

English (UK) Localization Style Guide

Table of Contents

1	Welcome	4
1.1	Reference material	4
2	Microsoft voice	5
2.1	Choices that reflect Microsoft voice.....	6
2.1.1	Words and phrases to avoid	6
2.1.2	Word choice	8
2.2	Sample Microsoft voice text.....	9
2.2.1	Address the user to take action	9
2.2.2	Explanatory text and providing support	10
2.2.3	Promoting a feature	11
2.2.4	Providing how-to guidelines.....	11
3	Inclusive language.....	12
3.1	Avoid gender bias	13
3.2	Accessibility	15
4	Language-specific standards.....	16
4.1	Grammar, syntax and orthographic standards.....	16
4.1.1	Abbreviations	16
4.1.2	Acronyms.....	17
4.1.3	Adjectives	17
4.1.4	Capitalization.....	18
4.1.5	Compounds	19
4.1.6	Conjunctions.....	19
4.1.7	Contractions.....	20
4.1.8	Genitive	20
4.1.9	Localizing colloquialism, idioms, and metaphors.....	21
4.1.10	Numbers	21
4.1.11	Prepositions	21
4.1.12	Punctuation.....	22
4.1.13	Sentence fragments.....	29
4.1.14	Split infinitive	29
4.1.15	Subjunctive	29
4.1.16	Symbols & non-breaking spaces	30

4.1.17	Verbs	30
4.1.18	Past participles	30
4.1.19	Transitive verbs	30
4.1.20	Plural formation	31
5	Localization considerations	31
5.1	Accessibility	31
5.2	Applications, products, and features	32
5.3	Copilot predefined prompts	32
5.4	Localizing URLs	34
5.5	Software considerations	35
5.5.1	Arrow keys	35
5.5.2	Error messages	35
5.5.3	Keyboard shortcuts	37
5.5.4	Keys	39
5.5.5	Lists	39
5.5.6	Numeric keypad	39
5.5.7	Shortcut keys	39
5.6	Trademarks	42
5.7	Vocabulary	42
5.8	Voice video considerations	43
5.8.1	English pronunciation	43
5.8.2	Tone	45
5.8.3	Video voice checklist	45

1 Welcome



Welcome to the *Microsoft Localization Style Guide* for English (UK). This guide will help you understand how to localize English (UK) content in a way that best reflects the Microsoft voice.

Before you dive in:

- Make sure you understand the key tenants of the [Microsoft voice](#).
- Familiarize yourself with the recommended [style references](#) in English (UK).

1.1 Reference material

Unless this style guide or [Microsoft Terminology - Globalization | Microsoft Learn](#) provides alternative instructions, use the orthography, grammar and terminology in the following publications:

Normative references

Adhere to these normative references. When more than one solution is possible, consult the other topics in this style guide for guidance.

1. Lexico (<https://www.lexico.com/>)
2. Cambridge Dictionary (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>)

3. Entries list in Oxford Dictionary of Law
(<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199551248.001.0001/acref-9780199551248?btog=chap&hide=true&pageSize=20&skipEditions=true&sort=titlesort&source=%2F10.1093%2Facref%2F9780199551248.001.0001%2Facref-9780199551248>)

Informative references

These sources may provide supplementary and background information.

1. The Guardian, Observer and guardian.co.uk style guide
(<http://www.guardian.co.uk/styleguide>)
2. European Commission, Directorate-General for Translation, English style guide
(https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/styleguide_english_dgt_en.pdf)
3. Wikipedia on US vs UK English
(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_American_and_British_English)

2 Microsoft voice

Microsoft's brand personality comes through in our voice and tone—what we say and how we say it. The design renaissance across 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 also extend across Microsoft content for all language locales. For each language, the specific choices in style and tone that produce Microsoft voice are different.

Consistency

Consistency in the Microsoft voice is vital. The more consistent it is, 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.

2.1 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 is often used for technical and commercial content.

When you are 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 is 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.

2.1.1 Words and phrases to avoid

Microsoft voice avoids an unnecessarily formal tone. The following table lists some 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>

2.1.2 Word choice

Terminology

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

Short word forms and everyday words

Microsoft voice text written in English prefers the short, simple words spoken in everyday conversations. In English, shorter words are generally 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 is 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 light-weight situations ("pick a colour," not "choose a colour") 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, 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 <i>information</i> better fits the context. Use <i>info</i> 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.
You	Address the user as <i>you</i> , directly or indirectly through the use of the second-person pronoun "you." Third-person references, such as "user," should be avoided as they sound formal and impersonal.

2.2 Sample Microsoft voice text

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

2.2.1 Address the user to take action

US English	UK English target	Explanation
The password isn't correct, so try again. Passwords are case-sensitive.	The password isn't correct, so 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. Check it and try again.	This product key didn't work. 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.
---	--	---

2.2.2 Explanatory text and providing 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.

2.2.3 Promoting 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 en-dash to emphasise the specific requirements to enable the feature, which in this case 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 we can add some more familiarity to the text by using everyday words, e.g. PC.

2.2.4 Providing 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.

It's time to enter the product key. When you connect to the Internet, we'll activate Windows for you.	It's time to enter the product key. When you connect to the Internet, we'll activate Windows for you.	Speak to the user directly and naturally using the second person pronoun "you" on clear actions to enter the product key.
---	---	---

3 Inclusive language

Microsoft technology reaches every part of the globe, so it's critical that all our communications are inclusive and diverse. These guidelines provide examples on how to use inclusive language and avoid habits that may unintentionally lead to marginalisation, offence, misrepresentation or the perpetuation of stereotypes.

General guidelines

Comply with local language laws.

Use plain language. Use straightforward, concrete and familiar words. Plain and accessible language will help people of all learning levels and abilities. Some examples include using a two-syllable word over a three-syllable word or several clear words instead of one complicated term or concept.

Be mindful when you refer to various parts of the world. If you name cities, countries or regions in examples, make sure that they're not politically disputed. In examples that refer to several regions, use equivalent references – for example, don't mix countries with states or continents.

In text and images, represent diverse perspectives and circumstances. Depict a variety of people from all walks of life participating fully in activities. Show people in a wide variety of professions, educational settings, locales and economic settings.

Don't generalise or stereotype people by region, culture, age or gender, even if the stereotype is positive. For example, when representing job roles, choose names that reflect a variety of gender identities and cultural backgrounds.

Don't use profane or derogatory terms.

Don't use slang that could be considered cultural appropriation.

Don't use terms that may carry unconscious racial bias or terms associated with military actions, politics or controversial historical events and eras.

Use this	Not this
English examples	
primary/subordinate	master/slave
perimeter network	demilitarized zone (DMZ)
stop responding	hang
expert	guru
meeting	pow wow
colleagues; everyone; all	guys; ladies and gentlemen
lunch and learn; learning session	brown bag session
parent	mother or father

3.1 Avoid gender bias

Use gender-neutral alternatives for common terms. Avoid the use of compounds containing gender-specific terms.

The table below contains examples of gender-biased words or compounds that should be avoided in UK English and the alternative that should be used to promote gender-inclusivity.

Use this	Not this
English examples	
chair, moderator	chairman
humanity, people, humankind	man, mankind
operates, staffs	mans
sales representative	salesman

synthetic, manufactured	manmade
workforce, staff, personnel	manpower

When presenting generalisations, use plural noun forms (for example, *people, individuals, students* etc.).

Don't use gendered pronouns (*she, her, he, him* etc.) in generic references. Instead:

- Rewrite to use the second or third person (*you or one*).
- Rewrite the sentence to have a plural noun and pronoun.
- Use articles instead of a pronoun (for example, the document instead of his document).
- Refer to a person's role (reader, employee, customer or client, for example).
- Use person or individual.

Use this	Not this
English examples	
A user with the appropriate rights can set other users' passwords.	If the user has the appropriate rights, he can set other users' passwords.
Developers need access to servers in their development environments, but they don't need access to the servers in Azure.	A developer needs access to servers in his development environment, but he doesn't need access to the servers in Azure.
When the author opens the document...	When the author opens her document...
To call someone, select the person's name, select Make a phone call and then choose the number that you'd like to dial.	To call someone, select his name, select Make a phone call and then select his number.

In English, if you can't write around the problem, it's OK to use a plural pronoun (they, their or them) in generic references to a single person. Don't use constructions like he/she and s/he.

When you're writing about a real person, use the pronouns that the person prefers, whether it's he, she, they or another pronoun. It's OK to use gendered pronouns

(such as he, she, his and hers) when you're writing about real people who use those pronouns themselves.

Note: Gender-neutral language should be used in new products and content going forward, but it's acceptable that we don't update all existing or legacy material.

3.2 Accessibility

Microsoft devices and services empower everyone, including people with disabilities, to do the activities they value most.

Focus on people, not disabilities. Don't use words that imply pity, such as *stricken with*, *suffering from*, *afflicted with* or *confined*. The preferred option is not to mention a disability unless it's relevant.

Use this	Not this
English examples	
person with a disability	Handicapped; differently abled
disabled people; people with health conditions and impairments	the disabled
person without a disability; non-disabled	normal person; healthy person; able-bodied
blind person; partially sighted person; person with a visual impairment; person with low vision	sight challenged; vision-impaired

Use generic verbs that apply to all input methods and devices. In procedures and instructions, avoid verbs that don't make sense with alternative input methods used for accessibility.

Use this	Not this
English examples	
Select	Click

Keep paragraphs short and sentence structure simple. Aim for one verb per sentence. Read text aloud and imagine it spoken by a screen reader.

Spell out words such as *and*, *plus* and *about*. Screen readers can misread text that uses special characters such as the ampersand (&), plus sign (+) and tilde (~).

4 Language-specific standards

This part of the style guide contains information and guidelines specific to UK English.

4.1 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.

4.1.1 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 is 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	no.

4.1.2 Acronyms

Acronyms are words made up of the initial letters of major parts of a compound term. Some well-known examples are DNS (Domain Name Server) or 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 is 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)

4.1.3 Adjectives

In UK English, adjectives should be handled 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.

4.1.4 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.

Incorrect	Corre
Important: adding this website to the Trusted sites zone, will lower the security settings for all content from this website for all applications, including Microsoft Edge.	Important: Adding this website to the Trusted sites zone will lower the security settings for all content from this website for all applications, including Microsoft Edge.

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).

Example:

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.

4.1.5 Compounds

Generally, compounds should be understandable and clear to the user. Overly long or complex compounds should be avoided. Keep in mind that unintuitive compounds are ultimately an intelligibility and usability issue.

- Do not hyphenate compounds that are commonly accepted as one word in English.

Example: website, toolbar, microchip.

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

Example: 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.

Example: 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.

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

- Try to avoid suspended compound adjectives.

Example, do not write: first- and second-generation computers.

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

4.1.6 Conjunctions

For US English Microsoft voice, use of conjunctions is another way to 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 be displayed correctly.

4.1.7 Contractions

For UK English Microsoft voice, the use of contractions helps to convey a conversational tone and are used whenever possible.

Examples:

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

4.1.8 Genitive

Do not 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.

4.1.9 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 the following options to express the intent of the source text appropriately.

- Do not attempt to replace the source colloquialism with a UK English colloquialism that fits the same meaning of the particular context unless it is a perfect and natural fit for that context.
- Translate the *intended meaning* of the colloquialism in the source text (as opposed to literally translating 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.

4.1.10 Numbers

This topic includes guidelines when to use numerals (symbol that represents a number. e.g. 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 one to nine 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.

4.1.11 Prepositions

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

Example:

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
Different than	Different to
Call us at	Call us on

For 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.

4.1.12 Punctuation

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

Do not add punctuation marks in labels.

Apostrophes

Apostrophes should never be used to indicate a plural (e.g. PCs, CVs, 1990s, to-dos).

For nouns ending in s, use –s's, e.g. 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 is perfectly acceptable and indeed necessary in some cases, to have a comma before "and" or "or" when it is 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 OneDrive, but can't make changes to them.	This user will be able to see your photos and documents on OneDrive 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
Is the job active, i.e., is the employee working on the job?	Is the job active, i.e. is the employee working on the job?

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"): e.g. 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: e.g. 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.

Example:

Incorrect	Correct
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:

- When the compound modifier comes after the noun

Example:

Incorrect	Correct
The file is up-to-date	The file is up to date

- In adjectival compounds beginning with adverbs ending in -ly

Example:

Incorrect	Correct
Do not disclose any personally-identifying information	Do not 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 em dashes is more common in US English than it is in UK English. UK English tends to favor en dashes.

Incorrect	Correct
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 en dashes one after the other. Again this is not common in UK English, which tends to favor a single en dash:

Incorrect	Correct
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 is not essential to the meaning conveyed by the sentence.

Example:

An em dash is not the most important punctuation mark—its 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!

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.

Incorrect	Correct
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 is, 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 double quotation marks as well.

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

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

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 (e.g. 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.

4.1.13 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.

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.

4.1.14 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!

4.1.15 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 is probably best to try and avoid using these altogether as they tend to give a pompous or pedantic air to the text.

4.1.16 Symbols & non-breaking spaces

Non-breaking spaces should be used between numbers and units so that they are not separated by line breaks (e.g. 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." or "number."

US English source	UK English target
#586	No. 586

4.1.17 Verbs

For UK 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 are 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.

US English source text (classic)	UK English use of verb tense (Microsoft voice)
After you are 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]

Do not use brand names as verbs, for example: Skype your friends.

4.1.18 Past participles

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

4.1.19 Transitive verbs

Transitive verbs are often used without an object in US English, but this is ungrammatical in UK English.

US English source text	UK English target text
Choose when the ad will show.	Choose when the ad will be shown.
A dialog box displays.	A dialog box appears. A dialog box will be displayed.
This document will not print.	The printer cannot print this document. This document cannot be printed.
Your file will download shortly.	Your file will be downloaded shortly.

4.1.20 Plural formation

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

5 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.

5.1 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. Some accessible products and services may not be available in UK English-speaking markets. Double-check with the appropriate resources.

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

5.2 Applications, products, and features

Application/product names are often trademarked or may be trademarked in the future and are therefore rarely translated. Occasionally, feature names are trademarked, too (e.g. IntelliSense™). Before translating any application, product, or feature name, verify that it is in fact translatable and not protected in any way.

Version numbers

Version numbers always contain a period (e.g. 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.

Translation of version strings

Version strings that contain copyright information should always be translated.

Example:

US English	UK English target
© 2024 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.	Refer to Microsoft Terminology - Globalization Microsoft Learn to check the correct translations "All rights reserved" and "Microsoft Corporation."

5.3 Copilot predefined prompts

Copilot prompts are the instructions or questions you use to tell Copilot what you want it to do. You can ask Copilot to create or edit content, ask questions, summarize information, and catch up on things.

Across various Microsoft products, you will find an array of predefined prompts designed to guide users in creating, learning, and using Microsoft Copilot.

Best practices for the localization of Copilot predefined prompts

Copilot prompts are functional. It is crucial that the translations for Copilot predefined prompts are accurate, consistent, concise, natural, and use the appropriate tone of voice. Please remember that the quality of these translations can significantly influence Copilot responses or outcomes.

- **Be clear and specific:** English prompts are generally questions or requests starting with an action verb. Make sure the target prompts are natural questions or requests. Avoid using vague language. Use clear and specific phrases or keywords.
- **Keep it conversational:** Be consistent with Microsoft Voice principles. Use simple and natural language when translating prompts. Avoid adopting a tone that resembles a machine.
- **Be polite and professional:** Use kind and respectful language, as this helps foster collaboration and improves the AI's responsiveness and performance. Don't use slang and jargon.
- **Use quotation marks:** This helps Copilot know what to write, modify, or replace for the user.
- **Pay attention to punctuation, grammar, and capitalization:** Clear communication helps collaboration between Copilot and the user.
- **Pay attention to the placement of entity tokens:** An entity token is a placeholder that is used to trigger a pop-up menu in the UI to let customers choose an entity, such as a file, contact, or meeting, so that the prompt uses specific data from the specified entity. As with any other placeholder, an entity token is not localizable, and the position of the entity token should make sense in the target text syntax.
- **Entity token localization exception:** Some prompts may be a display text (i.e., an example) and, in such cases, the entity token needs to be translated. Read the Dev comment carefully.

Exception example:

Source string: List key points from [file]

DevComment=Translate [file]

- **Be consistent:** Some English prompts are remarkably similar. Make sure to translate them consistently.

Source prompt	Target prompt	Comments
List ideas for a fun remote team building event	List ideas for a fun, remote team-building event	Please note the corrected punctuation .

Recap <entity type='meeting'>meeting</entity> summarizing key takeaways and action items as separate sections including who's responsible for each	Recap <entity type='meeting'>meeting</entity> , summarizing key takeaways and action items as separate sections, including who's responsible for each	Please note the corrected punctuation .
Propose a new introduction to <entity type='file'>file</entity>	Propose a new introduction to <entity type='file'>file</entity>	
What were the open issues from <entity type='meeting'>meeting</entity> ?	What were the open issues from <entity type='meeting'>meeting</entity> ?	
Give me ideas for icebreaker activities for a new team	Give me ideas for icebreaker activities for a new team	
Create a list of <placeholder>color names inspired by the ocean</placeholder>	Create a list of <placeholder>colour names inspired by the ocean</placeholder>	

5.4 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
http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/default.aspx	http://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/default.aspx
msn.com	https://www.msn.com/en-gb

5.5 Software considerations

This section refers to all menus, menu items, commands, buttons, check boxes, etc., which should be consistently translated in the localized product.

5.5.1 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 (e.g. Up, Down, Ctrl+Left etc.). However when used in tandem with "arrow" they should be left in lowercase (e.g. right arrow, left arrow, etc.).

The capitalized form is preferred for key combinations.

5.5.2 Error messages

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 rebooting 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

It is important to 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 standard phrases, standardize. Note that sometimes (such as in the table below) US English uses different forms to express the same idea.

Example:

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

Standard phrases in error messages

The phrases below commonly occur in error messages. When you are translating 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.

Example:

US English	UK English
Cannot ... Could not ...	Cannot...
Failed to ... Failure of ...	Failed to...
Cannot find ... Could not find ... Unable to find ... Unable to locate ...	Cannot 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 find out 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, see examples below:

%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."

5.5.3 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. For example, the following menu options:

New

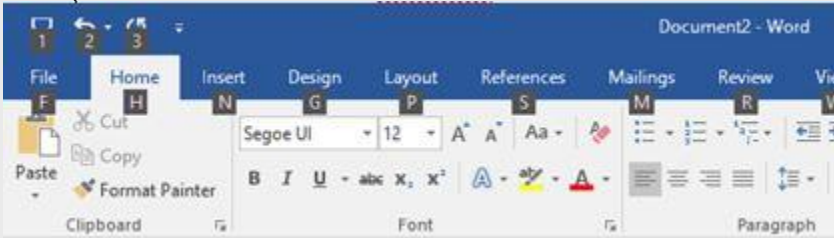
Cancel

Options

Keyboard shortcuts special options	Usage: Is it allowed?
"Slim characters," such as l, 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
access key	<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&ome</p> <p>In keyboard shortcuts, most access keys are used with the Alt key.</p>
key tip	<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> 
shortcut key	<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>

5.5.4 Keys

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

5.5.5 Lists

Bulleted 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.

5.5.6 Numeric keypad

It is recommended that you avoid distinguishing numeric keypad keys from the other keys, unless it is required by a given application. If it is not obvious which keys need to be pressed, provide necessary explanations.

5.5.7 Shortcut keys

Shortcut keys are keystrokes or combinations of keystrokes used to 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
General Windows shortcut keys			
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
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

File menu

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

Edit menu

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
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

Help menu

Help	F1	Help	F1
------	----	------	----

Font format

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
Paragraph format			
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

5.6 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 for your reference at the following location: <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/legal/intellectualproperty/Trademarks/>

5.7 Vocabulary

It is 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 do not 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.

5.8 Voice video considerations

A good Microsoft voice video addresses only one intent (one customer problem), is not too long, has high audio quality, has visuals that add to the information, and uses the right language variant/dialect/accents in voiceover.


Successful techniques for voicing video content

- Focus on the intent. Show the best way to achieve the most common task and stick to it.
- Show empathy. Understand and acknowledge the viewer's situation.
- Use SEO (Search Engine Optimization). Include search phrases in the title, description, and headers so that people can easily find the topic.
- Talk to the customer as if (s)he is next to you, watching you explain the content.
- Record a scratch audio file. Check for length, pace and clarity.

5.8.1 English pronunciation

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 some common term (such as "server") the local pronunciation should be used. Naturally pronunciation should reflect UK English pronunciation.

Example	Phonetics
SecurID	[si'kjuər aɪ di:]
.NET	[dot net]
Skype	[skaip] 

Acronyms and abbreviations

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

Example:

Acronyms pronounced like words	Acronyms pronounced letter by letter
RADIUS	ICMP
RAS	IP
ISA	TCP/IP
LAN	XML
WAN	HTML
WAP	OWA
MAPI	SQL
POP	URL

URLs

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

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

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

Punctuation marks

Most punctuation marks are naturally implied by the sound of voice, e.g. ? ! : ; ,

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 UK English form approved in [Microsoft Terminology - Globalization | Microsoft Learn](#).

5.8.2 Tone

Use a tone matching the target audience, e.g. a more informal, playful and inspiring tone may be used for most Microsoft products, games etc., or formal, informative, and factual in technical texts etc.

5.8.3 Video voice checklist

Topic and script

- Apply the following Microsoft voice principles:
 - Single intent
 - Clarity
 - Everyday language
 - Friendliness
 - Relatable context

Title

- Includes the intent
- Includes keywords for search

Intro: 10 seconds to set up the issue

- Put the problem into a relatable context

Action and sound

- Keep something happening, both visually and audibly, BUT...
- ...maintain an appropriate pace
- Synchronize visuals with voice-over
- Fine to alternate between first and second person

- Repetition of big points is fine

Visuals

- Eye is guided through the procedure
 - Smooth, easily trackable pointer motions
 - Judicious callout use
- Appropriate use of motion graphics and/or branding-approved visuals

Ending

- Recaps are unnecessary