

The Re|view style guide

The Re|view is a culture site for young people. As countless other sites with a similar approach exist, we want to try and set ourselves apart by attempting to create a broadsheet culture magazine. Therefore we are looking for informed, astute opinion pieces that contribute to or instigate discussion; we aspire to publish enlightening, entertaining, gripping, unusual, interesting reviews of literally anything you can think of.

In terms of style, we are thinking more along the lines of The Quietus, less along those of BuzzFeed. The latter (and sites of the kind) do a great job and we enjoy reading them, but we are looking to foster a platform with less fragmented, more coherent content that informs interested individuals by offering opinions and arguments rather than aphoristic snippets of information. This way, the site will allow for a real discussion to take place through comments, social media and a response from writers with opposing views.

People who read The Re|view are intelligent, multi-cultural, open-minded and creative. Our articles need to reflect this and appeal to those traits. In this digital age it is vital we quickly grab a reader's attention, and the best way to do this is through a snappy introduction: be challenging, be funny, be creative.

General and technical stuff

- While it is important to be creative with introductions, make sure it gets to the point. If you're starting with an anecdote (the 'delayed drop'), make sure you bring it back to earth fairly quickly. *Tell me what happened already!*
- When writing it's always a good idea to think about the 5 Ws - what, where, when, who and why?
- The key to writing a good opinion piece or feature is planning. Don't just dive in.
- Try and keep your sentences short. Could that comma be a full-stop? Clarity is key. Readers will lose interest if sentences are convoluted.
- Unless you are writing a personal experience or opinion piece, don't refer to yourself in an article. Although this has become common practice in contemporary web journalism, it's important to remember that readers are looking for a story that might appeal to them, and a piece that is only about you might be off-putting. Therefore: use pronouns sparingly.
- Provide evidence. If you are making a controversial or vague claim, or say something not widely known that might be disputed, use a [hyperlink](#) to the source material or a citation to back it up. At the same time, don't use them for everything. Give readers credit and assume some level of intelligence and knowledge.
- Cover your back. Write with passion, but never forget to check facts, figures, and research the claims you make. Readers will question and forensically examine everything you produce. Therefore, for the website's and your own reputation: research everything. The editorial staff will help as much as they can, but the responsibility is yours.
- Try and make your reviews balanced, see the good and the bad. Nothing is perfect, after all – sometimes imperfections make a film or an album all the more loveable. Explain your views as clearly as possible.
- Try and think of other media to include in an article. Is there a video, sound clip or image that has instigated your writing? This is also a good way to break up lengthy pieces and make them more manageable and enjoyable for the reader.
- Always link back to other articles on other sites if you reference them in your piece.

- Word limits are important. If you need more space, ask before you submit.
- Pitch before writing – tell your editor what you want to do and if it is going to change. This helps us to avoid clashes with other pieces and co-ordinate the topical balance of the magazine.
- If you are able to do so, please **submit a picture** along with your article. It should reflect the subject matter, but not in a stringent way – choose something you associate with your article and find meaningful. Let us know who took the picture so we can give them credit, and please check that they are ok with the publication.

Editorial line

- Politics: Although we're not going to tell you what to think, and welcome a wide range of views on the site, we won't publish anything that's prejudiced, needlessly offensive or overly reactionary. We want to start discussions, not court proceedings.
- Drugs: Our naughty readers will probably have done a few drugs in their time, or at least know people who have. While not encouraging you to go out and get messy, we would ask that you don't write about a common drug unless you've had experience of it. This is to avoid articles that include 'loss of sleep' in the 'dangers' of ecstasy etc.
- Swearing: We believe in free speech and are not going to censor swear words. However, try not to offend anyone; if there is a way to say something without cursing, do so. At best, only include a swear word if you're directly quoting somebody.
- Manner: When speaking to people on behalf of the website we expect you to be friendly and professional at all times, no matter what you personally think of them. Offending interview subjects is the last thing you want to do. Challenge them and their views, that is your job, but always do so politely and in a civil manner. Be opinionated in your writing, but be fair.
- If a person or organisation is unwilling to comment on a situation, speak to the editorial team. We will try and help persuade them to communicate. If they refuse to comment or are unavailable, we must acknowledge this in the article. However, all possible efforts must be made to contact sources and give people a right of reply.

House style and grammar

- Use UK spelling. Always run a spell check before submitting an article.
- Use a single space after a full stop.
- Leave a space of one line between paragraphs.
- Capitals only on names and titles when you're writing headlines, e.g.:
New thing: The most incredible thing in the world
- Never use exclamation marks in headlines, except in a quote. Avoid them in general as well, they are almost always unnecessary and make your writing look desperate! I'm so funny! Same goes for double question marks. Right??
- Numbers should be written in full up to nine, so eight cats, but 11 dogs. Percentages should be written as 1%.
- Dates should be written in this format: 1st January 2000 (not *the* 1st).
- Avoid using the passive voice, e.g. "It's estimated..." By who? "The CBI estimates..." is much clearer. Also avoid 'It's unclear whether...' Is it? To everyone, or just to you? You shouldn't be unclear.

- Quotation marks should be used where directly quoting, from text or speech, inverted commas when referring to a 'so-called'.
- "Only end a quote with a full stop or a comma if it's a full sentence." Otherwise, the punctuation mark should come "outside of the quote".
- If a quote is split over several lines of text, only close the marks at the end of the quotation, not at the end of each sentence.
- Hyphens: Hyphens should not be used in place of commas. When used, they should have a single space on either side of them.
- Hyphenating: When using a phrase as an adjective, it should be hyphenated. For example 13-year-old child, so-called institution, well-lit apartment. Adverbs (ending in -ly) are not included, e.g. "badly made".
- Apostrophes: Feel free to use a contraction if it sounds better (e.g. It is/It's, He has/He's) but use an apostrophe. They are also needed for possessive forms of nouns, e.g. Mary's bicycle. For words ending in 's' the same rules apply, e.g. Jesus's parrot. For plurals, no extra 's' is needed, e.g. parents' house. These are commonly confused; it's particularly embarrassing to get them wrong in a title.
- Use *italics* for emphasis, not CAPITALS or **bold**.
- Ellipses: It's better not to use these too often... certainly not as a replacement for a comma. But when you do it's always three full stops with a space after, not four or more.
- Titles: No italics, no inverted commas for titles of books, films, TV programmes, paintings, songs, albums or anything else. Words in titles take initial caps except for a, and, at, for, from, in, of, on, the, to, with (except in initial position or after a colon): A Tale of Two Cities, Happy End of the World, Shakespeare in Love, Superman: The Early Years, I'm in Love with the Girl on a Certain Manchester Megastore Checkout Desk, etc.
- Capitalise Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, Google, Googled etc., but not internet and tweet.
- When interviewing, edit quotes to fit these criteria but *do not* alter the meaning of the words used. Correct spelling mistakes but *never* replace words.
- Always maintain a copy of your interview notes, either by audio recording or shorthand – preferably both.

For any other issues, [The Guardian's style guide](#) is excellent and searchable.