



Joomla!™

...because open source matters

Editorial Style Guide

Joomla! User Documentation Team

Version 1.0.5

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Andy Wallace

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What it is All About

The Mission Statement

The Joomla! User Documentation Project has the aim of providing documentation to the Users and Administrators of a Joomla! CMS with clear, concise, useful, and usable information for the Front-end and Back-end functionality available to them.

To make Joomla! the best documented Open Source Project.

Purpose

The User Documentation Team (UDT), Editorial Style Guide (ESG) is the official reference guide for Joomla! User Documentation that is available within the Joomla! Help Site.

There are slight variations with regard the different individual documentation types such as Help Screens, User Manual, Administration Manual, Installation Manual, and Supported Documentation, but the essentials are the same throughout the project. We will release separate documents advising on document specific requirements when necessary.

Read and use this guide in conjunction with the Visual Style Guide (VSG) and Documentation Process Guide (DPG).

Our intention in releasing these notes, together with the individual process references, is to guide you through the requirements and standards that we are looking to inject into Joomla! documentation.

The Essentials

Clarity:

We want to reduce the use of technical jargon in non-development documentation or, when this is necessary, to provide an effective explanation of precisely what the referenced items actually mean.

Consistency:

We want to standardise the written material so that all Official Joomla! Documentation and Supported Documentation maintains a consistent style and tone.

Correctness:

We want to produce high-quality User documentation that is devoid of spelling, grammar, punctuation, and word usage errors.

Consideration:

We want to make the content accessible and understandable to all people, including those from different parts of the world where English is not their native language, those with disabilities, and people from various backgrounds and cultures.

Technical Correctness and Consistency:

One of the key priorities of the UDT Documentation Project is, and will always remain to be, the provision of technically accurate information for the Users of Joomla!. To this end, we will always strive to ensure the same accurate information is borne across all of our documentation.

How to Use the Editorial Style Guide (ESG)

There are a number of ways to use the ESG to assist in the writing, proofreading, editing, and production of Joomla! documentation:

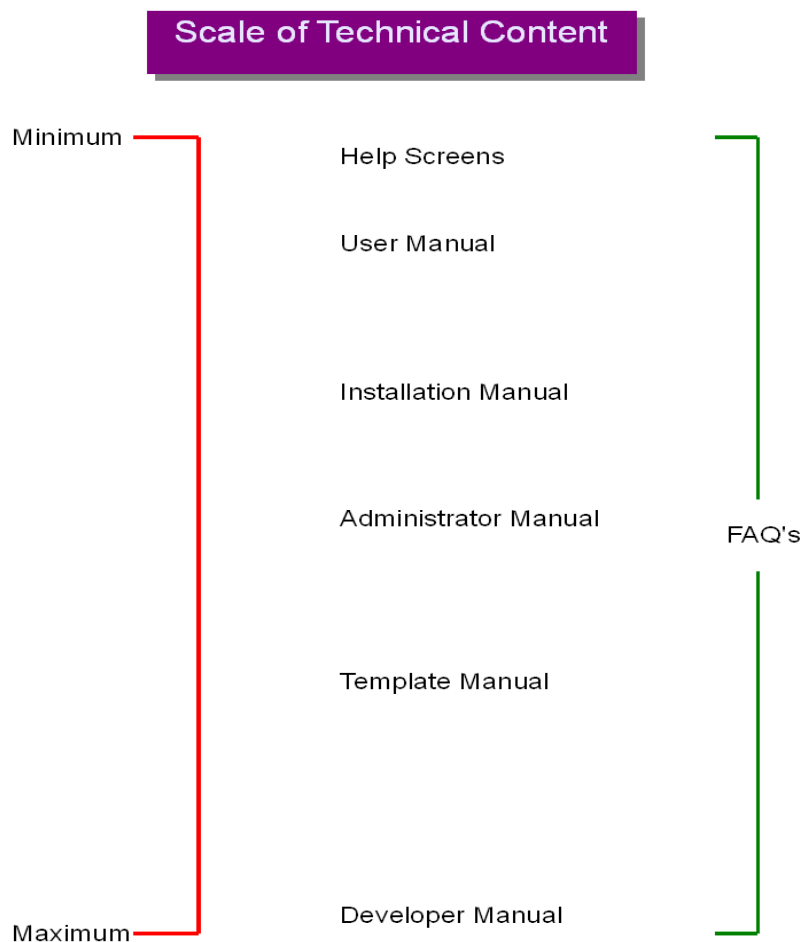
- Read the entire guide to familiarise yourself with the standards and editorial style issues specific to Joomla! User Documentation. This is essential if you wish to contribute to the project.
- If you are new to writing this type of material, or simply just as a refresher, you may like to check out the additional resources we reference throughout the guides. These will help you become familiar with general technical writing skills as well as documentation processing in general.
- As an ongoing desktop reference guide as to how to handle specific issues or words that will arise in the normal course of preparing documentation for the project.
- As a source document for Third Party Extension, documenters who want to provide their documentation with a similar look and feel to official Joomla! documentation.
- As a resource, for Developers, to assist them in the writing of tooltips and other written elements within the software code that in turn makes the visible display of Joomla! more user-friendly and accessible.
- Use it in conjunction with the Visual Style Guide.
- Use it in conjunction with the Document Process Guide.
- Keep up to date with any changes that we announce in the UDT Forums.

General Guidelines for Joomla! Documenters

Understand your Audience

The target audience of Joomla! User Documentation has varying degrees of experience. It is therefore difficult to present the content in a way that meets all of these levels, all of the time. The objective should be to write the content based upon who is most likely to be looking for information on a particular process or function and what level, in their Joomla! development, they are likely to have reached. For example:

- Help Screens should primarily, be aimed at new Users with little or no experience of Joomla! nor in addition, potentially little or no knowledge of the underlying components such as PHP, MySQL, Apache, and associated software.
- An Administrator Manual equally has to have a basic starting point but does not need to go over the basic functionality that a Help Screen or User manual has previously covered except when this is necessary as a prelude to a more detailed explanation. Typically, more material of a technical in nature will be contained in the Administrator Manual, as a matter of necessity.
- FAQ's (Frequently Asked (or Anticipated) Questions) span the full range of experience levels and technical knowledge and should be individually referenced to indicate the level at which they are targeted.



General Principles of Documenting Joomla!

Whatever process you happen to be writing about it is essential that you try out the actual process whilst writing, that you write the content in the correct sequence, and that your explanation works!

- Ensure you are using the most recent version of Joomla! at all times.
- Whenever possible keep sentences simple - one idea per sentence.
- Sentences should be, generally, no more than 25 words in length.
- Use plain English whenever possible – remember, Translation Partners translate much of the documentation we produce into many other languages – avoid the use of complex English phrases or colloquialisms.
- Use common words whenever possible.
- Whenever possible, limit the explanation of each procedural step to one action using 25 words or less.
- Provide instructions using the *active* tense rather than the *passive* tense. For example, write explanations using task-oriented action verbs...
- There may be exceptions to this and many of the other rules, so if you are uncertain, double-check with another Author or Editor regarding such situations.
- Avoid the use of vague language, unexplained technical terms, references, and any other unexplained or out of context content.
- Do not use ambiguous statements, personal opinion, or any other content that detracts from the clarity of the subject matter.
- Fully explain technical references where these are included. If necessary, refer to a developer for clarification.
- Make your writing more direct by removing any unnecessary wordiness and stressing what is most important within the statement.
- Imagine you are discussing the topic with the User across a table. If it does not sound the same as it would in this context, then it probably needs revising.

Using Plain English in Joomla! User Documentation

Throughout this document, you will see reference to the “User”. In the context of this and all UDT documentation, this relates to the Front-end User as well as the Back-end Administrator.

What Do We Mean by Plain English?

Plain English does not mean writing in a simplistic (or a child-like) manner. Nor does it mean reducing the length of a document or changing the meaning or emphasis of the message it contains just for the sake of it.

It is not as easy as some would have you believe to write documentation. It is all too easy to over-complicate the message we are trying to give to the Users. Clear, concise documentation does take time to produce, it does get easier with practice and support, but there is not a quick fix here either.

We need to establish a method of writing that is efficient and user-friendly.

By using plain English, our aim is to make our documentation:

- faster to write
- easier and faster to read
- get the message across to the User that Joomla! is as easy to use as we claim it to be, and exactly how to do this, but that it does require some effort on their part

So, it's vital that we get it right as often as we possibly can.

What is the Intention of Using Plain English?

Our aim is to create our documentation, written with the end-User in mind and with the right tone of voice, which is clear and concise.

To create documentation that is straightforward for the Translation Partners and others to convert to their own language.

Keep Your Sentences Short

The *literary world* generally accepts that an *average* sentence length of 15 to 25 words is about correct.

This does not mean you have to make every sentence the same length. Be dynamic. Vary your writing by using a mix of short sentences, like the last one, with longer ones, like this one. Follow the basic principle of only having one main topic in a sentence, plus perhaps one other related point. You will soon quite easily develop the ability to keep to the average sentence length.

However, at first you may still find yourself writing the odd long sentence, especially when trying to explain a complicated point, but most long sentences can be broken up in some way.

Use Active Verbs

We want our documents to sound *active* – precise and user friendly, not *passive* - confusing and overly technical.

Generally, there are three main components to a sentence:

- a **subject** (the person, group or thing doing the action);
- a **verb** (the action itself); and
- an **object** (the person, group or thing that the action is done to).

In the following sentence, “Chad played on the computer”:

- the **subject** is *Chad* (he is doing the playing);
- the **verb** is *played* (it is the action); and
- the **object** is the *computer* (it is being played).

Whilst this is a very simple sentence, there will generally be a few more words as well. “Chad, a Joomla! User from the USA played on his computer every night after work”.

However, the subject, verb and object are still there and their order indicates that this is in fact an *active* verb.

Reverse these three elements and the sentence becomes *passive*:

- object then verb then subject.

The *computer* (**object**) was *played* (**verb**) on by *Chad* (**subject**).

“Played” has become a passive verb here. The sentence says what is being played before it says who is doing the playing.

You will see that in making the sentence passive, we have introduced the words, “was” and “by”, and the sentence has become clumsier.

The **subject** does not always need to be a *person* and the **object** is not always a *thing*!

“The computer game beat Leandro” is active but “Leandro was beaten by the computer game” is passive.

Here are some more examples of how to turn a passive verb into an active verb.

(Passive) The Help Screens will be completed by us soon.

(Active) We will complete the Help Screens soon.

(Passive) The review was completed by Chris.

(Active) Chris completed the review.

(Passive) The latest version was released by the Joomla!

(Active) Joomla! released the latest version.

Using passive verbs can cause several problems:

- they will often be confusing;
- they can make writing more longwinded; and
- they make writing less lively.

Proper Use of Passives

There are appropriate occasions when you can use a passive verb:

- To prevent something sounding hostile – “The formatting of the text needs doing.” (**passive**) is better (in most circumstances) than “You have not formatted the text.” (**active**)
- To avoid taking the blame (as if we would ;)) – “Mistakes have been made.” (**passive**) rather than “We made mistakes.” (**active**)
- When you do not know who or what the doer is – “The User Documentation Team has been selected.”
- If it simply sounds better (Yes there will be occasions where this applies)

You should aim to make about 80 to 90% of your verbs active.

Use of 'You' And 'We' In Documentation

Our readership is likely to be the new User to Joomla! and probably, someone with little or no technical skills either as far as their understanding of coding and other issues. We can make the documentation more User friendly by referring to the reader as **you**. Whilst this may not be what people, (authors) are used to doing; this approach may just help the User settle in a bit more easily.

Here are some examples of this:

- **Community members must send us...**
- You must send us...
- **Joomla! will always tell Users before we...**
- We will tell you before we...
- **Further information is available from...**
- You can get further information from... ·

It is acceptable to refer to the User Documentation Team and Joomla! as “we”, and there is nothing wrong with using “we” and “I” in the same document. However, do not use “I” on Official documents such as the Help Screens or Manuals.

Issues of Tone

It is necessary to write the documentation in as consistent a manner as possible. We will have contributors from different continents and cultures and whose first language may not in fact be British English with all its various nuances; by setting a few basic guidelines and having a considered approach to these, the result should be relatively consistent.

- Avoid making a personal statement or using your own opinion in Official documentation.
- Avoid humour. This has the tendency to be territorial in nature and not everyone is going to understand that you mean something to be funny.
- Avoid using puns, wordplay, or innuendo to make a point.
- Avoid statements about future developments, unless you are writing specifically about this. The documentation must focus on “what is” and not “what may be”.
- Do not use colloquial language, unnecessary jargon, culture-specific language, gender-specific language, or condescension in the written tone. Stick to the subject under consideration and write about the facts.
- Stick to the principles of using Plain English outlined in this document.

When you are talking to your User, say exactly what you mean, using the simplest words that fit. This does not necessarily mean only using simple words – just words that the User will understand. Make use of the Glossary as a reference point for definitions of common and not-so-common words in use in the Community.

In the subject matter we are dealing with, technical jargon is the standard, and it is our responsibility to ensure that we demystify it for the whole Community. You can use jargon when writing for people who will understand the terms and phrases; it can be a useful form of shorthand. However, try to avoid using specialist technical jargon in general, and when it is necessary, explain the meaning of the terms used.

So in general, keep to everyday English whenever possible. Again, imagine talking to your reader across a table.

Do Not Be Afraid to Give Instructions

- Stop!
- Click the XYZ icon.
- Please refer to the ABC forum.

These are all commands – officially called *imperatives*. They are the fastest and most direct way of giving someone instructions.

We could write these commands in a more expansive form but this is often unnecessary to achieve the correct result.

- The User should be told to Stop!
- You should click the XYZ icon.
- We would be grateful if you would refer to the ABC forum.

There always seems to be a fear of commands. The most common fault is putting “Users should do this” or “you should do this” instead of just “do this”. Perhaps we worry that commands sound too harsh.

Here are some examples of longwinded phrases and shorter versions that use commands.

- You should just think of it as a complete statement.
- Just think of it as a complete statement.
- Writers should aim to be punchy.
- Be punchy.
- The topics should be split where necessary.
- Split the topics where necessary.

The last example is probably the worst because it uses a passive verb – ‘should be split’. Unfortunately, this is very common in instructions. For example:

- The program should be uncompressed from the zip file. The contents should then be uploaded to the web site.
- Uncompress the program from the zip file. Then upload the contents to the web site.

Avoid Nominalisations

A nominalisation is a type of abstract noun or in other words, the name of something that is not a physical object but a process, technique, or emotion.

Nominalisations are formed from verbs.

For example:

Verb	Nominalisation
complete	completion
introduce	introduction
provide	provision
fail	failure
arrange	arrangement
investigate	investigation

So what is wrong with them?

The problem is their use instead of the verbs they come from. Moreover, because they are merely the names of things, they sound as if nothing is actually happening in the sentence. Like passive verbs, too many of them can make the reading of your text hard work.

Here are some examples.

- We had a discussion about the matter.
- We discussed the matter. ·
- There will be a release of the latest version of Joomla! by the Developers.
- The Developers will release the latest version of Joomla!. ·
- The implementation of the method has been done by the UDT.
- The UDT has implemented the method. ·

Use Positive Language

Always try to emphasise the positive side of things, except when it is necessary for you to be actively negative.

For example:

- If you do not send your payment, your subscription to the Magazine will lapse. (Negative)
- Please send your payment so that we can ensure you receive the next issue of the Magazine. (Positive)

Date, Time, Measurement, and All

Date Format

Dates will always be listed day as a numeric, month name in full, and the year as a four digit numeric, without any ordinals (th, rd, st) or punctuation as in the following example:

12 June 2007

Time Format

Joomla! uses the International Standard Notation for time code for the time format in its documentation **[hh]:[mm]:[ss]**. For example, 23:59:59 represents the time one second before midnight.

Time Zones

All time zone references should be referenced against Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) – also known as Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) or Z (zulu).

A time zone is shown relative to UTC and is displayed as UTC **±[hh]:[mm]**. For example, **UTC+01:00** means one hour ahead of UTC.

Seasons and Holidays

Always write seasons as spring, summer, autumn, and winter. Note the absence of a capital letter to start the word – a common mistake.

It would be impossible to list all the national holidays of the world as a usable reference. Deal with these on a case-by-case basis thereby avoiding creating a national or religious conflict. Refer to a national holiday name, followed by the country to which it refers in parenthesis.

Units of Measurement

We will use the International System of Units (SI) for measurements.

Briefly, this means the use of metre, centimetre, millimetre, for distance (dimensions, length, and width), and grams, kilograms and tonnes for mass (weight).

For a detailed description of specific SI units, please visit: [How Many? A Dictionary of Units of Measurement](#) a web site maintained by Russ Rowlett.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

When using abbreviations and acronyms, make sure that:

- when they are first introduced in a document, you use the full term with the abbreviation or acronym following it in parenthesis
- the next time the abbreviation or acronym appears in the same document you omit the spelled-out term

Find another way to communicate commonly misunderstood (and misused) abbreviations such as i.e., e.g., etc. Consider replacing **i.e.** or **e.g.** with **for example**, **etc.** with **and others** or **and more** but these are only suggestions and it depends on the circumstances.

Avoid overusing abbreviations or acronyms in a document as it can quickly become confusing. Remember we are writing documentation for the User to read in comfort, not an SMS message on a mobile phone!

Capitalisation

Capitalisation is a method of emphasis; refer directly to the Visual Style Guide for specific formats to use for the text we are writing.

Capitalise in the following situations:

- All letters in acronyms, unless the acronym is a well-known exception
- the initial letter of the first word in a list item but only when the entry created is a full sentence
- the initial letter of a sentence
- the initial letter of a complete sentence after a colon
- to accurately replicate a key name on your keyboard, such as the *Shift* key, or *Caps Lock* key
- Capitalisation is an important issue with particular regard to proper names used within Joomla! All the key components, menus, functions, and more must be capitalised. For example, Modules, Plugins, Components, Section Manager, Site Menu, Menu Item, Article...
- Use the exact capitalisation style of messages shown on the computer screen, of hardware labels, software titles, and so on.
- Use capital letters for names of people, races, cities, regions, counties, states, nations, languages, and other such proper names.
- Use capital letters for titles of offices when the title precedes the name of an officeholder but not when the title occurs alone.
- Use capital letters for the days of the week, months, special days, and holidays—but not for the names of the seasons:
- Use capital letters for religions and religious groups.
- Use capital letters for organisation names (commercial, governmental, and non-profit) as well as their products and services:
- Use capital letters for references to most numbered or lettered items for example: figures, tables, chapters, parts.
- Use capital letters for objects that have individualised names.
- Use capital letters for most acronyms. When in doubt, check the dictionary. Use capital letters for the spelled-out version of acronyms only if the spelled-out versions are proper nouns in their own right.

Do not capitalise in the following situations:

- When you want to emphasise something **NEVER**, use all-caps to highlight a word only use the formats defined in the Visual Style Guide.
 - The only exceptions to this are within code extracts where it is a direct representation of the code or when representing a screen or system message configured in this way.
- Variable names
- The initial letter of the first word following a colon, if the word is part of an incomplete sentence

Numbers versus Words

In this type of documentation, we will often use numerals in text, even those below 10, breaking one of the established writing rules.

Do not use words, when the number is a direct representation of a specific value. For example, in referring to *Joomla! Version 1.5*, the numeral is in order as it is a direct reference to a numerical sequence (it would also look very strange written as *Joomla! version one point five*). If we were to say, "*There have been 2 major releases of Joomla!*" this would be inappropriate and we should in fact say, "*There have been two major releases of Joomla!*".

Do not use Numerals to start a sentence. Either write the number out in words or preferably use a different order of words so that the number occurs within the body of the sentence.

If your text includes fractions, do not use any editor specific characters as are found in most word processor programs. Enter the fraction as 8-1/2 (eight and a half) ensure there is a hyphen between the whole number and the fraction. However, it is unlikely that you will need to use fractions in Joomla! documentation and you should endeavour to convert any that are required into decimals instead.

Use Lists Where Appropriate

The **Visual Style Guide** explains the formatting of lists in detail.

Lists are excellent for splitting information up and adding emphasis.

Horizontal (Inline) List

There are three main types of list for us to consider here: (1) the horizontal (inline) list, (2) the vertical numbered list, (3) the vertical bulleted list.

Use horizontal, inline lists when you need to define a list of items but emphasis is less important.

Limit the number of items to four or five otherwise consider using a vertical list.

Vertical Numbered List

There are three main types of list for us to consider here:

1. the horizontal (inline) list
2. the vertical numbered list
3. the vertical bulleted list

Only use vertical numbered lists when you are describing a defined process that must follow a set sequence or when you need to refer to the points within it from the surrounding text.

Limit the number of items to around seven to ten; otherwise consider grouping related items under sub-lists.

Vertical Bulleted List

There are three main types of list for us to consider here:

- the horizontal (inline) list
- the vertical numbered list
- the vertical bulleted list

Use bulleted lists whenever you need a list of items to be emphasised outside of the main text. Limit the number of items to around seven to ten; otherwise consider grouping related items under sub-lists.

Bulleted and numbered lists must always have an introductory statement.

Use lowercase letters to start the listed points except when they are complete sentences when they must start with a capital letter and end with a full stop (period).

With a list, that is part of a continuous sentence, put semicolons (;) after each point and start each with a lowercase letter.

If you know that:

- you have an Apache server;
- you installed MySQL; and
- you installed PHP;

you should be able to install Joomla!.

As you can see, the next to last point has 'and' after the semicolon. If you only had to prove one of the three points instead of all of them, this word would be 'or'.

Always make sure each point follows logically and grammatically from the introduction. For example, if you took out 'you' from the second and third points it would still flow as a normal sentence but not as a list. The third point would then read, 'If you know that installed PHP', which obviously does not make sense.

Correctness of Spelling, Punctuation, Usage, and Grammar

It is essential to maintain correctness in spelling, punctuation, word usage, and grammar when producing documentation both for online and offline use.

Spelling and Usage:

- Remember to use the British English (en_GB) spelling of words rather than the American English spelling.
- Be on the lookout for words that are often spelled incorrectly ([Words to Watch](#))
- Check for and correct the following issues:
 - Inconsistent capitalisation
 - Inconsistent use of terminology
 - Repeated words
 - Typographical errors
 - Missing words
 - Verbs in the wrong tense
 - Emotions, desires, opinions, sense of location or dimension to an inanimate object (anthropomorphism)
 - "The" used to begin article titles, manual titles, chapter titles, headings, figure captions, table captions, and callouts
 - Contractions (don't, wouldn't, isn't) although these are acceptable where they assist in making the document more readable

Grammar and Punctuation

Keep an eye out for and correct these common errors in grammar and punctuation:

- use of a slash "/" as well as using and/or
- inconsistent use of hyphens "-" and dashes "—"
 - hyphens are used to prevent ambiguity, with a numeral in a compound modifier, with some standard prefixes and suffixes, in spelled-out fractions, and in variable names of two or more words
 - do not use for industry-accepted terms, to construct verbs, with an adverb ending in "ly", with numerals as single modifiers, with a word that that uses a common prefix, or with trademarked terms
 - to create an introductory piece of text: use a paragraph break or a colon rather than an **em** dash or **en** dash
- inappropriate use of parentheses "()" and brackets "{}, []"
 - use parentheses to contain the abbreviation of a term on the first occurrence of the full term
 - brackets should be used for optional command line entries, but not as a substitute for parentheses or to indicate variables in text
- incorrect use of apostrophes
 - apostrophes used to denote plurals
- incorrect use of quotation marks
 - limit the use of quotation marks to identify quoted speech; numbers, letters, or words referred to as such
 - do not use single quote marks at all other than in direct representations of code
- terms must be legitimate or not used
 - ensure you define terms for the reader in the content itself, or in the glossary
- incorrect use of comma splice

- excess commas
- commas used in a series of adjectives used as one modifier
- commas between two short independent clauses
- always use the third comma in a serial list, for instance, "the top, middle, and bottom" rather than "the top, middle and bottom"
- long sentences joined by conjunctions
- long sentences with confusing subordinate clauses
- incomplete sentences that leave out the articles
- over-elaborate sentence structure and syntax
- unnecessary adjectives in a phrase that could stand alone without them
- unnecessary adverbs in a phrase that could stand alone without them
- use of semi-colons
- use of the colon:
 - do not be use to introduce a figure, table, heading or at the end of a procedure introduction
 - always use to introduce a list or before an explanation
- do not use double spacing
- use an ellipsis "... " to show that you have omitted something from a sentence or to indicate a pause when you quote displayed text, do not have a space before the ellipsis

Rules

It is not the intention to rebel against the grammatical rules in the aim of achieving good User documentation. There are mysteries and preconceptions surrounding grammar that often impede the writing of user-friendly documents.

- You can start a sentence with **and**, **but**, **because**, **so**, or **however**.
- You can split your infinitives. So, you can say **to boldly go**.
- You can end a sentence with a preposition. In fact, it is something we should stand **up for**.
- And, you can use the same **word** twice in a sentence if you can't find a better **word**.
- Of course, this does not mean you should break these so-called rules all the time – just when they make a sentence flow better.

Summary

- Stop and think before you start writing. Make a note of the points you want to make in a logical order.
- Use short words. Long words will not impress your Users or help your writing style.
- Use Plain English whenever possible. Avoid jargon and colloquial words, and explain any technical terms you have to use.
- Keep your sentence length down to an average of 15 to 25 words. Try to stick to one main idea in a sentence.
- Use active verbs as much as possible. Say 'we will do it' rather than 'it will be done by us'.
- Be concise.
- Imagine you are talking to your reader. Write in a style that is suitable and with the right tone of voice.
- Always check that your writing is clear, helpful, human, and polite.
- And, always, always, make sure that what you have written works!

What to Document

One of the key factors in writing a document is the question “How do I decide on what is appropriate to include in this Help Screen/ Manual/reference...?” There are questions that you must answer before this one:

- What type of document are you writing for?
- Who are you writing this document for?
 - What is their anticipated level of experience with Joomla!
 - What is their expected level of knowledge of supporting programs?
- What should the target audience be able to get from the information I am writing?
- Will it add value to what already exists? (this one is more to do with proofreading and editing)

Then ask yourself:

- Do you have the knowledge to write the information or need to research the topic?
- Do you need additional support?

Finally, based on the answers to the previous questions ...:

- Plan a sequence and structure to the element you are writing about.
- Consider what others have written and try to follow a similar structure, assuming that it is correct. This is a personal interpretation issue, so discuss with others if necessary.
- Identify whether there is already existing documentation within the Help Site/Workshop that fits the bill and you can reuse it, there is no point reinventing the wheel every time!
- Establish a cut-off point at which to stop writing about the topic to avoid overdoing it. Where this point is depends on the context of the document.

This may all seem a lot to be thinking about but it will quickly become an automatic part of your writing procedure.

Help Screen Specifics

The following are general guidelines for each of the elements of the Help Screens.

Title

- Edit the title so that it duplicates the title of the Help Screen.

Header Block

- The content of the Header Block is pre-established by need.
- Edit the block for the Help Screen currently being written or edited.
- Add external references for Further Information locations.
- Check that all links do what we intend – this includes URL's, anchors/links within the current document, and links to other Help Screens, of direct relation, that are **not** referenced within the main body of the text.
- Add the correct image for the screen that is the subject of the Help Screen.

Sections

- Identify the correct sections that you should retain or add to the basic template format. Delete those that are unnecessary.
- Consider the section title and what this represents and add content to each section in turn as required.
- Do not duplicate content that is contained within the support group of pages – Toolbar, Mini-icons, Common Headers, Details, Parameters...

Sources

- Do not simply copy the words of another source (outside of the Joomla! Help Sites own content). The processes, which you are reviewing, are not copyrighted, the way in which others have written about them probably is! This includes the Forums. Use these resources to ensure you understand a process properly, and then put it into your own words.
- If you must include copyrighted material, ensure that you properly index and reference it as such. This includes images.

Review

Once you feel a document is complete, it is important to review it and determine whether:

- what you have written, actually explain what you intended originally
- the processes described work
- it is complete
- the formatting is correct
- the rules of this guide, the Visual Style Guide, and the Document Process Guide have been correctly implemented

If you consider all is complete then you need to indicate this to be the final version of the document and it is ready to be moved to the next stage – See the Documentation Process Guide.

General Guidelines for Proofreaders and Editors

If you are simply *proofreading* a document, identify your corrections, comments, and suggestions via the Comments facility in the Project Manager. Do not edit the screen directly.



If you are carrying out a *formal* edit of the document, make sure it is located at the correct stage of the overall process.

Make sure you have made a new copy of the document and that it has the correct version number.

Procedure for Proofreading and Editing

The following are generally suggestions, as everyone will have their own *ideal* way of completing the process.

- Make several different passes through the material as you are proofreading, in order to catch different types of issues each time through.
- Avoid making any edits on the first pass – just make a note of any obvious issues.
- During the first pass, look for obvious spelling, punctuation, grammar and usage issues that jump out at you right away. You may want to review proper spelling, punctuation, grammar and usage rules before you begin, so they are fresh in your mind as you are proofreading.
- During the next pass, carefully read and review the content for clarity, consistency in style and tone, and accessibility. Ask yourself if the content makes sense, if it is written in the best way it can be, and if anything is missing that should be added.
- Make sure you have caught everything that needs correction by passing through the material again and fine-tune it where needed.
- Reading out aloud often helps you to identify problems that you missed when reading silently.
- Check for common mistakes, such as not completing parentheses, brackets, and quotation marks, comma splices, dangling modifiers, and commonly misspelled words (see [Words2Watch](#)).
- Another suggestion to help you identify errors, especially in spelling, is to proofread the document in reverse: from bottom to top and right to left.
- Constantly check compliance with the [Visual Style Guide](#) and [Documentation Process Guide](#).

Marking Corrections from Proofreading

Copy the text that the comments apply to into the Comment facility. Then, record your corrections, comments, and suggestions. Please follow these directions:

- Please use **green** text for all additions and modifications, and **red** for any text that the author should delete or replace.
- In other words, if you are:
 - Adding *extra* new text - use **green text**
 - Deleting *unnecessary* text - use **red text**
 - *Replacing* existing text - use **red for the text to be deleted** and **green for the new text to be added**
 - *Modifying* existing text - use **green text** (for example, correcting a spelling error)

Post any questions, comments, or suggestions you may have to the [Suggestions, Modifications & Corrections forum](#).

Appendices

General Style Guides for Reference

We aim to create all Joomla! documentation using British English (en_GB) as the base language. It is done in this way to ensure there is a single language (variant) that it is necessary to understand - making it easier for Translation Partners and others to translate the documentation available within the Joomla! core and the Help Site.

You can research much of what we aim to achieve by way of style, grammar, punctuation, and general word usage in many of the available online style guides and web sites.

The following is a list (in no particular order of preference) of just a few of such sites:

- <http://www.usingenglish.com> Those writers and contributors whose first language is not English will find this site most beneficial.
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Style_guide#International_standards This page, on the popular Wikipedia web site, gives access to a whole raft of other resources far too many to be listed here with any real meaning.
- <http://economist.com/research/styleGuide/> The Economist Style Guide is a representation from a book handed to all new reporters on The Economist business journal.
- <http://www.askoxford.com/?view=uk> AskOxford.com is the online presence of the Oxford University Press – the publishers behind many language-orientated books including; the Oxford English Dictionary.
- [Spelling differences between American and British English](#)
- [The American-British British-American Dictionary](#)
- [WWlib-Notes on American English](#)
-

It is very easy to be *caught up* in the detail of these sites and lose to direction with regard the documentation itself, so we will try to cover as many of these aspects as we can and add to these guides as we find necessary.

Primarily we use the Oxford English Dictionary as the reference for all spelling aspects.

Should you find a particular reference or issue that needs adding to these guides please notify the UDT on the forums at <http://forum.joomla.org/index.php/board,62.0.html> and we will look at your recommendation and include it if appropriate.

Words to avoid

Try to use the alternatives we suggest in the table.

Word	Alternative
additional	extra
advise	tell
applicant	you
commence	start
complete	fill in
comply with	keep to
consequently	so
ensure	make sure
forward	send
in accordance with	under, keeping to
in excess of	more than
in respect of	for
in the event of	if
on receipt	when we/you get
on request	if you ask
particulars	details
per annum	a year
persons	people
prior to	before
purchase	buy
regarding	about
should you wish	if you wish
terminate	end
whilst	while

Words to Watch

Words to Watch (**W2W**) are words commonly misspelled or which may have variations that depend on the Joomla! style guide choices.

An entry, which is just a word without a comment, is to show how we are spelling that word.

If an entry has **something** *rather than something else* then it should be read as, "We are using the spelling of the first something rather than the other possible spellings shown in something else".

Accepted Word	Unacceptable Word	Detail
accessory		Spell with a double c and a double s; the ending is <i>-ory</i> .
accommodate		Spell with a double c and a double m and an o before and after the m's.
Administrator	administrator	Always capitalise when referring to the Joomla! User level or the Back-end Administrator. (Use of the latter should be limited to avoid confusion. Refer to this area as the Control Panel when referring to the facilities and Back-end when comparing to the Front-end.
address		Spell with a double d.
aggression		Remember to spell with a double g and a double s.
allege		Use a double l and spell with <i>-ege</i> at the end.
a lot	alot	Use as two words, not one.
amend and amendment		Spell with a single m at the beginning.
apologize or apologise		Spell with <i>-olo-</i> in the middle.
apparent		Use double p but only one r and end in <i>-ent</i> .
argument		Do not put an e after the u, as you would in argue.
Article		Capitalise the word Article when referring to the element of Joomla! content.
AutoCorrect		One word with capitalisation as shown
Back-end	backend	Ensure it is always capitalised and hyphenated when referring to the Administrator area of Joomla!
backup and back up		Use backup when used as an adjective, as in "he had a backup disk in his bag" and use back up when using it as a verb, as in "don't forget to back up your hard drive".
Banner		Capitalise the word Banner when referring to the element of the Joomla! Banner Component.
bitmap	bit map or bit-map	One word not hyphenated or two words.

Accepted Word	Unacceptable Word	Detail
business	business	Spell with busi- at the beginning
Category (Manager)		Capitalise the word Category when referring to the element of Joomla! content.
command	comand	
Contact (Manager)		Always capitalise when referring to the Component element or Manager function.
checkbox	check box	
check-in (noun/adjective) (Global) Check-in	checkin (noun/adjective)	We will be using check-in, which must be capitalised when referring to a specific function, Menu Item, or button such as Global Check-in. It is correct to use check in (verb) as in "check in your materials".
Component (Manager)		Capitalise the word Component when referring to an Extension in Joomla!.
consensus and consensual	concensus	Spell with -sen- in the middle.
Contact		Capitalise the word Contact when referring to the element of the Joomla! Contact Component.
Control Panel	control panel	Capitalise when referring to the Joomla! Back-end functional area.
controversy	contraversy	
CSS	css	Always capitalise except in code or when a file extension.
database	data base	One word not two
desperate	desparate	Spell desperate with -per- in the middle.
dial-up	dialup dial up	Include the hyphen between "dial" and "up".
disappoint and disappointment	dissappoint disapoint dissappoint	Remember to spell with one s and a double p.
eighth	eigth	Remember to use -hth at the end.
e-mail	E-mail email	E-mail is obviously correct at the start of a sentence! We will be going with e-mail (lower-case and hyphenated) for consistency.
Extension(s)	extension(s)	Refer to Components, Modules, and Plugins collectively as Extensions. Always capitalise when referring to CMPT's
embarrass	embbaras	Spell with a single b, double r, and a double s.

Accepted Word	Unacceptable Word	Detail
extraordinary	extrordinary	Do not omit the “a” of extra.
fascinate and fascination	facination	Spell with an s before the c.
file name	filename	Two words rather than one.
friend		Spell with -ie- in the middle.
Front-end	frontend	Ensure it is always capitalised and hyphenated when referring to the User (public) area of Joomla!
Front Page front page	Frontpage frontpage	Always two words. Capitalise the words Front Page when referring to the Menu Item element of Joomla! content.
fulfil	fulfill	Spell with one l in the middle and one at the end
gateway	gate way	One word, not two.
gauge	gage	Spell with -au- in the middle.
grateful	gratful or graitful	Begin with grate-. Single ‘l’ at the end
harass and harassment	harrass and harrassment	Spell with a single r and a double s.
hard disk	hard-disk	Two words. No hyphenation
hardware	hard-ware	One word. No hyphenation
home page	homepage	Always two words.
HTML	HTM html	Always capitalise, except in code or when a file extension.
hypocrisy	hypocrisy hypocrisey	Begin with hypo- and end with -isy.
immediate and immediacy	imiedate	Spell with a double m.
independent	independant	End with –ent rather than -ant.
instalment	installment	Spell with one l
itinerary	itinery	End with -erary.
JavaScript	javascript Java Script	One word but with the J and S capitalised.
Joomla!	joomla, Joomla,	Always capitalise and include the exclamation mark every time except in code.
joomla_root/		Use as the starting point to all references to directories within the core installation to avoid confusion with the web server or database root.
keyboard	key board	One word not two
licence and license		Use licence as a noun for the permit you obtain to

Accepted Word	Unacceptable Word	Detail
		do something like hunt or drive, but use license when you mean it as a verb, to give permission to or allow someone to do something or for something to occur.
login, logon, logoff, and logout		Noun always one word one "g" the act of logging into or out of a computer or Web site.
log in, log on, and log off log out		Verb to go through the procedure of logging in to or out of a Web site for example
maintenance	maintainence	Spell with -ten- in the middle and end with -ance.
Mambot	mambot	Always capitalise when used for a Joomla! Extension. Remember from 1.5 this is replaced by Plugin.
Manager	manager	When referring to either the User level or a Manager screen (Poll Manager) it is capitalised.
manoeuvre	maneuver	Spell with -oeu- in the middle and -vre at end
Media Manager	media manager	Capitalise when referring to the Joomla! function.
Menu	menu	When referring to a specific menu in Joomla! always capitalise.
Menu Item	menu item	Two words and capitalise both when referring to the specific element within Joomla! but not when generally discussing any old menu items
metadata	meta data	One word
millennium		Spell with a double l and a double n.
minuscule		Spell with a u after the n.
misspell	mispell	Spell with a double s.
Module	module	Always capitalise when used for a Joomla! Extension.
multitasking	multi-tasking multi tasking	one word
MySQL	mysql MYSQL	
News Feed (Manager)	newsfeed Newsfeed	Always capitalise when referring to the Component within Joomla!, and always two words. Manager when included is always capitalised
necessary and necessity	neccessary	Spelled with one c and a double s.
occasion	occassion	Spell with a double c and a single s.
OK	Ok, ok	capitalise both letters

Accepted Word	Unacceptable Word	Detail
omission	ommission	Spell with one m and a double s.
online	on-line on line	One word
Open Source (OS)	open source	Capitalise the O and S.
original		Spell with an i before and after the g.
overwrite	over write over-write	One word
password	pass word	One word
PHP	php	Always capitalise except when used as a file extension or in code
Poll (Manager)	poll manager	Always capitalise when referring to the Component in Joomla!.
platform		
Plugin(s)		One word, always capitalise when referring to the Extension.
possess and possession	posess	Spell with a double s before and after the e.
PostScript	Post Script post-script	One word. Capitalise P and S.
practice and practise		Use practice as a noun when describing actually doing something rather than just discussing it or theories about it, as in "put your good manners into practice". Use practise as the verb, "improving your skill by doing something over and over".
presence	presance	End with -ence.
privilege	privilage privildge	Spell with -ege at the end.
proofread	proof-read, proofed, proof read	This applies to all derivatives as well, such as proofreader, proofreading, etc.
questionnaire	questionare	Spell with a double n and end with -aire.
really	realy	Spell with a double l in the middle.
receive	recieve	Use i before e except after c.
recommend and recommendation	reccomend	Spell with a single c and a double m.
restaurant	restorant restaront	Spell with -au- between the t and r.
rhythm	writhm	
secretary	secratary secretery	Use an e after the r and end with -ary.
Section	section	Always capitalise when referring to the specific element within Joomla! cms.

Accepted Word	Unacceptable Word	Detail
seize	sieze	Spell with the e before the i.
separate	seperate	Spell with -par- in the middle.
similar	simalar simillar similer	End with -lar rather than -ler.
skilful, skilfully, skilfulness	skillfull	Watch for variations as shown
software	soft ware soft-ware	One word
source code	sourcecode	Two words
style sheet	stylesheet style-sheet	Two words no hyphen
subdirectory	sub-directory sub directory	One word
subdocument	sub-document sub document	One word
success and successful	sucess	Spell with a double c and a double s.
sufficient	suficient	Use a double f in the middle and end with -cient.
Super Administrator	super administrator	Always capitalise when referring to the Joomla! User level.
surprise		Spell with an r before and after the p.
tomorrow		Spell with a single m and a double r.
toolbar	tool bar tool-bar	One word
twelfth	twelth	Spell with an f in the middle.
unfortunately		Spell with -ately at the end.
until		Use a single l at the end.
URL	Url url	Capitalise except when used in code.
User	user	When referring to a specific Joomla! User always capitalise first letter
vehicle		Spell with -icle at the end.
Web	web	Capitalise except when using to refer to a spiders trap!
Web link Web Link	weblink web-link	Two words unhyphenated. Capitalise the words when discussing the Component variant - Web Link Manager.
Web site	website Web Site web site	As the World Wide Web is a proper noun, we use initial upper-case letter, in the same way as you do with your surname. This is a change. Site

Accepted Word	Unacceptable Word	Detail
		however is lower case.
<i>weird</i>	wierd	Spell with the e before the i
<i>wilful</i>	willfull willful	Only use a single l in the middle, and one at the end.
<i>withhold</i>	withold	Spell with a double h in the middle.
<i>World Wide Web (WWW)</i>	Worldwide Web	Capitalise, as it is a proper noun. Three separate words. Capitalise the abbreviation (except in URL's)