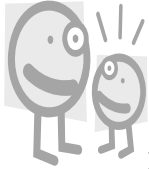


**FROM THE LEGAL WRITING CLINIC**  
**WRITING TIP OF THE WEEK**

**ABBREVIATIONS IN LEGAL WRITING**



This tip covers some of the abbreviations you might use in the text of a legal document. For abbreviations in citations and case names, follow the rules in The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation.

**Time:** Abbreviate ante meridiem (morning) and post meridiem (afternoon) as follows:

- 8:15 a.m.
- 6:00 p.m.

**Dates:** Do not abbreviate dates in text: October 8, 1995, **not** Oct. 8, '95

**Weights and Measures:** If you spell out the number, spell out the unit as well. If not, abbreviate the unit. (Bluebook R. 6.2(a) generally requires spelling out numbers up to 100.)

- Fifty-five pounds
- 200 lbs.

**Degrees and Titles:** Academic degrees are usually abbreviated; titles are not usually abbreviated (except for Mr., Ms., Mrs., Dr. and Messrs.)

- Professor John Jones
- Jack Granger, M.D. or Dr. Jack Granger

**Acronyms:** Acronyms, such as LSAT or ERISA, are usually abbreviated in all capitals, without periods.

**Specialized abbreviations:** Legal writers often create their own specialized abbreviations, known as “defined terms,” in memoranda, briefs, or other documents. To create a defined term, give the complete term and immediately follow it with an abbreviation in parentheses.

- The Americans with Disabilities Act (the “ADA”) applies here.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) applies here.

For more information, see Laurel Currie Oates & Anne Enquist, The Legal Writing Handbook 707-11 (5th ed. 2010).