

Critical Fish style guide

The following should cover most of the questions you might have regarding the presentation of your text. Our editors will use/apply these when they review your submission.

There is quite a lot to go through – we will have a summary version for writers available shortly on our website

1. General

Preferred dictionary: Merriam-Webster online (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary) to check all spelling preferences

For hyphenation etc; use British English spelling and punctuation.

Use full names for people referred to the first time they're mentioned in each essay, and subsequently use surname only or full name as appropriate. Exceptions to this are Old Masters, where last name only need be used.

2. Abbreviations

Avoid in running text; use 'that is', not 'ie'; 'for example', not 'eg'; but 'etc', not 'etcetera' (although 'and so on' is often preferable), okay, not OK (although this should only be used in interviews)

No full stops in abbreviations, nor spaces between initials – BBC, US, mph, 4am, lbw, No 10, PJ O'Rourke, WH Smith, AIDS, DIY; p(p). for page number(s), with no space between: p.4; Dr; St; c (circa); Anon (used in footnotes); (ed) or (eds) in footnotes for editor / editors

It should be: Washington DC (not D.C.)

3. Apostrophes

Morris's, not Morris'

Goldsmiths – no apostrophe

Central Saint Martins – no apostrophe

Do not use for commonly abbreviated words: bus, flu, phone

4. Bibliography and endnotes

Surname, Forename, *Title*, Publisher, Place, Year

For example:

Stonard, John-Paul, *Trials of Art*, Ridinghouse, London, 2007

Reardon, John and Mollin, David, *Ch-ch-ch-changes: Interviews with Artists that Teach*, Ridinghouse, London, 2008

5. Capitalisation

a) Capitalisation in art movements

Upper case for art movements – Minimalism, Conceptualism, but Minimal/ist art, Surrealist, the Situationists. That is, capitalise first letter if used as a noun, but write general terms or adjectival form in lower case

Conceptual art, Pop art (but pop music), Op art, Dada, Art Deco, Land art
modernism, modern art, but Modern British

neo-Romantic; neo-Gothic; neo-Georgian; neo-Geo; except Neo Naturists
postmodernism

pre-Raphaelite

post-Impressionist

Performance art

the Sublime

b) Capitalisation in headings and titles

Text headings and sub-headings: title case

Journal, exhibition, catalogue and artwork titles: true to original where possible, otherwise title case

c) Capitalisation in job titles, names, departments and institutions

Lower case for jobs and departments – Fred Bloggs is professor of fine art in the department of sculpture at Goldsmiths

Upper case when used as a job title – Professor Fred Bloggs; Jill Howitt, Editor, The Critical Fish

Van Gogh but Vincent van Gogh; De Kooning but Willem de Kooning, etc

d) Capitalisation in compass points

Lower case for regions – the north, the south of England, the south-west, north-east Scotland, south Wales

Lower case for geopolitical areas – the west, western Europe, the far east, south-east Asia, central America

Lower case for the cultural, political, economic terms – the west, western culture, the east, eastern culture

Upper case when part of the name of a county – West Sussex, East Riding – or province – East Java – and for East End, West End (London), East Coast, West Coast (USA), Middle East, Latin America, North America, South America

e) Capitalisation in political parties/movements

Upper case for movements and regimes, Fascism, Communism, Socialism, Nazism
the Left, but left-wing, communist, fascist

6. Captions

Captions should be written in the following format:

Artist

Title, date

Medium

height x width x depth cm

dimensions up to one decimal point – if two or more, round up or down accordingly

7. Dates

a) General dates

twentieth century not Twentieth Century or 20th century etc, and hyphenated when used as a compound adjective: twentieth-century art

use of Common Era rather than before Christ/AD, eg: fourth century BCE, 2006 CE, 1000 BCE

1980s, not '80s or eighties or Eighties or 80's, but spell out 'swinging sixties'

1968 not '68

21–27 March 2008, but September – October 2008 (set off using en dash – rather than hyphen – or em dash —)

1 January 2000 (no commas, day before month)

Two digits after en dash in date ranges – 1922–24; 1989–94; 1998–2001

b) dates of works and exhibitions

Supply date of works and exhibitions in brackets after the title the first time mentioned in a text, but not subsequently.

If work is illustrated add p.xx after title of work to reference page number of plates, eg, Anya Gallaccio, *because I could not stop* (2000; p.xx)

Supply date of books, poems, films etc in brackets after the title the first time mentioned in text but not subsequently, eg, *The Collected Writings of Jon Thompson* (2011); *The Waste Land* (1922)

8. Ellipses

Close up space between word and ellipsis: 'Do not... use full stops for ellipses'; '...do not use full stops for ellipsis'

No punctuation needed before or after the ellipsis in quotes

No ellipsis needed at beginning and end of a quote, even if the sentence quoted is incomplete

Use ellipses in interviews only when a sentence is left incomplete

9. En-dashes

Use en-dashes – not em-dashes —

No spaces if dashes in titles – *Attitudes–Concepts–Images*

Spaces in texts – 'Jill and Lauren live in Hull – not Liverpool – and they edit *The Critical Fish*

10. Endnotes / Footnotes

Use endnotes, not footnotes

Place endnote indicator after first punctuation following reference

Two digits after dash in page ranges, full stop after p., no space between p. and number – pp.114–15

a) Example book references

Michael Corris (ed), *Conceptual Art: Theory, Myth and Practice*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004, p.10.

Michael Corris and Paul Wood (eds), *Conceptual Art: Theory, Myth and Practice*, Cambridge University Press and MIT Press, Cambridge and Cambridge MA, 2004, p.10.

Michael Corris, 'Conceptual Art', in Paul Wood (ed), *Conceptual Art: Theory, Myth and Practice*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004, p.10.

Ibid., p.3. – when same details as note above

Corris, *op. cit.*, p.9. – when other notes have intervened

Corris, *Conceptual Art*, *op cit* – when more than one publication by same author is cited

b) Catalogue references

Charles Harrison, 'Against Precedents', *When Attitudes Become Form*, exhibition catalogue, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, pp.10–15.

c) Magazine references

Robert Pincus-Witten, 'Naked Lunches', *October*, no.3, spring 1977, pp.102–18.

11. Foreign words and phrases

Italicise foreign words and phrases: *mise-en-scène*, *objet d'art*, *fin-de-siècle*, *trompe l'oeil*, *tableaux*, *cognoscenti*, *en route*, *hauteur*, *blitzkrieg*, *di menschmaschine*, except for vice versa, tabula rasa, avant-garde

12. Hyphenation

Use hyphens for compound adjectives, except where the adjectives are capitalised – Red Cross worker, Home Counties accent

Do not use hyphens after adverbs ending in 'ly' – a hotly disputed penalty, a constantly evolving newspaper, genetically modified food; hyphens are needed with short and common adverbs, eg ill-prepared report, hard-bitten hack

art world not art-world (unless compound adjective)

postwar, not post-war

readymade, not ready-made

south-east, not southeast

Follow www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary for hyphenation usage

13. Index

No spaces between entry and page numbers: Riley, Bridget 24, 28–29, 57

For page ranges, contract up to two digits – 23–24; 120–22

For page numbers with the entry in the footnote add 'n' – 24, 28–29, 57, 200n, 220

Use en-dash not hyphen for page ranges

14. Interview rules

Use full name on first usage and use initials of participants followed by colon thereafter; put questions in italics (unless recommended otherwise); titles etc that would otherwise be italicised in roman:

John Reardon: Can you tell me when you first started curating?

Charles Harrison: It was soon after I graduated that I was asked to put together an exhibition by some artist friends.

JR: *How did the invitation to curate the English version of When Attitudes Become Form in September 1969 come about?*

CH: I'd proposed to the ICA an exhibition of a group of English artists.

Use we'd, who'd, we've, you're, it's etc, to maintain conversational style

All editorial comments, such as [*long pause*], [*laughs*] in square brackets and italics

As a general rule, use full names for people referred to the first time they're mentioned in each interview, and subsequently use surname only (or first name if clear who is being referred to). However, if the reader may have forgotten who they are by the time they're mentioned again, repeat first name. Exceptions to this are Old Masters, where last name only need be used, especially where it helps retain conversational tone

Use as few ellipses as possible. Replace with full stops or question marks at end of sentences, or en-dashes in the middle of sentences, if genuinely parenthetical

Avoid repetitions unless absolutely essential to character of speaker

Avoid 'yeah, ah, um'. 'Yeah' should read 'Yes'; avoid overuse of 'So' or 'Yes' at the beginning of questions and answers. Avoid 'I think', especially at the beginning of sentences, unless doubt as to the accuracy of a memory etc is being expressed

15. Italicisation / Inverted commas

Use italics, followed by date in parenthesis for individual artworks, exhibitions, catalogues, books, albums, poems, plays

Use inverted commas for series titles (including television series), articles, songs, lectures

Use roman without inverted commas for large annual shows such as Prospect, Documenta or biennales

Use italics for newspapers, *The Sunday Times*; *the Guardian*

See **Foreign words and phrases**

16. Measurements

Figures, not words for amounts

In body text spell out measurements etc: 33 metres, 29 centimetres, 3 inches, but use abbreviations m, cm, in, etc in captions, with space between figure and measurement – 3 mm, 2 in

17. Numbers

Spell out one to ten, use figures from 11 to 999,999; thereafter use m or bn for sums of money, quantities or inanimate objects, eg £10m, 5bn tonnes of coal, 30m doses of vaccine; but million or billion for people or animals, eg 1 million people, 3 billion rabbits, etc; in headlines use m or bn

Spell out 'second', 'third' etc (but retain if part of official title, such as 3rd Berlin Biennale – do not use superscript)

Use figures with percentages and measurements: 11 per cent, 12 metres

Numbers above 11 written as digits, unless a number starts a sentence, when it should be written out, for example, Forty years ago there were more than 75 people.

OR if it is a term/phrase, for example, There are thousands of precedents

a) Contraction of dates, page numbers etc

Contract date ranges to two digits: 1922–26; except across centuries 1998–2001

For page numbers, use en dash no space, contracted to two figures after dash: pp.12–18, pp.110–21

18. Quotations

Single not double quotes, unless to denote a quote or title within a quote

Use comma or colon before quotes (colon only before indented quotes)

Indent quotes of five lines or longer, without quotation marks, but use single quotes to denote a quote or title with this quote

Punctuation should be outside quotes:

'You can make a painter out of a peasant', Picasso told the journalist H el ene Parmelin, 'but you can't make a peasant out of a painter'.

Unless a full sentence is quoted:

See **Ellipsis** for omitted text

19. Spelling

English spelling, not American – organise not organize, etc

Practising not practicing (but 'practice' for noun; follow the same system as you would for 'advise' and 'advice')

Use American or Australian spelling in quotations or for names of institutions: Pearl Harbor, Lincoln Center, Australian Labor Party

20. That / Which / Who

Use 'that' to introduce defining clauses: 'The picture that was sold', 'the job that she did'

Use 'which' to introduce descriptive clauses or those that give additional details: 'The wallpaper, which was designed by William Morris, is hand-printed.'

Two useful hints: a) there is always a comma before 'which', and b) if the sentence could exist without the clause under consideration, you probably need 'which'. If the sentence would collapse without the clause, then use 'that'.

Use who (or whom), not that, for people: 'The artists who were working at this time'

21. Further miscellaneous rules

A hotel, a history, not an hotel, an history

Art & Language

art world, art form, art making

artwork

avant garde not avant-garde (unless used as compound adjective)

the Bible, but biblical

black and white (unless before noun: black-and-white photograph)

café

cliché

decor

Düsseldorf (English spelling takes umlaut)

facade

First World War, Second World War

Gilbert & George

Goldsmiths – no apostrophe

MoMA (after spelling out in full in first instance)

naive

Perspex – upper case P

postwar

rock 'n' roll

Second World War

site specific

St Martins – no apostrophe [TBC]

Thames & Hudson

Victoria & Albert Museum

wallpaper

Young British Art (not in single quotes; abbreviate to YBA)

Zurich (English spelling takes no umlaut)