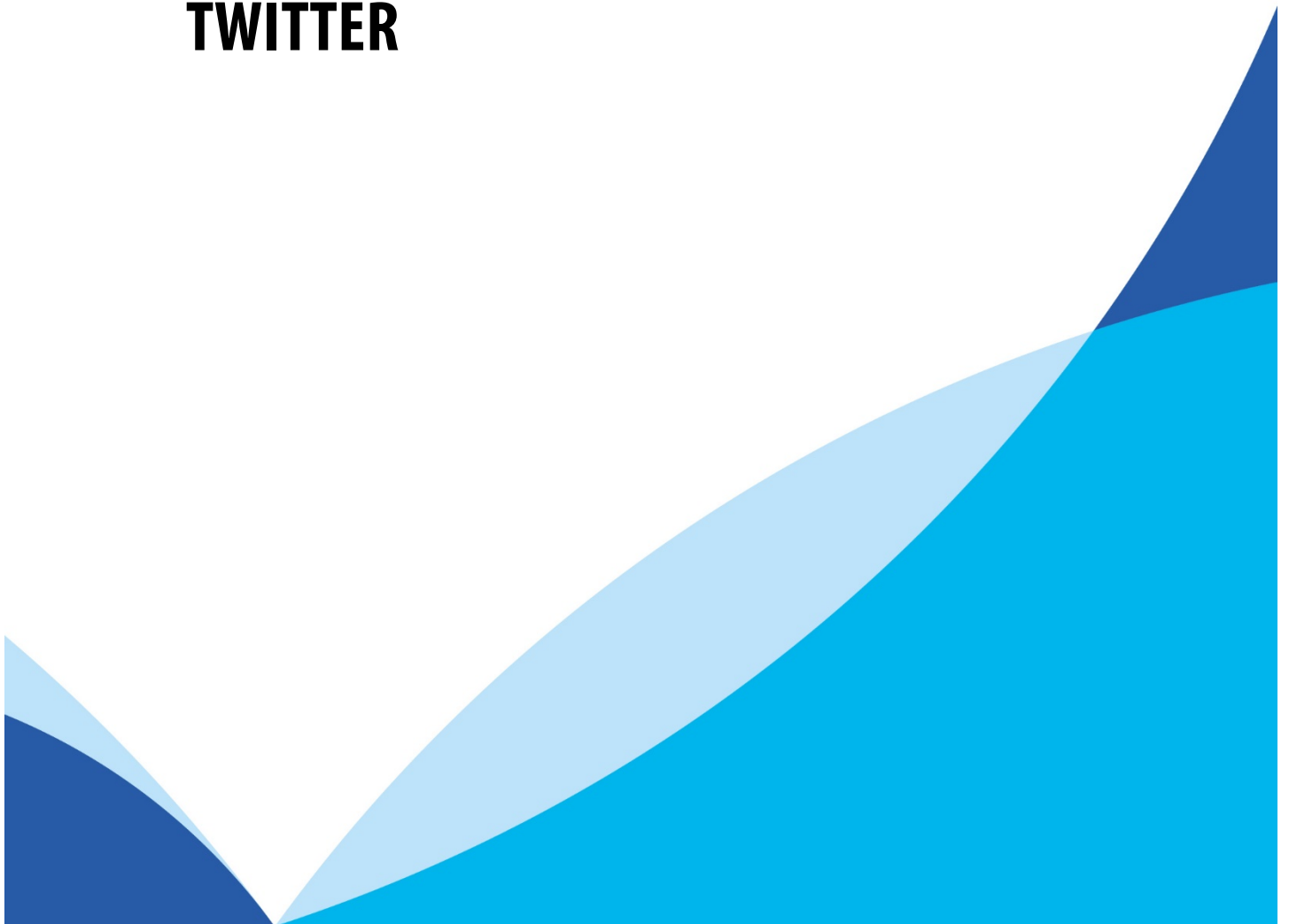




PRIME MINISTER'S
OFFICE

GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES ON TRANSLATING AND WRITING FOR TWITTER



Prime Minister's Office 2021

GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES ON TRANSLATING AND WRITING FOR TWITTER


Helsinki 2021

Contents

1	About Tweets.....	4
2	Tone of Voice.....	6
3	Plain Language.....	10
4	Abbreviations and Symbols.....	12
5	Names and Titles.....	15
6	Numbers, Dates and Times.....	16
	Sources.....	18

1 About Tweets

<p>Character restrictions</p> <p>The maximum number of characters in a Tweet is currently 280.</p> <p>If you need to save space, try to simplify the ideas – but not by altering the spelling or punctuation of the words themselves.</p> <p>This guide will help you write concise but informative Tweets by using simple structures, acceptable abbreviations and other compact expressions.</p>	
<p>Hashtags</p> <p>Hashtags (e.g. <i>#budjettiriihi</i>) only identify Tweets that have the same language-specific hashtag. In some cases, a corresponding English version of the hashtag may be in use (e.g. for a conference or other event, or a commonly referred to topic such as <i>#Finland100</i>). Otherwise, translate the text of the hashtag as part of the sentence, but omit the symbol (#). If there is a 'keyword' list of hashtags at the end of the Tweet, these can be left for the communications staff to deal with.</p> <p>An apostrophe can be used to separate a hashtag from affixes (very common in Finnish).</p>	<p>FI: <i>Tutustu osallistujien näkemyksiin haasteista http://vnk.fi/kohti-seuraavaa-sataa <i>#Seuraava100</i> <i>#Suomi100</i></i></p> <p>EN: <i>Find out the participants' views at http://vnk.fi/kohtiseuraavaa-sataa <i>#Next100</i> <i>#Finland100</i></i></p> <p><i>Tänään vietetään maailman #humanitaarisenavunpäivä'ä.</i></p>
<p>Handles and Twitter names</p> <p>Twitter handles (e.g. <i>@FinGovernment</i>) are the same in every language. They are used when you want to mention someone else in your Tweet.</p> <p>Note that users can also add a Twitter name in their profiles to specify the owner of the account, but they do not have the same functionalities as handles. Multiple accounts can have the same Twitter name, but handles are unique.</p>	<p><i>Restaurants closed to customers until 28 March 2021 in order to stop the acceleration of the epidemic. More information @TEM_uutiset: [LINK]</i></p> <p>Finnish Government <i>@FinGovernment</i> MFA Finland <i>@Ulkoministerio</i></p> <p>Anna Virtanen <i>@anna_virtanen</i> Anna Virtanen <i>@Virtanen_Anna</i></p>

<p>If you have enough space, include the person's real name if it does not match their handle, as Twitter names are not displayed in Tweets.</p> <p>Do not begin your Tweet with a handle if you want all your followers to see your Tweet in their feed. Twitter interprets this as a reply, which means that only people who also follow the account you mention will see the Tweet. It is a common practice to put a full stop before the handle to prevent this from happening, but we recommend reworking the structure instead where possible.</p> <p>Do not repeat handles. After the first mention, you can just use the person's last name.</p>	<p><i>Nebraska-based creative director Tim Siedell @badbanana commented on the situation in his latest blog [LINK].</i></p> <p>YES: <i>PM @MarinSanna will speak at Ministerial Segment of #HLPF2020.</i></p> <p>OK: <i>.@MarinSanna will speak at Ministerial Segment of #HLPF2020.</i> (with full stop)</p> <p>NO: <i>@MarinSanna will speak at Ministerial Segment of #HLPF2020.</i> (no full stop)</p> <p><i>[...] Director of @THL_org @mika_salminen spoke at the event. Watch the recording of Salminen's talk here: [LINK]</i></p>
<p>Emojis</p> <p>Emojis can be used to structure and visualise a Tweet, but as a general rule, we do not recommend substituting words with emojis. For example, flag emojis can however be used instead of country names.</p> <p>Note that all emojis count as two characters.</p>	<p><i>We need to support the groups most affected by the crisis and assess the gender impacts of it, says @ThomasBlomqvist7, Minister of Equality of  at #EPSCO</i></p>
<p>Links</p> <p>All links count as 23 characters, even if they are shorter.</p>	
<p>Images</p> <p>If the Tweet includes an image or a video, check that the translated text is consistent with it. Do not hesitate to contact the commissioner if the image or video is not provided.</p>	

2 Tone of Voice

<p>Editing source material</p> <p>It's a good idea to use web content as source material for social media communication, but it's not a good idea to use web content verbatim in Tweets.</p> <p>Instead, rework web content to make it engaging and brief enough to be successful in social media.</p>	<p>Source material: <i>A new programme for boosting employment through procurement launched at the beginning of August aims to increase support for employment through public procurement. The programme can help support access to employment for people with partial work capacity, for example.</i></p> <p>Tweet: <i>New programme boosts employment through public procurement. It can help employ people with partial work capacity, for example. Read more: [LINK]</i></p>
<p>Friendly, professional tone</p> <p>Write in a friendly but professional tone, maintain standard British English. A conversational style is easier to understand, but avoid going overboard.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use personal pronouns as often as possible. • Use contractions (can't, don't, haven't). • Write in first or second person (<i>I, we, you</i>). • Avoid colloquial language (<i>y'all, ain't, you guys</i>). • Avoid trendy abbreviations (<i>UR for you are</i>). • Use ALL CAPS sparingly, for emphasis only. • Use exclamation points sparingly, and never more than one at a time. 	<p>YES: <i>The #EUGreenDeal, in action!</i> <i>We want Europe to be the first climate-neutral continent by 2050, with our strategies for</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Biodiversity</i> • <i>Healthier & more secure food</i> • <i>A more circular energy system</i> • <i>Clean hydrogen</i> <p><i>...and much more: [LINK]</i></p> <p>NO: <i>2nite the European Council will aim to name the next leaders 4 the top positions in the EU! We can't w8!! CHECK OUT THIS VID ON THE NOMINATION PROCESS #EUCO [VIDEO]</i></p>

<p>Engaging the reader</p> <p>Tweets should be reader-friendly and action-oriented. Ask a question, highlight a key statistic, or provide a specific call to action.</p> <p>Hashtags are a good way to engage the reader, but make sure they serve your purpose and are not too general (compare #SummerReading and #violence in the examples here).</p> <p>Focus your message. Create a hierarchy of information and lead with the main point or the most important content. Think of your Tweet as a news headline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give the most important information first. • Tell what actions to take in clear, easy-to-understand language. • Explain why the action is important. • Use concrete nouns (things you can see, hear, smell, taste or touch). • Use appropriate, inoffensive language (this is how you will get responses and stimulate debate). 	<p>YES: <i>The EU is a key player in global trade. Why is free & fair trade is so important? What benefits does it bring to the EU, its citizens & businesses? Discover the story now: [LINK]</i> <i>#SummerReading</i> <i>#ThrowbackThursday</i></p> <p>NO: <i>Progress has been achieved in the area of equal opportunities for all #children, participation of all children, a life free from #violence for all children and the rights of the child in the #digital environment. Next steps: [LINK]</i></p> <p>YES: <i>Always wash hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds before and after handling food. Food can carry germs that might make you and your family sick.</i></p> <p>NO: <i>Gifts from your kids like a yummy mud-pie, a timid turtle, and a dandelion bouquet are cute, but they all have germs. That's why it's important to wash your hands before preparing dinner.</i></p> <p>YES: <i>Changes to border traffic and travel recommendations 27 July.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Internal border control will be reinstated for traffic between Finland and Austria, Slovenia and Switzerland.</i> • <i>All traffic is allowed from certain non-European countries.</i> <p><i>Read more: [LINK]</i></p> <p>NO: <i>New travel restrictions have entered force today 27 July. More: [LINK]</i></p> <p>NO: <i>Recommendation on travel across Finland's internal and external borders as of 27 July 2020. Press release: [LINK]</i></p>
--	---

<p>Convey emotions with your posts, but don't go overboard or undermine your content's credibility with excessive hype or clichéd promotional phrasing.</p>	<p>NO: <i>The restrictions on entry into Finland will be amended in accordance with the Government decision based on the limit values set by the health authorities as of Monday 27 July 2020. [LINK]</i></p> <p>YES: <i>We are excited to host the reception "Women & Equality" together with @WPLeadersOrg. We are expecting a great evening of discussion with our guests! #EU2019FI</i></p>
<p>Active voice</p> <p>Write in active voice and avoid passive voice. Active voice sentences are often shorter and easier to understand.</p> <p>One exception is when you want to specifically emphasise the action over the subject. In some cases, this is fine.</p>	<p>YES: <i>The committee will announce the winners</i></p> <p>NO: <i>An announcement of the winners will be made by the committee.</i></p> <p><i>Your account was flagged by our Abuse team.</i></p>
<p>Generic 'you', 'one'</p> <p>You can use the generic 'you' when writing for Twitter, but don't use 'one'.</p>	<p>YES: <i>The freedom to roam means you can forage for chanterelles fresh from the forest.</i></p> <p>NO: <i>For blackcurrants, one could visit a pick-your-own farm.</i></p>
<p>'He', 'she' and singular 'they'</p> <p>Avoid using the generic <i>he</i> or <i>he or she</i>; singular <i>they</i> is appropriate for Tweeting.</p>	
<p>Contractions</p> <p>Use contractions, they're great! They give your writing an informal, friendly tone and save characters.</p>	<p><i>it's, can't, don't, haven't</i></p>

<p>Action words</p> <p>Social media messages should have a call to action, urging people to take the next step. Use action verbs such as “read”, “learn,” “watch,” or “join.”</p> <p>For example, write “read more:” or “read more at” rather than just “press release:”</p>	<p>YES: <i>Help ease itching from mosquito bites: wash the bitten area, rub gently with ice, or apply anti-itch cream.</i></p> <p>NO: <i>When bitten by a mosquito, washing the area can be helpful. Also using an ice cube or itch cream to put on the bite might also help ease the itch.</i></p>
<p>Tense</p> <p>Tweets should be conversational, so avoid perfect and progressive verb tenses.</p>	<p>YES: <i>The prime minister announced a trip to China.</i></p> <p>NO: <i>The prime minister has announced a trip to China.</i></p>

3 Plain Language

<p>Translation</p> <p>When translating a Tweet, keep the meaning as close as possible to the original, while also making the translated Tweet easy to read and understand in the second language. This means it's more important to keep the sense of the translated Tweet as close as possible to the original than to have a word-for-word translation.</p> <p>Be concise: use short words and sentences and avoid unnecessary modifiers.</p>	<p>FI: <i>Suomi pyrkii YK:n ihmisoikeusneuvoston jäseneksi kaudelle 2022–2024. Pääministeri Sanna Marin puhui Suomen YK:n ihmisoikeusneuvostokampanjan avajaistilaisuudessa.</i></p> <p>EN: <i>Finland is a candidate for the UN Human Rights Council for 2022–2024. Prime Minister @MarinSanna spoke at the #FforHRC campaign opening.</i></p>
<p>Ambiguity</p> <p>Be specific, avoid vague language and cut the fluff.</p> <p>Consider using alternatives to words expressing abstract concepts if those words do not have meaning to your audience.</p> <p>Choose words with one definition or connotation so as to avoid confusion or ambiguity.</p>	<p>YES: <i>.@THLorg continues to investigate the AstraZeneca #COVID19vaccine and blood clots.</i></p> <p>NO: <i>.@THLorg continues to investigate the AstraZeneca #COVID19vaccine and the occurrence of thromboembolic events.</i> (If the intention is to reach and reassure the general public widely, a medical term like “thromboembolic event” might be too specific and difficult to understand.)</p> <p>YES: <i>Workers who earn less money are less likely to seek medical help when they feel sick.</i></p> <p>NO: <i>Poor workers are less likely to seek medical help when they feel sick.</i> (“Poor workers” could mean workers with poor performance or workers with limited income.)</p>

<p>Jargon</p> <p>Avoid the use of jargon, technical or scientific language as much as possible unless you are communicating with experts in the subject.</p> <p>If technical information is essential to help the audience understand your point, define the terms first and explain them in everyday language your readers will understand.</p>	<p>YES: <i>high blood pressure, birth control</i></p> <p>NO: <i>hypertension, contraception</i></p> <p>YES: “Mad Cow Disease”, <i>which captured public attention in the 1990s, is a disease of the nerves that affects the brain and spinal cord of cattle.</i></p> <p>NO: Bovine Spongiform Encephalitis <i>captured public attention in the 1990s. It is a neurological disease of cattle.</i></p>
---	--

4 Abbreviations and Symbols

<p>About abbreviations</p> <p>Try to write concise Tweets that don't require abbreviations. Sometimes, because of the character limit, abbreviations are necessary.</p> <p>The general rule is that if the abbreviation or acronym is well known, you can use it (and don't worry about spelling it out).</p> <p>If there's a chance your reader won't recognise an abbreviation or acronym, spell it out the first time you mention it. Then use the short version for all other references. If the abbreviation isn't clearly related to the full version, specify in parentheses.</p> <p>Please find more specific instructions below.</p>	<p><i>EU for European Union</i> <i>GDP for gross domestic product</i> <i>AI for artificial intelligence</i></p> <p>YES: <i>Breathing smoke from someone else's cigarette or pipe (secondhand smoke) can cause sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).</i> NO: <i>Breathing secondhand smoke is a known cause of SIDS.</i></p>
<p>Organisations</p> <p>If the abbreviation or acronym is well known, you can use it without having to spell it out.</p> <p>Otherwise, spell it out on the first mention.</p>	<p><i>NATO</i> <i>UN</i></p> <p><i>Meeting of the General Affairs Council (GAC)</i></p>
<p>Ministries</p> <p>Avoid using abbreviations for the English names of ministries in the actual Tweet text. Instead of using the ministry's full name, you can tag the ministry in question to save space.</p>	<p>Source Material: <i>The Ministry of Defence of Finland urges citizens to avoid all unnecessary travel.</i> YES: <i>.@DefenceFinland urges citizens to avoid all unnecessary travel.</i> NO: <i>The MoD of Finland urges citizens to avoid all unnecessary travel.</i></p>
<p>Educational institutions</p> <p>The first time you mention a school or a university, refer to it by its full official name. On all other mentions, you can use its abbreviation.</p>	<p><i>University of Eastern Finland, UEF</i> <i>Georgia Institute of Technology, Georgia Tech</i></p>

<p>Countries</p> <p>Do not use country codes unless they are well known and commonly used, such as UK and US. However, country codes can be included in hashtags.</p> <p>To save space, you can use flag emojis, but consult with the commissioner first. Please find more information on emojis in Chapter 1 <i>About Tweets</i>.</p>	<p>YES: UK, US NO: FIN, DE, FRA</p>
<p>Cities and states</p> <p>Spell out city and state/province names. Do not abbreviate them.</p> <p>You can use flag emojis to indicate the country where a city is located if it isn't well known.</p>	<p>NO: HKI, LND, NY; TX, CA</p>
<p>Job titles and political titles</p> <p>You can use commonly recognised abbreviations without spelling them out first. Avoid abbreviations that can be vague or have multiple meanings.</p>	<p>YES: CEO, MP, PM, FM</p>
<p>Finnish acronyms and abbreviations</p> <p>You can use commonly recognised abbreviations without spelling them out first.</p> <p>If you are really having trouble with the character limit, consider substituting the agency's or organisation's name with their handle. Check first whether they have a Twitter account and their name in English in their profile bio (or even better, a separate account for international communication). Using the handle allows people to click on it and find more information if they are not familiar with the agency or organisation. Please read more on Twitter handles and how to use them in Chapter 1 <i>About Tweets</i>.</p>	<p><i>Kela, Yle</i></p> <p><i>@THLorg, @rikosseuraamus, @LukeFinlandInt</i></p> <p>Source material: <i>The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, the Finnish Medicines Agency and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health will hold a press briefing on the situation with regard to the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine today at 16.00.</i></p> <p>Tweet: <i>.@THLorg, @Fimea and @STM_Uutiset will hold a press briefing on the AstraZeneca #COVID19vaccine on 14 April at 16.00.</i></p>
<p>Latin abbreviations</p> <p>You can use common Latin abbreviations.</p>	<p><i>etc., e.g., i.e.</i></p>

<p>Currency</p> <p>When writing about currency, you can use commonly recognised symbols and abbreviations. Write the symbol or abbreviation before the amount and don't add a space before the symbol.</p> <p>Do not use e.g. <i>MEUR</i>.</p>	<p><i>EUR, GBP, USD; €, £, \$</i></p> <p><i>We are boosting the #ErasmusPlus programme with an additional €200 million to mitigate disruptions caused by the #coronavirus.</i></p>
<p>Ampersands</p> <p>It's fine to type & instead of <i>and</i> in moderation, but it might not work in every context.</p> <p>Never use + to substitute <i>and</i>.</p>	<p><i>On vaccines & vaccination, I have a message of truth and hope.</i></p>
<p>Units of measurement</p> <p>You can use common symbols if necessary. Write numbers as figures and add a space in between, except for Celsius or Fahrenheit, which are written closed up to the number.</p>	<p><i>m for metre</i> <i>l for litre</i> <i>h for hour</i> <i>°C for degrees Celsius</i></p>

5 Names and Titles

<p>People</p> <p>In Twitter, people are usually referred to with their handles. If you have enough space, include the person’s real name if it does not match their handle.</p> <p>Do not repeat handles. After the first mention, you can use just their last name.</p> <p>Never remove hyphens or accents.</p>	<p><i>Novak Djokovic @DjokerNole wins 9th Australian Open Title. The victory for top-ranked Djokovic gives him his 18th career Grand Slam title over all.</i></p>
<p>Companies</p> <p>Honour companies’ own names for themselves and their products. Go by what’s used on their official website.</p> <p>Refer to a company or product as “it” (not “they”).</p>	<p>YouTube Yahoo! iPhone</p>
<p>Projects, reports, etc.</p> <p>Capitalise titles and names and do not put them in quotation marks. Use double quotes only for actual quotations.</p>	<p><i>Hot off the press: Multilateralism 2020! Our Secretary General publishes her annual report. It covers Council of Europe’s actions since the Helsinki Ministerial Meeting in May 2019 and the organisation’s response to the #Covid19 pandemic in 2020. [LINK]</i></p>
<p>Tweeting</p> <p>Always capitalise the word Tweet, regardless of how it is used. Retweet is also always capitalised.</p>	

6 Numbers, Dates and Times

<p>Numbers</p> <p>You can write numbers as figures, but be consistent with your decision throughout the Tweet. Avoid beginning a sentence with a numeral when possible.</p>	
<p>Thousands, millions, billions</p> <p>In line with the English Style Guide, you can use <i>bn</i> for billion and <i>mill.</i> for million, but do not use <i>k</i> for thousand</p>	
<p>Percentages and fractions</p> <p>Use the % symbol instead of spelling out "per cent." Write numbers as figures, and do not add a space between the number and the symbol.</p> <p>You don't have to spell out fractions, but beware: a fraction right at the beginning or at the end of a Tweet can be confusing and misleading. This is because due to restricted space, it's quite common to number a series of Tweets to indicate the order and the total number of interrelated Tweets. That's also why you should never place a fraction at the beginning or at the end, as it could be mistakenly understood to mean a serial number.</p>	<p>YES: <i>In the past few years, charges have been dismissed in only about 10% of all cases. Read more:</i></p> <p>NO: <i>ten per cent, 10 per cent, ten %</i></p> <p>YES: <i>Four in five Finns are happy to pay taxes.</i></p> <p>YES: <i>In Finland, 4/5 citizens are happy to pay taxes.</i></p> <p>NO: <i>4/5 Finns are happy to pay taxes.</i></p> <p>NO: <i>The proportion of Finns happy to pay taxes is 4/5.</i></p>
<p>Dates and times</p> <p>Do not use the DD/MM/YYYY or DD.MM.YYYY formats, as international standards vary and you might get misunderstood. Instead, spell out the month or abbreviate it. To avoid excessive punctuation, you can consider omitting full stops.</p> <p>Always include minutes for on-the-hour time.</p>	<p><i>Saturday 24 January, Sat. 24 Jan.</i></p> <p><i>Government budget session at Kesäranta Tue–Wed, PM @anttirinne meets French President @EmmanuelMacron Thu, PM Rinne and @LiAndersson at #europeforum in Turku Fri.</i></p> <p>YES: <i>The meeting will take place at 14.00.</i></p>

<p>You can use the en-dash in ranges to cut down characters.</p>	<p>NO: <i>The meeting will take place at 14.</i></p> <p><i>The meeting will take place 17–19 August.</i></p> <p><i>The meeting will take place at 14.30–16.00.</i></p>
<p>Relative time expressions</p> <p>Avoid terms such as <i>yesterday</i>, <i>today</i>, or <i>tomorrow</i>, because it may be Thursday in the United States, but it’s already Friday in Australia. Specify using the date or the day of the week.</p>	<p>YES: <i>4 June is the Flag Day of the Finnish Defence Forces.</i></p> <p>NO: <i>Today is the Flag Day of the Finnish Defence Forces.</i></p>
<p>Live events</p> <p>Specify relevant time zones when writing about an international event or something else people would need to schedule. If there isn’t enough space, default to the time zone of the country of origin.</p>	<p><i>Tune in live at 16.00 Finnish time or 14.00 GMT.</i></p>

Sources

English Style Guide (2019):

<https://vnk.fi/documents/10616/3457865/English+Style+Guide>

CDC's Guide to Writing for Social Media (2012):

<https://www.cdc.gov/socialmedia/tools/guidelines/pdf/GuidetoWritingforSocialMedia.pdf>

Twitter Curation Style Guide (2019):

<https://help.twitter.com/en/rules-and-policies/curationstyleguide>

Mailchimp Content Style Guide (2020):

<https://styleguide.mailchimp.com/>

Social media guide for EU funded R&I projects (2020):

https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/grants_manual/amga/soc-med-guide_en.pdf

GrammarBook's Tips for Twitter (2010):

<https://data.grammarbook.com/blog/effective-writing/tips-for-twitter/>