DATES and TIMES

Dates

Dates should be noted in the Australian/UK format, e.g. 20/07/2008 or 20th July 2008. The preferred in-text formats are as follows:

> *February 1988*
>
> *8 (or 8th) February 2004* (without the zero before the '8' in body text. In a table the zero may be used.)

If the day is also included, separate it with a comma: *Tuesday, 2nd March 2004*

Spell out the month in full (except in tables).

Spell out 'seventeenth century', 'twentieth century', and so on. Hyphenate such expressions when they are in attributive position: *Few seventeenth-century philosophers . . .*

There is no apostrophe in full year (plural) dates : *1960s, 1800s.*

However, where the years have been abbreviated there is an apostrophe to replace the missing numbers: *The '60s were good years*. In these instances, where the apostrophe occurs at the start of the word, ensure that it is facing the correct way—i.e. that it *is* an apostrophe and not an opening quotation mark. This may mean taking care to overrule the defaults in your word processor.

Decades

The preferred style is to use numerals rather than text—don't use apostrophes:

> *1970s, 1980s, 1990s.*

Spans of years

Do not use the en dash as a replacement for 'and' in the phrase 'between . . . and . . . ', or as a replacement in a 'from . . . to . . . ' phrase. In these situations, use the whole year for each occurrence, and use words rather than the en dash symbol:

Correct	Incorrect
between 1960 and 1969	between 1960 and '69
from 1984 to 1987	from 1984–1987
between August and November 2004	between August–November 2004

Use a spaced en dash when joining complex entities and if the final element of the date repeats, write it only once, at the end of the span:

Correct	Incorrect
18 May – 13 July 2004	18 May 2004 – 13 July 2004

Where the phrasing of the sentence does not have a two-sided expression ('to – from'; 'between – and'), the last two digits only of the year are retained.

2000–01	*1311–17*	*1919–23*	*1877–91*

There are two exceptions to this. The first is when the **unofficial** century changes (for example, the year 2000 denoting the start of the 21st century, rather than the official 2001). When dates span more than one such 'century', all four digits are retained:

1999–2000	1499–1500	1826–1796 BC	1666–1826

A second (possible) exception is when the year span is part of a title or subtitle, which must be quoted accurately.

Use a spaced en dash when joining complex time spans:

47 BC – 30 AD	1200 BC – 118 AD

Times

There is a space between the number and the a.m./p.m. definer: 8 a.m., 5 p.m.

There must be full stops in 'a.m.' and 'p.m.', i.e. not 'am' and 'pm'. Use a full stop rather than a colon to separate the minutes from the hours. If there are no minutes specified, do not put in '00' to represent the minutes when using the twelve-hour clock, unless there is a span one half of which has minutes specified. If using the 24-hour clock, all four digits are essential: e.g. 09.00 (*not 9.00*), 21.45.

Use an unspaced en dash to separate time:

10.30–14.30	12–2 p.m.	6.30–8.00 p.m.	07.30–12.25

However, where 'a.m.' and 'p.m.' are stated, and the time span changes from one to the other, a spaced en dash is required:

10 a.m. – 2 p.m.	3.20 p.m. – 4.20 a.m.	11.40 a.m. – 12.00 p.m.

Correct	Incorrect
8 a.m. – 1 p.m.	8 – 1 p.m.