the capital letters and the numerals.
vacuums
vertebrae
vetoes
video games
virtuosos
volcanoes
the web
-ward, -wards When it is an adjective a word like upward, downward, backward or forward should not end in s, but when it is an adverb it should. For example: "homeward bound", "the upward and the downward slope", "forward planning", but "spread outwards", "peer downwards", "move forwards"
website
wellbeing
Wi-Fi
wharves

while (not whilst)
white paper
whitish, not whiteish (having a white colour)
whizz
whodunnit
World Wide Web (never the WWW, and ‘web’ is preferred)
X-ray
yoghurt
zero-g

HD TV
3D TV

Some “generic” trade marks and alternative terms

Bluffer’s Guide Bluff Your Way Do not use in a branding sense, but can be used purely descriptively – eg “you bluffed your way out of that situation”
Botox Scientific term is ‘injectible botulinum toxin A product’. Botox is widely used generically but should not be used in a negative context in respect of a product not made by Allergan
Dictaphone tape recorder
Hoover vacuum cleaner
Jacuzzi jetted bath
Jetski jet water bike
Jockey cam/Helmet cam should not be used as a generic description of small cameras worn by jockeys for tv coverage – use “helmet camera” or “mini camera”
Outward Bound activity holiday
Portakabin, Portaloo portable building, portable toilet
Rollerblades in line skates
Time Out Do not use in a branding sense but can be used descriptively e.g. “do you need time out…”
Youth Hostel hostel

Other marks to avoid
Red Cross emblem - Restricted under the Geneva Conventions Act To indicate first aid, use the EU symbol of a white cross on a green background

Olympic rings - Protected by the Olympic Symbol Protection Act (logo must not be adapted) May be used or shown in programmes about the Olympic Games or Olympic movement

Noticeboard - Use of trademarks in programmes

Subject to Editorial Policy constraints on product prominence (see Editorial Guidelines Section 13: Editorial Integrity and Independence), trademarks can be used in programmes without legal problems in the following circumstances:

A. News and Factual Programmes

1. "Descriptive" or factual use There is no reason not to use trade marks or brand names in relation to the products or services for which they are registered. Examples: "British Oscars hopes dashed" or "Miss World controversy continues".

There is no requirement to use the ® or ™ symbol in written text, even if we are asked to by trade mark proprietors.

But be sure that the product or service we are describing really is the genuine article. Example: in a DIY programme do not say "Formica tends to buckle if not glued properly" if it is not Formica that is being used.

2. Generic marks Some terms which are often used descriptively are actually registered trade marks – eg Hoover, Portakabin, Outward Bound, Youth Hostel. These should not be used generically in a negative context. Example: "Two construction workers were injured when a portakabin collapsed". A list of these marks with alternative names to use is attached. N.B The BBC has given an undertaking not to use 'Outward Bound' to designate an organisation other than the Outward Bound Trust.

3. Use of brand images or logos Corporate logos are often used in connection with news stories about the organisation concerned. This is not trade mark infringement and although copyright may also protect the logo, this kind of use is usually justified under fair dealing and very rarely provokes complaint.

B. Drama Programmes

1. Spoken use only No problem if referring to the actual product in the fictional context. Examples:

'I've given the baby Calpol and he seems to feel better'.

'They were coming out of McDonalds when…'

'She claims her Rolex watch was stolen'. Avoid unduly negative fictional situations, such as getting food poisoning in a McDonalds, adverse reaction to a branded pharmaceutical product, or injury by exploding branded appliance - best in that case to use generic names such as burger bar, pain killer or vacuum cleaner. But take care to avoid 'generic marks' which although often used descriptively are actually registered trademarks -eg Hoover, Portakabin, Outward Bound, Youth Hostel. These should

not be used in a negative context. A list of these marks with alternative terms to use is attached. Do not use ‘Outward Bound’ to designate a fictional organisation – see 2 above.

2. Use on products or props - copyright issues There are no trademark issues with using actual products - eg food packaging, magazines etc, and recreating brands or logos on props should not infringe trademarks. Copyright may be infringed if the brand or logo has a design element or eg a magazine or newspaper shows text or photos. However most fleeting use of props such as newspapers being read, pictures on walls, TV being watched in a corner, will come under the exception of 'incidental inclusion'. This also applies to eg logos on uniforms or buildings or letterheads mocked up for dramas. For prominent use clearance may be necessary.

3. Use of fictional names or trademarks

These should be checked to make sure they are not real.

Further advice on trademarks/copyright fromLitigation & Intellectual Property ext. 02 81937and on defamation from Programme Legal Advice ext. 02 81911