

## Rules and best practices for commenting

These are rules for in code commenting (not doc blocks) that combine what I used in proof reading and a few other things that have come up.

### General

1. Comments should be as sentence like as possible.
2. Comments should use en-GB (See below)
3. Comments should precede the code they refer to.
4. Corollary: Comments should not be on the same line as the code to which they refer (which puts them after the code they reference). They should be on their own lines.
5. Comment blocks that introduce large sections of code and are more than 3 lines long should use `/* */` and should use `*` on each line with the same space/tab rules as doc blocks. If you need a large introduction consider whether this block should be separated into a method to reduce complexity and therefore providing a full docblock.
6. Do not use html in comments unless specifically related to the comment content.
7. Do not leave commented code unless there is a clearly explained reason for doing so.
8. Comments may include forward looking statements of how something will be extended or modified in the future but not todos indicating that code is not complete or ready to use.
9. Code that is included specifically to assure compatibility with other software (for example specific browsers or a specific version of the CMS or for backward compatibility reasons) should be clearly marked as such. If there is the intention to remove specific code at a future point, state that but do not use a deprecation tag or specify a release (this can be hard to predict).
10. Check spelling and grammar on all comments (see below).
11. Comments that are written in a readable and narrative style, especially when explaining a complex process, are encouraged. In general they should be placed close to the code explained rather than before the entire block of code.
12. Comments are not a replacement for detailed doc blocks and should be.
13. Rather than use docblock tags use See:, Link: and Note: for comments if appropriate.

### Sniffable or potentially sniffable

1. Always have a space between `//` and the start of comment text.
2. New lines should always start with an upper case letter unless
  - The line is a continuation of a complete sentence
  - The term is code and is case sensitive.
3. Don't use a blank line between comments and the code they refer to (no space underneath a comment block).
4. Comments should align with the code they refer to. (Same indenting as the line that follows the comment)
5. Always have a single blank line before a comment or block of comments.

Common spelling and grammar errors to check for

Joomla! contributors include many non native speakers of en-GB which makes it understandable that there are sometimes spelling and grammar errors. At the same time, some people reading comments also are non native speakers and may even use automated translation to understand comments. This makes it very important that comments should follow proper en-GB spelling and grammar rules.

Capitalise all letters of acronyms such as HTML, XML, SQL, GMT, and UTC. This is an exception to the general use of en-GB rules.

Lets versus let's

Lets means permits or allows to:

// This lets the user enter data

Let's is a contraction for let us and means we are going to do this now:

// Let's validate the field

Its versus it's

Its is the possessive form of it:

// Get its record

It's is a contraction of it is

// It's cold outside

Correct spelling of commonly misspelled words

General en-GB rules to watch for

Wikipedia provides a good summary of common differences between en-US and en-GB.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American\\_and\\_British\\_English\\_spelling\\_differences](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_and_British_English_spelling_differences)

Note that there are some instances where en-GB common usage (but not actual rules) varies slightly from en-AU and using en-AU is considered acceptable.

en-GB most commonly uses ise where en-US would use ize, such as normalise instead of normalize. (Note that standarize is an exception to this rule.)