

# English (UK) Style Guide

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# 1 About this style guide

This style guide is intended for the localization professional working on localized products that run on a Microsoft platform. It's not intended to be a comprehensive coverage of all localization practices, but to highlight areas where Microsoft has specific preferences or deviates from standard practices for UK English localization.

The primary goal of this guide is to help you understand and learn how to address all of the necessary linguistic and stylistic nuances of UK English during the localization of your products and services.

The style guide covers guidelines and recommendations for translating the Microsoft voice into UK English including words, grammatical structures, the needs of the audience, and the intent of the text that are to be considered. Each of these areas is supplemented with samples.

Other language considerations covered in this style guide are accessibility, trademarks, geopolitical concerns and specific software considerations.

We welcome your feedback, questions and concerns regarding the style guide. Please send your feedback via [Microsoft Language Portal](#).

## 1.1 Recommended style references

Unless this style guide or the [Microsoft Language Portal](#) provides alternative instructions, use the orthography, grammar, and terminology in the following publications:

### **Normative references**

When more than one solution is allowed in these sources, look for the recommended one in other sections of the style guide.

1. The Oxford English dictionary (<http://www.oed.com/>)
2. Wikipedia ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page))
3. DictionaryReference.com (<http://dictionary.reference.com/>)
4. Legal Dictionary (<http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/>)

### **Microsoft User interface reference**

A helpful reference is the [Windows User Experience Interaction Guidelines](#).

## 2 Microsoft voice

Microsoft's brand personality comes through in our voice and tone—what we say and how we say it. The design of Microsoft products, services, and experiences hinges on crisp simplicity.

Three principles form the foundation of our voice:

- **Warm and relaxed:** We're natural. Less formal, more grounded in honest conversations. Occasionally, we're fun. (We know when to celebrate.)
- **Crisp and clear:** We're to the point. We write for scanning first, reading second. We make it simple above all.
- **Ready to lend a hand:** We show customers we're on their side. We anticipate their real needs and offer great information at just the right time.

The Microsoft voice targets a broad set of users from technology enthusiasts and casual computer users. Although content might be different for different audiences, the principles of Microsoft voice are the same. However, Microsoft voice also means keeping the audience in mind. Choose the right words for the audience: use technical terms for technical audiences, but for consumers use common words and phrases instead.

The key elements of Microsoft voice should extend across Microsoft content for all language locales. For each language, the specific choices in style and tone that produce Microsoft voice are different. The following guidelines are relevant for US English as well as many other languages.

### Guidelines

Keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Write short, easy-to-read sentences.
- Avoid passive voice—it's difficult to read and understand quickly.
- Be pleasant and ensure that explanations appear individualized.
- Avoid slang and be careful with colloquialisms—it's acceptable to reassure and connect with customers in a conversational tone, but be professional in doing so.

#### 2.1 Consistency

Consistency in the Microsoft voice is vital. The more consistent it's, the more likely that people will understand what makes the company and its products so special. The way that the various brands express themselves has to be consistent so that people trust and respect the company.

Consistency does not only apply to tone of voice, but to the use of style, terminology and formatting.

## 2.2 Choices that reflect Microsoft voice

Translating UK English in a way that reflects Microsoft voice means choosing words and grammatical structures that reflect the same style as the source text. It also means considering the needs of the audience and the intent of the text.

The general style should be clear, friendly and concise. Use language that resembles conversation observed in everyday settings as opposed to the formal, technical language that's often used for technical and commercial content.

When you're localizing source text written in Microsoft voice, **feel free to choose words that aren't standard translations** if you think that's the best way to stay true to the intent of the source text.

Because Microsoft voice means a more conversational style, literally translating the source text may produce target text that's not relevant to customers. To guide your translation, consider the intent of the text and what the customer needs to know to successfully complete the task.

### 2.2.1 Word choice

#### Terminology

Use terminology from the [Microsoft Language Portal](#) where applicable, for example key terms, technical terms, and product names.

#### Short word forms and everyday words

Microsoft voice text written in English prefers short, simple words spoken in everyday conversations. In English, shorter words are friendlier and less formal. Short words also save space on screen and are easier to read quickly. Precise, well-chosen words add clarity, but it's important to be intentional about using everyday words that customers are accustomed to.

The following table lists some common words that are used for Microsoft voice in UK English.

en-GB word	en-GB word usage
App	Use <i>app</i> instead of <i>application</i> or <i>program</i> .
Pick, choose	Use <i>pick</i> in more fun, less formal or lightweight situations ("pick a color," not "choose a color") and <i>choose</i> for more formal situations (don't use <i>select</i> unless necessary for the UI).

Drive	For general reference to any drive type (hard drive, CD drive, external hard drive, etc.). Use specific drive type if necessary.
Get	Fine to use as a synonym for "obtain" or "come into possession of" but should be avoided for other general meanings.
Info	Use in most situations unless "information" better fits the context. Use "info" when you point the reader elsewhere ("for more info, see <link>").
PC	Use for personal computing devices. Use <i>computer</i> for situations about PCs and Macs. Don't switch between <i>PC</i> and <i>computer</i> .
You	Address the user as <i>you</i> , directly or indirectly through the use of first- and second-person pronouns like "you." Avoid third-person references, such as "user," as they sound formal and impersonal.  For information on localizing <i>you</i> , see the section <a href="#">Pronouns</a> .

## 2.2.2 Words and phrases to avoid

Microsoft voice avoids an unnecessarily formal tone. The following table lists English words that add formality without adding meaning, along with more common equivalents.

en-US word/phrase to avoid	Preferred en-GB word/phrase
Achieve	<i>Do</i>
As well as	<i>Also, too</i>
Attempt	<i>Try</i>
Configure	<i>Set up</i>
Encounter	<i>Meet</i>
Execute	<i>Run</i>
Halt	<i>Stop</i>
Have an opportunity	<i>Can</i>
However	<i>But</i>
Give/provide guidance, give/provide information	<i>Help</i>

In addition	<i>Also</i>
In conjunction with	<i>With</i>
Locate	<i>Find</i>
Make a recommendation	<i>Recommend</i>
Modify	<i>Change</i>
Navigate	<i>Go</i>
Obtain	<i>Get</i>
Perform	<i>Do</i>
Purchase	<i>Buy</i>
Refer to	<i>See</i>
Resolve	<i>Fix</i>
Subsequent	<i>Next</i>
Suitable	<i>Works well</i>
Terminate	<i>End</i>
Toggle	<i>Switch</i>
Utilize	<i>Use</i>

## 2.3 Sample Microsoft voice text

The source and target phrase samples in the following sections illustrate the intent of the Microsoft voice.

### 2.3.1 Address the user to take action

US English	UK English target	Explanation
The password isn't correct, so please try again. Passwords are case-sensitive.	The password isn't correct, so please try again. Passwords are case sensitive.	The user has entered an incorrect password so provide the user with a short and friendly message with the action to try again.



This product key didn't work. Please check it and try again.	This product key didn't work. Please check it and try again.	The user has entered an incorrect product key. The message casually and politely asks the user to check it and try again.
All ready to go	All ready to go	Casual and short message to inform user that setup is finished, the system is now ready for use.
Would you like to continue?	Would you like to continue?	Use of the second person pronoun "you" to politely ask the user if they would like to continue.
Give your PC a name—any name you want. If you want to change the background color, turn high contrast off in PC settings.	Give your PC a name – any name you'd like. If you want to change the background colour, turn high contrast off in PC settings.	Address the user directly using the second person pronoun to take the necessary action.

### 2.3.2 Promote a feature

US English	UK English target	Explanation
Picture password is a new way to help you protect your touchscreen PC. You choose the picture—and the gestures you use with it—to create a password that's uniquely yours.	Picture password is a new way to help you protect your touchscreen PC. You choose the picture – and the gestures you use with it – to create a password that's uniquely yours.	Promoting a specific feature with the use of em-dash to emphasize the specific requirements to enable the feature which in this situation is picture password.
Let apps give you personalized content based on your PC's location, name, account picture, and other domain info.	Let apps give you personalised content based on your PC's location, name, account picture and other domain info.	Promoting the use of apps. Depending on the context of the string you can add familiarity to the text by using everyday words, for example, PC.

### 2.3.3 Provide how-to guidelines

US English	UK English target	Explanation
To go back and save your work, click Cancel and finish what you need to.	To go back and save your work, click Cancel and finish what you need to do.	Short and clear action using the second person pronoun.
To confirm your current picture password, just watch the replay and trace the example gestures shown on your picture.	To confirm your current picture password, just watch the replay and trace the example gestures shown on your picture.	Voice is simple and natural. The user isn't overloaded with information; we tell them only what they need to know to make a decision.

### 2.3.4 Explanatory text and support

US English	UK English target	Explanation
The updates are installed, but Windows 10 Setup needs to restart for them to work. After it restarts, we'll keep going from where we left off.	The updates are installed, but Windows 10 Setup needs to restart for them to work. After it restarts, we'll keep going from where we left off.	The language is natural, the way people talk. In this case voice is reassuring, letting the user know that we're doing the work. Use of "we" provides a more personal feel.
If you restart now, you and any other people using this PC could lose unsaved work.	If you restart now, you and any other people using this PC could lose unsaved work.	Voice is clear and natural informing the user what will happen if this action is taken.
This document will be automatically moved to the right library and folder after you correct invalid or missing properties.	This document will be automatically moved to the right library and folder after you correct invalid or missing properties.	Voice talks to the user informatively and directly on the action that will be taken.
Something bad happened! Unable to locate downloaded files to create your bootable USB flash drive.	Something bad happened! Unable to locate downloaded files to create your bootable USB flash drive.	Let the user know what has happened in an easy to understand manner and using short sentences.

## 3 Language-specific standards

Information about UK English specific standards, such as phone number formats, date formats, currency formats, and measurement units are available from the [GoGlobal Developer Center](#).

### 3.1 Grammar, syntax and orthographic standards

This section includes information on how to apply the general language and syntax rules to Microsoft products, online content, and documentation.

#### 3.1.1 Abbreviations

You might need to abbreviate some words in the UI (mainly buttons or options names) due to lack of space. Generally speaking, for UK English, it's advisable to follow the source when abbreviations have been used.

Make sure that the abbreviation is clear and will be easily understood in the context. Where possible, use standard abbreviations such as those provided in the list of common abbreviations below.

List of common abbreviations:

Expression	Acceptable abbreviation
Article	Art.
Chapter	Chap.
Example	e.g.
Hour	h
Minute	min
Number	N°, no.

#### 3.1.2 Acronyms

Acronyms are words made up of the initial letters of major parts of a compound term. Common examples are WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get), DNS (Domain Name Server), and HTML (Hypertext Markup Language).

## Localized acronyms

Most acronyms that appear are international and will be understood by UK English users. Where a local body is being referred to, either to describe local laws or as an illustration, an appropriate alternative should be found to avoid confusion.

US English source	UK English target
ED (US Department of Education)	DfE (UK Department for Education)

## Unlocalized acronyms

Where it's necessary to retain the US acronym (and where that acronym is likely to be unfamiliar to UK-based users), the full form can be used the first time this appears (with the acronym in brackets), with the acronym being used on all subsequent occurrences within that page.

US English source	UK English target
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

### 3.1.3 Adjectives

In UK English, handle adjectives in the following manner.

Adjectives are treated the same way as in US English, except for compound adjectives, which are often left unhyphenated in US English, but almost always require hyphenation in UK English.

US English source	UK English target
part time worker	part-time worker

## Possessive adjectives

The frequent use of possessives is a feature of the English language. They should be considered as alternatives for definite and indefinite articles to make the text seem more natural and flow better.

### 3.1.4 Capitalization

#### Capitalization following a colon

Always use lowercase after a colon within a sentence, except if the colon introduces a direct quotation or if the first word after the colon is a proper noun.

After words like "Note:" or "Important" start the next sentence with a capital letter.

(-)	(+)
Important: you must add sales tax to any orders you ship to states where you have a physical store presence.	Important: You must add sales tax to any orders you ship to states where you have a physical store presence.

#### Capitalization in titles, headings and subheadings

In UK English, only the first letter of a title, heading or sub-heading is capitalized (except proper nouns, names and acronyms, per standard convention).

Examples:

Universal declaration of the rights of man  
The curious case of Benjamin Button  
Section III: Import excises

#### Capitalization in UI labels

Menu titles and items, push buttons, toolbar item labels and labels that are not full sentences (for example, group box or list headings) should be capitalized as per the source.

### 3.1.5 Compounds

Compounds should be understandable and clear to the user. Avoid overly long or complex compounds. Keep in mind that unintuitive compounds can cause intelligibility and usability issues.

- Don't hyphenate compounds that are commonly accepted as one word in English.

Examples: website, toolbar, microchip.

- Hyphenate two or more words that collectively modify a noun, especially if not hyphenating them could confuse the user.

Examples: read-only memory, bottom left-hand corner, built-in drive.

- Hyphenate two words that modify a noun if one of the words is a past or present participle.

Examples: copy-protected disk, free-moving graphics.

- Hyphenate two or more words that modify a noun if one of the modifiers is a number or a single letter.

Examples: eight-sided polygon, 16-bit bus, I-beam insertion point.

- Try to avoid suspended compound adjectives.

Example, don't write: first- and second-generation computers.

- If space allows, use the second modifier twice, for example: first-generation and second-generation computers.

### 3.1.6 Conjunctions

For en-US Microsoft voice, conjunctions can help convey a conversational tone. Starting a sentence with a conjunction can be used to convey an informal tone and style.

The same is applicable for UK English.

US/ UK English classic use of conjunctions	US/UK English use of conjunctions in Microsoft voice
As <product> gains features, there is a risk that older content may not display correctly.	Because of these features, older content may not display correctly.

### 3.1.7 Contractions

For US English Microsoft voice, contractions help to convey a conversational tone, and used whenever possible.

US English long form	US English contracted form
Do not	Don't

This also applies to UK English Microsoft voice. Some more examples:

UK English long form	UK English contracted form
Cannot	Can't
It will	It'll
Would have	Would've
They would	They'd

### 3.1.8 Gender

Grammatical gender is treated the same way as in US English.

### 3.1.9 Genitive

Don't attach a possessive "-s" to product/service names or trademarks as this could be interpreted as a modification of these names. If a possessive is necessary, use an "of construction" or use the trademark as an adjective.

### 3.1.10 Lexicon

Lexicon is a tool that enables automation of changes in orthographic conventions.

#### **Application of the Lexicon**

The Lexicon is a list of terms that are automatically replaced and/or marked up in US-En source files. It's used at the very beginning of the project. After the Lexicon has been applied to the source files, a proof-reader has to review the strings to ensure all replacements were made properly and there are no flaws resulting from tricky word pairs. At the same time, the reviewer is performing other changes that need to be done to adapt the US-En to UK-En.

#### **Replacements performed by the Lexicon**

The Lexicon performs both spelling changes and word replacements. See examples below.

#### **Spelling**

Type of change	US English	UK English
hyphenation	antialiasing	anti-aliasing
	e-mail	email

	cohosting	co-hosting
word separation	anymore	any more
-l/-ll	labeled	labelled
-ize and -ise	localize	localise
-yze and -yse	analyze	analyse
-or and -our	watercolor	watercolour
-er and -re	center	centre
	milliliter	millilitre
air- and aer-	airfoil	aerofoil (but not airport)
-e- and -ae-	anesthesiologist	anaesthesiologist
-ey and -y	flakey	flaky
-a- and -au-	balk	baulk
-aly and -ally	basicaly	basically
-i- and -y-	cipher	cypher
-e and -é	coupe	Coupé

The spelling replacements are made in all forms of the word:

US English	UK English
localize	localise
localized	localised
localizes	localises
localizing	localising
localizing's	localising's



watercolor	watercolour
watercolors	watercolours
watercolors'	watercolours'
watercolor's	watercolour's

Word substitutions:

US English	UK English
parentheded	bracketed
roughhewed	rough-hewn
buddy	mate
Zip code	postcode

Tricky issues:

US English	UK English	Comment
program	program programme	computer program TV programme
fall	autumn to fall	season verb
meter	meter metre	device unit
draft	draught draft	of wind, or beer of a document

## Location of the Lexicon

The Location of the Lexicon is project-dependent.

## Lexicon Windows specific information

The ENGB Transformation tool containing Lexicon was used for Windows. Below is a sample text before and after the tool application and human editing. Contact project manager for more details on the Transformation tool and Lexicon used.

Sample text:

US English	After Application of the Lexicon
Filter Keys lets you personalize the keyboard ignore unintended keystrokes. To turn it on hold down the shift key for 8 seconds.	Filter Keys lets you personalise the keyboard so it will ignore unintended keystrokes. To turn it on press and hold down the shift key for 8 seconds.
Choose our recommended settings to take care of these things in one click. It's OK if you want to customize them now, but it will take a little longer.	Choose our recommended settings to take care of these things in one click. It's OK if you want to customise them now, but it will take a little longer.
Allows you to sign up for a brand new e-mail account.	Allows you to sign up for a brand new email account.
Add a TV tuner and record your favorite TV shows to watch whenever you want.	Add a TV tuner and record your favourite TV shows to watch whenever you want.
aliasing; anti alias; anti aliasing; antialias; anti-alias; antialiasing; anti-aliasing; clear type; cleartype; text; words; menus; dialogs; buttons; labels; messages; writing; ui language;	aliasing; anti alias; anti aliasing; anti-alias; anti-alias; anti-aliasing; anti-aliasing; clear type; cleartype; text; words; menus; dialogs; buttons; labels; messages; writing; ui language; <b>Note:</b> This would need to be reverted back as the keywords already contain both hyphenated and unhyphenated version.

## Lexicon Windows Services specific information

The ENGB Transformation tool containing Lexicon was used for Windows Services. Below is a sample text before and after the tool application and human editing. Contact Windows IPM for more details on the Transformation tool and Lexicon used.

Sample text:

US English	After Application of the Lexicon
Post your favorite photos and videos online and create beautiful slide shows you can share with the people you choose.	Post your favourite photos and videos online and create beautiful slide shows you can share with the people you choose.
Whether you're opening a video or searching for an e-mail, the new Hotmail is faster than ever. Performance improvements mean you can zoom through your inbox, giving you more time to get other stuff done.	Whether you're opening a video or searching for an email, the new Hotmail is faster than ever. Performance improvements mean you can zoom through your inbox, giving you more time to get other stuff done.
Import photos from your camera, organize them into albums and edit them so they look their best. Use powerful photo tools to create stunning panoramas, movies, slide shows and more. When you're ready to share, publish your photos and videos to your favorite websites like Facebook and Flickr directly from Photo Gallery.	Import photos from your camera, organise them into albums and edit them so they look their best. Use powerful photo tools to create stunning panoramas, films, slide shows and more. When you're ready to share, publish your photos and videos to your favourite websites like Facebook and Flickr directly from Photo Gallery. -For software such as MovieMaker (product name not adapted), movie is used throughout the text, to ensure consistency.
Bring your team, club, or other group together with a webpage, calendar, personalized e-mail address, and more.	Bring your team, club, or other group together with a webpage, calendar, personalised email address, and more.
The Guide provides TV program listings to help you find, watch, and record TV shows. If you use the Guide, information to improve the quality and accuracy of the service will be sent to Microsoft. The information is not used to identify or contact you.	The Guide provides TV programme listings to help you find, watch, and record TV shows. If you use the Guide, information to improve the quality and accuracy of the service will be sent to Microsoft. The information is not used to identify or contact you. <b>Note:</b> This has occasionally been wrongly auto-corrected in URLs, where it's obviously harder to spot.

### 3.1.11 Localizing colloquialism, idioms, and metaphors

The Microsoft voice allows for the use of culture-centric colloquialisms, idioms and metaphors (collectively referred to "colloquialism").

Choose from these options to express the intent of the source text appropriately.

- Don't attempt to replace the source colloquialism with a UK English colloquialism that fits the same meaning of the particular context unless it's a perfect and natural fit for that context.
- Translate the *intended* meaning of the colloquialism in the source text (not the literal translation of the original colloquialism in the source text), but only if the colloquialism's meaning is an integral part of the text that can't be omitted.
- If the colloquialism can be omitted without affecting the meaning of the text, omit it.

### 3.1.12 Nouns

#### General considerations

Nouns are treated the same way in UK English.

#### Plural formation

UK English still retains more irregular plurals than US English does, and these should be considered when adapting text. For example: learnt.

### 3.1.13 Numbers

This topic includes guidelines when to use numerals (symbol that represents a number. for example, 1, 2, 3, 234, etc.) and when to spell out numbers (one, two, three, two hundred and thirty-four) and other aspects for the particular language.

In English (UK) numbers from 1 to 9 are written out in letters, numbers above nine are shown as numerals.

Numbers below zero should follow the same general rules as those above zero ("two microseconds", "20 microseconds"). When there is a mix of numbers below and above nine, and used in the same context, use numerals.

### 3.1.14 Prepositions

Pay attention to the correct use of the preposition in adaptation.

Examples:

US English source text expression	UK English expression	Comment
Monday through Wednesday	Monday to Wednesday	Through is never used in UK English in this sense.

Finish up	Finish	
Waiting on	Waiting for	

For the Microsoft voice, use of prepositions is another way to help convey a casual or conversational tone. Starting or ending a sentence with a preposition is acceptable practice in conveying Microsoft voice.

Classic English preposition usage (both US/UK English)	Microsoft voice English usage (both US/UK English)
Developers can go to the application management site to find the apps for which they are looking.	Developers can go to the application management site to find the apps they are looking for.
The person to whom you were speaking.	The person you were speaking to.

### 3.1.15 Pronouns

Pronouns are treated the same way as in US English.

### 3.1.16 Punctuation

Note that punctuation, particularly comma usage, is one of the areas where UK English can differ greatly from US English. Follow UK English conventions.

Don't add punctuation marks in labels.

### 3.1.17 Apostrophes

Apostrophes should never be used to indicate a plural (for example, DVDs, CVs, 1950s, to-dos).

For nouns ending in s, use –s's, for example, Niklas's

### **Bulleted lists**

Bulleted lists tend to be treated the same way as in US English.

### **Comma**

#### **Commas before the conjunctions "and" and "or"**

There should be no comma before the final "and" in a list-type construction:

US English source text	UK English target text
Check for available updates to the Software, such as bug fixes, patches, and enhanced functions.	Check for available updates to the Software, such as bug fixes, patches and enhanced functions.

There should be no comma before the final "or" in a list-type construction:

US English source text	UK English target text
Check for available updates to the Software, such as bugfixes, patches, or enhanced functions.	Check for available updates to the Software, such as bug fixes, patches or enhanced functions.

Note that it's perfectly acceptable and indeed necessary in some cases, to have a comma before "and" or "or" when it's used to break up two separate but related clauses:

US English source text	UK English target text
On Google Maps, your ad can appear right on the map, and you can pick a special icon related to your business.	On Google Maps, your ad can appear directly on the map, and you can pick a special icon related to your business.

### Use of commas with the conjunction "but"

In keeping with standard UK English grammar rules, "but" should not be preceded by a comma, as it serves as a conjunction between clauses. This is not usually the case in US English.

US English source text	UK English target text
This user will be able to see your photos and documents on SkyDrive, but can't make changes to them.	This user will be able to see your photos and documents on SkyDrive but won't be able to make changes to them.

However, where these two clauses form independent sentences, a comma should be inserted

US English source text	UK English target text
You can't turn on contact management for this child, but you'll still be able to manage contacts for accounts that already have it turned on.	You can't turn on contact management for this child, but you'll still be able to manage contacts for accounts that already have it turned on.

### Commas before and after "etc." and "i.e."

Note that there is no comma before "etc." in UK English:

US English source text	UK English target text
Select the "Date Range" for your report by clicking the pull-down menu and choosing the time span (i.e., "Last seven days," "Last thirty days," etc.).	Select the "Date Range" for your report by clicking the pull-down menu and choosing the time span (i.e. "Last seven days", "Last thirty days" etc.).

The same applies to commas after "i.e.":

US English source text	UK English target text
Select the "Date Range" for your report by clicking the pull-down menu and choosing the time span (i.e., "Last seven days," "Last thirty days," etc.).	Select the "Date Range" for your report by clicking the pull-down menu and choosing the time span (i.e. "Last seven days", "Last thirty days" etc.).

### Colon

Use colons to indicate a list or introduce a point.

### Dashes and hyphens

Three different dash characters are used in English:

#### Hyphen

The hyphen is used to divide words between syllables, to link parts of a compound word, and to connect the parts of an inverted or imperative verb form.

It should also be used with the following prefixes: pre-, re- and un-.

Use re- (with a hyphen) when followed by the vowels e or u (not pronounced as "yu"): for example, re-entry, re-examine, re-urge.

Use re (no hyphen) when followed by the vowels a, i, o or u (pronounced as "yu"), or any consonant: for example, rearm, rearrange, reassemble, reiterate, reorder, reread, reuse, rebuild, reconsider, retweet.

Exceptions (where confusion with another word would arise): re-cover/recover, re-creation/recreation, re-form/reform, re-sent/resent, re-sign/resign.

Pre-, re- and un- are often hyphenated in neologisms, but where a word has entered the lexicon, this prefix is generally concatenated (not always in the case of pre-), except for in the above-described cases.

Use hyphen in cases where compound modifiers precede the noun, for example, "third-party solutions," "on a case-by-case basis."

Retain this hyphen and use it if required even if doesn't appear in the source text.

Examples:

(-)	(+)
Keyword related ads	Keyword-related ads
Campaign tracking variables	Campaign-tracking variables
Manager Defined Spend	Manager-Defined Spend

Note that hyphens are not used in the following cases:

1. When the compound modifier comes after the noun

Example:

(-)	(+)
The file is up-to-date	The file is up to date

1. In adjectival compounds beginning with adverbs ending in -ly

Examples:



(-)	(+)
Don't disclose any personally-identifying information	Don't disclose any personally identifying information
This page lets you monitor your contextually-targeted campaigns	This page lets you monitor your contextually targeted campaign

One last difference regarding UK English hyphen usage occurs when a word is too long to fit on the end of one line. In this case they should appear at morphological breaks, unlike US English which allows for them at syllable breaks. Compare:

US English	UK English
buil- ding	build- ing

### En dash

The en dash is used as a minus sign, usually with spaces before and after. The en dash is also used in number ranges, such as those specifying page numbers. No spaces are used around the en dash in this case. The use of "m" dashes is more common in US English than it's in UK English. UK English tends to favor "n" dashes.

(-)	(+)
This is an example — and must be taken into account — when localizing into UK English.	This is an example – and must be taken into account – when localising into UK English.

In some cases, US English uses two "n-dashes" one after the other. Again this is not common in UK English, which tends to favor a single "n" dash:

(-)	(+)
This is an example -- and must be taken into account -- when localizing into UK English.	This is an example – and must be taken into account – when localising into UK English.

### Em dash

The em dash should only be used to emphasize an isolated element or introduce an element that's not essential to the meaning conveyed by the sentence.

Example:

An em dash is not the most important punctuation mark—it's main use being for making asides.

### **Ellipses (suspension points)**

Ellipses are generally to be avoided in UK English. Where they are used, there should be no space between them and the preceding word, then a space before a following word (if appropriate).

Example:

UK English target
When you need to create suspense... ellipses can help!

#### 3.1.18 Exclamation marks

Exclamation marks should be avoided, especially in UI strings.

### **Period/full stop**

#### **Full stop and brackets**

If the text within the bracket is merely part of a sentence, place the full stop after the closing bracket.

(-)	(+)
Your keyword status, listed beside every keyword in your account, tells you whether or not your keyword is triggering ads on Google and other search pages (if you have opted in to the search network.)	Your keyword status, listed beside every keyword in your account, tells you whether or not your keyword is triggering ads on Google and other search pages (if you have opted in to the search network).

However, if the bracket contains an entire sentence from start to finish, place the full stop directly after the last word, that's, before the closing bracket.

## Quotation marks/inverted commas

Traditionally, inverted commas ( ' ') were used in UK English where quotation marks ( " ") would be used in US English. However, modern UK English usage tends to favor quotation marks as well.

In US English, the punctuation mark goes inside the quotation marks, but in UK English it goes outside:

US English source text	UK English target text
Click "Edit Profile."	Click "Edit Profile".
Once you select on "Play these back-to-back", the videos will populate your "Playlist"	Once you select on "Play these back-to-back", the videos will populate your "Playlist"

Note that this change applies to both single and double quotation marks.

### Exception: direct speech

When reporting direct speech, the comma needs to go inside the quotation mark for UK English, just as it does for US English:

US English source text	UK English target text
"This makes French research more visible in foreign countries," said John.	"This makes French research more visible in foreign countries," said John.

Additionally, in US source strings you may find software references surrounded by English quotation marks. When these quotation marks are used to define a term which may be understood otherwise (for example, a "line" in code), then they should be replaced with inverted commas per standard UK English usage.

## Parentheses/brackets

In English, there is no space between the parentheses and the text inside them.

### 3.1.19 Sentence fragments

For the Microsoft voice, the use of sentence fragments helps convey a conversational tone. They are used whenever possible as they are short and to the point.

The same is applicable for UK English.

US English source text	UK English long form	US English and UK English sentence fragment
Use the following steps to print a document.	Use the following steps to print a document.	Need to print a document? Here's how.

### 3.1.20 Split infinitive

In both UK and US English the split infinitive was traditionally avoided and even frowned upon in formal written language. However, more recently it has become an accepted stylistic feature which often sounds more idiomatic than the "correct" version. If it sounds more idiomatic with the infinitive split, then leave it.

Example:

UK English target
To boldly go where no man has gone before!

### 3.1.21 Subjunctive

The use of the subjunctive in UK English has become increasingly less common in recent years as it sounds old-fashioned and can make the reader stumble or create confusion. Where it was once simply incorrect to use the indicative in certain constructions such as "if I were/was to" or "I wish it were/was true," both are now common and equally correct.

The subjunctive is still necessary in certain slightly antiquated constructions and set phrases such as "be that as it may" or "were it not for" or "whether it be." It's probably best to try and avoid using these altogether as they tend to give a pompous or pedantic air to the text.

### 3.1.22 Symbols & nonbreaking spaces

Nonbreaking spaces should be used between numbers and units so that they are not separated by line breaks (for example, 60 ml, 100 mph).

Additionally, # (the hash sign) is not commonly used in UK English as a short form for "number." This should be replaced with either "no./N°" or "number."

US English source	UK English target
#586	No. 586

### 3.1.23 Verbs

For US English Microsoft voice, verb tense helps to convey the clarity of Microsoft voice. Simple tenses are used. The easiest tense to understand is the simple present, like we use in this guide. Avoid future tense unless you're describing something that will really happen in the future and the simple present tense is inapplicable. Use simple past tense when you describe events that have already happened.

The same is applicable in UK English.

US English source text (classic)	UK English use of verb tense (Microsoft voice)
After you're finished installing the tool, the icon will appear on your desktop. ["are finished" is in present perfect tense]	After you finish installing the tool, the icon appears on your desktop. ["finish" is in simple present tense]

Don't use brand names as verbs, for example: Skype your friends or Send a Qik.

## 4 Localization considerations

Localization means that the translated text needs to be adapted to the local language, customs and standards.

The language in Microsoft products should have the "look and feel" of a product originally written in UK English, using idiomatic syntax and terminology, while at the same time maintaining a high level of terminological consistency, so as to guarantee the maximum user experience and usability for our customers.

### 4.1 Accessibility

Accessibility options and programs are designed to make the computer usable by people with cognitive, hearing, physical, or visual disabilities.

Hardware and software components engage a flexible, customizable user interface, alternative input and output methods, and greater exposure of screen elements.

General accessibility information can be found at <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/accessibility/>.

## 4.2 Applications, products, and features

Product and application names are often trademarked or may be trademarked in the future and are therefore rarely translated. Occasionally, feature names are trademarked, too (for example, IntelliSense™). Before translating any application, product, or feature name, verify that it's in fact translatable and not protected in any way. This information can be obtained [here](#).

Refer to the product-specific sections at the end of this document for information on the localization of specific product names.

### **Version numbers**

Version numbers always contain a period (for example, Version 4.2). This usage extends to UK English as well.

Version numbers are usually also a part of version strings, but technically they are not the same.

## 4.3 Trademarks

Trademarked names and the name Microsoft Corporation shouldn't be localized unless local laws require translation and an approved translated form of the trademark is available. A list of Microsoft trademarks is available [here](#).

## 4.4 Geopolitical concerns

Part of the cultural adaptation of the US product to a specific market is the resolution of geopolitical issues. While the US product is designed and developed with neutrality and a global audience in mind, the localized product should respond to the particular situation that applies within the target country/region.

Sensitive issues or issues that might potentially be offensive to the users in the target country/region may occur in any of the following:

- Maps
- Flags
- Country/region, city and language names
- Art and graphics
- Cultural content, such as encyclopedia content and other text where historical or political references are present

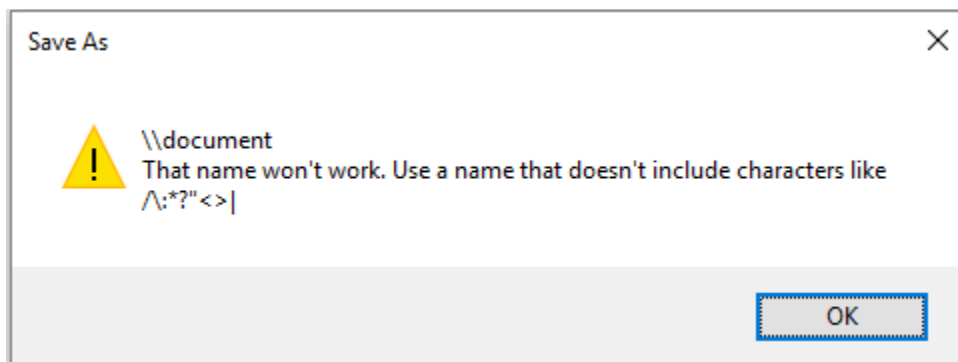
Some issues are easy to verify and resolve. The localizer should have the most current information available. Maps and other graphical representations of countries/regions should be checked for accuracy and existing political restrictions. Country/region, city, and language names change on a regular basis and should be checked, even if previously approved. A thorough understanding of the culture of the target market is required for checking the appropriateness of cultural content, clip art and other visual representations of religious symbols, and body and hand gestures.

## 4.5 Software considerations

This section refers to all menus, menu items, commands, buttons, check boxes, and other UI elements that should be consistently translated in the localized product.

### 4.5.1 Error messages

Here is an example:



Error messages are messages sent by the system or a program, informing the user of an error that must be corrected in order for the program to keep running. The messages can prompt the user to take action or inform the user of an error that requires restarting the computer.

Considering the underlying principles of Microsoft voice, translators are encouraged to apply them to ensure target translation is more natural, empathetic and not robot-like.

### **UK English style in error messages**

Use consistent terminology and language style in the localized error messages, and not just translate them as they appear in the US product.

When adapting usual phrases, standardize. Note that sometimes (such as in the table above) US English uses different forms to express the same idea.

Examples:

English source	English UK translation
Oops, that can't be blank...	Oops, that's not right...
Not enough memory to process this command.	Not enough memory to process this command.

### Standard phrases in error messages

These phrases commonly occur in error messages. When you translate them, try to use the provided target phrases. However, feel free to use other ways to express the source meaning if they work better in the context.

Examples:

US English	UK English
Can't ... Could not ...	Can't...
Failed to ... Failure of ...	Failed to...
Can't find ... Could not find ... Unable to find ... Unable to locate ...	Can't find...
Not enough memory Insufficient memory There is not enough memory There is not enough memory available	Not enough memory
... is not available ... is unavailable	...is not available

### Error messages containing placeholders

When localizing error messages containing placeholders, try to anticipate what will replace the placeholder. This is necessary for the sentence to be grammatically correct when the placeholder is replaced with a word or phrase. Note that the letters used in placeholders convey a specific meaning.

Examples:



%d, %ld, %u, and %lu means <number>

%c means <letter>

%s means <string>

Examples of error messages containing placeholders:

"Checking Web %1!d! of %2!d!" means "Checking Web <number> of <number>."

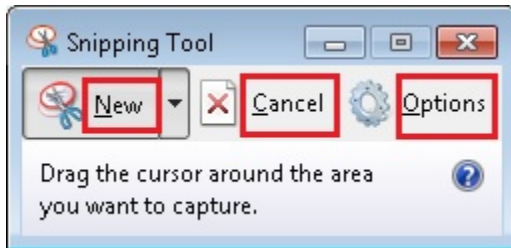
"INI file "%1!-.200s!" section" means "INI file "<string>" section."

## 4.5.2 Keys

In English, references to key names, like arrow keys, function keys and numeric keys, appear in normal text (not in small caps).

## 4.5.3 Keyboard shortcuts

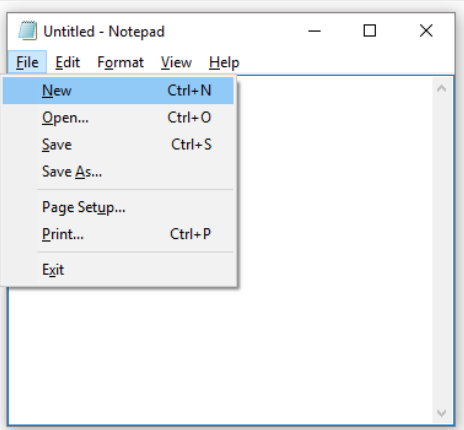
Sometimes, there are underlined or highlighted letters in menu options, commands or dialog boxes. These letters refer to keyboard shortcuts, which help the user to perform tasks more quickly.



Keyboard shortcuts special options	Usage: is it allowed?
"Slim characters," such as I, l, t, r, f can be used as keyboard shortcuts	yes
Characters with downstrokes, such as g, j, y, p and q can be used as keyboard shortcuts	yes
Extended characters can be used as keyboard shortcuts	yes
An additional letter, appearing between brackets after item name, can be used as a keyboard shortcut	yes
A number, appearing between brackets after item name, can be used as a keyboard shortcut	yes

A punctuation sign, appearing between brackets after item name, can be used as a keyboard shortcut	yes
Duplicate keyboard shortcuts are allowed when no other character is available	yes
No keyboard shortcut is assigned when no more characters are available (minor options only)	yes

Content writers usually just refer to “keyboard shortcuts” in content for a general audience. In localization, however, we distinguish the following terms:

Term	Usage
<p><b>access key</b></p>	<p>A subtype of keyboard shortcut. A letter or number that the user types to access UI controls that have text labels. Access keys are assigned to top-level controls so that the user can use the keyboard to move through the UI quickly.</p> <p>Example: F in Alt+F</p> <p>Example in UI localization: H&amp;ome</p>  <p>In keyboard shortcuts, most access keys are used with the Alt key.</p>
<p><b>key tip</b></p>	<p>The letter or number that appears in the ribbon when the Alt key is pressed.</p> <p>In UI localization, the key tip is the last character present in the strings after the “^” character.</p> <p>Example: In UI localization Home`H</p>

<p><b>shortcut key</b></p>	<p>A subtype of keyboard shortcut. A key that the user types to perform a common action without having to go through the UI. Shortcut keys are not available for every command.</p> <p>Example: Ctrl+N, Ctrl+V</p> <p>In keyboard shortcuts, most shortcut keys are used with the Ctrl key.</p> <p>Ctrl+letter combinations and function keys (F1 through F12) are usually the best choices for shortcut keys.</p>

#### 4.5.4 Arrow keys

The arrow keys move input focus among the controls within a group. Pressing the right arrow key moves input focus to the next control in tab order, whereas pressing the left arrow moves input focus to the previous control. Home, End, Up, and Down also have their expected behavior within a group. Users can't navigate out of a control group using arrow keys.

Regarding the capitalization of arrow keys, when used alone or in combination with another key they should be in uppercase (for example, Up, Down, Ctrl+Left etc.). However, when used in tandem with "arrow" they should be left in lowercase (for example, right arrow, left arrow, etc.).

The capitalized form is preferred for key combinations.

#### 4.5.5 Numeric keypad

Avoid distinguishing numeric keypad keys from the other keys, unless it's required by a given application. If it's not obvious which keys need to be pressed, provide necessary explanations.

#### 4.5.6 Shortcut keys

Shortcut keys are keystrokes or combinations of keystrokes perform defined functions in a software application. Shortcut keys replace menu commands and are sometimes given next to the command they represent. While access keys can be used only when available on the screen, shortcut keys can be used even when they are not accessible on the screen.

## Standard shortcut keys

US command	US English shortcut key	UK English command	UK English shortcut key
<b>General Windows shortcut keys</b>			
Help window	F1	Help window	F1
Context-sensitive Help	Shift+F1	Context-sensitive Help	Shift+F1
Display pop-up menu	Shift+F10	Display pop-up menu	Shift+F10
Cancel	Esc	Cancel	Esc
Activate/Deactivate menu bar mode	F10	Activate/Deactivate menu bar mode	F10
Switch to the next primary application	Alt+Tab	Switch to the next primary application	Alt+Tab
Display next window	Alt+Esc	Display next window	Alt+Esc
Display pop-up menu for the window	Alt+Spacebar	Display pop-up menu for the window	Alt+Spacebar
Display pop-up menu for the active child window	Alt+-	Display pop-up menu for the active child window	Alt+-
Display property sheet for current selection	Alt+Enter	Display property sheet for current selection	Alt+Enter
Close active application window	Alt+F4	Close active application window	Alt+F4
Switch to next window within (modeless-compliant) application	Alt+F6	Switch to next window within (modeless-compliant) application	Alt+F6
Capture active window image to the Clipboard	Alt+Prnt Scrn	Capture active window image to the Clipboard	Alt+Prnt Scrn
Capture desktop image to the Clipboard	Prnt Scrn	Capture desktop image to the Clipboard	Prnt Scrn

US command	US English shortcut key	UK English command	UK English shortcut key
Access Start button in taskbar	Ctrl+Esc	Access Start button in taskbar	Ctrl+Esc
Display next child window	Ctrl+F6	Display next child window	Ctrl+F6
Display next tabbed pane	Ctrl+Tab	Display next tabbed pane	Ctrl+Tab
Launch Task Manager and system initialization	Ctrl+Shift+Esc	Launch Task Manager and system initialization	Ctrl+Shift+Esc
<b>File menu</b>			
File New	Ctrl+N	File New	Ctrl+N
File Open	Ctrl+O	File Open	Ctrl+O
File Close	Ctrl+F4	File Close	Ctrl+F4
File Save	Ctrl+S	File Save	Ctrl+S
File Save as	F12	File Save as	F12
File Print Preview	Ctrl+F2	File Print Preview	Ctrl+F2
File Print	Ctrl+P	File Print	Ctrl+P
File Exit	Alt+F4	File Exit	Alt+F4
<b>Edit menu</b>			
Edit Undo	Ctrl+Z	Edit Undo	Ctrl+Z
Edit Repeat	Ctrl+Y	Edit Repeat	Ctrl+Y
Edit Cut	Ctrl+X	Edit Cut	Ctrl+X
Edit Copy	Ctrl+C	Edit Copy	Ctrl+C
Edit Paste	Ctrl+V	Edit Paste	Ctrl+V
Edit Delete	Ctrl+Backspace	Edit Delete	Ctrl+Backspace

US command	US English shortcut key	UK English command	UK English shortcut key
Edit Select All	Ctrl+A	Edit Select All	Ctrl+A
Edit Find	Ctrl+F	Edit Find	Ctrl+F
Edit Replace	Ctrl+H	Edit Replace	Ctrl+H
Edit Go To	Ctrl+G	Edit Go To	Ctrl+G
<b>Help menu</b>			
Help	F1	Help	F1
<b>Font format</b>			
Italic	Ctrl+I	Italic	Ctrl+I
Bold	Ctrl+B	Bold	Ctrl+B
Underlined/Word underline	Ctrl+U	Underlined/Word underline	Ctrl+U
Large caps	Ctrl+Shift+A	Large caps	Ctrl+Shift+A
Small caps	Ctrl+Shift+K	Small caps	Ctrl+Shift+K
<b>Paragraph format</b>			
Centered	Ctrl+E	Centered	Ctrl+E
Left aligned	Ctrl+L	Left aligned	Ctrl+L
Right aligned	Ctrl+R	Right aligned	Ctrl+R
Justified	Ctrl+J	Justified	Ctrl+J

#### 4.5.7 Lists

Lists tend to be treated the same way as in US English.

Introduce a list with a heading or sentence fragment followed by a colon.

Lists tend to be made up of sentence fragments and should therefore not start with a capital letter or end in a full stop. However, if the list item is a full sentence, standard grammatical rules apply. If the list is a mix of sentence fragments and sentences, use a capital letter and full stop for all bullet points.

#### 4.5.8 English pronunciation

##### General rules

Generally speaking, English terms and product names left unlocalized in target material should be pronounced the English way. For instance, "Microsoft" must be pronounced the English way. However, if your language has an established pronunciation for a common term (such as "server"), use the local pronunciation. Naturally pronunciation should reflect UK English pronunciation.

Example	Phonetics
SecurID	[sɪ'kjʊər aɪ di:]
.NET	[dot net]
Skype	[skaɪp]

##### Acronyms and abbreviations

Some acronyms are pronounced like real words, adapted to the local pronunciation. Other abbreviations are pronounced letter by letter.

Examples:

Acronyms pronounced like words	Acronyms pronounced letter by letter
RADIUS	ICMP
RAS	IP
ISA	TCP/IP
LAN	XML
WAN	HTML

WAP	OWA
MAPI	SQL

## URLS

"http://" should be omitted; the rest of the URL should be read entirely.

"www" should be pronounced as "double u, double u, double u."

In UK English it's common to read the "dot" after "www."

## Punctuation marks

Most punctuation marks are naturally implied by the sound of voice, for example, ? ! : ; ,

En dashes (–) are used to emphasize an isolated element. It should be pronounced as a comma, i.e. as a short pause.

## Special characters

Pronounce special characters such as / \ ~ < > + - using the approved UK English.

## 4.6 Vocabulary

It's important to consider whether any changes are required to localize vocabulary for UK English. For example, changes need to be made to the spelling of words in order to meet UK English conventions.

US English	UK English
Favorite	Favourite
Center	Centre
Optimize	Optimise

Some words in US English are not commonly used in UK English or don't have the same meaning. UK English words should be used wherever possible to ensure that the text sounds natural to UK users.



US English	UK English
Cell phone	Mobile phone
Mall	Shopping centre
Movie theater	Cinema

Sometimes it may be necessary to consider the context before making a change in terminology.

US English	UK English	Comment
State	County	Would need to be localized for UK addresses, but may not need to be changed in other contexts.

#### 4.7 Localizing URLs

If a localized website is available, the URL in the target text should direct users directly to the local site. This may include changing the domain to ".co.uk" or changing the language code in the URL to "en-gb".

US English source	UK English target
<a href="http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/default.aspx">http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/default.aspx</a>	<a href="http://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/default.aspx">http://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/default.aspx</a>
msn.com	msn.co.uk

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