



PRINCIPLES BEHIND THE  
DIGITAL RESOURCES STYLE:  
WHY WE DO THINGS THE WAY THAT WE DO

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## Preface

One tool for achieving a high standard resource is a set of styles that regulate the various components of the resource. The particular styles chosen can vary according to the purpose, the audience and the medium. Some examples of the reasons behind the styles used in TLF's digital resources are provided in this document.

Our **purpose** in the digital resources team is to make available 'assets' – items held by institutions around Australia and New Zealand – that are not generally accessible available for classroom use with accompanying educational information. The **audience** for the accompanying text is teachers, and the **medium** is the internet. We want users to be able to download and store the assets in their own databases, and use them in ways that suit their own particular educational purposes. To achieve the required flexibility, distribution and ease of discovery, our resources are published as metadata.

## **Formatting**

Using metadata as the publication format imposes some requirements that do not apply to publishing in print or website media. For example, there is a group of 'special' characters that cannot be guaranteed to show correctly in users' systems, depending on their computer setup. Bold and italic letters are not available. This means that there is a number of editorial conventions – generally accepted practice for print and websites – that we are unable to use, and we have had to modify aspects of normal TLF editorial style to achieve a satisfactory outcome within the publication format and medium.

## **Ease of use**

Having a user audience of teachers imposes several requirements – making sure that hard-pressed teachers can make quick decisions on the appropriateness of a resource for their purposes, and that essential and relevant information is provided. To ensure we meet these requirements we have developed a set of styles for the structure and content of the educational text. Our guidelines describe, for instance, what should be included in the title and the description, and the type of information and sequence for the educational value points. And for some of the common subject areas we have guidelines for appropriate language use and terminology and type of material to include.

## **Copyediting style**

We have taken particular care in developing and applying our extensive copyediting style guidelines. Our editorial style is aimed at ensuring the language is accessible and appropriate for teachers, but is also not too complex for students if a teacher decides to use our text as classroom handouts (but note, we do not endorse such action, simply recognise that it is likely to occur). And because our resources may be used anywhere in the English-speaking world, we attempt to ensure they are not Australasia-centric by avoiding phrases such as 'arrived here', 'came to Australia/New Zealand', and so on.

Another style consideration is the appearance of the text on screen – a narrow column of educational points. To help avoid the points being overlong and to reduce wordiness, we use numerals and a number of common abbreviations where they are not normally used in discursive text, for example '5 km per hour' (note the 'per' rather than '/' – the slash is one of those special characters!).

If a partner institution has a house style that is different from ours and prefers their own style to be used with their assets, we apply that house style as far as possible within the constraints described.