

STYLE GUIDE SUMMARY



This style guide applies to all UNISON public and internal communications, whether printed or electronic; its purpose is to ensure consistency.

Essentials when writing

Above all, be succinct, think about your tone, personalize. Then consider:

- Why am I writing this – to recruit members, explain a UNISON policy, get media attention, campaign, give a speech, record decisions, brief colleagues, report news?
- What do I want the audience to feel e.g., enjoyment, empathy, excitement etc?
- What do I want to say?
- Who do I want to read it – staff, members, activists, the public, potential new members, employers, MPs, fellow staff?
- What is the best content/action/service/product to meet the needs of the audience (rather than my own needs)?
- How can I keep their attention and get to the point quickly?
- What do I want them to do when they've read what I've written?
- Consider the UNISON tone – for external comms, serious and professional and for internal comms, chatty, fun.
- Consider the platform for which you are writing as this may impact the style – leaflet, report, website copy, social media etc.

House Style

Always UNISON – not Unison.

The corporate standard font is Helvetica Neue where available – with Arial as substitute when not. This will enable most PC users to accurately reflect UNISON style without additional costs of extra fonts.

It's = it is. If you want to show possession with 'it' there is no apostrophe, e.g., Railtrack and its management.

Never use accents – cafe not café, etc.

Abbreviations do not have full stops e.g., RMT, US, UK, Mr, Mrs, Ms etc

Only proper nouns have capitals. Job titles do not have capitals – Christina McAnea, general secretary.

Compass points do not have capitals unless part of the country name, e.g., South Africa. Seasons are not capitalised. General nouns – the union, the branch, the party, your regional organiser etc. – never take caps.

STYLE GUIDE SUMMARY



When writing about UNISON campaigns, the initial letter should be in caps but the words are not italicized – Together We Rise

Dates: Written (without th or st) e.g., 11 February 2005. Decades: 1990s not 1990's.

Clock: Never use the 24-hour clock – always 5am, 10pm, 6-9pm

Numbers: words for numbers one to nine and then figures for the number 10 onwards.

Gender - Remain gender neutral – e.g., police officer not policeman.

Speech marks/quotations: Use double quotes for directly quoting something someone has said: The government said it was “focused on reform”.

Use single quotes for everything else, such as referring to a concept or term used by others, e.g.: This idea of ‘reform’ bandied about by everyone is a non-starter.

The inks for the corporate colours are Pantone 2627 and Pantone 362. The purple is dark to provide better legibility when used for text. Both inks work well in full colour printing – and also on screen where our logo is increasingly used.

Avoid Americanised spelling s- so Americanised and not Americanized.

Avoid Americanised use of words: so, not ‘do the math’ – there’s no such thing as ‘methematic’, singular, so ‘do the maths’. Not ‘protest x’, but ‘protest for or against x’. Also, not ‘debate y’ but ‘debate with/for or against y’.

Copyright details

For external audience:

@UNISON 2023 (or whatever year the publication is published in). All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced by any means nor transmitted, nor translated into a machine language, without written permission.

Remember: UNISON Centre is the union’s head office - or indeed UNISON Centre - not its national office (national offices exist in the other countries and nations of the UK as well).

NB: UK and (Great) Britain do not mean the same thing. Great Britain excludes Northern Ireland.