

Acronyms

522 a. An acronym—for example, *NOW*—is a shortened form normally derived from the initial letters of the words that make up the complete form. Thus *NOW* is derived from *National Organization for Women*. Like all-cap initialisms such as *IRS* and *FBI*, acronyms are usually written in all-caps and without periods; however, unlike those abbreviations, which are pronounced letter by letter, acronyms are pronounced as words. (See ¶501b.) Because they have been deliberately coined to replace the longer expressions they represent, acronyms are appropriate for use on all occasions. However, if your reader may not be familiar with a particular acronym, provide the full expression when the acronym is first used. (See ¶504, note.)

DAM	Mothers <u>A</u> gainst <u>D</u> yslexia
C-SPAN	<u>C</u> able <u>S</u> atellite <u>P</u> ublic <u>A</u> ffairs <u>N</u> etwork
CAN-SPAM	<u>C</u> ontrolling the <u>A</u> ssault of <u>N</u> on- <u>S</u> olicited <u>P</u> ornography and <u>M</u> arketing <u>A</u> ct
ICANN	<u>I</u> nternet <u>C</u> orporation for <u>A</u> ssigned <u>N</u> ames and <u>N</u> umbers
BATS	<u>B</u> etter <u>A</u> lternative <u>T</u> rading <u>S</u> ystem
WATS	<u>W</u> ide- <u>A</u> rea <u>T</u> elecommunications <u>S</u> ervice
POTS	plain old telephone service
POTUS	<u>P</u> resident of the <u>U</u> nited States (pronounced <i>POH-tus</i>)
FLOTUS	<u>F</u> irst <u>L</u> ady of the <u>U</u> nited States
SCOTUS	<u>S</u> upreme <u>C</u> ourt of the <u>U</u> nited States
ZIP (Code)	<u>Z</u> one <u>I</u> mprovement <u>P</u> lan*
PIN	personal identification <u>n</u> umber (see ¶522e)
ICE	in <u>c</u> ase of <u>e</u> mergency
SKU	stockkeeping <u>u</u> nit (pronounced <i>SKEW</i>)
SOHO	<u>s</u> mall <u>o</u> ffice, <u>h</u> ome <u>o</u> ffice (as in <i>the SOHO market</i>)
FSBO	for <u>s</u> ale <u>b</u> y <u>o</u> wner (pronounced <i>FIZZ-boh</i>)
BOGO	<u>b</u> uy- <u>o</u> ne, get- <u>o</u> ne-free offer
DRIP	<u>d</u> ividend <u>r</u> einvestment program
ESOP	employee <u>s</u> tock <u>o</u> wnership plan
VEBA	voluntary <u>e</u> mployee <u>b</u> eneficiary <u>a</u> ssociation
E-RACE	<u>E</u> radicating <u>R</u> acism and <u>C</u> olorism from <u>E</u> mployment
COBRA	<u>C</u> onsolidated <u>O</u> mnibus <u>B</u> udget <u>R</u> econciliation <u>A</u> ct
ERISA	<u>E</u> mployee <u>R</u> etirement <u>I</u> ncome <u>S</u> ecurity <u>A</u> ct
SarbOx	<u>S</u> arbanes- <u>O</u> xley legislation
FASB	<u>F</u> inancial <u>A</u> ccounting <u>S</u> tandards <u>B</u> oard (pronounced <i>FAZ-bee</i>)
NAFTA	<u>N</u> orth <u>A</u> merican <u>F</u> ree <u>T</u> rade <u>A</u> greement
OSHA	<u>O</u> ccupational <u>S</u> afety and <u>H</u> ealth <u>A</u> dministration
RICO	<u>R</u> acketeer <u>I</u> nfluenced and <u>C</u> orrupt <u>O</u> rganizations Act (pronounced <i>REE-koe</i>)
FOIA	<u>F</u> reedom of <u>I</u> nformation <u>A</u> ct (pronounced <i>FOY-uh</i>)
EPIC	<u>E</u> lectronic <u>P</u> rivacy <u>I</u> nformation <u>C</u> enter

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**ZIP Code* is the style used by the United States Postal Service, the organization that invented the concept. The term may also be styled as *Zip code* or *zip code*.

SWAT (team)	<u>S</u> pecial <u>W</u> eapons and <u>T</u> actics
NASCAR	<u>N</u> ational <u>A</u> ssociation for <u>S</u> tock <u>C</u> ar <u>A</u> uto <u>R</u> acing
CAFÉ	<u>C</u> orporate <u>A</u> verage <u>F</u> uel <u>E</u> conomy (standards for cars and light trucks)
LEED	<u>L</u> eadership in <u>E</u> nergy and <u>E</u> nvironmental <u>D</u> esign
TIES	<u>T</u> he <u>I</u> nternational <u>E</u> cotourism <u>S</u> ociety
AIDS	<u>a</u> cquired <u>i</u> mmune <u>d</u> eficiency <u>s</u> yndrome
SARS	<u>s</u> evere <u>a</u> cute <u>r</u> espiratory <u>s</u> yndrome
CARE	<u>C</u> ooperative for <u>A</u> merican <u>R</u> elief to <u>E</u> verywhere
NIMBY	<u>n</u> ot <u>i</u> n <u>m</u> y <u>b</u> ackyard (as in a <i>NIMBY protest</i>)
BANANA	<u>b</u> uild <u>a</u> lmost <u>n</u> othing <u>a</u> nwhere <u>n</u> ear <u>a</u> nthing
CAVE	<u>C</u> itizens <u>A</u> gainst <u>V</u> irtually <u>E</u> verything
SADD	<u>S</u> tudents <u>A</u> gainst <u>D</u> estructive <u>D</u> ecisions
FONZ	<u>F</u> riends of the <u>N</u> ational <u>Z</u> oo
MoMA	<u>M</u> useum of <u>M</u> odern <u>A</u> rt
KIPP	<u>K</u> nowledge <u>I</u> s <u>P</u> ower Program (a KIPP school)
WARM2Kids	<u>W</u> e <u>A</u> re <u>R</u> ole <u>M</u> odels to Kids
EPIC	<u>E</u> very <u>P</u> erson <u>I</u> nfluences <u>C</u> hildren
COPPA	<u>C</u> hildren's <u>O</u> nline <u>P</u> rivacy <u>P</u> rotection <u>A</u> ct
EMILY's List	a political fund-raising group based on the concept that <u>e</u> arly <u>m</u> oney is <u>l</u> ike yeast (and makes the dough rise)
SPELL	<u>S</u> ociety for the <u>P</u> reservation of <u>E</u> nglish <u>L</u> anguage and <u>L</u> iterature
SHARP	<u>S</u> ociety for the <u>H</u> istory of <u>A</u> uthorship, <u>R</u> eading & <u>P</u> ublishing
MEGO	<u>m</u> y <u>e</u> yes <u>g</u> laze <u>o</u> ver
BOGSAT	<u>b</u> unch of <u>g</u> uys <u>s</u> itting <u>a</u> round a <u>t</u> able (an ad hoc decision-making process)
SITCOM	couple with a <u>s</u> ingle <u>i</u> ncome, <u>t</u> wo <u>c</u> hildren, and an <u>o</u> nerous <u>m</u> ortgage
DINK	couple with a <u>d</u> ouble <u>i</u> ncome and <u>n</u> o <u>k</u> ids
SINK	<u>s</u> ingle, <u>i</u> ndependent, <u>n</u> o <u>k</u> ids
OINK	<u>o</u> ne <u>i</u> ncome, <u>n</u> o <u>k</u> ids
THINKER	<u>t</u> wo <u>h</u> ealthy <u>i</u> ncomes, <u>n</u> o <u>k</u> ids, <u>e</u> arly <u>r</u> etirement
YAWNs	people who are <u>y</u> oung and <u>w</u> ealthy but <u>n</u> ormal
PONA	<u>p</u> erson of <u>n</u> o <u>a</u> ccount (someone not hooked up to the Internet; pronounced <i>POH-nuh</i>)
WOMBAT	<u>w</u> aste of <u>m</u> oney, <u>b</u> rain, and <u>t</u> ime
PEBCAK	<u>p</u> roblem <u>e</u> xists <u>b</u> etween <u>c</u> hair and <u>k</u> eyboard (computer service technician's diagnosis in the absence of other problems; an alternative to the diagnosis of ID-10-T ("IDIOT"))
YAHOO	<u>y</u> et <u>a</u> nother <u>h</u> ierarchically <u>o</u> fficious <u>o</u> racle
YABA	<u>y</u> et <u>a</u> nother <u>b</u> loody <u>a</u> cronym
TEAL	<u>T</u> ypo <u>E</u> radication <u>A</u> dvancement <u>L</u> eague

NOTE: In some cases, writers select a word to serve as an acronym, and then they strain to create a phrase that will support the acronym. This type of abbreviation is often referred to as a *backronym* because it is created backward. For example:

USA Patriot Act	<u>U</u> nitng and <u>S</u> trengthenng <u>A</u> merica by <u>P</u> rovidng <u>A</u> ppropriate <u>T</u> ools <u>R</u> equired to <u>I</u> ntercept and <u>O</u> bstruct <u>T</u> errorism <u>A</u> ct
ACRONYM	<u>A</u> <u>C</u> ontrived <u>R</u> esult of <u>N</u> omenclature <u>Y</u> ielding <u>M</u> echanism

- b. In a few cases acronyms derived from initial letters are written entirely in lowercase without periods.

spim	spam sent by instant messaging
scuba	self-contained underwater breathing apparatus
laser	light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation
yuppies	young urban professionals
duppies	depressed urban professionals
gorp	good old raisins and peanuts (a high-energy snack)
BUT: Ninja	referring to mortgages made to people with no income, no jobs or assets

- c. Some coined names use more than the first letters of the words they represent. Such names are often written with only the first letter capitalized.

Ameslan	American Sign Language
Delmarva	an East Coast peninsula made up of Delaware and parts of Maryland and Virginia
Conrail	Consolidated Rail Corporation
Amtrak	American travel by track
CalPERS	California Public Employees Retirement System
Echo	East Coast Hang Out (an online service)
The Well	The Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link (an online community)
radar	radio detecting and ranging
sonar	sound navigation ranging
modem	modulator/demodulator
medevac	medical evacuation
hazmat	hazardous materials
canola (oil)	Canada oil low acid
op-ed page	the page that is opposite the editorial page
pixel	picture element
domos	downwardly mobile professionals
BUT: AmEx	American Express
FedEx	Federal Express
INTELPOST	International Electronic Postal Service
LASIK	Laser-Assisted In Situ Keratomileusis

- d. Very long acronyms (with five or more letters) are sometimes written with only the initial letter capitalized to avoid the distracting appearance of too many capital letters.

UNESCO **OR:** Unesco (the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization)
 UNICEF **OR:** Unicef (the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund; now simply called the United Nations Children's Fund)

NASDAQ **OR:** Nasdaq (the National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotation System)

- e. When using an acronym, do not follow it with a word that is part of the acronym. For example, write *PIN* (personal identification number), not *PIN number*. (For other examples, see ¶¶501c, 544b.)