

Appendix D. Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronyms, initialisms, and abbreviations are common in Italian. Here, we summarize some basic rules and list some common examples.

Acronyms and Initialisms

Acronyms and initialisms are both utilized to shorten a phrase by using the first letter of each word. The difference between an acronym and an initialism is that the former is pronounced as one word, e.g., “NASA” and “LASER,” whereas the latter is pronounced as separate letters, e.g., “ATM” and “UN.”

In most cases, we follow the same rules to form acronyms and initialisms in Italian. For example:

<i>United Nations</i>	UN	O rganizzazione delle N azioni U nite	ONU
<i>International Monetary Fund</i>	IMF	F ondo M onetario I nternazionale	FMI
<i>World Health Organization</i>	WHO	O rganizzazione M ondiale della S anità	OMS
<i>Non-Governmental Organization</i>	NGO	O rganizzazione N on G overnativa	ONG
<i>Value Added Tax</i>	VAT	I mposta sul V alore A ggiunto	IVA

Abbreviations

An abbreviation is a shortened version of a word or phrase. It uses the initial part of a word or a combination of the initial and final parts and is often characterized by a period at the end.

Examples of such abbreviations are titles and professions, such as:

Sig./Sig.ra	signor/signora	<i>Mr./Mrs.</i>
Sig.na	signorina	<i>Miss</i>
Dtt./Dtt.sa	dottor/dottoressa	<i>Dr.</i>
Prof./Prof.ssa	professor/professoressa	<i>Prof.</i>
Ing.	ingegnere	<i>Eng.</i>

The months of the year are abbreviated as follows:

<i>January</i>	genn.	<i>July</i>	luglio
<i>February</i>	febr.	<i>August</i>	ag.
<i>March</i>	mar.	<i>September</i>	sett.
<i>April</i>	apr.	<i>October</i>	ott.
<i>May</i>	magg.	<i>November</i>	nov.
<i>June</i>	giugno	<i>December</i>	dic.

Notice that the months of “**giugno**” (*June*) and “**luglio**” (*July*) are not abbreviated.

The days of the week are often abbreviated using a single letter as follows:

<i>Mon.</i>	<i>Tue.</i>	<i>Wed.</i>	<i>Thur.</i>	<i>Fri.</i>	<i>Sat.</i>	<i>Sun.</i>
lunedì	martedì	mercoledì	giovedì	venerdì	sabato	domenica
lun.	mar.	mer.	gio.	ven.	sab.	dom.
L	Ma	Me	G	V	S	D

The *Before Christ* (BC) era is referred to as “**avanti Cristo**,” and is abbreviated as “**a.C.**” The *Common Era* (CE) is often referred to as “**dopo Cristo**,” and is abbreviated as “**d.C.**”

The four cardinal directions are abbreviated as “**N**” for “**nord**” (*north*), “**S**” for “**sud**” (*south*), “**E**” for “**est**” (*east*), and “**O**” for “**ovest**” (*west*). The four ordinal directions are abbreviated as “**NE**” for “**nordest**” (*northeast*), “**NO**” for “**nordovest**” (*northwest*), “**SE**” for “**sudest**” (*southeast*), and “**SO**” for “**sudovest**” (*southwest*).

Abbreviation of Plural Nouns

One notable exception to abbreviation in Italian is the doubling of the letters in the abbreviation of some plural nouns. For example:

<i>Traffic Police</i>	Vigili Urbani	VV. UU.
<i>Posts and Telegraphs</i>	Poste e Telegrafi	PP. TT.
<i>Royal Highnesses</i>	Altezze Reali	AA. RR.

Notice that this rule does not apply to all plural nouns, and there are many exceptions.