Abbreviations and Symbols are most appropriate in tabular matter, bibliographies, and parenthetical references. In the text always spell out an Acronym at your first mention of it to accommodate readers unfamiliar with the acronym. For example, if you are referring to the CDC in your text narrative, use:

“The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) say it is important. The CDC also goes on to say….”

DEFINITIONS:

Initials

An initial is the first letter of a word. We often use initials to refer to the names of countries and organizations:

USA United States of America

BBC British Broadcasting Corporation

Initials also refer to the first letters of people’s first names. When we fill in forms, we are sometimes asked to state our surname and initials. When we refer to ourselves using initials, it is more formal:

J. Adams, lawyer (formal)

John Adams, lawyer (less formal)

Sometimes first names are in full, and middle names are included as initials. This is also a formal use. It is particularly common in American English:

Robert B. Davidson

Acronyms

Acronyms are words which are formed from the first letters of other words, and which are pronounced as full words. Examples of acronyms:
NATO /ˈneɪtəʊ/ North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
scuba /ˈskuːbə/ self-contained underwater breathing apparatus
radar /ˈreɪdɑ(r)/ radio detection and ranging
SATs /sæts/ standard attainment tests (tests taken by schoolchildren in the UK)

Newer acronyms are written with capital letters:
Jodie’s got her SATs next week – she’s a bit nervous.

Where the acronym has existed for a long time and become fully established in the language, it is written with small letters (or with one capital letter if it is at the beginning of a sentence):
The ship’s radar had been destroyed in battle.
Radar was one of the most important inventions of the twentieth century.
We went scuba-diving in Australia.

Some acronyms are pronounced as a combination of letters and syllables:
She sent me a jpeg file with a photo of her wedding. (joint photographic experts group /ˈdʒeɪpeg/)
You can buy the dictionary on CD-ROM. (compact disc read-only memory; pronounced /si: di:ˈrɒm/)

We use some acronyms in the plural or possessive:
Are the pictures on your memory stick jpegs or bitmaps?
NATO’s foreign policy has been criticised recently.
### Abbreviations and letters

When we abbreviate a word or phrase, we shorten it. Abbreviations can be formed from the first letters of the word or phrase. In such cases, we normally say them by spelling out each letter:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>personal computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20p</td>
<td>twenty pence (said, informally, as twenty p)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organisation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For some written abbreviations, individual letters or sounds from the word are used, although the word is always said in full:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full Form</th>
<th>Written Abbreviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>Dr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for example</td>
<td>e.g. (from the Latin equivalent: exempli gratia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaze Limited</td>
<td>Gaze Ltd (Limited refers to a company)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mister</td>
<td>Mr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ounces</td>
<td>oz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street</td>
<td>St</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>page 38</td>
<td>p. 38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(“Abbreviations, initials and acronyms” from English Grammar Today © Cambridge University Press)