Style guide

Contents

Some general principles

RTE promotes education as a human right, making international and national law accessible to everybody. We conduct research and legal analysis and we develop tools and guides to help understand and effectively use human rights mechanisms to claim and enforce the right to education. We build bridges between disciplines (human rights, education and development), actors (CSOs, international organisations, academics), and language communities, linking international, national and local advocacy with practical engagements leading to positive changes on the ground.

In order to achieve this, our public-facing content must be clear, comprehensive, consistent, and supportive to all individuals, actors and organisations working to make these positive changes. It must contain accurate terminology while also being free of unnecessary jargon. And content must be written in clear language that is accessible, for example, to readers with dyslexia, and to people for whom English, Spanish, French or Arabic is not their first language.

Style guide purpose

The purpose of this style guide is to save time when writing public-facing content by clearly setting out our style and editorial requirements, thereby alleviating doubt. It is also intended to provide consistency for readers and content users, and to communicate a consistent identity and RTE brand.

This style guide is not meant to be exhaustive and does not include a grammar or spelling guide, except where relevant to RTE. For style guides with this type of information, see *The Economist* and *The Guardian*.

House style v external style guides

For reports or other written deliverables for external organisations, e.g., submissions to UNESCO, blogs for partner organisations, always check what their style guide requirements are. For example, submissions to UNESCO must follow their own, detailed, style manual, or a blog written for CRIN should follow their style guidelines.

House writing rules

CRIN has 3 house writing rules that also fit perfectly with what RTE aims to achieve. They are:

- write about serious subjects
- be correct
- use clear language

Writing tips

- read your written communication out loud - preferably to someone else - if it sounds stilted, confusing, wordy or something you wouldn't actually say, then you need to work on it
- avoid jargon where possible, and if you must then explain the term
- avoid acronyms too where possible
- use neutral language and avoid making value judgements such as 'she has a terrible life - she works rather than going to school'
- avoid complex sentence structures - try to include just one idea or concept per sentence
- limit each paragraph to one idea
- Never justify your text, always left align. This makes it easier and more accessible to read

In addition, it's always worth bearing in mind George Orwell's six elementary rules (from 'Politics and the English Language', 1946):

1. never use a metaphor, simile or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print
2. never use a long word where a short one will do (see Formal language)
3. if it is possible to cut a word, always cut it out
4. never use the passive where you can use the active
5. never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent

6. break any of the rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous

Online content

Using the different content types

Content can be published on the RTE website in the form of static content, blogs, news, and resources.

Static content

Static content is the main content of our website. It communicates the right to education in international law under the following section headings:

- Education as a right
- International law
- National implementation
- Issues
- Using rights in practice

Static content should be updated periodically to reflect changes in international law and mechanisms, new sources of law, emerging issues, etc.

Accordion format is used for all static content.

Blogs

RTE publishes blog posts written by the RTE team, colleagues from partner organisations, students and academics, and other experts in the field. All blog content should adhere to the RTE style guide. Blogs written by colleagues and collaborators from outside of the organisation need to be copy edited to reflect the RTE style guide prior to publication.

Blogs should be:

- pertinent* and focused on human rights in education
- engaging, relevant and concise
- around 800 words in length (though there is no strictly applied word limit)
- linked in the body of the text to appropriate issue pages on the RTE website
- accompanied by a short biography of the author(s) including a photo, the author's or their organisation's Twitter handle, and contact details (if desirable)
- published with a relevant, accompanying photo, e.g., the cover page of a report, a culturally appropriate generic shot
- reproduced with the permission of the author / original publisher, as appropriate, with that permission acknowledged underneath the blog, including a link to the original post

Once published on the RTE website, links to all new blogs need to be posted on Twitter, Facebook, and included in the monthly RTE e-Bulletin.

All comments received on the blog post should be passed on to the author.

News items

News items are short items relating to recent events, laws passed, court decisions etc. They must be:

- pertinent* to RTE and relate to current events
- concise and engaging
- linked in the body of the text to appropriate static content issue pages on the RtE website
- published with an accompanying photo relevant to the subject and the cultural context
- credited to the author or organisation the news was sourced from and linked to their website, Twitter, Facebook, as appropriate
- posted on Twitter and Facebook including links to the appropriate RTE website news page, the source, and relevant partner organisation(s), the photo used on the new page

*Issues pertinent to RTE

- education financing
- quality
- privatisation
- education in emergencies, including child soldiers
- education 2030
- educational freedoms
- free education
- minimum age, eg child marriage and child labour
- justiciability
- marginalised groups: girls & women, persons with disabilities, refugees, migrants & IDPs, minorities & Indigenous Peoples, persons in detention
- national implementation

There may be other groups and issues related to the right to education that don't have their own page, eg:
- LGBTQI
- persons in poverty
- street children
- corruption in education

Where to find content

Ad hoc news and blog content can be found via:

- the RTE news account: rtenews13@gmail.com
- Twitter using the #righttoeducation and the key words 'right to education', 'droit à l'éducation', 'derecho a la educacion'
- Facebook
- email (Privatisation Group, personal, requests from Erica or Delphine)

Types of content we should always post

- ratifications of human rights instruments that contain a right to education provision
- ratifications of optional protocols on communications procedures
- Changes in education national laws
- case-law or information on important rte cases
- minimum age news e.g., if a state equalises the minimum age of marriage for girls or increases the minimum age of employment
- special rapporteur on the right to education press releases
- press releases we have endorsed or written
- volunteer / job opportunities
- changes of education law that are regressive or progressive (expanding access, free, compulsory age of education)
- events on the right to education

Resource library

The RTE online library provides resources from the Right to Education Initiative as well as other partner organisations, including RTE reports, reports from CSOs, the UN, etc., case summaries, and guides. The resources can be filtered by topic, region, country, content type, and language.

Resources for publication in the resource library should be saved in PDF format as follows:
ORG/Author_Title_of_Resource_Year_En

Publishing on the website

When publishing new resources on the RTE website always:

- link it to the appropriate sections of the website, e.g. 'education in emergencies','refugees, migrants and IPS' from the ' relates to' menu,
- check the 'promoted to front page' box in 'Publishing options' (at the very bottom of the content adding page)

Social Media

Twitter

All newly published RTE website content should be Tweeted on publication.

Original Tweets

These should include:

- a photo relevant to the subject and cultural context of the tweet (this also allows for organisations and people to be @ed without using up the 180 characters)
- a shortened (e.g. Bitly) url link to the news, blog, article, website content being tweeted about
- one or more relevant hashtags
- @ links to relevant organisations, e.g. article source, organisation publishing a report, etc.

ReTweets

Any retweeted tweets from external organisations must relate specifically to human rights <u>and</u> education.

Hashtags

Where space allows, always include a relevant hashtag e.g.

English	French	Spanish
#education	#education	#educacion
#righttoeduation	#droiteaeducation	#derechoaeducacion
#SDGs	#ODD	#ODS

Facebook

All newly published RTE website content should also be posted on the RTE Facebook page.

Original Facebook posts

These should include:

- the author and the @organisation
- a photo relevant to the subject and, or cultural context of the tweet
- a short blurb explaining the main point(s) of the article
- a shortened url link to the news, blog, article, website content being posted about

- link(s) to any relevant pages on the RTE website

Likes and shares

Any Facebook posts from external organisation liked or shared on the RTE Facebook page must relate to human rights <u>and</u> education.

LinkedIn

All newly published RTE website content should also be posted on the RTE LinkedIn page.

The guidelines for posting to LinkedIn are the same as those for Facebook.

Formatting rules

Font

Calibri (body) 12 is used for all written content uploaded to the website. All web content the font style & size are fixed in the Drupal settings.

Titles and headers

For reports etc., written in Word all of the titles can be either turquoise or purple throughout the whole document, but one colour must be chosen and used uniformly throughout. The following formatting settings should be used:

Document title (Calibri 12, bold, custom turquoise or purple)

Section titles (Calibri 12, bold, custom turquoise or purple)

Sub-section titles (Calibri 12, custom turquoise or purple)

Content (Calibri 12, black)

Custom purple hex: #494771; RGB = R73 G71 B113

Custom turquoise hex: #21959E; RGB = R33 G149 B158

Highlighting: bold/italics/links

Do not embolden individual words or portions of text within a phrase or sentence.

Having individual words or parts of phrases emboldened within otherwise standard text can disrupt the flow of reading. It makes text especially difficult to read for people with dyslexia.

Italics should only be used for:

- Latin legal terms e.g *ex ante, ex post facto*
- case titles, e.g., *Brown v Board of Education* ('*Brown*' thereafter)
- publication titles

- RTE website section titles when mentioned within the body of the text

Bullets & lists

Bullet points can be a good for organising complicated content, they can make screen content more easily scannable, and content in list format can be easier to recall. They are also useful for showing the reader how many pieces of information they are being presented with. However, they must not be routinely relied on where clear content writing would be more effective and appropriate.

Use bullet points instead of numbers or symbols. Unless the sequence of the list is important, then the list should be numbered not bulleted.

The content of bullet points should be:

- as short and punchy as possible
- single phrases or sentences

Content that runs into two or more sentences is a paragraph, not a bullet point.

A colon is used to indicate that a bullet list begins below, but no other punctuation is used in bullet point lists.

The first letter of each bullet point phrase should be in lower-case, unless it is a proper noun.

Bullet point lists should contain no more than 5 to 10 points. If your lists contains more than 10 points, break it down into two or more separate lists.

Text body lists

Lists within the body of the text, and that are not presented as bullet points, should be preceded by a colon and separated by:

- commas, or
- semicolons where the items being listed contain commas

For example, provisions in international law should be listed as per the following example: Article 50, International Covenant; Article 28, Convention on the Rights of the Child

Enumeration

Enumeration within a report written by RTE for publication is as follows: Section titles are numbered, subsections with the section are lettered and for any sub-points or paragraphs within the sub-section numerals are used. For example:

1. Section Title

1.1 Subsection

1.1.a sub-paragraph within the subsection

1.1.a.i sub-point within the sub-paragraph

The introduction and conclusion sections of a report are not numbered sections.

Enumeration within written work in which the primary content is the construction of a legal argument or similar, should follow standard legal writing conventions, i.e. with each paragraph sequentially numbered. The sequential numbering continues from one paragraph to the next irrespective of section numbering. E.g., Section 1 might contain paragraphs numbered 1 - 6, Section 2, paragraphs numbered 7 - 13, and Section 3, paragraphs 14 - 16.

Capitalising

Using fewer capital letters helps to make screen content feel less cluttered and easier to read. Across all RTE content, the following are capitalised:

- proper nouns
- the first word only of titles
- north, south etc. where they refer to country names or standard usage names of geographical regions e.g. East Timor, South Korea, North America, New South Wales (not when used to refer to cardinal points of the compass they are not capitalised e.g. the north east of England, eastern Europe, southern United States)
- titles should be capitalised where they refer to a specific post holder including their name, e.g. 'President Hollande of France', but not 'the French president' nor to a general notion of the position e.g. country presidents met in Geneva
- special rapporteur is capitalised when referring to a specific post e.g. the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, otherwise not, e.g. 'the UN recruits sector experts to serve as special rapporteurs…'
- state is capitalised when referring to States party to a convention (note that party is not capitalised), UN Member States, the State, when referring to a UN Member State, Heads of State (when referring to general notions, state is not capitalised e.g. it is the state's responsibility to provide education funding…)
- Charter, Convention, Covenant, Committee, Declaration, Recommendation, etc., when referring to a specific, previously named convention, committee, etc.
- the term Indigenous Peoples is always capitalised

Abbreviations & acronyms

When abbreviating titles always spell the first appearance of a title out in full and put the abbreviation in brackets afterwards, e.g., International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The abbreviation can be used for all subsequent appearances. If the document is long and divided into sections or chapters, the first appearance in each section or chapter should be spelled out in full with the abbreviation in brackets afterwards.

Where the abbreviated version is universally used more commonly than the full spelling, there is no need to give the full spelling in the first instance. E.g. EU, USA, BBC, HIV, NASA, MP.

For abbreviations that are *not* acronyms or initialisms, a full stop is only required where the abbreviation does not end in the last letter of the word being abbreviated, e.g., Dr does not take a full stop, but abbreviating population to pop. does.

E.g. and i.e. should be written in lowercase roman, with two full stops and no spaces.

Use LGBTQI (and no other variation of the form) when referring to lesbian, gay, bisexual etc. related issues.

Referencing

Legal instruments

'Article' should be capitalised when referring to a specific provision, but not otherwise.

When denoting sections follow the below guidance found in *Typograhy for Lawyers* (Butterick, 2010)

Use 'para' when citing documents with sequentially numbered paragraphs (e.g., declarations or complaints). The *section mark* § is used when citing documents with numbered or lettered sections (e.g., statutes).

'If the paragraph or section reference comes at the start of a sentence, don't use the mark—spell out the whole word (*Section 17200 applied to the transaction, but § 17500 did not*). In a reference to multiple paragraphs or sections, double the mark ¶¶ or §§.'

Provisions in international law should be listed as per the following example: Article 50, International Covenant; Article 28, Convention on the Rights of the Child

For the first mention of a legal instrument the year of adoption (not entry into force) should appear after the legal instrument, thereafter it can be ignored, eg:

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966

Abbreviating international instruments: the following abbreviations are acceptable:

- ICESCR
- CRC
- ICERD
- CEDAW
- CRPD
- ICMW
- ICCPR

For UN treaty bodies, the following abbreviations after first use, are acceptable:

- CESCR
- CRC
- CERD
- CEDAW
- CRPD
- CMW
- HRC

Beware of context! If content makes reference to the CRC, meaning the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and also the Convention on the Rights of the Child (likewise for the CRDP and CEDAW), use the abbreviated form for the Convention and 'Committee for the CRC' to refer to the treaty body.

In text citation

When citing all national, regional and international legal instruments the titles should be capitalised.

For example, *The HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act, 2017*, thereafter referred to as the Act.

When citing legal cases, capitalise cases names and italicise when referencing, Eg *Brown v Board of Education,* thereafter *Brown.*

For guidance on how to correctly cite international law refer to the [OSCOLA](#) *Citing International Law Sources Section*.

Referencing sources in online content

External source materials should be referenced within the text of website content using the Harvard method and the title should hyperlink to the materials wherever possible. For example:

[Courts and the Legal Enforcement of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Comparative Experiences of Justiciability](#) ([International Commission of Jurists (ICJ)](#), 2008: p.27)

Imperial College provides full guidance on using the Harvard referencing method [here](#).

In static web content, when referencing subjects or areas covered by relevant RtE website content always explicitly direct readers to the appropriate section of the website, e.g.,

'See our pages on [international law](#) and [national implementation](#).'

In other web content, such as blogs or news items simply hyperlink keywords to the relevant web page, e.g.,

'The [2030 Agenda](#) is explicitly grounded in the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) and [international human rights treaties](#).'

Footnotes & endnotes

These are used to provide supplemental or citation information in stand-alone reports and publications.

Footnotes appear, in numerical order, at the bottom of the relevant page and can be used in shorter documents and reports.

Endnotes appear, in numerical order, in a separate section at the end of a piece of work. They are most appropriate for longer works divided up into two or more chapters.

Footnotes and endnotes should be referenced as per [OSCOLA](#).

Quotations

Single inverted commas are used around quoted materials. Double inverted commas are only used to denote a quote within a quoted extract.

Quotes beginning mid-sentence and introduced as directly attributed quote should be preceded by a colon. E.g., When asked to comment, Dr Smith stated: 'I feel that here are a number of issues to be addressed here...etc.,'

Avoid "that" quotes, ie The prosecutors maintained that "this was not a trial about freedom of the internet. Instead, a serious issue has been raised about the rights of the individual." There is no reason to introduce a complete direct quote of this kind with "that". It should be The prosecutors maintained: "This was not a trial ... " etc. [taken from the Guardian style guide)

Quotes that integrate into the syntax of the phrase are preceded by a comma, for example; 'The Committee asserts that, "there is a powerful educational, social, and economic case to be made" (Smith, 2014) for inclusive education'

Other

British v American English spelling

The Right to Education Project web contents is written in British English and uses British English spelling, e.g., adviser not advisor, organisation not organization, centre not center.

The only exception is where an organisation specifically used American spelling in it's title, e.g., International Labour Organization (which is a bit of a linguistic mess because it 'Labour' is in GB EN and 'Organization' is in US EN)

Content written in US English by colleagues from partner organisations should be copy edited to reflect RTE style principles, including UK EN spelling, prior to publication.

Figures - text v numerals

Spell out one to ten, and then use numerals from 11 onwards. For weights, measures, amounts etc., always use numerals (e.g. 5 million, 11 kilos etc).

You should never start a sentence with a numeral. If you have to start with a number, spell it out.

Date & time format

RTE house style is for the date to be written without number suffix or punctuation, e.g., 21 January 2017

Time is written using the standard 24 hour clock format, including a colon e.g., 13:00 for 1pm

Forward slash (oblique or solidus punctuation)

These should be used without spaces, eg, footnotes/endnotes, and/or.

Dashes

M-dashes should be used sparingly but when used should be used without spaces.

Logo

(Forthcoming)

English usage

Be aware of how the language you use might inadvertently reinforce bias or stereotypes. For example:

- age - use 'older people' instead of 'the elderly'
- cultural diversity - our content is aimed at a diverse international readership, avoid using a patriarchal/white ethnocentric tone
- instead of 'poor people', use 'people living in poverty'
- instead of 'Third world' - differentiate between low income and middle income countries

Avoid gender-biased or sexist language. For example, use ombudsperson instead of ombudsman (applies to all similar types of noun, inc. chairperson etc.) For example:

Instead of writing...	Write...
early marriage	child marriage
The disabled	People / person with a disability

deaf	Hearing impaired