

# Quick guide: dates and time

## Times of day

Use a colon between the hours and minutes in times of day. Write 'am' and 'pm' in lower case with a non-breaking space (Ctrl+Shift+Spacebar) between the time and 'am' or 'pm'. You can use 2 zeros to show the full hour, but they are not essential. Be sure to follow your chosen style consistently in your document.

The 24-hour clock is used for certain types of content. It's also useful when space is limited. Timetables and schedules often use the 24-hour clock. The format is 'hh:mm', or 'hh:mm:ss' if you add seconds.

### Example

8:30 am  
11:15 pm  
9:00 am or 9 am  
1 pm or 1:00 pm

### Example

00:15 [12:15 am]  
06:26 [6:26 am]  
17:59 [5:59 pm]  
20:31:05 [8:31:05 pm – includes hours, minutes and seconds]

Don't use 'am' and 'pm' with words that duplicate their meaning like 'morning' and 'afternoon'.

### Write this

We'll meet at 7:30 am tomorrow.  
They finish at 4 pm on Tuesday.

### Not this

We'll meet at 7:30 am tomorrow morning.  
They finish at 4 pm on Tuesday afternoon.

Use 'noon', 'midday' or 'midnight' instead of '12 am' or '12 pm'. This is easier to understand.

### Example

I woke to a text message at midnight.  
The lunch meeting is at midday tomorrow.

## Dates

Use the 'day month year' format (with no commas) when writing dates in numerals and words. Use a non-breaking space between the day and the month.

### Example

22 July 2024  
Monday 22 July 2024

## Use numeric dates when space is limited

Only use numeric dates when space is limited (such as in tables). Numeric dates can be confusing because their order and format differs between countries.

Australian style is to separate numerals with an unspaced forward slash, using the format 'd/m/yyyy'. This format uses single digits for days and months and 4 digits for the year.

There is an exception. You can use 2 digits for the year ('dd/mm/yy') when:

- writing financial data
- it's clear which century you're referring to
- users understand that the order is 'day/month/year'.

#### Example

1/7/2020  
12/12/2024

#### Example

12/12/23  
07/05/25

## Decades

Write decades with an 's' on the end. Don't use an apostrophe to show the plural.

#### Example

1980s  
2010s

## En dashes

Use 'from ... to' or 'between ... and' instead of an en dash for spans of years.

#### Example

from 57 to 65 years  
between 1970 and 1980

There are exceptions. Use an en dash in date spans for:

- financial years
- calendar years
- titles of publications and programs
- terms of office
- lifespans (birth and death)
- content in limited space.

#### Example

the 2024–25 financial year  
It spanned 2 calendar years (2022–23).  
*Corporate plan 2024–28*  
*The spotted handfish recovery program 1999–2001*  
The *Department of Health and Aged Care annual report 2022–23* states ...  
Australia's first female prime minister was Julia Gillard (2010–2013).  
Shane Warne (1969–2022)

## Combining dates and times

You can choose whether the date or the time comes first when you combine them. There is no fixed rule. But if you add the day of the week, just make sure the time doesn't come between it and the date.

You can use standard abbreviations for days and months when you have limited space. This might be in a table, social media post or display text. Don't forget to add a non-breaking space before 'am' and 'pm' and between the day and month.

#### Write this

The meeting is scheduled for Thursday  
14 August 2025 at 10 am.  
Lunchtime seminar  
12:30 pm Tue 12 Aug  
All welcome!

#### Not this

The meeting is scheduled for Thursday 10 am  
on 14 August 2025.  
Lunchtime seminar  
Tue 12:30 pm 12 Aug  
All welcome!

Visit [stylemanual.gov.au](https://stylemanual.gov.au) and search 'dates and time'.