



The Cheese Grater Magazine

Official Style Guide

Preface

The Cheese Grater takes very seriously its responsibility to maintain high editorial standards. Part of this responsibility is to make sure that we know how to spell and punctuation correctly and write in a consistent manner. It is the task of both writers and subeditors to ensure that all articles produced by *The Cheese Grater* adhere to this guide. Exceptions include Humour and Satire, which may take some artistic liberties, Voices and Letters, where writers may enjoy greater stylistic freedoms, and *Women's Wrongs*, where this guide does not apply.

This guide will take previous editions of the style guide as a starting point and refer to external guides where appropriate. It will also set a standard for the structure of articles and provide guidance on picture sourcing.

A-Z Style Guide

Acronyms	<p>Always spell out the abbreviation in the first instance, e.g., "The Independent Workers' Union", then "the IWGB".</p> <p>Do not abbreviate if the term only appears once unless obvious, e.g., UCL, SOAS, BBC, Met Police, POC Network, etc.</p> <p>Do not put the acronym in brackets after the full form, e.g., "National Union of Students (NUS)" unless the abbreviation is not obvious.</p>
Ages	<p>Set up ages in copy as name age, e.g., "Nick, 23, said...". Only include a hyphen in "23-years-old" but not in "23 year old".</p>
American spelling	<p>Always use British spelling unless directly quoting from another text that uses American spelling. E.g., use "s" instead of "z" in words like "italicise", "aluminium" instead of "aluminum", etc.</p>
Big words	<p>Avoid big words where possible. A big word is anything the reader has to Google. This is not an essay and you are not impressing anyone.</p>
Branding	<p>Always refer to <i>The Cheese Grater</i> as such. Despite popular belief among Union staff, we are not called "Cheesegrater".</p> <p>Always capitalise and italicise <i>The Cheese Grater</i> unless referring to The Cheese Grater Magazine Society, which is distinct from <i>The Cheese Grater Magazine</i>, the publication.</p> <p>"The" is part of the name of this publication and should be capitalised and italicised unless when used as a possessive noun, e.g., "<i>Cheese Grater</i> reporters".</p>

Always capitalise and italicise *Women's Wrongs*, with care paid to the position of the apostrophe before the "s".

Always capitalise (but not italicise) "Digestive" when referring to the newsletter and "Grater Insight" when referring to the radio programme.

Always capitalise and use "Society Bitch" or "Soc Bitch" at the first instance and optionally "the Bitch" thereafter.

Always capitalise the names of *Cheese Grater* sections, e.g., "Investigations", "Humour", "Graters", and "Zine".

Only include "Magazine" where appropriate or relevant.

Only use "CG" when referring to past issues, e.g., CG 88. The abbreviation, not the number, should be italicised.

Commas	Do not comma splice. Always use the Oxford comma unless it makes the sentence less clear.
Dashes	Always use the correct type of dash. Hyphen (-) (see below), en dash (–) for numerical ranges, e.g. 2014–15, and em dash (—) with spaces on either side for denoting a subclause or without spaces for showing a person has been cut off while speaking.
Dates	Always write dates in the following format: Monday 1 January 2024, but only include what is relevant. E.g., "Thursday 7" if the month has already been mentioned, or "7 July" if the year is implied, which it will be in most news stories.
Double spacing	Never double-space after a full stop.
Faculty	<p>Capitalise when referring to a degree subject, department, or faculty.</p> <p>Capitalise "Department" and "Faculty" only when referring to a specific department or the faculty as a whole, not individual staff. E.g., "The Faculty issued a statement..." and "a faculty member said..."</p> <p>Do not capitalise when referring to an academic by job title, e.g., "anthropologist", "specialist in modern French history".</p>
Headline	<p>Always use sentence case and capitalise proper nouns.</p> <p>If there is a colon in the title, also capitalise the first word of the sub-clause, e.g., "Quad Closure: Kiss goodbye to the Main Quad, says UCL". See below for more guidance.</p>
Hyphen	Always use one word where possible unless it helps avoid ambiguity, e.g., "black cab drivers" (cab drivers who are black) vs "black cab-drivers" (people who drive black cabs).

Hyphens should be used to form short compound adjectives, as in “one-tonne vessel”, “two-year deal”, etc.

Intro	<p>Always start a story with an introduction that encapsulates the entire story within 25 words. This applies to both the standfirst and the first line of the body text (see below for more).</p> <p>An intro must be a full, single sentence that hooks the reader into the story. It is not the same as the headline.</p>
Italics	<p>Always italicise the names of print publications, e.g., <i>The Cheese Grater</i>, <i>Women’s Wrongs</i>, <i>The Guardian</i>, <i>The Sunday Times</i>. Do not italicise TV or radio stations.</p> <p>Always italicise the titles of books, films, TV shows, and plays. Always italicise foreign language quotations or Latin phrases, e.g., <i>ex officio</i>, <i>de facto</i>, <i>passim ad nauseam</i>, etc.</p> <p>Do not use italics for emphasis.</p>
Time	<p>Always use the 12-hour format. E.g., 1pm. Do not include space between the number and am/pm.</p> <p>Optionally, use “noon” or “midday” when referring to 12pm and “midnight” when referring to 12am.</p>
Titles	<p>Use rank titles as appropriate, including police rank (e.g., “Detective Chief Inspector” in first instance, “DCI” thereafter, etc.), peerage (e.g., “Lord Sugar”, never “Lord Alan Sugar”), and knighthood (e.g., “Sir Keir”, never “Sir Keir Starmer”).</p> <p>Abbreviate Professor as “Prof” and Doctor as “Dr” with no full stops.</p>
Measurements	<p>Be consistent if using full words (50 kilograms) or abbreviation (50kg).</p>
Names	<p>Always introduce someone with their full name, followed by their last name in subsequent mentions. Exceptions are children and if multiple people mentioned have the same last name.</p> <p>Always make sure you are spelling someone’s name correctly and use the right pronouns. If unsure, use they/them.</p>
Numbers	<p>Always write out one to nine in words and any number above 10 as digits.</p> <p>Never start a sentence with a number, with the exception of currency, date, and measurements.</p> <p>Include commas for large numbers above 1,000, e.g., 100,000. Millions and billions may optionally be abbreviated as “1m” or “1bn”, but keep consistent whether you are writing it out or abbreviating it.</p> <p>Use the percent sign (%) when referring to percentages. Never write</p>

	per cent or percent.
NUS	<p>Always spell out and capitalise “National Union of Students” in the first instance and “NUS” or “National Union” thereafter.</p> <p>Always use “National Conference” in the first instance and “Conference” thereafter but never with the definite article “the”. E.g., “Many see Conference as a waste of time.”</p> <p>Always use “NUS Conference delegates” in the first instance and “delegates” thereafter. There is currently a move within the NUS to rename them “reps”, so “NUS reps” or “reps” is also acceptable.</p>
Paragraph lengths	Only one full sentence per paragraph particularly for short-form news stories. This rule is less relevant for in-depth investigation pieces, although generally speaking, we do not like large paragraphs.
Passive voice	Avoid passive voice unless the passive subject is more interesting.
Provost	<p>Always introduce the Provost Michael Spence with his full name at the first instance and use “the Provost” over “Spence” thereafter unless to avoid repetition.</p> <p>Always capitalise “Provost” when referring to Michael Spence.</p>
Quotes	<p>Always use double quotation marks. Use single quote marks only in headlines and when referring to a quote within a quote.</p> <p>Always directly quote for emotive speech or opinion and optionally use reported speech for factual statements. E.g., “A spokesperson for UCL said the University will be closing the Main Quad in December” and “One student said the proposals were ‘bullshit’.”</p> <p>Always include the full stop outside the quotation marks unless the quote is a complete sentence.</p> <p>If a quote runs into the next paragraph, do not close the quote until the final paragraph. E.g., “A UCL spokesperson said, ‘UCL is committed to not being evil. / ‘This is why we are disagreeing well with oil and gas companies by continuing to work with them.’”</p> <p>Snatch quotes are acceptable insofar as they are not used to misrepresent the speaker’s intent.</p>
Sabbs and officers	<p>Always capitalise specific officer titles and use in full in the first instance, e.g., “Union President” and “President” thereafter, “Societies Rep for Student Media” and “Media Rep” thereafter, etc.</p> <p>Always use “sabbatical officer” in the first instance and “sabb officer” or just “sabb” thereafter.</p>
Semicolon	Only use semicolons to join independent clauses that are closely related but not connected by conjunction; avoid if unsure of correct usage.

Social media	<p>Always capitalise the name of social media companies, e.g., “Facebook” and “Instagram”, with stylised capitalisation where appropriate, as in “LinkedIn”. Never abbreviate as “IG”, “FB”, etc.</p> <p>Always use “Twitter”, never “X” or “X (formerly Twitter)”. The day Elon Musk stops deadnaming his children will be the day this publication stops deadnaming Twitter. In the same vein, continue to use “tweet” (not “post”) and “retweet” (not “repost”).</p>
Societies	<p>Always spell out the full name of a club or society in the first instance and optionally use its nicknames thereafter. E.g., “The UCL Conservative Society” and “Tory Soc” thereafter.</p> <p>Always capitalise the names of clubs and societies, including the words “Club” and “Society” when referring to a specific club or society, e.g., “The Cheese Grater Magazine Society” in the first instance and “the Society” thereafter.</p>
Union	<p>Always use “Students’ Union” in the first instance and the capitalised “Union” thereafter when referring to Students’ Union UCL.</p> <p>Do not abbreviate the Union as “SU” or “SUUCL” or refer to as “UCL Students’ Union” because they specifically asked.</p> <p>If another students’ union or a trade union is mentioned in the same article, use “UCL Union” for clarity as it remains the Union’s official name, even though they may not like it.</p>
Union bodies	<p>Always capitalise Union bodies and refer to full names in the first instance, e.g., “Union Executive” and “Exec” thereafter, “Welfare and Community Zone” and “Welfare Zone” (or just “Zone” if none other is mentioned) thereafter, “Board of Trustees” and “the Board” thereafter, etc.</p> <p>Never use the definite article “the” before “Exec” and “Zone”, which are treated as proper nouns.</p> <p>Always capitalise Union departments, e.g., “Democracy and Representation Team”, “Policy and Research Team”, “Activities Team”, etc., except “senior management” or “sabbatical leadership”.</p>
University	<p>Always use “UCL” or the capitalised “University”, never “college”.</p> <p>Always use “University of London” at the first instance and “UoL” thereafter, never “London University”.</p> <p>Always use “King’s College” at the first instance and “King’s”, “KCL”, “the Strand”, or “Strand Polytechnic” (derogative) thereafter.</p> <p>Always use the acronyms for SOAS and LSE.</p> <p>Always use “Imperial College” at the first instance and “Imperial” thereafter, never its acronyms “IC” or “ICL”.</p>

Article structure

Just because *The Cheese Grater* is a student publication does not mean we can publish any old rubbish – even satirical journalism has rules! Readers should be able to expect a professional and consistent standard from our output, and that means sticking to a defined article structure as outlined below. Some of this is based on NCTJ guidance, others are based on what is common practice in the industry.

Headline

Headlines should lead with the angle of the story, i.e., what makes the story interesting. If the story is part of a wider topic such as “Quad Closure” or “Rep Elections”, then lead with that instead. E.g., “Rep Elections: Voter turnout lowest in three years”.

Headlines must be short and cut to the point. As such, you can drop connectives and use single instead of double quotes to save space. In total, it should not be over ten words.

Never use passive voice unless the passive subject is the story, e.g., “Cat stuck on Portico rescued by firefighters”. This is because the interesting part of the story here is the cat being stuck on the Portico, not the firefighters doing their job.

Standfirst

A standfirst is the first line that goes under the headline. This is the introduction line that hooks the reader into the story. It should encapsulate the entire angle of the story within a single full sentence under 25 words. Try not to use commas as it disrupts the flow, but this does not mean you can drop punctuation. It is **not** the same as the headline.

On the website, the standfirst should be in Bitter, H5 and bold.

Byline

A byline is where your name goes. In general, it's not a good idea to have too many people in the byline simply because you cannot use it as part of your journalism portfolio (if you are trying to build one). Write a story yourself if you can or two names on a byline at most.

On the website, the names should be in bold, followed by your title within the Magazine if you have one. If you are trying to build up a portfolio and feel that you can benefit from a more official-sounding title (e.g., “News reporter”, “Students’ Union correspondent”, etc.), let our subeditors know.

Featured image

All articles must come with an appropriate featured image. Writers and subeditors must ensure that they have the right to use the image and include proper attribution. See below for more guidance on copyright and picture sourcing.

Body text

All stories should follow an inverse pyramid structure: that is, **the most newsworthy information on top**, followed by the details, followed by any background or contextual information.

Stories should begin with an introduction that is similar to, but not the same as, the standfirst. The intro of your body text should reiterate the angle of the story but provide more information on what readers can expect from the rest of the article. This should be in bold.

Generally speaking, the body text should have **one full sentence per paragraph**. Big blocks of text are intimidating and nobody is going to read it.

Always end the body text with a dotted divider on the website.

Footer

Any right of reply comments generally go here unless they are embedded within the body text. Typically, they begin with (e.g.,) “A UCL spokesperson said”, followed by the comment in the next line. On the website, the comment should be contained in a quote block with font size set to small.

If your featured image is different from the one you used for the cover of the post, you should include the attribution here as well.

If other writers were involved in the reporting process, subeditors may add their names here for “additional reporting”.

Subeditors should include a link if the article appeared in print or in the Digestive, with the issue number included. E.g., “This article appeared in CG 88” or “This article appeared in the Digestive 3”.

Picture sourcing

Pictures are one of the most crucial elements of a good story, second only to the headline. All stories published by *The Cheese Grater* must have a cover photo attached.

Unfortunately, *The Cheese Grater* is not exempt from copyright laws. This is important because there are companies out there specialising in invoicing publications for improper use. University College Dublin's *College Tribune* was slapped with a £2,000 bill for a picture they used ten years ago – and we do not have that kind of spare money.

As such, writers and subeditors must do their due diligence in ensuring that they and, by extension, the Magazine, have the right to use any picture attached to an article.

This means writers must not take pictures off the internet directly and subeditors must ensure that **any picture used has the proper attribution**. Attribution may go under the caption or, for any featured image (with no caption), attribution should be added to the bottom of the article.

Here are several ways we can source pictures without being fined.

Own work

The easiest way to avoid copyright infringement is to take the picture yourself. Pictures should ideally be taken in landscape but will be cropped to a 4:3 ratio in any case.

By using any picture you have taken in an article, you agree to share the rights to the picture with *The Cheese Grater* unless otherwise stated. Writers should add their names to the description of the picture so we can attribute the source if required.

UCL Imagestore

The University offers an archive of stock pictures and brand resources that are free to use for UCL students. You can access this at <https://imagestore.ucl.ac.uk>. Any pictures taken from this archive should be attributed to the UCL Imagestore in the image description.

Creative Commons

One way of making sure we have the rights to use a picture on the internet is to only use those that are licenced under Creative Commons. You can filter this on Google Images under Tools > Usage rights > Creative Commons licences. Most pictures from Wikimedia Commons and some pictures on Flickr are also Creative Commons.

Pictures licenced under Creative Commons must still include the necessary attribution, including the source, author, and linked CC licence. E.g., "Credit: No. 10 via Flickr/[CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](#)"

Royalty-free images

Writers can also source pictures from websites offering royalty-free images such as [Shutterstock](#), [Pixabay](#), and [Unsplash](#), but these are free typically because they are a bit rubbish.

Writers should also make sure that any pictures taken from these websites do not require attribution explicitly and should attribute them to the website nonetheless. E.g., “Credit: [Author] via Pixabay” (if author is known).

Embedded elements

Certain pictures from Getty Images may be embedded into an article without charge, but these cannot be used as the cover photo. Consult with a subeditor if you wish to do this.

Any pictures from a tweet or social media post should also be an embedded element. **Never scrape pictures off a post without attribution or permission.** Writers should link any relevant post in the draft document and subeditors will embed them in the post as appropriate. Social embeds cannot feature as the cover image either unless given express permission from the author.

Screenshots

Screenshots of videos, films, and TV shows are a grey area in media law, so you can probably get away with it with attribution. If you know the person who took the video, get express written permission from them that they are happy for you to use it.

Screenshots of Google Maps and Street View are typically fine with attribution.