International AIDS Society
Style Guide

Geneva
2009

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I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.
Martin Luther King, Jr.
Washington, DC
28 August 1963

First they came for the communists, and I did not speak out because I was not a communist. Then they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me – and there was no one left to speak out for me.
Pastor Martin Niemoeller
Holocaust survivor

We may take refuge in our stereotypes, but we cannot hide there long, because HIV asks only one thing of those it attacks: Are you human?
Mary Fisher
Huston, Texas
August 1992

[Rhetoric is] the art of enchanting the soul.
Plato
Phaedrus

Introduction

Language is powerful. It can clarify, or confuse; it can persuade, or repel; it can hurt, or heal. Since the beginning of the AIDS epidemic, language has been used for all those purposes, and it is in the interest of clearer, persuasive, empowering language that this style guide was prepared. The International AIDS Society (IAS) communicates on countless occasions to our members and other stakeholders involved in the global response to HIV/AIDS. When our newsletters, reports, letters and other electronic and hard-copy communications are clearly and concisely written, they help us achieve our goals and demonstrate that the IAS adheres to the highest standards of professionalism.

The IAS Style Guide is based on the World Health Organization (WHO) Style Guide and United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) addendum to the WHO guide. Consistent use of this guide will help IAS staff and others who contribute to our publications make more effective use of language, terminology, spelling and punctuation. It will improve the quality and effectiveness of our communications.

I WRITING STYLE

Voice and Technique

Use the active rather than the passive voice. The active voice is more direct and concise.
- The International AIDS Society invited 30 participants to a think tank. (Rather than: Thirty participants were invited by the International AIDS Society to attend a think tank.)

Put statements in positive form.
- He thought the study missed the mark. (Rather than: He did not think the study was progressing in an appropriate direction.)

Use definite, concrete language.
- It rained all day. (Rather than: There was a great deal of inclement weather that day.)

Omit unnecessary words and minimize the use of adjectives and adverbs. Keep your writing as concise as possible. Avoid expressions such as: there is no doubt that, it is important to note that, the reason why is that, and he is a person who. Keep sentences short. This is particularly helpful for readers whose first language is not English.

Use single spaces between sentences. Double spaces create unsightly gaps, particularly in justified text.

Spelling

Use British spelling for words. For example:
- *labour* (not labor)
- *centre* (not center)
- *catalogue* (not catalog)
- *fulfil* (not fulfill)
- *programme* (not program)
- *litre* (not liter)
- *colour* (not color)

For words such as organize and ostracize, use *ize*, not *ise*. (In British English, either spelling is accepted, but the United Nations and other international organizations use *ize*.)

See the most recent edition of the Concise Oxford Dictionary, available online at www.askoxford.com, for correct spelling and definitions of words. IAS staff should set the language default setting on their Outlook and Word applications to English (UK).

Abbreviations

Use abbreviations – particularly abbreviations for the names of organizations – only when you are certain readers will understand them. In all cases, write out the name in full the first time it appears, with the abbreviation that will be used in brackets.

- Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) research is a priority for the Industry Liaison Forum (ILF) in 2006.

Do not include the abbreviation unless you intend to use it in the document. If your document includes many abbreviations, include a separate list of abbreviations and their definitions.

When abbreviating titles such as mister or doctor in a person's name, use a period.

- Mr.
- Dr.
- Ms.

Note: when abbreviating words that would be used with commas if they were written out, continue to use the commas with the abbreviation.

- e.g.,
- i.e.,

Abbreviate conference names as follows:

- XVI International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2006)
- 4th International AIDS Society Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention (IAS 2007)

Acronyms

Spell out words in full whenever possible. Exceptions would be in cases where space is limited (e.g., fact sheets). As with abbreviations, write out the name in full the first time it appears, followed with the acronym that will be used in brackets:

- The International AIDS Society (IAS) is sponsoring the conference.

The only acceptable acronym for *person/people living with HIV/AIDS* is PLHIV (not PHA, PLWHA or PWA).

Avoid creating new acronyms for common expressions.

- new prevention technologies (not NPT)

Only very widely understood acronyms (HIV, AIDS) can be used without first spelling them out in full.

Note: if acronyms are used, no punctuation is required (e.g., HIV, not H.I.V.).

Capitalization

Capitalize proper names, position titles, and the names of specific organizations and institutions.
- The French Government sent a delegate. Otherwise, say "the government".
- Helene Gayle, President of the International AIDS Society, spoke at the XV International AIDS Conference.
- The New Zealand Ministry of Health is hosting a forum. If you are not using the full name, say "the ministry".
- The delegation travelled to North America.
- The conference was held in South America.
- The Internet is her primary source of information.

Do not capitalize titles when they are general or descriptive.
- Several government leaders met to discuss the issue.
- The committee reviewed policies developed by various ministries of health.
- The executive directors of all member agencies met yesterday.
- Delegates came from western Europe.
- Many conference delegates showed interest in the session.

Capitalize all significant words in the title of a section of a newsletter, fact sheet, document or report, not just the first word. For example:
- Preventing HIV: Opportunities and Challenges in Prophylactic Research

Contractions

Avoid contractions unless you are writing speeches, ad copy or text that is likely to be read aloud.
- *cannot* (not can't)
- *is not* (not isn't)

Spell out the names of months in full.
- The study was completed in January.

Currencies

Use a combination of abbreviations, symbols and numerals for amounts of money. The abbreviation (when required) and the symbol always precedes the numeral:
- US$5 million
- $4,697
- £26.50

- €100

When using a currency with a commonly used name and symbol, such as the dollar ($), write the currency in full the first time you use it (eg., US$ or ZW$).

Write out a lesser-known currency in full the first time you refer to it, and if appropriate, indicate its value against a major currency.
- The currency is the Mexican peso (MX$); the parity of the MX$ to the US dollar is about MX$10.70 per US dollar.

Dates

Write dates in the following form, without commas.
- 15 January 2006.

Do not place a zero before numbers below 10:
- 9 January 2006 (not 09 January 2006)

If using a date in a table or place where space is an issue, use the British short form for day/month/year:
- 15/01/06

Avoid starting sentences with a number or year. If that is not possible, write the number out in full.
- Two thousand and six was the first year he worked in Europe.

Use numbers for decades.
- The first case of AIDS was reported in the 1980s.

Note: there is no apostrophe before the *s* in 1980s. You would use an apostrophe, however, if you were writing *'80s* or *'90s*.

Do not use seasons to describe time periods; rather use quarters or months.
- Papers will be reviewed in the second quarter of 2009 (not in Spring 2009).

Fractions

Write out fractions. Hyphenate fractions when they are adjectives.
- The glass is two-thirds full.

Do not hyphenate fractions when they are used as nouns.
- He ate one quarter of the pie.

Hyperlinks

Avoid hyperlinks in documents whenever possible because they are difficult to keep up to date. If it is necessary to include a hyperlink, give the link to the web site rather than to the specific document. Hyperlinks should be underlined.

Measurements

Always use a number when followed by a unit of measurement. Do not use a space between a number and an abbreviated unit.
- 2g
- 14ml
- 59km

However, write out *litre* in full. It is difficult to read *120l*; *120 litres* is much clearer.

Numbers

Spell out whole numbers between one and nine.

Use numerals for numbers 10 and higher, unless the number starts the sentence; then write it out.
- Fifteen of the 75 samples tested positive.

Use the decimal point, not decimal comma. Always include a number before the point, even if it is a zero.
- 5.4%
- 0.5%
- $26.50

Use numbers and the percentage symbol (*%*) to express percentages. Do not include a space between a number and a % sign.
- Between 1995 and 2005, the incidence rate increased by 20%.

Do not include a space between a number and < or >
- <4
- >5

Large round numbers can be written using a combination of numerals and words or in words:
- 10 million or ten million

Use commas (not full stops or spaces) in numbers with four or more figures:
- 1,863
- 12,925
- 6,432,854

Quotations

Ensure all quotations correspond exactly to the original in wording, spelling, punctuation and use of capital letters.

Use an ellipsis with a space on either side (…) to replace any text omitted from a quotation.
- According to the article in the newsletter, "As the IAS embarks on an ambitious new phase … unity is more important than ever in strengthening our response to HIV/AIDS."

Enclose any words added for the sake of clarity in square brackets.
- The media reported that the Ugandan delegate was very knowledgeable: "[He] spoke for more than an hour about medical issues facing the country."

Include short quotations in the body of text, enclosed in quotation marks.

Use single quote marks only when there is a quotation within a quotation. Do try to avoid these unless absolutely necessary.

Do not use angled quotation marks (<< and >>) because these are not used in the English language.

Put any quotation that is longer than three lines in a separate paragraph, and indent the paragraph from both the left and right margins or use smaller type; quotation marks are not required. Use a colon to introduce the quotation.

If the punctuation mark is part of the quotation, put it within the quotation marks.
- He said, "I asked him to make a presentation at the conference."

If the punctuation mark is part of a longer sentence that includes a quotation, put the punctuation mark outside the quotation marks.
- You should use hyphens in "up-to-date information" but not in "information that is up to date".

II PUNCTUATION

Punctuation helps clarify meaning and prevent misunderstandings.

Apostrophe

Use apostrophes to show possession. Add *'s* after all singular nouns, even when the noun ends with an *s*, and after all plural nouns that do not end in *s*.
- The man's death caused great sorrow.
- The circus's owner hired a new clown.
- Charles's boat is moored in the harbour.
- The men's deaths caused great sorrow.

Add an apostrophe to plural nouns that end in *s*.
- The judges' decision was final.
- The IAS's head office is in Geneva.

When there is more than one noun, add an apostrophe and the letter *s* to the last noun to show possession.
- John and Jane's house is just two blocks away.

Note: *its* without an apostrophe is the correct possessive form. (*It's* is a contraction, short for *it is*.)

Colon

Use a colon to introduce a list.
- The menu featured three types of fish: salmon, sea bass and tuna.

Use a colon to indicate that the second statement or phrase explains or amplifies the first.
- The dog stopped suddenly: there was a rustling sound in the woods.

Use a colon to introduce a quotation when there is no direct speaker.
- As he read the article, he was reminded of one of Strunk and White's rules: "Use the active voice."

Use a colon to introduce a long quotation (i.e., more than three lines) that is set out as a separate paragraph. For example:
In the *Elements of Style*, Strunk and White caution against overwriting:

> When writing with a computer, you must guard against wordiness. The click and flow of a word processor can be seductive, and you may find yourself adding a few unnecessary words or even a whole passage just to experience the pleasure of running your fingers over the keyboard and watching your words appear on the screen. It is always a good idea to reread your writing later and ruthlessly delete the excess.

Do not use a colon (or a comma) after the salutation in a business letter.
- Dear Dr. Ramos (not Dear Dr. Ramos: or Dear Dr. Ramos,)

Comma

Use commas to indicate a pause or avoid ambiguity.

Use commas to separate lists of three or more items.

Do not use a comma before *and* unless required for clarity.
- The red, white and blue car turned left at the light.

- He spent the day hauling baskets, pruning trees, and picking and sorting fruit.

Use commas to separate relative clauses in a sentence.
- He put the basket, which was full of apples, in the kitchen.
- Standing on the top of the hill, she could see for miles.

Use a comma to introduce a quotation when there is a direct speaker. For example:
- The foreman called down from the third floor, "We need three more people working up here."

Use a comma to separate contrasting phrases. For example:
- Seven countries voted in favour of the amendment, six voted against.

Dash

Avoid the use of dashes to separate text.

Use a dash only when other more common punctuation marks, such as a comma, a colon or parentheses, are inadequate.
- He chose the blue vase – the one on the top shelf – for the flower arrangement.

Hyphen

Use hyphens to join words and avoid ambiguity. Hyphens are often used when words are combined to form an adjective that is used before the noun.
- The manager asked for up-to-date sales information.

Use a hyphen after a prefix to avoid confusion.
- *co-op* (not *coop)*
- *re-treating* to mean treating something a second time as opposed to *retreating* from the battle

Use a hyphen with a prefix before a word that starts with a capital letter.
- sub-Saharan Africa

Note: the word *email* is not hyphenated, but other e-terms are.
- e-commerce

Avoid the use of hyphens for word breaks. IAS staff should turn off the automatic hyphenation in their Outlook and Word applications.

Semi-colon

Use a semi-colon to link independent clauses or sentences.

- The conference was worth attending; the sessions provided useful treatment information.

Use semi-colons to separate passages that already contain commas.
- The delegates came from: London, England; Cape Town, South Africa; Beijing, China; Lima, Peru; and Tokyo, Japan.

Stroke, Slash or Oblique Dash

Avoid the use of the stroke, slash or oblique dash (/) to substitute for the word *or*.
- Dear Sir or Madam (not Dear Sir/Madam)

When you do use a stroke or slash, do not leave spaces before and after the / unless required to avoid an awkward line break.
- HIV/AIDS (not HIV / AIDS)

III FORMATTING

NOTE: If writing for a journal, check the formatting specifications for that particular journal. These often differ from those used by IAS, and from one journal to another.

Bulleted Lists

If each item in the list is not a complete sentence, use a colon to start the list, begin each item with a lower-case letter, and place a full stop after the last item (as shown in the example here). Ensure that bullets are left aligned with the preceding sentence or paragraph.

The factors that influence health include:
• education
• socio-economic status
• physical environment
• social support.

If each item in the list is one or more complete sentences, start each item with a capital letter and end it with a period (full stop). For example:

The speaker described the normal procedure in the emergency department:
• All patients are seen by a triage nurse.
• Urgent cases are referred directly to a physician.
• Non-urgent cases are sent to the family practice clinic.
• Cases whose condition cannot be quickly classified as either urgent or non-urgent are sent to a waiting area for observation and monitoring.

Figures

Keep figures as simple as possible. Titles should be brief, and graphics clearly labelled.

Figures should be numbered and appear in the order they are cited.

An abbreviation may be used in the title.
- Fig. 3

Footnotes

There is often confusion between a footnote, citation and reference. According to www.askoxford.com:
- A footnote is an additional piece of information printed at the bottom of a page.
- A citation is a quotation from or reference to a book or author.
- A reference is a mention or citation of a source of information in a book or article.

Use footnotes to provide extra detail, such as references or definitions of unfamiliar terms that would distract the reader if included in the text.

Keep footnotes to a minimum. Place the footnote number, using superscript Arabic Numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.), after any punctuation that immediately follows the word or phrase to which the footnote refers.

Number footnotes consecutively.

Place footnotes at the bottom of the page on which the footnote number appears.

Citations

Citations can be inserted in the text using either:
- the Harvard system, which includes the author's name and date of the reference in the body of the text. For example: Ballance, Ewart & Fitzsimmons (2001) reported ...; Researchers have found that … (Ballance, Ewart & Fitzsimmons, 2001; Allsopp, 2002)
- a numerical system, in which the citations are numbered consecutively as they occur in the text. *Hobbs & Wynn*[2] *have reported …* ; A French study found …[3].

The second example follows the "Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals" (the so-called Vancouver style), formulated by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors.

Use the numerical system ONLY when dealing with a large number of references where including a long list of authors in the text may be distracting.

References

Use the "Vancouver style" when you are listing references.

List all authors when there are three or fewer; when there are four or more, give only the first author's name and add "et al".

Write out journal names in full.

Italicize the titles of books and journals (use initial capital letters for the latter). Do not italicize the titles of individual papers or articles; enclose them in quotation marks.

Use punctuation as in these examples; note that there is no space between the colon and the page numbers.
- References to unpublished findings or personal communications should be followed, in parentheses, by the statement "unpublished data" or "unpublished observations" or "personal communications", the name of the authority cited and the date: … (L Daley, unpublished data, 2003).

Examples of References

Here are examples of common references. Note: when using the Harvard system, modify the format and put the date in parentheses immediately after the authors' names, followed by a full stop.
- Willet MC (1995). Diet, nutrition, and avoidable cancer. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 103(Suppl. 8):S165–S170.

See IMD (IMDQueries@who.int) for any not covered here.

Article in a journal

Burt BA, Pai S. Sugar consumption and caries risk: a systematic review. *Journal of Dental Education*, 2001, 65:1017–1023.

Book

Krug EG et al., eds. *World report on violence and health*. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2002.

Chapter in a book

Melton LJ III. *Epidemiology* of fractures. In: Riggs BL, Melton LJ III, eds. *Osteoporosis: etiology, diagnosis, and management*, 2nd ed. Philadelphia, Lippincott-Raven, 1995:225–247.

Corporate author

Heart Protection Study Collaborative Group. MRC/BHF Heart Protection Study of antioxidant vitamin supplementation in 536 high-risk individuals: a randomised placebo-controlled trial. *Lancet*, 2002, 360:23-33.

If the corporate author is also the publisher, mention it only once. Where an IAS publication has no named author, the IAS should be shown as the publisher:

- Access for All. Report on the XV International AIDS Conference, Bangkok, Thailand. Geneva, International AIDS Society, 2004.

Databases and electronic publications

Reference information from electronic sources, such as online journals and databases and CD-ROMs, using the same style as print publications with a note added, if necessary, to indicate the electronic version:

- Harrison *CL*, Schmidt PQ, Jones JD. Aspirin compared with acetaminophen for relief of headache. *Online Journal of Current Clinical Trials*, 2 January 1992.
- *CANCERNET*-PDQ [online database]. Bethesda, National Cancer Institute, 29 March 1996.
- Lewin SA et al. Interventions for providers to promote a patient-centred approach in clinical consultations. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, 2001, (4):CD003267.

Dissertation or thesis

Rodrigues CS. Dietary guidelines, sugar intake and caries increment. A study in Brazilian nursery school children [thesis]. London, University of London, 1997.

Document (numbered)

Montresor A et al. *Guidelines for the evaluation of soil-transmitted helminthiasis and schistosomiasis at community level*. Geneva, World Health Organization, 1998 (WHO/CDS/SIP/98.1).

Foreign language reference

Jarquin E, Carrillo F. *La económica política de la reforma judicial [The political economy of judicial reform]*. Washington, DC, Inter-American Development Bank, 1999.

Legal and government documents

Legal systems vary between countries, and the conventions for referring to legislation and judgments vary accordingly. The same is true for systems of government and the resolutions of parliaments.

When citing a court case in the body of a text, use the following style:

- *Sidaway v. Bethlehem Royal Hospital Governors* [1985].

When providing more comprehensive information in the reference list, use the convention of the legal system in question, which should resemble the following style:

- *Australian Federation of Consumer Organisations v. Tobacco Institute of Australia*, 6.2 TPLR 2. Federal Court of Australia, 1991.

Legislation should be described according to local conventions. For example:

- In Brazil, *Order* No. 490 of 25 August 1988 permits ...
- Both New Zealand (Smoke-free Environments Act 1990) and Spain (Crown Decree No. 192/1988 of 4 March 1988) require ...

The information given in the citation may be sufficient to guide the reader to the source document. Alternatively, more detail can be given in a reference:

- Nigeria. The Tobacco Smoking (Control) Decree 1990, Decree No. 20. Dated 25 June 1990. *International Digest of Health Legislation*, 1990, 41:640-641.

Conferences

Italicize the themes of conferences.

- *Africa's Response: Face the Facts* (the theme of ICASA 2008)
- *Universal Action* Now! (the theme of AIDS 2008)

Meeting reports and decisions

When referencing a statement in a summary record of a meeting or resolutions, cite the year and resolution number in the body of the text. For example:

- … as *endorsed* by the Fifty-fifth World Health Assembly in resolution WHA55.27 in 2002.

If you wish to include more comprehensive information in the reference list:

- Resolution WHA39.27. The rational use of drugs. In: *Thirty-ninth World Health Assembly, Geneva, 5-16 May 1986. Volume 1. Resolutions and decisions, and list of participants*. Geneva, World Health Organization, 1986 (WHA39/1986/REC/1), Annex 5:93-105.

Monograph in a series

Prevention and control of schistosomiasis and soil-transmitted helminthiasis. Report of a WHO Expert Committee. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2002 (WHO Technical Report Series, No. 912).

WHO Expert Committee on Biological Standardization. Fiftieth report. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2002 (WHO Technical Report Series, No. 904).

Newspapers and television

Formatting styles for references to medical and scientific journals are not easily applied to other types of popular media. The reference should provide sufficient information to guide the reader to the source document. For television and newspapers: identify the day, month and year of broadcast or publication; and provide information such as the section designator, the page number and the column number for the newspaper, or the time of broadcast for a television programme. If the name of the country or city is not included in the title, it should be added in parentheses and not italicized.

- Lundberg *GD. The medical profession in the 1990s* [transcript]. *American Medical Television*, 15 September 1993.

If the writer of a newspaper article is named:

- *Rensberger* B, Specter B. CFCs may be destroyed by natural process. *Washington Post*, 7 August 1989, A:2.

If the writer is not named:

- [Anonymous]. Gene data may help fight colon cancer. *The Times* (London), 24 August 1990:4.

Published proceedings paper

DuPont B. Bone marrow transplantation in severe combined immunodeficiency with an unrelated MLC compatible donor. In: White HJ, Smith R, eds. *Proceedings of the third annual meeting of the International Society for Experimental Hematology*. Houston, TX, International Society for Experimental Hematology, 1974:44–46.

Video or audio cassette

Clark R et al., eds. *Topics in clinical microbiology* [audio cassette]. Baltimore, MD, Williams & Wilkins (for the American Society for Microbiology), 1976.

Information obtained on the Internet

Food allergens: when food becomes the enemy. Washington, DC, United States Department of Agriculture, Department of Health and Human Services, and United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2001 (http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/fdac/features/2001/401_food. html, accessed 21 August 2002).

Tables

Keep tables as simple as possible. Keep titles and column headings brief. Titles and column headings should be repeated at the top of each page if the table extends over more than one page.

Put footnotes to the table immediately below the table in the following order: explanations of abbreviations and notes on statistics; source and general notes; notes on specific parts of the table; and acknowledgements.

IV STANDARD IAS FORMATS

Font

For all documents, use Arial 12 point (10 point for email communications).

Letters

See sample on next page.

If using an electronic letterhead, use only the version pasted on the IAS G: drive. Do not create your own letterhead.

Place the date under the IAS logo, aligned to the left margin. Place the address under the date, aligned to the left margin, and align all subsequent paragraphs, including the opening and closing salutation, to the left margin. Address correspondence directly to the individual, using the appropriate salutation (i.e., Mr., Ms., Dr.).

The appropriate closing is *Sincerely* or *Best regards*, followed by the writer's name and title. If the letter exceeds one page, number the pages in the bottom right hand corner.

Email

Use the following standard email signature format so all email messages contain relevant and consistent contact information:

Craig McClure
Executive Director
International AIDS Society
International AIDS Conference
IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention
71 Avenue Louis Casaï P O Box 28
1216 Cointrin
Geneva, Switzerland
Tel: +41 (0)22 7100 809
Fax: +41 (0)22 7100 899
Email: Craig.McClure@iasociety.org
Website: www.iasociety.org | www.ias2009.org | www.aids2010.org

SAMPLE LETTER FORMAT

Date (day/month/year)

Address
Address
Address

Dear Sir or Madam

TOPIC LINE

Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
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Sincerely

Your name
Your position

V TERMINOLOGY

Non-stigmatizing Language

Make every effort to use language that is inclusive, and does not discriminate against or stigmatize people.

Terms/Usage to Avoid	Preferred Terms/Usage
gender stereotypes or unnecessary references to a person's sex or gender	Note: the term *sex* refers to biologically determined differences; the term *gender* refers to differences in social roles and relationships between men and women. Gender roles are learned and are affected by age, class, race, ethnicity, religion and economic and political environments.
cultural stereotypes or unnecessary references to race or culture	
references to someone's age unless it is relevant	
aged, frail, geriatric, no longer active or no longer productive (to describe older people)	older, elderly
the use of paired pronouns, such as: *he/she* or *she or he*	rewrite the sentence in the plural form: *they*.
policeman, average man (unless you are referring to information specific to men)	police officer, average person
inexperienced or immature (to describe young people)	young
underdeveloped countries	developing countries, low-income countries, middle-income countries, resource-limited settings
the disabled, the handicapped, the blind (to describe people with disabilities)	people with physical disabilities, people who are blind
AIDS victim, AIDS sufferer, AIDS carrier	person/people living with HIV/AIDS, (PLHIV)
innocent AIDS victim to describe people who acquired HIV through a medical procedure (e.g., blood transfusion) or children who acquired HIV through maternal transmission	people with medically acquired HIV or children with HIV
combative or military language, such as *struggle*, *fight*, *battle* and *war*	response
church or religious organization	faith-based organization

prostitute	sex worker
safe sex	safer sex
risk groups	risk behaviours
drug addicts	drug behaviours
drug abuse	drug use
sharing needles	using contaminated injecting equipment
HIV+ person, HIV- person	HIV-positive person, HIV-negative person Note: the person is HIV positive (i.e., no hyphen required)

HIV/AIDS Glossary of Terms

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS): A disease caused by a retrovirus, the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and characterized by failure of the immune system to protect against infections and certain cancers.

Antiretroviral: Treatments that suppress viral replication and HIV disease progression. If you use the abbreviation, *ARV*, ensure you have written out the word in full at first mention. Note that *ART* refers to antiretroviral treatment.

CD4 count: CD4+ T cells control the body's immune response against infections and are the primary targets for HIV. CD4 cell count is used as one measure of HIV disease progression. CD4 tests measure the number of T cells containing the CD4 receptor. Results are usually expressed in the number of cells per microliter (or mm^3) of blood. The preferred IAS style is to use mm^3. For example: *His CD4 count was stable at 350 cells/mm³.*

GIPA: acronym for the *greater involvement of people living with HIV/AIDS*.

Highly active antiretroviral therapy: Treatment regimens that suppress viral replication and the progression of HIV disease. The usual regimen combines three or more different drugs, such as two nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors and a protease inhibitor or other combinations. If you use the acronym, HAART, please write it out in full at first mention.

HIV incidence (sometimes referred to as cumulative incidence): The proportion of people who have become infected with HIV during a specified period of time. It is usually presented as a rate (e.g., the number of cases per 100,000 population).

HIV-infected: Indicates that evidence of HIV has been found via a blood or tissue test.

HIV-negative (or seronegative)**:** No evidence of infection with HIV (e.g., absence of HIV antibodies) in a blood or tissue test.

HIV-positive (or seropositive): Evidence of infection with HIV (e.g., presence of HIV antibodies) in a test of blood or tissue.

HIV prevalence: The proportion of individuals in a population who have HIV at a specific point in time (usually given as a percentage).

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV): The retrovirus that weakens the immune system, ultimately leading to AIDS. Since HIV means 'human immunodeficiency virus', it is redundant to refer to the *HIV virus*.

Human immunodeficiency virus type 1 (HIV-1): The retrovirus isolated and recognized as the causal agent of AIDS. HIV-1 is classified as a lentivirus in a subgroup of retroviruses. Most viruses and all bacteria, plants and animals have genetic codes made up of DNA, which uses RNA to build specific proteins. The genetic material of a retrovirus such as HIV is the RNA itself. HIV inserts its own RNA into the host cell's DNA, preventing the host cell from carrying out its natural functions and turning it into an HIV factory.

Human immunodeficiency virus type 2 (HIV-2): A virus closely related to HIV-1 that has also been found to cause AIDS. It was first isolated in West Africa. Although HIV-1 and HIV-2 are similar in their viral structure, modes of transmission, and resulting opportunistic infections, they differ in their geographical patterns of infection.

Injecting drug users (IDUs): People who take drugs by injection. Avoid the acronym; spell out in full.

Mother to child transmission (MTCT): Transmission of a pathogen such as HIV from mother to fetus or baby during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding. Please note: *mother to child* is not hyphenated.

Opportunistic infections: Illnesses caused by various organisms, some of which do not usually cause disease in persons with healthy immune systems. Persons living with advanced HIV infection may experience opportunistic infections of the lungs, brain, eyes and other organs. Opportunistic infections common in persons diagnosed with AIDS include: *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia; Kaposi's sarcoma; cryptosporidiosis; histoplasmosis; other parasitic, viral and fungal infections; and some types of cancers. Avoid the use of the acronym, *OI*; write it out in full.

Seroprevalence: The proportion of persons who have serologic evidence (i.e., from blood testing) of HIV infection at any given time.

Serostatus: The presence or absence of HIV antibodies in the blood of an individual.

Sexually transmitted infection (STI): An infection spread from person to person during sexual contact. STIs include: syphilis, gonorrhoea, chlamydia, human papilloma virus, genital herpes, chancroid, genital mycoplasmas, hepatitis B, trichomoniasis, enteric infections, ectoparasitic diseases (i.e., diseases caused by organisms that live on the outside of the host's body), and HIV. Use *sexually transmitted infection* (STI) instead of *sexually transmitted disease* (STD).

Surveillance: The ongoing and systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data about a disease or health condition. Collecting blood samples for the purpose of surveillance is called serosurveillance.

Universal precautions: A simple standard of infection control practice to be used to minimize the transmission risk of blood-borne pathogens.

Vertical transmission: Transmission of a pathogen such as HIV from mother to fetus or baby during pregnancy or birth.

For more extensive glossaries of HIV/AIDS terms, as well as a reporting guideline, see:
* http://gametlibrary.worldbank.org/pages/30_Glossary_English.asp
* http://www.kff.org/hivaids/7124.cfm

Troublesome Words

For an extensive list of words and phrases that are frequently confused, misused or spelled incorrectly, please refer to the World Health Organization's style guide. Also useful is Strunk and White's classic, The Elements of Style. The following is a brief list of troublesome words.

a, an	*A* introduces a noun that starts with a consonant. *An* goes before a noun that starts with a verb or a noun that *sounds* as if it starts with a verb (examples: an MRI; a hospital).
accept, except	*Accept* means receive; give an affirmative answer; regard favourably. *Except* means not including.
accommodate	Note the word takes two Cs and two Ms.
affect, effect	As a verb, *affect* means to influence; *effect* means to bring about or accomplish. As a noun, *affect* has a psychological meaning; *effect* means the result of an action. When you *affect* something, you have an *effect* on it.
alleviate, ameliorate	*Alleviate* means to lessen or make less severe. *Ameliorate* means to make or become better; improve.
billion	One billion is a thousand million.
can, may	*Can* means "is able to"; *may* means "is possibly able to".
classic, classical	*Classic* means of the first class; of acknowledged excellence and remarkably typical or outstandingly important. *Classical* means of ancient Greek or Latin literature, art or culture or having the form used by the

	ancient standard authors.
compare to, compare with	As a noun, *complement* refers to something that completes or one of two things that go together and is also used to refer to a protein present in blood plasma that combines with an antigen-antibody complex to bring about destruction of foreign cells; *compliment* refers to an expression of praise. As a verb, *complement* means to complete; *compliment* means to congratulate or praise.
compose, comprise, include	*Compose* means put together to form a whole. *Comprise* typically means consist of. *Comprised of* is therefore incorrect. *Include* means contain as part of a whole. Use *comprise* or *composed of* to introduce the complete list of items that make up a whole, and *include* to introduce a list of some of those items.
consequent, subsequent	*Consequent* means following as a result or consequence. *Subsequent* means following a specified event in time.
continual, continuous	*Continual* means repeated, happening over and over again. *Continuous* means happening constantly without stopping.
council, counsel	*Council* is an advisory body of people formally constituted and meeting regularly. As a verb, *counsel* means advise. As a noun, *counsel* means advice.
data, datum	*Data* is the plural form of *datum* and should be used with a plural verb.
economic, economical	*Economic* means of or relating to economics or maintained for profit. *Economical* means sparing in the use of resources; avoiding waste.
ensure, insure	*Ensure* means make sure an action will be taken. *Insure* refers to the business of an insurance company.
endemic, epidemic, pandemic	*Endemic* means regularly or only found among a particular people or in a certain region. *Epidemic* is a widespread occurrence of a disease in a community at a particular time. *Pandemic* means prevalent over a whole country or the world.
etc.	An abbreviation of *etcetera* (and so forth). Avoid in formal text. If you are introducing a list with for example or such as, it is incorrect to add *etc.* at the end of the list.
fewer, less than, under	*Fewer*, the comparative of few, is used when referring to a smaller number of something (numbers). *Less*, the comparative of little, is used when referring to a smaller amount of something (quantities). *Under* refers to a location. (Examples: Less than 50% of patients … Fewer than 20 people … Under the table …)
imply, infer	*Imply* means suggest a conclusion. *Infer* means draw a conclusion from specific or unspecified evidence.
last, past	*Last* refers to something that is final (example: the last emperor …). *Past* refers to the most recent (example: the past 10 years …).

majority, most	*Majority* means most of a set of people, or the greater part numerically. It should not be used as a substitute for the greater part of a whole that is not numerical; *most* is a better choice. (Examples: The majority of the patients responded to treatment. Disease X is endemic in most of the African continent.)
more than, over	Use *more than* when referring to quantities or to compare two quantities. *Over* is used when referring to a place/location. (Example: More than 50 patients …)
prescribe, proscribe	*Prescribe* means advise and authorize the use of (a medicine or course of treatment) or lay down or recommend a course of action. *Proscribe* means forbid, especially by law, or reject or denounce.
prevalence, incidence	The *prevalence* of a disease is the number of cases in a defined population at a specified point in time; its *incidence* is the number of new cases arising in a given period in a specified population. There may be a high prevalence and a low incidence, as for diabetes, or a low prevalence and a high incidence, as for the common cold; colds occur more frequently than diabetes but last for only a short time, whereas once contracted, diabetes is permanent. The *prevalence rate* and the *incidence rate* are often expressed as the number of cases per 1,000 population.
sex, gender	*Sex* refers to those characteristics of women and men that are biologically determined; *gender* refers to those characteristics that are socially constructed.
stationary, stationery	*Stationary* means remaining in one place, not moving. *Stationery* refers to writing materials sold by a stationer.

Sources: WHO style guide, The Elements of Style, IAS staff members

References

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- Strunk W, White EB. *The Elements of Style*, Fourth Edition. USA, Longman, 2000.
- Truss L. *Eats Shoots and Leaves*. New York, Gotham Books, 2004.
- *UNAIDS Editorial Guide*. Geneva, UNAIDS, 2004.
- *WHO Style Guide*. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2004.