

The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) and Society for Education and Training (SET) Written, Digital and Social Media Style Guide

Contents

Digital Media

1. Setting out page structure for online news/articles/blogs
2. Linking to internal pages
3. Linking to external pages
4. Adding related links and promo boxes

General Rules

5. Titles and headings
6. General writing guidelines
7. Active writing voice
8. Abbreviations and acronyms
9. Bullet points
10. Capitalisation
11. Dashes
12. Dates and times
13. Compass directions
14. Full stops
15. Hyphenation
16. Numbers
17. Organisations
18. Telephone numbers
19. Quotes and speech marks
20. Grammatical pointers
21. Terminology guidelines

Brand and Social Media

22. Font
23. Branding guidelines
24. Social media
25. References

This guide is aimed at providing a standard and consistent way of spelling, writing and expressing key words, numerals and abbreviations. It is common for organisation to produce such a guide. Some sections such as 1-4 are specific to certain media, such as web copy.

This style guide contains many of the rules followed in the [Guardian/Observer style guide](#) and [Gov.uk style guide](#), which you can look at for further clarification. If you have any queries, please contact commsteam@etfoundation.co.uk, and more specifically Julia Faulks.

Digital copy

1. Setting out page structure for online news/articles/blogs

- **Intro:** A clear introduction, explaining the what, why and when of the article or page using key words (up to 50 words).
- **Heading 2/3:** Headings to break up large paragraphs of text.
- **Bullet points:** To break up lists or explanations.
- **Feature box:** Use for small case studies or important information.
- **Images:** Author/accompanying images.
- **Word count:** ideally, 800 to 1000 words max per page.
- **Related links:** Include up to 10 links where possible.

Search engine optimisation

Avoid starting a page with a link – always use an introduction which includes keywords and phrases and use relevant and explanatory headings. Complete the metadata section to increase SEO rankings. Learn more about SEO via the Hobo website.

2. Linking to internal pages (open in same window)

Include Alt tag of the page title.

Do not use the following:

- Please click here (avoid any reference to 'click here')
- Read more here
- Download here
- Link here
- Read this link

Instead, explain the link by using sentences that make sense and stand alone. Underline the whole sentence so it can be easily seen against the other text.

- Download SET's membership prices.
- Find out more information on the ETF website.
- Visit our membership pages to find out more.

3. Linking to external pages (open in new window)

Include a simple Alt tag, for example: BBC website, ETF website.

- Visit the Education and Training Foundation's website to find out more.
- For more information, visit the Education and Training Foundation website.
- You can find out more by visiting the Education and Training Foundation website.

4. Adding related links and promo boxes

- Include up to five related internal links.
 - If you add a promo box (SET website), make sure it isn't linking to the same page it is on (unless it is being pulled through from the home page, in which case this can't be helped).
-

General rules

5. Titles and headings

- Aim for a title with no more than 10 words.
- Titles only need a capital letter at the start of the sentence. Same rule applies for headings.

YES: SET launches mentoring service and increased access to research

NO: SET Launches Mentoring Service And Increased Access To Research

6. General writing guidelines

To keep content understandable, concise and relevant, it should be informative, clear and concise and specific. Always use plain English. Don't use formal or long words when easy or short ones will do. Use 'buy' instead of 'purchase', 'about' instead of 'approximately' and 'like' instead of 'such as'. Additionally, keep in mind George Orwell's rules of writing:

1. Never use a metaphor, simile or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.
2. Never use a long word when a short one will do.
3. If it is possible to cut out a word, always cut it out.
4. Never use a foreign phrase, scientific word or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.
5. Never use the passive when you can use the active.

More specific rules:

- Use our full name, the Society for Education and Training (SET) in the first mention or the Education and Training Foundation (ETF), then SET and the ETF from then on.
- Always use 'the' in front of 'ETF' – never use just 'ETF' – so it is "On Tuesday the ETF did..." not "On Tuesday ETF did..."
- Don't! Overuse! Exclamation! Marks! It looks unprofessional!
- Write conversationally, but with authority. Picture your audience and write as if you were talking to them one-to-one, but with the authority of someone who can actively help and understands their subject matter.
- Avoid repetition of key words and phrases within the same piece of copy.
- Signpost to pages with relevant content.
- Avoid double spacing at the start of sentences.
- Ellipsis: Write it like this... with one space after the final dot.
- If you are using brackets (like this) put a full stop at the end of the sentence. (If you are writing a whole sentence within a bracket, put the full stop inside the bracket.)

- Use italics for words that are foreign, or for books/journals.
- Use hyphens where necessary: up-to-date, in-house, full-time, part-time, two-day conference, one-day course, two-part webinar.
- Add headings to large chunks of text. Consider what makes them SEO-friendly by using keywords that are relevant to the topic.

7. Active writing voice

Use the active rather than passive voice to help us write concise, clear content.

- Alison posted the letter (active)
- The letter was posted by Alison (passive)

Address the audience as 'you' where possible. For example: 'You can contact SET by phone and email' or 'come to one of our events'. Use we, us and our when discussing SET, to create a personal and warm tone.

8. Abbreviations and acronyms

- Spell out acronyms at first mention unless they're well known, e.g. UK, VAT, MP.
- Don't use an acronym if you're not going to use it again later in the text and avoid them where possible.
- Don't use full stops in abbreviations – NHS, not N.H.S.
- Don't use Americanisms e.g. use got, not gotten.
- Mind your s and your z – e.g. organise, not organize.
- Ampersand: Use 'and' rather than an '&' unless it's an official part of an organisation's name (e.g. a sponsor)
- Brackets: Use (round brackets), not [square brackets].
- When using per cents, use the number followed by the symbol – 7%, 25% etc.
- Use percentage or per cent when there is a need to use that word on its own. For example – the "percentage of people who run to the park are", not "the % of people who run to the park are"
- Write % in headlines, tables, emails and on pdf/print publications.
- Write e.g., i.e., etc., out in full: and so on, for example, in other words...

9. Bullet points

Introduce bullet points with a colon:

- first character takes a lower case, unless it is a full sentence
- and no full stop, unless full sentences
- no semi colon at the end of the sentence and no 'and' before the last bullet
- full sentences take cap and full stop, but keep to one style only throughout list
- final bullet takes the full stop.

Please note: This rule can be altered if you are using copy in an email campaign or as part of print marketing and it works better to start with a capital letter, so please use your own discretion – such as in this very guide. However, generally the rule above should be used across digital content.

10. Capitalisation

DON'T USE BLOCK CAPITALS FOR LARGE AMOUNTS OF TEXT AS IT'S HARD TO READ AND MAY LOOK LIKE YOU'RE SHOUTING.

Use capitals for:

- Departments
- Titles (Mr, Mrs, Lady)
- Buildings
- Place names
- Job titles
- The **P**rincipal of a college
- The **C**hief Executive of the organisation (including using CEOs)
- Names of groups and organisations
- Event names
- People's names
- Organisation's names
- Titles of publications (Annual Review).
- The Government (when referring to the current Government), but lower case 'government' when referring to an institution (government bodies) or range of governments (For example, the ETF has been supported by the Coalition Government, Conservative Government and *Conservative minority government hence why the ETF is referred to now as the government-backed*)
- Other examples: Further Education and Training sector, Strategic Leadership Programme, FE, Maths and English Pipeline
- The SET Board (but lower case 'b' when writing generically about 'a board').
- The SET Trustees (but lower case 't' when writing generically about 'trustees').

Don't capitalise:

- The staff
- Random words.
- SET member
- SET fellow

11. Dashes

We use an en-dash, which is a space, then a dash, then a space. Use a single dash in the same way as a colon – to mark a break. Use paired dashes – but only in the middle of a sentence – in the same way you would use brackets. Make sure you use a dash (–) and not a hyphen (-). In Microsoft programmes, you can insert a dash by pressing the 'Ctrl' key and with the number 1 key on the number pad. Alternatively, you can insert one using the 'insert symbol' function.

12. Dates and times

Please use to in date and time ranges. For example:

- Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm
- 10 November to 19 November
- If you're running out of space you can use truncated months: Jan, Feb, Mar, Aug, Sept, Oct, Nov, Dec
- 5.30pm (not 1730hrs)
- Midnight, not 00:00
- Midday, not 12 noon, noon or 12pm
- Don't put "th" at the end of a date. Dates should start with the date then month.

13. Compass directions

Compass directions are all in lower case: the north, the south of England, the south-west, north-east Scotland, south Wales. The same applies to wider regions: the west, western Europe, the far east, south-east Asia.

Note the following: East End, West End (London), Middle East, Central America, North America, South America, Latin America have capitals.

14. Full stops

- Do not use full stops between initials, for example, MP, not M.P.
- Do not use after abbreviations such as Mr, Ms, Dr, Ltd.
- Only put one space between a full stop and the next sentence.

15. Hyphenation

You only need to hyphenate words beginning with 'o' or 'e' e.g.:

- Re-evaluate
- Co-ordinate

16. Numbers

- Write numbers from zero to nine, then use numerics for anything higher than this, unless a range (for example 1-11). However, if a number starts a sentence, write it out in full ('Eighty-nine people turned up to the workshop) except where it starts a headline. Try to avoid starting a sentence or heading with a number as it looks clunky and reads poorly.
 - Don't say 'over' in terms of something being more than expected and instead use 'more than'. For example, 'More than 50 people attended'.
 - Insert a comma for clarity for numerals over 999. 'We raised more than £9,000'.
 - Percentages – see page 4.
 - Money: Use the £ symbol – £75
 - Don't use decimals unless pence are included e.g. £75.50, but not £75.00.
 - Write out 'pence' in full: Calls will cost four pence per minute from a landline.
- Adopt the standard government usage for Financial Years and Academic Years. For example, 2016-17 for financial years and 2016/17 for academic years.

17. Organisations

All organisations are singular, for example:

- Horsham District Council **has** kindly agreed we can use its land.
- The Society of Education and Training **is** the new professional membership organisation of the Education and Training Foundation.
- The Education and Training Foundation **is**
- The Education and Training Foundation **has**
- **Its** view is...

18. Telephone numbers

In a sentence, use the word 'telephone' (lower case 't'), for example, telephone 020 3740 8280. When included as part of an organisation's contacts details, you can use 'T:' followed by the number, for example, T: 020 3740 8280.

For London telephone numbers, write the area code first, leave one character space, write the next four digits, leave another character space and then write the last four digits, for example, 020 3740 8280.

For other regional numbers, write the area code first, and then leave one character space, followed by the rest of the number, for example, 01794 234567. The same applies to mobile numbers, for example, 07890 123456.

19. Quotes and speech marks

Double quotes:

Martin Reid, Head of SET, said: "I am delighted that we are able to add these new benefits to SET for the new 2017-18 membership year. Our mentoring services will allow members to support each other in their professional development and career progression, benefitting from the largest network of training professionals in the UK. Meanwhile our research support is second to none, demonstrating how our members can learn from and contribute to leading teaching practice."

In long passages of speech or a press release, open quotes for every new paragraph, but close quotes only at the end of the final paragraph. Please note you need to insert a comma before the word 'said'.

Martin Reid, Head of SET, said: "I am delighted that we are able to add these new benefits to SET for the new 2017-18 membership year. Our mentoring services will allow members to support each other in their professional development and career progression, benefitting from the largest network of training professionals in the UK.

"Meanwhile our research support is second to none, demonstrating how our members can learn from and contribute to leading teaching practice."

Single quotes:

- in headlines
- web links
- unusual terms
- when referring to words or publications.

20. Grammatical pointers

- **Different:** 'Different from' not 'to'
- **Consists of/comprises:** These mean the same. 'Comprised' cannot be followed by 'of'.
- **Data:** Data takes the plural, thus 'data are' (not 'data is').
- **Due to/owing to:** 'Due to' means 'caused by' and in some contexts may be replaced by 'because of' or 'as a result of'. 'Due to' cannot start a sentence, because it must be preceded by a noun; if there is no preceding noun, use 'owing to' or 'because of'. For example: 'The cancellation was due to the snow', 'The performance was cancelled owing to the snow', 'Owing to the snow, the performance was cancelled'.
- **Impact:** Do not allow 'impact' as a verb: thus, 'days lost to depression have an impact on productivity' (not 'days lost to depression impact on productivity' or 'days lost to depression impact productivity'). Consider replacing with, e.g., affect (v.), effect (n.), influence (v. & n.)
- **Past/last:** 'Past' means preceding and has the expectation of more to come; 'last' means final, with no more to follow. For example, 'Attitudes have changed during the past 10 years', but 'Attitudes changed during the last 10 years of the 19th century'.

21. Terminology guidelines

This box will be added to over time. Please ask if you are not sure about how to refer to something.

DON'T USE	DO USE
Professional standards	Professional Standards
InTuition	<i>inTuition</i> (lower case 'i' unless at start of a sentence – and in italics)
InTuition Extra/Intuition X	InTuition extra
(as part of a sentence) 'Apprenticeships'	'apprenticeships' (lower case A)
Good/innovative practice	Effective practice
Practitioners	Teachers, trainers and assessors
Mathematics	Maths
Newly qualified teachers	Recently qualified teachers
ITT	ITE
Professional formation	Professional Formation
Justice sector	Offender learning
Achieved	Awarded
Qtls	QTLS

Further Education and Training	further education and training (if it comes in the middle of a sentence. <i>Further education and training</i> if it is at the start of a sentence).
the further education and training sector	the Further Education and Training sector
Further Education (common noun)	Further education (common noun)
Fe or fe	FE
English and maths	Maths and English
T-level(s) or T level(s)	T Level (s)
Edtech	EdTech
Focussed, focussing, unfocussed	Focused, focusing, focused
ETF is launching	The ETF is launching
David Russell from The Education and Training Foundation	David Russell from the Education and Training Foundation
The Education & Training Foundation	The Education and Training Foundation
SET Members/Fellows	SET members / SET fellows
Our Members	Our members

Brand and social media

22. Font

Our standard corporate font for use in Microsoft Office programmes is Arial. It should be used at 12 point to make the text clear and easy to read. It can be used at a smaller font size for email (11 point) and down to 10 point in tables and graphs.

For items being produced by a graphic designer, or where the font can be embedded in the final product, e.g. a PDF produced with the correct software and settings we use the following fonts. Roboto (a free google font, download from google.com) as the font for body copy. Flama Condensed (we can supply a copy, please contact the Communications Team) is our headline font and is used in uppercase (mostly for main headings and titles) and sentence case.

23. Branding guidelines

For advice on fonts, logos, photography, and more.

- [Download the ETF Brand Guidelines.](#)

24. Social media

Our social media tone is helpful, polite, friendly and informative. Please refer to the above rules when it comes to our tone, language and terminology – these all remain the same (especially when it comes to over using exclamation marks!).

Rules can be relaxed when it comes to space constraints (writing acronyms instead of full words, Jan instead of 'January', e.g. instead of 'for example' and so on).

Top tips to follow:

- Please limit hashtags to no more than three.
- Avoid stock images if they include the faces of people.
- Write in the first person: “We are excited to announce a new SET Corporate Partner”...
- When Tweeting from the SET Twitter account about ETF (and vice versa), don’t write in the first person. ‘The ETF is’ or ‘SET is pleased to announce’.
- Include @ where the Tweet relates to someone in the Tweet (to encourage them to retweet).

Examples of Tweet formats you can use:

- Standard announcement



- Link, image/hashtag/s and information



- Image and @ (no link)/Retweet

You Retweeted

Education and Training Foundation (ETF) @E_T_Foundation · Jan 31

Our very own @cerian_ayres opening the Technical Teaching Fellowship Award Celebrations @royalsociety with @RoyalCom1851 talking about the vital importance of technical education to our country.



○ Retweet/reply



Society for Education and Training (SET) @SocietyET · Jan 29

Thank you @james_kieft the team is very happy to hear positive feedback about the platform 👍

James Kieft @james_kieft

Love the look and feel and of modules released by @SocietyET on their new Enhance Digital Teaching platform, @vikkilogier and team have done a fab job these are going to be a really useful in helping the development of teachers #Digitalskills #ukfechat twitter.com/SocietyET/stat...

25. References

Refer to the Harvard system, which is the most commonly used in social-science publications.

- In his research, Murphy (2015), finds that...
- Murphy 2015: 156 or Murphy 2015, p.165 or pp.165-6
- Murphy, P.L. (2015), *Birds, Bees and Butterflies* (Garden Press, London).

ENDS