

At the end of the chapter, the students will be able to understand-

- *Abbreviations*
- *Rules and Conventions for using Abbreviations*
- *Common Standard Abbreviations*

Standard abbreviations are important as by using commonly accepted shortened forms of words or phrases, people can convey complex or lengthy information quickly without losing meaning. This is especially useful in professional, academic, and everyday contexts where time and space are limited, such as in business reports, scientific papers, text messages, and signs. Standard abbreviations ensure that everyone understands the message uniformly, preventing confusion that might arise from unfamiliar or non-standard shortcuts. Overall, knowing and using standard abbreviations improves clarity, saves effort, and helps maintain consistent communication across different fields and situations.

ABBREVIATIONS

An abbreviation is a shortened form of a word or phrase, created to reduce length in speech and writing. The primary function of abbreviations is to save space and time, making communication more efficient without compromising understanding. Abbreviations are particularly useful when dealing with long, complex terms or frequently repeated expressions.

For example, rather than repeatedly writing the long phrase "International Monetary Fund", it is abbreviated as "IMF" for convenience. Abbreviations are universally used in formal documents, technical writings, academic papers, and everyday communication, enhancing clarity and brevity.

Types of Abbreviations

1. **Clipping or Truncation:** Clipping involves shortening a word by omitting one or more syllables (usually from the end, sometimes the beginning or middle) without changing its meaning or grammatical category.

Examples:

- Ad from advertisement
- Lab from laboratory
- Fridge from refrigerator
- Exam from examination

Note: This form of abbreviation makes everyday language more casual and conversational. Clipped words retain the original word's part of speech and meaning, functioning as informal yet widely accepted substitutes.

2. **Contraction:** A contraction deletes certain letters from a word or phrase, often marking the omission with an apostrophe. Contractions are mainly used to combine auxiliary verbs and pronouns or to simplify negative forms.

Examples:

- Can't from cannot
- I'm from I am
- They've from They have
- Won't from will not (irregular form)

Note: Contractions reflect natural speech patterns and are frequent in informal writing, dialogue, and conversational tone. They facilitate smoother, faster communication, yet are generally avoided in formal writing unless in direct quotes.

3. **Initialisms:** Initialisms are abbreviations formed by taking the initial letters of a multi-word term and pronouncing each letter separately.

Examples:

- FBI – Federal Bureau of Investigation (pronounced "F-B-I")
- ATM – Automated Teller Machine (pronounced "A-T-M")
- BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation (pronounced "B-B-C")

Note: Initialisms are highly prevalent in business, government, technology, and organizations. They are very useful when handling names or concepts too long or too technical to use daily.

4. **Acronyms:** These are formed similarly to initialisms but are pronounced as single words rather than separate letters.

Examples:

- NASA – National Aeronautics and Space Administration (pronounced nasa)
- SCUBA – Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus (pronounced scuba)
- LED – Light Emitting Diode (often pronounced letter-by-letter or as a word in some contexts)

Note: Acronyms often become words themselves, extensively used in technology, institutions, and science. They are easier to remember and more streamlined than spelling out full phrases.

5. **Portmanteau Words:** A portmanteau is a blend of parts of two (or more) words combined to form a new word that conveys elements of both.

Examples:

- Brunch (breakfast + lunch)
- Smog (smoke + fog)
- Motel (motor + hotel)

Note: Portmanteaus are a creative form of abbreviation that synthesize meanings into concise, catchy words, often becoming part of everyday lexicon.

RULES AND CONVENTIONS FOR USING ABBREVIATIONS

- Punctuation:** Traditional American English often places periods in abbreviations (e.g. Mr., Dr., U.S.). British English sometimes omits the period if the abbreviation ends with the last letter of the word (e.g., Mr., Dr.). Acronyms and initialisms typically do not include periods (NASA, FBI).
- Capitalization:**
 - Proper nouns and acronyms are usually capitalized (e.g., USA, CEO).
 - Common or general abbreviations (e.g., etc., eg, i.e.) are lowercase.
 - **First Mention:** In formal writing, introduce the full form followed by the abbreviation in parentheses:
Example: The World Health Organization (WHO) announced new guidelines.
 Subsequent uses can just use the abbreviation.
 - **Avoid Overuse:** Excessive abbreviations can confuse readers, so they should be used judiciously, especially in academic or formal texts.

COMMON STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full Form	Meaning/Use
Mr.	Mister	Used before a man's name
Mrs.	Mistress	Used before a married woman's name
Dr.	Doctor	Medical or academic title
Prof.	Professor	Academic title
St.	Street	Used in addresses
Ave.	Avenue	Used in addresses
Jan.	January	Month
Feb.	February	Month
USA	United States of America	Country
UK	United Kingdom	Country
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration	Organization
approx.	Approximately	About, nearly
Info	Information	General information
etc.	et cetera	And other things
i.e.	that is	To explain something
e.g.	for example	To give examples
a.m.	before noon	Time in morning

Abbreviation	Full Form	Meaning/Use
p.m.	after noon	Time in afternoon/evening
Kg	Kilogram	Unit of weight
Cm	Centimeter	Unit of length
M	Meter	Unit of length
Km	Kilometer	Unit of distance

A.D.	Anno Domini, in the year of the lord
a.m.	Antemeridiem, before noon
anon.	anonymous
Asst.	assistant
b.	born
B.A.	Bachelor of Arts
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
B.C.	Before Christ
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (US)
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
COD	Cash on Delivery
Dept.	Department
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation (US)
GPO	General Post Office
Ibid.	ibidem, in the same place
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOU	I owe you
M.A.	Master of Arts
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
p.a.	per annum, per year
p.m.	post meridiem, after noon
POW	Prisoner of War

pp.

PRO

PTO

UNESCO

UNICEF

w.e.f.

WHO

Xmas

YMCA

YWCA

pages

Public Relations Officer

Please turn over

United Nations Educational Scientific
and Cultural Organisation

United Nations Children's Fund, formerly,
United Nations International Children's
Emergency Fund

with effect from

World Health Organisation

Christmas

Young Men's Christian Association

Young Women's Christian Association