

NOTES ON THE APPROVED STYLE FOR DISSERTATIONS IN THE HISTORY FACULTY, CAMBRIDGE

Updated: DECEMBER 2010

LENGTH

PhD. dissertations **MUST NOT exceed 80,000 words**, and will normally be near that length. The word limit includes appendices and the contents page but excludes the abstract, footnotes, references, notes on transliteration and bibliography. The Contents Page should be included in the word limit. Statistical tables should be counted as 150 words per table. Maps, illustrations and other pictorial images count as 0 words. Graphs, if they are the only representation of the data being presented, are to be counted as 150 words. However, if graphs are used as an illustration of statistical data that is also presented elsewhere within the thesis (as a table for instance), then the graphs count as 0 words.

Only under exceptional circumstances will permission be granted to exceed this limit. A letter of application for permission to exceed the word limit should be sent to the Degree Committee, with a supporting letter from the supervisor, at least four months before the thesis is bound. Exceptions are granted when a compelling intellectual case is made.

A candidate in this Faculty must submit with the dissertation a statement signed by herself or himself stating the length of the dissertation. Any dissertation that exceeds the limit will be referred back to the candidate for revision before being forwarded to the Examiners. An exception is made of dissertations based in part on oral evidence. With the prior consent of the Degree Committee, a candidate submitting such a dissertation may include in it a methodological essay, not more than 10,000 words in length, discussing the oral evidence, without this counting towards the normal word limit. With the prior approval of the Degree Committee, he or she may also submit typed transcripts or a CD of oral evidence, totalling not more than 80,000 words in length, to be bound and deposited with the dissertation in the University Library. Each transcript should state whether it is verbatim, precis, or edited.

In addition to the two bound paper copies of the thesis submitted to the Board of Graduate Studies, PhD students are required to submit an exact copy of the thesis on CD ROM to the Degree Committee Office, Faculty of History. Should examiners suspect that a PhD thesis is over the word limit, and no extension has been approved, they will contact the Degree Committee Office to perform a word count check. If this proves positive, the candidate will be contacted and required to submit two shortened theses. The candidate will be responsible for paying the costs of re-sending the theses to the examiners.

The same applies for MLitt dissertations, except that the word limit is 60,000 words.

A candidate may submit with the dissertation unconnected or unrelated work only if this has been published. This work may be taken into consideration at the discretion of the examiners.

INCLUSION IN A PH.D. OR M.LITT. DISSERTATION OF WORK PRESENTED IN A THESIS FOR THE M.PHIL.

Candidates who have previously completed the M.Phil. degree are not permitted to include the whole or the major part of the text of the M.Phil. thesis in the Ph.D or M.Litt. dissertation. The Board of Graduate Studies, however, recognises that Ph.D. work often develops from work undertaken for the M.Phil. thesis and that certain candidates may wish to include in their Ph.D. or M.Litt. dissertation such parts (including tables,

diagrams etc.) of their M.Phil. thesis and other work carried out for the M.Phil. degree as may form a connected part of the argument of their Ph.D. or M.Litt. dissertation. The Board require such candidates to state generally in a preface and specifically in notes in their dissertation the extent to which they have drawn on their M.Phil. work and thesis.

THE TITLE

Titles of dissertations proposed to, and submitted in, the Faculty of History should offer a plain description of the subject matter. They should not presuppose the argument, and should be as brief as possible. Colons followed by subtitles should be avoided if possible. Vague phrases and literary affectations must be avoided ('A New Beginning'; 'Continuity and change'). Quotations are always ruled out. Be perspicuous to a broader audience: avoid abbreviations. Dates are usually desirable.

PLAGIARISM

This is a very serious issue. The Board of Graduate Studies statement on plagiarism defines it as follows:

Plagiarism

In general, plagiarism can be defined as:

the unacknowledged appropriation of the work of others as if this were your own original work.

In the context of an examination, this amounts to:

passing off the work of others as your own to gain unfair advantage.

Such use of unfair means will not be tolerated by the University; if detected, the University Proctors will be involved in any investigation and the penalty may be severe and may lead to failure to obtain your degree.

1 The scope of plagiarism

a) Plagiarism may be due to:

- **Copying** (using another person's language and/or ideas as if they are your own);
- **Collusion** (unauthorized collaboration)

b) Methods include:

- *quoting directly* another person's language, data or illustrations without clear indication that the authorship is not your own and due acknowledgement of the source;
- *paraphrasing* the critical work of others without due acknowledgement – even if you change some words or the order of the words, this is still plagiarism if you are using someone else's original ideas and are not properly acknowledging it;
- *using ideas* taken from someone else without reference to the originator;
- *cutting and pasting* from the Internet to make a "pastiche" of online sources;
- *colluding* with another person, including another candidate (other than as might be permitted for joint project work);
- *submitting* as part of your own report or dissertation someone else's work without identifying clearly who did the work (for example, where research has been contributed by others to a joint project).

- c) Plagiarism can occur in respect to *all types of sources and all media*:
- not just text, but also illustrations, musical quotations, computer code etc;
 - not just text published in books and journals, but also downloaded from websites or drawn from other media;
 - not just published material but also unpublished works, including lecture handouts and the work of other students.

2 How to avoid plagiarism

The stylistic conventions for different subjects vary and you should consult your course director or supervisor about the conventions pertaining in your particular subject area. Most courses will issue written guidance on the relevant scholarly conventions and you are expected to have read and to follow this advice. However, the main points are:

- if you are copying text, keep a note of the author and the reference as you go along, *with the copied text*, so that you will not mistakenly think the material to be your own work when you come back to it in a few weeks' time;
- if you reproduce an illustration or include someone else's data in a graph include the reference to the original work in the legend
eg (figure redrawn from Webb, 1976)
or (triangles = data from Webb, 1976)
- if you have been **authorised to work together** with another candidate or other researchers, you must acknowledge their contribution fully in your introductory section. If there is likely to be any doubt as to who contributed which parts of the work, you should make this clear in the text wherever necessary
e.g. I am grateful to A. Smith for analysing the sodium content of these samples;
- be especially careful if **cutting and pasting** work from electronic media; do not fail to attribute the work to its source. If authorship of the electronic source is not given, ask yourself whether it is worth copying.

3 The Golden Rule

The examiners must be in no doubt as to which parts of your work are your own original work and which are the rightful property of someone else.

ETHICS IN RESEARCH

All students should ensure that they adhere to the University's practice regarding ethics in research, applying for the appropriate permissions, please see

<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/research/research/Ethics.aspx> for details of ethics in research.

THE TYPESCRIPT

The following notes give guidance on the preparation of a typescript, on bibliographies and footnoting. They are not intended to be exhaustive; nor are they compulsory. There are a number of acceptable conventions that you can use; the main principle is to be **consistent**. Choose your system and stick to it. If you are in doubt as to which convention to employ, seek the advice of your Supervisor.

One helpful source of very detailed guidance on all aspects of bibliographical style and other conventions, such as abbreviations, spelling, capitalization, etc., is the style guide of the MHRA (Modern Humanities

Research Association), available as a PDF download:

<http://www.mhra.org.uk/Publications/Books/StyleGuide/download.shtml>.

See, for example, sections 2 (Spelling), 3 (Abbreviations), 4 (Punctuation), 9 (Footnotes and endnotes), 10 (References).

Always make regular backups of your computer files, as well as hard copy print-outs.

You are permitted by the Board of Graduate Studies to print the thesis on both sides of A4 paper, the Faculty preference though is for it to be printed on one side of A4 paper (via a laser printer or a good inkjet printer). You may wish to make use of the laser printing facilities provided in the Faculty's Graduate Research Room.

Leave margins of at least 1½ inches (40mm) at the top, the left and the foot, and 1 inch (25mm) at the right.

Everything in the main text should be one-and-a-half spaced, except indented quotations and footnotes (at the foot of the page) which should be single-spaced. Double-spacing is allowable but one-and-a-half spacing is now preferred.

There is no prescribed typeface but it is strongly recommended that the candidate should use simple classical typefaces (such as Times Roman or Courier). Use 11pt or 12 pt for the body of the text and 10 pt or 11 pt for footnotes.

Modern word-processing programmes are capable of producing accents and non-roman characters, as well as printing mathematical symbols and equations. Candidates are advised to use such word-processing packages but in the case of rare languages the appropriate fonts may not be available, in which case hand-written additions to the typed texts are allowed. See that any handwriting is entirely legible, and that subscripts and superscripts are clearly positioned.

HEADINGS

Do not use more than three kinds of headings within a chapter; the more kinds there are, the more difficult it will be for the reader to distinguish one grade from another.

ABBREVIATIONS

A list of the abbreviations used in the text and the footnotes should be placed at the beginning of the thesis, after the preface.

TABLES

Tables may be typed on separate sheets or in the text. Tables of more than four lines should be numbered and referred to in the text by number rather than 'as follows'. Do check your tables carefully. Are they in the form that the reader will find most helpful? Will the reader be able to compare one set of values with another? Are all units, percentages and totals identified? Do the totals tally with the individual values? Are the sources given in the same form for each table? In case of doubt, consult your Supervisor. If you are using a word processor, you may find that such tables are better typed separately. Unless you are sufficiently skilled, you may waste a lot of time trying to put them through a computer.

QUOTATIONS

Short quotations should be enclosed in single inverted commas, except for quotations within quotations which have double inverted commas, and should run on with the main text in double-spacing. However,

quotations extending to more than five lines of typescript ought to be distinguished from the rest of the text and do not need inverted commas (except for quotations within quotations). Start each such quotation on a fresh line and indent the whole quotation (say five spaces from the margin) and type in single-spacing; the first line of any new paragraphs after the beginning of the quotation should be indented a further five spaces.

TRANSLATIONS

Many doctoral dissertations will rely extensively on primary and secondary sources in a foreign language. Normal practice is as follows: Direct quotations from primary sources (manuscript or print) and from any secondary source in a foreign language should be translated. The dissertation writer, in consultation with the supervisor, can choose whether to quote the original source in the text with translation in the notes, or the other way around, provided both are there. If the source is summarised or paraphrased in English in the text, it is sufficient simply to give the reference. However, the appropriate treatment of foreign-language material may vary by the subject and subfield of the dissertation. Therefore, the decision about whether foreign-language material should appear in the original only, in translation only, or both in the original and translation, is ultimately a decision to be taken by the student in consultation with the supervisor. (If there is any doubt about the correct decision in a given case, advice should be sought from senior members of the Faculty.) As the research design takes shape, the student and supervisor should reach an explicit agreement about how foreign language material is to be handled. When the thesis is submitted for examination, a letter from the student should be enclosed, recording which option was agreed between student and supervisor, for the attention of the examiners.

TRANSLITERATIONS

Some doctoral dissertations will rely on sources written in scripts other than the Latin alphabet. In some cases, there are accepted conventions: for instance, Hindi language transliteration should be based on the modern form of transliteration used in R S McGregor's English-Hindi dictionary; Russian language transliteration should be based on the Library of Congress transliteration system. However, the appropriate treatment of quotations from non-Latin scripts may vary depending on the nature of the language or languages and on the character and field of the dissertation. Therefore, the decision about handling transliteration issues must be taken by the student in consultation with the supervisor. (If there is any doubt about the correct decision in a given case, advice should be sought from senior members of the Faculty.) It probably makes sense to record the decision in the dissertation's prefatory material. When the thesis is submitted for examination, a letter from the student may be enclosed, recording the decision agreed between student and supervisor, for the attention of the examiners.

GUIDELINES FOR THE USE IN PHD DISSERTATIONS OF MATERIAL WHICH HAS BEEN GATHERED IN INTERVIEWS

The Faculty of History has special instructions for dissertations reliant on evidence gathered in interviews. In such cases, the dissertator should:

- a) Send those who have been interviewed the exact text of what is to appear in the PhD relating to their comments. This should be done at least three months before submission.
- b) Ask the interviewees to give written permission for the use of this information or quotation.
- c) If interviewees wish to remain anonymous, confirm to them that their name(s) will be withheld. Footnote the material in question as follows: 'Information (or quotation) from an official or employee of xxxxx' (as the case may be).
- d) In all footnote citations to interviews, add the date of the interview, if recorded.
- e) Bring the written permissions to the viva, so that the Examiners may see them if they so wish.

FOOTNOTES IN GENERAL

Wherever possible, footnotes must be confined to references only. The expanding of footnotes to include lengthy digressive notes and other footnotes that are not directly relevant to the actual content of the thesis itself will not be accepted.

REFERENCES

The purpose of footnotes is primarily to refer the reader to the sources upon which statements are made. It is essential that the reader should be able to identify quickly the particular sources for particular statements. If it is convenient to gather together the evidence for sequences of statements, or a sequence of examples illustrating a statement, it is perfectly proper to put these into a single note. However, in such cases the sequence in the notes must follow the sequence in the text precisely. If there is any risk that a reader will not be able immediately to identify a particular source for each statement, then separate notes should be given. If in doubt, use more rather than fewer separate notes.

There are two alternative systems of inserting references. You cannot mix them for published references, but must choose one or the other and stick to it. You would do well to acclimatize yourself early to whichever sort of system is used by the journals in which you might hope eventually to publish some of your conclusions. The Historical Journal, for example, uses traditional footnotes.

1) Traditional footnote system

- a) The traditional method is that the first reference to a document or work in each chapter should be punctuated, spelt out and capitalised as in the following examples:

Cardwell to Russell, 3 Nov. 1865, London, National Archives (N.A.), Russell Papers, 30/22/1466, f. 23.

John Morley, The life of William Ewart Gladstone (2 vols., London, 1988 edn.), I, 42, 121-34.

M. Cowling, 1867: Disraeli, Gladstone and revolution: the passing of the second Reform Bill (Cambridge, 1967), pp.41-5, 140-7, 151-62.

C.M. Williams, 'The political career of Henry Marten' (unpublished D.Phil. dissertation, University of Oxford, 1954).

W.G. Hynes, 'British mercantile attitudes towards imperial expansion', Historical Journal, XIX, 4 (1976), 969-76.

Select committee on manufactures, commerce and shipping (Parl. Papers, 1833, VI), Q3326.

and that the second and later references should be given in the appropriate abbreviated form (see (b)).

- b) Since you should already have full description of your sources in the bibliography, you may, if you wish, use abbreviated versions for all your footnotes, except for manuscript references, which must appear in full. You must be consistent and avoid ambiguity. Add volume (if more than one). It is usual to include 'p.' (or 'pp.' if more than one page) before page numbers, but only if there is no volume number. It is also usual to shorten the second number (except those between 11 and 19) in a pair of page numbers, e.g. pp. 508-9, 512-16.

The references should be punctuated as in the following examples:

Hazel, The growth of the cotton trade, III, 2.

Carr, 'Uncertainty and monetary theory', p. 82.

Do not use op. cit. and loc. cit. but only your standardised abbreviated form of reference. Use ibid to indicate that you are referring to the same item as that mentioned last, but remember that you may need another page reference.

When referring to a foliated work, use 'fol.', 'fols.' or 'f.', 'ff.' for folios; 'r' and 'v' for 'recto' and 'verso' should not be raised or underlined.

Check your footnotes against the bibliography because it will confuse and irritate the reader if the details given are not the same. Use as few capitals as possible in book, journal and article titles, and be consistent.

Provide at the beginning of the thesis a list of any abbreviations used in the footnotes or in the bibliography and any special symbols that you have employed.

Footnotes must appear at the foot of the page to which they refer, in single-spaced typescript.

2) Author-date system

This can be used either in brackets in the text or in the ordinary way in footnotes: the use in text is normally only suitable for some fields of social and economic history.

The normal form is 'Darcy 1920. pp. 131-8' – author's name, date and reference; if the references are in the text, they are in brackets '(Darcy 1920, pp.131-8)'. Possible alternatives include 'Darcy (1920), pp.131-8)' or 'Darcy 1920: 131-8' omitting the 'pp.'.

If the references are in the text another variant can occur: 'the analysis of straw hat manufacture at Gamlingay by Darcy (1920, pp.131-8)'. If the author published two or more works in one year, these are labelled '1920a' etc.

Manuscript References must appear in full as in the Traditional Footnote system.

When explanatory notes are needed they must appear at the foot of the page, not in brackets in the text.

The names of two joint authors are always given. Three and four joint authors are always given in full the first time and thereafter et al. may be used. Five or more names can be given as et al. from the start.

Where several references are cited together in the text they may be placed in alphabetical or chronological order, or in order of importance, but the same system should be used throughout.

INTERNET REFERENCES

In response to several requests from postgraduate students about how to provide references to websites in the footnotes and bibliography, we are able to issue the following advice, based on the Harvard system and approved by the Board of Graduate Studies:

Websites: Cite author or webmaster/webmistress (if known), date created or last updated (if known), title of text, heading of page, full url, and date last accessed; eg. Urry, J. (1999), 'Automobility, car culture and weightless travel: A discussion paper', Department of Sociology, Lancaster University, Jan., <http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/sociology/soc008ju.html> last accessed 1 Nov. 2000.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The bibliography must include all material, primary and secondary, that has been cited in the footnotes or has substantially informed the dissertation; it should not include materials consulted that have not, in the end,

been used. It should normally be divided into manuscript sources, printed sources, printed secondary works, unpublished dissertations, and websites.

Each item should be described as follows:

a) Manuscripts

- 1) City in which archive is to be found
- 2) Full name of archive
- 3) Reference according to the practice of the relevant archive

b) Printed primary sources

Examples:

(a) Source published as a whole book

Stephanus, *Vita sancti Wilfridi*, ed. B. Colgrave (Cambridge, 1927)

(b) Source published as part of a book or as part of a volume of a journal (for which you should provide details of pages containing the entire source)

Roger of Salerno, *Chirurgia*, ed. K. Sudhoff, *Studien zur Geschichte der Medizin* 12 (1918), 148-236

(c) Source published as an entire volume of a series (in the example given below, the volume forms part of a sub-series (Epistulae) of the series known as the Monumenta Germaniae Historica)

Alcuin, *Epistolae*, ed. E. Dümmler, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistulae, 4 (Hannover, 1895)

(d) Source published as part of a volume which is itself part of a series (in the example given, the volume forms part of a three-volume edition of the complete works of Amalarius, which is itself part of the series known as *Studii e testi*)

Amalarius of Metz, *Liber officialis*, ed. J.M. Hanssens, *Amalarii episcopi opera*, *Studii e testi*, 138-40 (3 vols., Rome, 1948), II, 3-543

c) Printed works

I. Books

- 1) author's or editor's surname
- 2) author's or editor's initials or forename (for editor(s) add '(ed.)' or '(eds)')
- 3) the title, in italics or underlined
- 4) the series, if any, not underlined
- 5) the edition (if not the first)
- 6) the number of volumes, publication place and date, punctuated as follows

Carter, P., Frogna to Englands Lane (London Street Name Series, vol.45. London, 1938)

Hazel, J.A., The growth of the cotton trade in Lancashire (2nd edn. 4 vols. London, 1956-7)

II. Chapters in edited books

- 1) author's surname
- 2) author's initials or forenames
- 3) name of chapter, in single inverted commas, not underlined
- 4) the word 'in' followed by the initials/forenames and surname of the editor(s) and 'ed.' or 'eds.' in brackets
- 5) the title of the book, in italics or underlined
- 6) the number of volumes (if more than one), publication place and date published as above
- 7) volume number (if relevant) and page numbers of the chapter, punctuated as follows:

Kelly, S., 'Anglo-Saxon lay society and the written word', in R. McKitterick (ed.), The uses of literacy in medieval Europe (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 36-62

III. Articles

- 1) author's surname
- 2) author's initials or forenames
- 3) name of article, in single inverted commas, not underlined
- 4) name of journal, in italics or underlined
- 5) volume number in Roman or Arabic numerals ('vol.' not needed)
- 6) date in brackets
- 7) page number(s) ('p', 'pp.' not needed in the case of multi-volume works) punctuated as follows:

Carr, J.L., 'Uncertainty and monetary theory', Economics, II (1956), 82-9.

d) Unpublished dissertations

Put the title in inverted commas and add University and date.

Punctuate as follows:

Other, A.N., 'The breeding of caveys for food in sixteenth century Peru' (unpublished PhD. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1962).

Be careful to standardise your use of punctuation marks.

SPELLING AND OTHER CONVENTIONS

Inconsistencies will irritate the reader; the best way to avoid them is for you to decide on a system before the final draft is typed.

Spelling and accents

Where alternatives exist, the most important thing is to be consistent. Make sure that your use of accents is correct and that any transliteration system is a generally accepted one and is applied throughout; a note explaining the system may be necessary.

Underline or italicise foreign words in an English sentence except when placed within quotation marks.

Be consistent in your inclusion or omission of an s after the apostrophe in possessives of names ending in an s in the singular. It is usual to include the second s except when the last syllable is pronounced iz: Bridges', Moses', but James's Thomas's. It is included after names which end in a silent s, e.g. Rabelais's.

The apostrophe is best omitted in plurals such as 1960s and N.C.O.s.

Numbers

All specific quantities and all percentages should be denoted by figures. Other numbers up to ninety-nine should be in words: five hospitals, twenty years ago, seventy-four years old; but 105 men, 314 women. Series of numbers should usually be in figures, e.g. '79 sheep and 108 cows' not 'seventy-nine sheep and 108 cows'. Use words rather than figures to start a sentence.

Use 0.15 not .15.

The second of a pair of numbers other than quantities should be abbreviated, except for the numbers 11-19 which retain the 1: e.g. 101-2, 130-1, but 111-12 and 1914-18.

Dates

Dates should normally appear in the form 18 September 1927, 1830s, nineteenth century (hyphenated when used as an adjective). 500 B.C. – but A.D. 500.

Say 1967-8, not 1967-68; but 1914-15. In B.C. references the full dates must be given, e.g. 250-245 B.C., not 250-45 B.C. Use 'between 1971 and 1975' and 'from 1971 until 1975' or just '1971-5', but not 'between 1971-5' or 'from 1971-5'.

If you are not using the modern calendar make this clear either in a general note or at each occurrence.

Currency

Words should be used to express simple sums of money occurring in normal prose: 'The manuscript was sold for eight shillings in 1865'. Sums of money which are cumbersome to express in words, and sums occurring in statistical tables, etc., should be written in figures.

British currency prior to 1971 should be shown in the following form: 'The manuscript was sold for £197 12s. 6d in 1965'.

British decimal currency should be expressed in pounds and new pence, separated by a full stop on the line or by a decimal point above the line, but not by a comma: '£5.00', '£25.65'. Sums below one pound should be shown thus (without a full stop after 'p'): '84p', '½p'.

Abbreviations may be used for the more familiar foreign currencies where it is not appropriate to express the sums in words. Do not use £ for lire or livres, use li. instead. Always make it clear what currency you are using, particularly when there may be confusion e.g. livres tournois and livres paris, U.S.\$ and Canadian \$.

Abbreviations and contractions

These should be avoided in the text unless they are well known and serve a useful purpose.

No full stop is necessary where the contraction includes the first and last letter of the singular Mr, Dr, Mme, St, or an abbreviation of SI (metric) units. The plural of m, kg, and other SI abbreviations is the same as the singular. The stop may also be omitted in sets of initials pronounced as a word (e.g. NATO, UNESCO).

Be consistent in your use of 'per cent' and '%': we suggest that you use 'per cent' in the text but '%' in tables.

Stops are used in c. fol. fols. C.O. M.P.s U.S.A. P.R.O. F.O. W.O. H. of C. B.L. but not for MS MSS v (verso) r (recto) 2nd edn.

Capitals

- (i) Use lower case in references to books, articles, MSS papers, diaries etc.
- (ii) Use lower case for titular offices: the king, sultan, monarch, pope, lord mayor, prime ministers, foreign secretary, president of the U.S.A., bishop of Durham, duke of Portland, minister of agriculture, chiefs of staff. But upper case if ambiguities are likely to arise (the Speaker, the British Resident) or when titles immediately preface names (Pope John, King William, Duke William, Viscount Andover).
- (iii) Use lower case for institutions, government agencies etc where possible: the monarchy, the cabinet, the privy council, the royal commission, the select committee on manufactures, the ministry of defence, the houses of parliament, member of parliament (but M.P.), the government, the opposition.

However, use upper case to avoid ambiguity or eccentricity (if in doubt, follow common sense): the Crown, the Church, the Union, the King's Bench, the Bank (of England), the Royal Air Force, the Star Chamber, the Treasury, the Admiralty, the Prussian Diet, the (East India) Company, the Inner Temple.

- (iv) Use upper case for political parties except where ambiguity is impossible, so whig, tory, but Conservative government, the Liberal Party, the Labour opposition.
- (v) Official publications in lower case (e.g. report of the select committee on agriculture), except in footnotes when the first word should be capitalised and the whole italicised. 'A bill', 'an act', but 'the Act' or 'the Bill' when specific (e.g. the Stamp Act).