

# Alan Boswell Group Writing Style Guide

# 1 Abbreviations, acronyms and contractions.

## 1.1 Abbreviations

Abbreviations should be in lower case letters and have a full stop after each shortened word:

- e.g.
- i.e.

## 1.2 Ampersands

Ampersands are not to be used, unless they are part of a company name (or abbreviated company name):

- H&M
- M&S

## 1.3 Acronyms

Acronyms should be written as capital letters without any spaces or punctuation.

Acronyms should spell out the whole word in the first instance and include the acronym in brackets:

- Alan Boswell Group are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). The FCA regulate financial services firms and markets in the UK.

After this, use the acronym for the remainder of the article.

Alan Boswell Group should never be shortened or acronymised.

- Alan Boswells
- Boswell's
- Boswells
- The Alan Boswell Group

## 1.4 Contractions

Contracted titles should not be followed by a full stop:

- Mr Potter
- Miss Turner

## 2 Capitalisation

### 2.1 Brand names

Brand names, governing and regulatory bodies' names should all be written as they do unless there is a commonly used acronym available (see rules above):

- Financial Conduct Authority
- eBay

### 2.2 Headings

The title of a document and subsequent headings should be written in sentence case:

- Guide to campervan and motorhome licences.

The name of a product should be capitalised in the H1 only:

- Guide to Private Medical Insurance.

In the body text, names of products shouldn't be capitalised:

- Paul purchased private medical insurance from Alan Boswell Group.
- Paul purchased Private Medical Insurance from Alan Boswell Group.

Capitalise proper nouns.

Capitalise the first word of a sentence, heading, or title.

Don't use internal capitalisation unless it's part of a brand name.

### 2.3 Job titles

Job titles should be capitalised:

- Ben Hewitt, Chartered Financial Planner

## 2.4 Proper Nouns

Capital letters should be used for the initial letters of any proper nouns (people's names, cities, countries).

## 3 Formatting

### 3.1 Bold

Bold text is to be used sparingly and only when needed to emphasise important information.

Punctuation after bold text should not be bold unless the entire sentence is bold.

### 3.2 Bullet points

Bullet points should always start with a capital letter if they are part of a list. Listed bullets do not need punctuation at the end.

- The following are all examples of savings accounts:
  - ISAs
  - Fixed rate savings
  - Regular savings

For a longer section of bullet points, each bullet should end with a semi colon and the last item should end with a full stop. The first letter of each point should not be capitalised unless it is a proper noun.

- To find out more about our services you can:
  - speak to one of our advisers;
  - email our customer services department;
  - talk to us on webchat during business hours.

If a complete sentence precedes the list, each item in the list should end with a full stop and follow sentence case.

- Alan Boswell Group offer a range of insurance products and financial services.

- Risk management, health and safety, and training.
- Commercial and personal insurance products tailored to suit your requirements.
- Financial services for both business and personal wealth.

Use either full sentences or all fragments. Avoid mixing.

### 3.3 Italics

Italics should only be used for titles of books or journals.

### 3.4 Underlining

Underlining should not be used unless it is for a hyperlink.

## 4 Numbers

### 4.1 General

Numbers from one to ten should be written as words. Numbers above ten should be numbers:

- One, two, three
- 15, 16 ,17

If you have a cross over, don't mix them up:

- 10 – 12
- 10 to twelve

The same rule applies for first, second, third etc.

For numbers over 999, use a comma after every three numbers:

- 1,000

When a number is used as part of an adjective use a hyphen:

- A three-quarter majority

The words 'million' and 'billion' should be spelt.

## 4.2 Currency

Use symbols rather than words:

- £900
- Nine hundred pounds

When writing about ranges of money, use a symbol in front of each quantity:

- £800 - £900
- £800 - 900

## 4.3 Dates

Dates should be written in full and include the relevant contraction:

- 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021
- 8 November 2021
- 8 Nov. 2021

Grouped years should use an en dash and include both numbers in full:

- 2008-2009
- 2008-09

Decades should not have an apostrophe:

- 1980s
- 1980's

## 4.4 Percentages

Percentages should use the symbol, not the words.

- 40%
- Revenue grew by 20%
- 40 per cent
- 40 percent

## 5 Punctuation

### 5.1 Commas

Minimise use of commas, especially in relatively short sentences. Commas should be used where you naturally pause when speaking aloud. Don't use a comma after an introductory word if the sentence is very short.

Use commas to mark out non-essential information within a sentence.

Use commas with the phrase 'for example':

- These savings accounts are great for when you do not need to access the funds for a while, for example, if you are saving for your retirement or to buy a house.

Comma splices should not be used.

- With these types of savings accounts you will pay in the same amount every month and benefit from preferential interest rates. In order to receive this interest, you will need to keep up with regular payments.
- With these types of savings accounts you will pay in the same amount every month and benefit from preferential interest rates, in order to receive this interest you will need to keep up with regular payments.

Oxford commas are to be used in lists.

- There are lots of different types of savings accounts available, including ISAs, regular savings, and children's savings.

### 5.2 Exclamation marks

Exclamation marks are to be avoided. If they must be used, then use sparingly and only one.

### 5.3 Hyphens

Hyphens are to be used for compound adjectives that precede a noun, unless the first word ends in 'ly'.

Compound adjectives after a noun shouldn't be hyphenated.

The following words should not be hyphenated:

- Email
- Online
- Website

## 5.4 Quotation marks

Quotation marks should be double:

- Paul said “I would like to buy some car insurance.”

## 6 Style and tone

### 6.1 General

All content provided for Alan Boswell Group should be informative and educational. Assume that your reader doesn't know the topic, but do not dumb down, patronise or condescend.

We adopt a friendly and approachable tone that positions us as the go-to company for expert advice. We avoid use of jargon and industry terms wherever possible.

- Don't use long, over-complicated, words when a short one will do.
- If it's possible to cut out a word, then do.
- Don't use foreign words, industry specific terms or jargon if there is an everyday word or phrase equivalent that is easier to understand.
- Content should be evergreen wherever possible. Try not to include reference to dates or time sensitive information unless avoidable or otherwise instructed.

For anything not covered in this guide, use AP style.