

Bullet Points: Use With Care

The Craft of Writing · By Simon Townsend · 1 min read

Bullet points (or dot lists)

Modern journalism strives to make it easy for the reader to read quickly, so bullet points (or dot lists) are frequently used.

It's boring to read through a paragraph that is "listing things":

The conference's consumer topics included electricity tariffs, rip-off loans, extended warranties, mortgage deals to avoid, child trust funds, anti-virus software and travel insurance.

I urge you to use "bullet points" (also known as "dot lists").

They look like this:

The conference's consumer topics included:

- Electricity tariffs
- Rip-off loans
- Extended warranties
- Mortgage deals to avoid
- Child trust funds
- Anti-virus software
- Travel insurance

So consider making bullet points (or dot lists).

If you look at your Microsoft Word toolbar at the top of your screen you'll see a little icon called "Bullets". It looks like this:

- -----
- -----
- -----

Click on this to automatically insert a bullet point (or dot).

Reprinted from The Wonderful World of Journalism. Written in the spirit of Simon Townsend's journalism craft advice. Visit simontownsendjournalist.com for the full archive.