

General Rules for Abbreviations

Do not try to perfect a definite system of “shorthand.” Here we have simply brought together the various ideas we have picked up over the years. You may select one or any combination of those ideas that fit your needs.

1. Symbols. Symbols are especially helpful to students in engineering and mathematics.

! = does not equal	f = frequency
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2. Create a family of symbols.

O = organism	Q = individual	O = individuals
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3. Leave out the periods in standard abbreviations.

cr = confer	e.g. = exempli gratia
(Latin for compare)	(Latin meaning “for example”)
dept = department	NYC = New York City

4. Use only the first syllable of a word.

pol = politics	dem = democracy
lib = liberal	cap = capitalism

5. Use the entire first syllable and only the first letter of the second syllable.

subj = subject	cons = conservative
	ind = individual

6. Eliminate final letters. Use just enough of the beginning of a word to form easily recognizable unit.

assoc = associate, associated	ach = achievement
biol = biological	info = information
intro = introduction	chem = chemistry
con = concentration	max = maximum
rep = repetition	

7. Omit vowels from the middle of words, and retain only enough constants to provide a recognizable skeleton of the word.

bkgd = background	ppd = prepared
prblm = problem	estmt = estimate
gvt = government	

8. Use an apostrophe.

gov't = government	am't = amount
con't = continued	educat'l = educational

9. Form the plural of the symbol word or abbreviated word by adding "s."

s = areas	chaps = chapters
fs = frequencies	/s = ratios

10. Use "g" to represent "ing" endings.

decg = decreasing	ckg = checking
estg = establishing	exptg = experimenting

11. Use a dot to represent rate. A dot placed over a symbol or a word indicates the word "rate."

v = vibration rate	f = frequency rate
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12. Short words should generally be spelled out. Symbols, signs, or abbreviations for short words will make the notes too dense with "shorthand."

in	but	at	for	to	key
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13. Leave out unimportant verbs.

went	came	be
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14. Leave out "a" and "the."

15. If a term, phrase, or name is initially written out in full during the lecture, initials can be substituted whenever the term, phrase, or name is used again.

Initial writing:.....and the effect of the Modern Massachusetts will be felt.....

Subsequently: NM

16. Use symbols for commonly recurring connective or transitional words.

& = and	w/ = with	w/o = without	vs = against
= therefore			