

Quick guide: lists

Lists make it easy to scan and understand a series of items. There are different types of lists. Each type of list has a different format.

Lists can be ordered or unordered. Numbered lists are ordered lists. Use them when the order of list items is important.

Bullet lists are unordered lists. Use them when the order of list items isn't important. There are 3 types of bullet lists: sentence lists, fragment lists and some stand-alone lists.

Lists in general content don't need 'and', 'or', semicolons or commas at the end of list items.

Sentence lists

Use sentence lists for a series of complete sentences. Sentence lists can have a:

- sentence lead-in with a colon
- sentence lead-in with a full stop
- phrase lead-in with a colon
- heading with no punctuation.

Example

Follow us on social media.

- Learn about our projects.
- Enter our competitions.
- Find out about our new products.

[Sentence lead-in with a full stop]

Rules for sentence lists:

- Follow normal sentence structure in each list item.
- Start each list item with a capital letter and end it with a full stop.
- Align run-over lines with the text, not the bullet or number.
- Avoid using multiple sentences in each bullet or numbered item.

Example

To receive support:

- You can visit our office.
- You can call our helpline for a confidential chat.
- Your carer can contact us on your behalf.

[Phrase lead-in with a colon]

Fragment lists

Use fragment lists for a series of incomplete sentences. Fragment lists can have a:

- sentence lead-in with a colon
- phrase lead-in with a colon.

A phrase lead-in and each fragment must make a complete sentence. Keep the resulting sentence to no more than 25 words.

Fragment lists have a:

- lower-case letter for the first letter of each fragment, unless the fragment begins with a proper noun
- full stop for the last item only.

Example

There are 3 ways to contact us:

- email
- online form
- telephone.

[Sentence lead-in with a colon]

Example

Keep your body healthy by:

- eating fruit and vegetables
- exercising daily
- drinking water.

[Phrase lead-in with a colon]

Stand-alone lists

Brochures and display material often contain stand-alone lists.

Use stand-alone lists for a series of items under a heading (no lead-in, colon or full stop).

List items can have:

- indents
- no indents
- bullets.

Stand-alone lists have:

- a capital letter to start list items
- no full stops after list items.

Example

Gallery spaces for hire

Exhibition space
Function rooms
Theatrette

Example

Popular Australian destinations

- Great Ocean Road
- Barossa Valley
- Sydney Opera House

Numbered lists

Use numbered (ordered) lists when the order is important. You might use numbered lists for instructions, an order of events or when you rank items.

Example

How to sign up to our newsletter:

1. Enter your name.
2. Enter your email address.
3. Verify your email address.

[A numbered sentence list]

The participants will:

1. arrive at the venue
2. find their name tag
3. take their allocated seat.

[A numbered fragment list]

Example

Winners of the awards

1. Western Australia
2. Australian Capital Territory
3. Victoria

[A numbered stand-alone list]

Multilevel lists

Try to use single-level lists in general content. Some types of content need multilevel lists, but they can be hard for users to follow. Use en dashes (not hollow bullets) for the second level. Multilevel lists can be ordered or unordered. Use the same symbol, number or letter for the same level in each list.

Example

They are allergic to:

- tree nuts
 - almonds
 - cashews
 - walnuts
- dairy products
 - cow's milk
 - goat's milk
- crustaceans
 - crabs
 - prawns.

[An unordered multilevel list]

Example

In order of severity, they are allergic to:

1. tree nuts
 - a. almonds
 - b. cashews
 - c. walnuts
2. dairy products
 - a. cow's milk
 - b. goat's milk
3. crustaceans
 - a. crabs
 - b. prawns.

[An ordered multilevel list]