The Stylish Strategist

A quick guide to our style

Welcome to *The Strategist*. Now that you've stepped into the club, please learn our dress code. And the first thing to know is that we're journalistic, not academic.

Our readers

They're all interested in national security, but many may know little about your article's part of it. And a lot of our readers aren't Australian. So ideas that are familiar to you may need explaining. Jargon is unwelcome.

Article structure

Readers are impatient. Your main contention must be in the top of the article, the sentences that precede development of the argument. You may have some chatty and engaging way to start, perhaps an anecdote, but there's nothing wrong with simply starting with your main contention. We won't accept articles that begin with uninteresting background.

Readers expect that what's in the top will be expanded on in the rest of the article.

The pitch format on our Submissions page is also a format for the top of an article.

Headline

Suggest at least one headline of up to 10 words. Shorter is better. A headline must let readers know what's in the article, typically the main contention, and it should be engaging. The headline more than anything else will influence whether people read your article. So think carefully about it.

Style

Our preferred writing style corresponds to smart casual, not business attire. Write as you would speak, not as you would compose a piece of academic work. If you're inclined to use 'whilst', 'discourse' or 'realities', you're in the wrong frame of mind.

Use short, plain words in short, simple sentences. Keep paragraphs short, too. Avoid bullet points.

Write to minimise punctuation, except full stops, which should be abundant.

Spelling, punctuation, etcetera

Australian English (almost the same as British English). Metric measures. Provide A$ conversions for other currencies.

Em-dashes—like this. Percent, not %.

Single quote marks. In general, use quote marks only when quoting someone. Don't use them 'apologetically' (like that).

If you're unsure whether to capitalise, don't.

For numbers, use numerals for 10 and above (six destroyers, 26 helicopters), except for measures, which get numerals only (5 kg, 17 metres). Commas for 1,000 and above.

Abbreviations

Introduce them in brackets, but in general we want you to avoid using them at all. Readers don't want to learn a code to understand your article. Try to use a generic noun instead of an abbreviation. For example, write 'the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade' at first reference and maybe 'the department' thereafter instead of 'DFAT'.

The most familiar abbreviations don't need introducing: AI, NATO, GDP and so on.

Hyperlinks

We need few, maybe none, and mainly for research reports and official statements. We generally don't want hyperlinks to other articles except those in *The Strategist*. Because this isn't an academic publication, we don't want hyperlinks for verification unless readers will doubt a statement. Also, you can't rely on hyperlinks for explanations.

Try to attach a hyperlink to only one or two words.

Finally,

Good luck with your article.

The *Strategist* team.