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# English for Academic Research: Grammar, Usage and Style

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## 1.2 Acronyms: main usage

The first time you use an acronym, write the word out in full, followed by the acronym in brackets. The next time it is used within the same section (Introduction, Methods etc.), just use the acronym. But when you start a new section, repeat the full form again before reverting to the acronym. This is because you don't know which section of your paper the reader will read first.

Orders are dealt with on a **first in first out (FIFO)** basis. Blah blah blah. As mentioned earlier, given that we are using a **FIFO** queuing system, we ...

Note that in the above example *first in first out* is recent without initial capitalization. In fact, it is NOT a rule that each word has to begin with a capital letter..

Orders are dealt with on a **First In First Out (FIFO)** basis.

We used Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to ...

We used analysis of variance (ANOVA) to ...

Check with Google Scholar (**11.5**) to see whether initial capital letters are required for your specific case.

On the other hand, each letter of the acronym itself is usually capitalized, except when one of the letters in the acronym is a preposition (typically *of*).

Users require a **personal identification number (PIN)** to access any **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** files.

The quality-of-service (**QoS**) requirements for ...

The written full form of an acronym may or may not require initial capital letters. There are no rules for this, again check on Google Scholar.

We are part of a **NASA / Nasa** project.

Acronyms that include a number can be found either in upper or lower case (e.g. *B2B* or *b2b* = *business to business*).

Many **peer2peer** applications have now been blocked.

Many **P2P / p2p** applications have now been blocked.

Do not repeat the final abbreviated word in the text following the abbreviation (in the example below *I* stands for *interface* and *N* for *number*).

The **GUI interface** is user friendly. It does not require a **PIN number**.

The **GUI** is user friendly. It does not require a **PIN**.

Be careful of using acronyms that exist in your own language but not in English. Put the meaning of the acronym before the acronym itself. If necessary also include the nationality.

This paper describes a **CNRS** (National Center for Scientific Research) study of ...

This paper describes a study by the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) of ...

If the acronym is unlikely to be known to your readers, then provide an explanation of what it stands for. This does not need to be a literal translation. There is little point in putting the form in your own language as readers will not understand its meaning unless they happen to speak your language.

Italian citizens are subject to various taxes, the most important being **Irpef**.

Italian citizens are subject to various taxes, the most important being **IRPEF (Imposta sul Reddito delle Persone Fisiche – tax on the income of physical persons)**.

Italian citizens are subject to various taxes, the most important being **IRPEF**, which is a **tax on personal income**.

Ensure that you use the English form of an acronym when referring to an international entity, e.g. **EU** – *European Union*, not **UE** – *Union européenne*.

This is an **EU / UE** law.