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## Information and documentation — Rules for the abbreviation of title words and titles of publications

*Information et documentation — Règles pour l'abréviation des mots dans  
les titres et des titres des publications*

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## Foreword

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Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

International Standard ISO 4 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 46, *Information and documentation*, Subcommittee SC 9, *Presentation, identification and description of documents*.

This third edition cancels and replaces the second edition (ISO 4:1984), of which it constitutes a technical revision.

Annex A of this International Standard is for information only.

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## Introduction

The rules contained herein are applicable to the abbreviation of the titles of serials and, if appropriate, of non-serial publications. They are intended to guide and assist authors, editors, librarians, and others working in various fields of information transfer in preparing unambiguous abbreviations for the titles of publications cited, for example, in footnotes, references and bibliographies. Such citations include those produced by abstracting and indexing services, lists of references accompanying articles, and public or private files where document identification is a concern.

Owing to the large number of different serial and non-serial publications subject to reference by abbreviated citation, the many different languages in which they are published, the different ways of recording them and the widely diversified backgrounds of persons using title abbreviations, it is not possible to set down rules that will in every instance assure unassisted reconstruction of the original titles of the publications cited in abbreviated form. As one way to facilitate this identification, authors and editors who make extensive use of title abbreviations in their publications are urged to make available to their readers, at frequent intervals, lists of the abbreviated titles they use, with corresponding equivalent unabbreviated titles.

The basic principle underlying this International Standard is that each title should have its own unique abbreviation. This is to be achieved through application of the rules provided by this International Standard in conjunction with a list of standardized title word abbreviations. It is recognized that for international information exchange an international system for the establishment of unique title abbreviations of serials is also necessary. By this arrangement, no two titles will have identical abbreviations, nor will a single abbreviation represent more than one title.

# Information and documentation — Rules for the abbreviation of title words and titles of publications

## 1 Scope

This International Standard gives rules for abbreviating titles of serials and, if appropriate, non-serial documents in languages using the Latin, Cyrillic and Greek alphabets. This International Standard also serves as the basis for the establishment of title word abbreviations by the ISSN Network.

## 2 Definitions

For the purposes of this International Standard, the following definitions apply.

- 2.1 abbreviation:** Abbreviated term resulting from the omission of some of its letters. [Adapted from ISO 1087:1990]
- 2.2 abbreviated qualifying element:** Abbreviated element added to an abbreviated title in order to make the abbreviated title unique.
- 2.3 acronym:** Abbreviated **complex term** made up of letters from the full form of a term and strung together into a sequence pronounced only syllabically. [ISO 1087:1990]
- EXAMPLE: ALGOL = *algorithmic language*.
- 2.4 affix:** **Morpheme** which is neither a **stem** nor an ending but which is attached to the stem in order to change its meaning or its lexical or grammatical category. [ISO 1087:1990]
- 2.5 artificial word:** Word created for a special purpose and not normally found in dictionaries.
- 2.6 complex term:** Term consisting of two or more **stems** with or without other term elements. [ISO 1087:1990]
- 2.7 compound word:** Word whose component parts are themselves words or combined forms.
- 2.8 contraction:** Shortening of a word, syllable, or word group by omission of internal letters.
- 2.9 corporate body:** Organization or group of persons identified by a particular name.
- 2.10 derivative:** Word formed by the addition of one or more **affixes** to a **stem**. [ISO 1087:1990]
- 2.11 generic term:** Word or a group of words in a title that indicate the kind and/or frequency of a publication.

EXAMPLES: Abhandlungen, annales, Berichte, bulletin, cahier, annual report, compte rendu, proceedings, yearbook.