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**Information and documentation — Rules for  
the abbreviation of title words and titles of  
publications**

*Information et documentation — Règles pour l'abréviation des mots dans  
les titres et des titres des publications*

**iTeh STANDARD PREVIEW**  
**(standards.iteh.ai)**

ISO 4:1997

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## Foreword

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Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

International Standard ISO 4 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 46, *Information and documentation*, Subcommittee SC 9, *Presentation, identification and description of documents*.

This third edition cancels and replaces the second edition (ISO 4:1984), of which it constitutes a technical revision.

Annex A of this International Standard is for information only.

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Printed in Switzerland

## Introduction

The rules contained herein are applicable to the abbreviation of the titles of serials and, if appropriate, of non-serial publications. They are intended to guide and assist authors, editors, librarians, and others working in various fields of information transfer in preparing unambiguous abbreviations for the titles of publications cited, for example, in footnotes, references and bibliographies. Such citations include those produced by abstracting and indexing services, lists of references accompanying articles, and public or private files where document identification is a concern.

Owing to the large number of different serial and non-serial publications subject to reference by abbreviated citation, the many different languages in which they are published, the different ways of recording them and the widely diversified backgrounds of persons using title abbreviations, it is not possible to set down rules that will in every instance assure unassisted reconstruction of the original titles of the publications cited in abbreviated form. As one way to facilitate this identification, authors and editors who make extensive use of title abbreviations in their publications are urged to make available to their readers, at frequent intervals, lists of the abbreviated titles they use, with corresponding equivalent unabbreviated titles.

The basic principle underlying this International Standard is that each title should have its own unique abbreviation. This is to be achieved through application of the rules provided by this International Standard in conjunction with a list of standardized title word abbreviations. It is recognized that for international information exchange an international system for the establishment of unique title abbreviations of serials is also necessary. By this arrangement, no two titles will have identical abbreviations, nor will a single abbreviation represent more than one title.

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## 1 Scope

This International Standard gives rules for abbreviating titles of serials and, if appropriate, non-serial documents in languages using the Latin, Cyrillic and Greek alphabets. This International Standard also serves as the basis for the establishment of title word abbreviations by the ISSN Network.

## 2 Definitions

For the purposes of this International Standard, the following definitions apply.

- 2.1 abbreviation:** Abbreviated term resulting from the omission of some of its letters. [Adapted from ISO 1087:1990]
- 2.2 abbreviated qualifying element:** Abbreviated element added to an abbreviated title in order to make the abbreviated title unique. [ISO 1087:1990]
- 2.3 acronym:** Abbreviated **complex term** made up of letters from the full form of a term and strung together into a sequence pronounced only syllabically. [ISO 1087:1990]
- EXAMPLE: ALGOL = *algorithmic language*.
- 2.4 affix: Morpheme** which is neither a **stem** nor an ending but which is attached to the stem in order to change its meaning or its lexical or grammatical category. [ISO 1087:1990]
- 2.5 artificial word:** Word created for a special purpose and not normally found in dictionaries.
- 2.6 complex term:** Term consisting of two or more **stems** with or without other term elements. [ISO 1087:1990]
- 2.7 compound word:** Word whose component parts are themselves words or combined forms.
- 2.8 contraction:** Shortening of a word, syllable, or word group by omission of internal letters.
- 2.9 corporate body:** Organization or group of persons identified by a particular name.
- 2.10 derivative:** Word formed by the addition of one or more **affixes** to a **stem**. [ISO 1087:1990]
- 2.11 generic term:** Word or a group of words in a title that indicate the kind and/or frequency of a publication.

EXAMPLES: Abhandlungen, annales, Berichte, bulletin, cahier, annual report, compte rendu, proceedings, yearbook.

# Information and documentation — Rules for the abbreviation of title words and titles of publications

- 2.12 inflected form:** Form undergone by words to mark such distinctions as those of case, gender, number, tense, person, mood or voice.
- 2.13 initialism:** Abbreviated **complex term** or name made up of the first letters of the term elements. [ISO 1087:1990]
- NOTE — An initialism forms a sequence which may be pronounced letter by letter, syllabically, or both.
- 2.14 morpheme:** Smallest meaningful unit of a language. [ISO 1087:1990]
- 2.15 prefix:** **Affix** which precedes another **stem** or another prefix. [ISO 1087:1990]
- 2.16 root:** Word element which forms the etymological basis of a family of words in one language or in several languages. [ISO 1087:1990]
- 2.17 section title:** Title specific to a section which serves to distinguish one part of a group of related serials having a common title.
- 2.18 serial:** Publication, in any medium, issued in successive parts, usually having numerical or chronological designations, and intended to be continued indefinitely.
- 2.19 stem:** Word element which can be used as a term in itself or as the base of a **derivative**. [ISO 1087:1990]
- 2.20 suffix:** **Affix** which follows a **stem** or another suffix. [ISO 1087:1990]
- 2.21 title:** Word or phrase, or a group of characters, usually appearing on the document, by which it is convenient to refer to it, which may be used to identify it, and which often (though not invariably) distinguishes it from any other document. [Adapted from ISO 5127/3a):1981]
- 2.22 truncation:** Shortening of a word by the omission of two or more continuous letters at the end.
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### 3 Rules for word abbreviations

#### 3.1 Methods

The recommended method of abbreviation is by truncation.

EXAMPLE:

literature = lit.

Words are also abbreviated by contraction according to the nature of languages and the national practices. In particular the suppression of vowels is frequent.

EXAMPLES:

1	Zeitung	=	Ztg.
2	könyvtár	=	kvf.
3	karangan	=	krgn.

Abbreviation to a single letter is limited to very frequently used generic words.

EXAMPLES:

1	journal	=	j.
2	Zeitschrift	=	Z.

Whether the method of abbreviation is truncation or contraction (or a combination of those methods), at least two letters shall be dropped from the word to be abbreviated. Words from which only a single letter would be dropped are not abbreviated.

The method of indicating an abbreviation shall be a full stop (period). Abbreviations are normally followed by a full stop. However, in some applications the full stop may be omitted (see also 4.6).

### 3.2 Diacritic marks

Diacritic marks shall be retained in the word abbreviations. For languages where an alternative spelling without diacritics is also possible, this alternative may be used instead. Diacritic marks occurring in transliterated words shall be retained in the abbreviations (see 3.11).

EXAMPLES:

1	médecine	=	méd.
2	Überwachung	=	Überwach.
3	Ueberwachung	=	Ueberwach.
4	žurnal	=	ž.

### 3.3 Artificial words

Artificial words should be retained as they appear on the publication. However, new word coinages which are likely to become an accepted part of the language should be abbreviated.

EXAMPLES:

			<a href="https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/bb8ad92e-b527-4f37-a42b-b0192a374b/iso-4-1997">https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/bb8ad92e-b527-4f37-a42b-b0192a374b/iso-4-1997</a>
1	diamat		[not abbreviated]
2	chemtech		[not abbreviated]
3	sharemarket	=	sharemark.
4	cyberspace	=	cybersp.

### 3.4 Plurals and other inflected forms

#### 3.4.1 Plurals

An abbreviation for the singular form of a word shall also be used for the plural form, as long as the orthography of the abbreviation is not affected by the change from singular to plural.

EXAMPLES:

1	importation	=	import.
	importations	=	import.
2	Jahrbuch	=	Jahrb.
	Jahrbücher	=	Jahrb.

When the method of abbreviation is contraction and if the orthography of the word changes in the plural form, affecting the spelling of the abbreviation, the abbreviation of the plural form may be different from the singular form.

## EXAMPLES:

1	country	=	ctry.
	countries	=	ctries.
2	national =		natl.
	nationaux	=	natx.

The irregular plural form of a word may be abbreviated even when the singular form is not abbreviated, provided that more than one letter would be dropped.

## EXAMPLES:

1	child		<i>[not abbreviated]</i>
	children	=	child.
2	Buch		<i>[not abbreviated]</i>
	Bücher	=	Büch.

### 3.4.2 Other inflected forms

The same abbreviation shall be used for all inflected forms of a word.

## EXAMPLE:

promyšlennost'	=	prom.
promyšlennosti	=	prom.
promyšlennostej	=	prom.

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#### 3.4.2.1 Appended article

In languages in which the definite article forms part of the word, the same abbreviation shall be used for the word with an appended article or without one.

## EXAMPLE:

bibliotek	=	bibl.
biblioteket	=	bibl.

#### 3.4.2.2 Grammatical prefixes

In languages in which the prefixes before nouns or verbs have grammatical function (e.g. Malay and Indonesian languages), such prefixes shall be suppressed or reduced in abbreviations.

## EXAMPLES:

1	diperluas	=	prls.
2	berwarna	=	wrn.
3	kemasyarakatan	=	kmsyrk.

### 3.5 Derivatives

If orthographic changes in the derivative form change the part of the word retained as an abbreviation, the abbreviation for the derivative form shall be different from that of the root form.



## EXAMPLE:

Scotland	=	Scotl.
Scottish	=	Scott.

If the orthographic changes do not affect the abbreviation for the derivative form, the abbreviation for the derivative and root forms shall be the same.

## EXAMPLES:

1	physics	=	phys.
	physical	=	phys.
2	organization	=	organ.
	organizing	=	organ.

The derivative of a word may be abbreviated even when the root form is not abbreviated.

## EXAMPLE:

Gefahr	=	[not abbreviated]
gefährlich	=	gefährl.

A derivative of a word which has acquired a different meaning or a different morphological structure shall have a different abbreviation.

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## EXAMPLES:

1	information	=	inf.
	informatique	=	inform. <a href="https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/bb8ad92e-b527-4f37-a42b-601b2e8714b/iso-4-1997">ISO 4:1997</a>
2	psychical	=	psych.
	psychology	=	psychol.

### 3.6 Semantically unrelated words

Words which are semantically unrelated shall have different abbreviations.

## EXAMPLE:

ind.	<i>correct for</i>	industrial, industrie, industry, etc.
	<i>incorrect for</i>	Indian, indication, induced, etc.

### 3.7 Compound words

Each component of a compound word should be abbreviated.

NOTE — If a compound word is not hyphenated, the components preceding the final component may be retained in their full form if required by the national practice for a given language.

Each abbreviated component of a compound word should be followed by a full stop (period) without a space between the components. However, full stops within the abbreviation, with the exception of the full stop after the final component, may be omitted as determined by the requirements of national practice.