100 Abbreviations

A Letters or words?



Most abbreviations are spoken as individual letters.

EU European Union
UN United Nations
PM Prime Minister
MP Member of Parliament
BBC British Broadcasting Corporation
ID identification, e.g. Do you have an ID card?
PC personal computer
CV curriculum vitae [a history of your job experience]
ISP Internet Service Provider

Occasionally abbreviations are spoken as words, e.g. **AIDS** /eɪdz/ and **PIN** /pɪn/ [personal identification number, especially used with a bank/credit card]

Language help

We use the verb **stand for** to ask about the meaning of an abbreviation.
A: **What does** EU **stand for**?
B: European Union.

B Written forms only

Some abbreviations are written forms only, but pronounced as full words.

Mr Scott (mister Scott)
Mrs Bryant (misses Bryant)
Dr Chapman (doctor Chapman)
St Mark's Church (Saint Mark's Church)
Dean **St** (Dean Street)

C Abbreviations as part of the language

Some abbreviations (from Latin) are used as part of the language.

Latin	abbreviation	pronunciation	meaning
et cetera	**etc.**	/et ˈsetərə/	**and so on**
exempli gratia	**e.g.**	/iːˈdʒiː/	**for example**
id est	**i.e.**	/aɪˈiː/	**that's to say / in other words**

D Shortened words

Some common English words can be shortened, especially in spoken English. In some cases, the shorter form is more common and the full form sounds quite formal, e.g. refrigerator, influenza, gymnasium and veterinary surgeon.

phone (telephone)
maths (mathematics)
board (whiteboard/smartboard/blackboard)
case (suitcase)
ad/advert (advertisement)
gym (gymnasium)
bike (bicycle)
TV/telly (television)
paper (newspaper)
fridge (refrigerator)
exam (examination)
plane (aeroplane)
photo (photograph)
flu (influenza) [illness like a cold but more serious]
lab (laboratory) [special room where scientists work]
sales rep (sales representative; *syn* **salesperson**)
vet (veterinary surgeon)

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Exercises

100.1 **Are these sentences correct or incorrect? If a sentence is incorrect, change it to make it correct.**

1 ISP stands for Internet Service Player. *Incorrect. It's Internet Service Provider.*
2 BBC stands for British Broadcasting Company. .....
3 MP stands for Minister of Parliament. .....
4 PC stands for personal computer. .....
5 UN stands for Unified Nations. .....
6 ID stands for identification. .....
7 CV stands for curricular vitae. .....

100.2 **What abbreviations in written English are often used for these words or phrases?**

1 Mister *Mr*
2 for example .....
3 and so on .....
4 Street .....
5 in other words .....
6 Saint .....
7 Doctor .....

100.3 **Rewrite this note, making it more informal by using short forms where possible.**

Luke

Olly had a ~~mathematics~~ maths examination this afternoon and then had to take his bicycle to the repair shop, so he'll probably be a bit late home. You can watch television while you're waiting for him, and please help yourself to anything in the refrigerator. If there's a problem — for example, if Doctor Brown rings about the influenza vaccination, my telephone number is next to the photographs on the dining room table. I should be home myself by about five.

Pam (Olly's mum)

100.4 **Complete the sentences with suitable words, shortened words or abbreviations.**

1 It was a warm day, so I put the milk and butter in the *fridge*.
2 He didn't want to walk, so he went on his .....
3 If you go to Mediterranean islands, ... Sardinia or Corsica, it's a good idea to hire a car.
4 If you want to apply for the job, you'll need to send your ..... with a letter of application.
5 The dog was sick, so we had to take her to the .....
6 In that shop on the corner you can get books, pens, writing paper, ...
7 I took my large bag with me on the plane, but I didn't have a .....
8 When I sold my CDs, I put an ..... in the paper and had three replies the same day.
9 If you use the cashpoint, remember you'll need your ..... number.
10 What does MP ..... for?
11 We did some experiments in the chemistry .....
12 My uncle is a sales .....

100.5 **Here are some more abbreviations. What does each one stand for, and where will you see them?**

PTO ..... RSVP ..... asap .....
IMO ..... DOB ..... PS .....

LIVEWORKSHEETS