

SHORTENED FORMS OF WORDS IN ENGLISH



Orysia Volkova, вчитель англійської мови Рівненського природничо-математичного ліцею «Елітар»

There is a variety of terms used to refer to shortened forms: shortening, contraction, clipping, blending, and abbreviation. Shortenings are abbreviations in which the beginning or end of the word has been dropped. In some cases both the beginning and the end have been omitted. Examples include: cello (violoncello), flu (influenza), ad (advertisement), telly (television), bike (bicycle), zoo (zoological garden).

Contraction – two words which are combined together and are pronounced as one new word (typically functional words such as auxiliary verbs, articles, and prepositions). Contractions are abbreviated forms in which letters from the middle of the full form have been omitted: don't (do + not), shouldn't (should + not), wanna (want + to), can't =

cannot.

Clipping is dropping of a part of a word: (tele)phone, (air)plane, math(ematic)s, spec(ification)s, info(rmation), gas(oline), (re)frige(rator). Clipping is common when we use personal names: Timothy – Tim, Frederick – Fred, Pamela – Pam,

Blending – formation of a new word with a distinctive meaning out of two or more other words: smog (smoke + fog), hungry (hungry + angry).

Abbreviation is a creation of new words based on another word or words that are shortened to its or their initial letter(s) only. Abbreviation is a highly productive way of forming new words in English. Below are just a few examples: hru – how are you, diy – do it yourself, np – no problem, eom – end of message, eod – end of day, ty – thank you, ttyl – talk to you later, lol – laughing out loudly, asap – as soon as possible, btw – by the way.

Initialism is the abbreviated word pronounced letter by letter: pm (or p.m.), U.S. (or US). We often use initials to refer to the names of countries and organisations: the USA (United States of America), BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation).

For some written abbreviations, individual letters or sounds from the word are used, although the word is always said in full: Doctor – Dr, Mister – Mr, Street – St, 5 kilometres – 5 km.

Acronym is the abbreviated word pronounced as a whole new word rather than letter by letter: NATO /'neɪtəʊ/ North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, scuba /'sku:bə/ self-contained underwater breathing apparatus, radar /'reɪdɑ(r)/ radio detection and ranging.

Abbreviations and symbols save time. They shorten words and phrases. It's a good idea therefore for students to use them when writing short-hand notes quickly during lectures and from books and other resources.

The shortenings are now an accepted part of the language. In fact some of the original, longer forms tend to be used only in formal or technical writing. It would sound rather odd, for example, to describe a person as suffering from influenza unless you were writing in a scientific context.

You do not need to use an apostrophe in shortenings to show that letters have been omitted. You should only use a capital letter if the original form also starts with a capital letter, for example: Med (Mediterranean), Brit (British). You do not need to use a full stop unless the shortening is one created specifically for use in writing, for example: Dec. – December, Tue. – Tuesday.

Abbreviations are short forms of lengthy expressions. Abbreviations are in use in almost every discipline and area of life from commonly used abbreviations like names, for instance Mr. for Mister or Sgt. for Sergeant, to less commonly used abbreviations, such as the shortened version of abbreviation itself, which is abbr. Abbreviations exist in all areas of life from medicine to military and international relations to religion.

With every generation come cries that teenagers are destroying the language with their newfangled slang. In fact, linguists say teenagers, far from destroying English, are innovating and enriching the language.

Written and verbal communication often includes these abbreviations:

P.S. – Means "post script." At the end of a letter, people will often include a P.S. to include an extra thought that was intended to be included in the letter, but forgotten.

A.S.A.P. – "As soon as possible," used when encouraging someone to respond to a request without delay.

E.T.A. – This acronym means "estimated time of arrival," and is used as a guess for when one expects to arrive while traveling.

D.I.Y. – This acronym stands for "do it yourself," which means creating something on your own. It is often used for crafts and home repairs.

Teens aren't the only ones opting for abbreviations in written communication. The first citation of OMG in the Oxford English Dictionary is from a 1917 letter from the British admiral John Arbuthnot Fisher to none other than Winston Churchill. He writes, "I hear that a new order of Knighthood is on the tapis –O.M.G. (Oh! My God!) – Shower it on the Admiralty!" Perhaps he picked up this colorful expression from his grandchildren.