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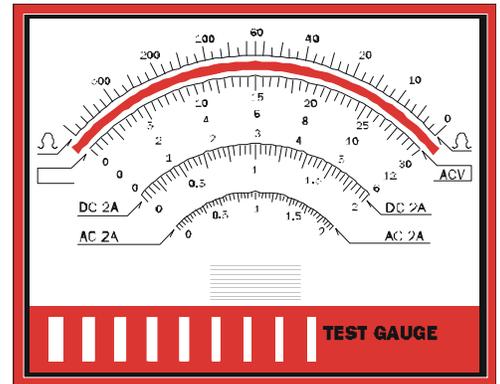
BOLLETTINO

INFORMATION AND TIPS ABOUT THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE

Writing "metric" in Italian

At times, Italian and English formatting rules are different. Often, agencies or clients will wonder what is correct.

This issue of "il BOLLETTINO" deals with metric issues and provides the basic Italian formatting rules for writing metric values and units of measurement.



Digit Separators

In writing a numeric value, the digit separators in Italian are exactly the opposite of those in English:

- The *decimal* separator is the "comma" (not the "period")
- The *thousand* separator is the "period" (not the "comma")

For example, the number 1,539.25 is written in Italian as 1.539,25.

Units Names and Symbols

The measurement units must be written using standard names or symbols, according to the following rules:

The *name* (and not the symbol) must be used whenever a non-numeric value is used. For example: "a few meters" is correct, whereas "a few m" is incorrect. Note that measurement unit names are:

- Always written with a lower case initial, even when they are the name of a person (e.g., "ampere", "volt", "newton", etc.)
- Made plural if they are Italian names (e.g., "metro/metri" and "grammo/grammi"), while many others remain unchanged (e.g., "lux", "ampere", "volt")

The *symbol* (and not the name) must be used whenever a numeric value is given. For example: "8 m" is correct, whereas "8 meters" is incorrect. Note that the symbol is always written:

- After the numeric value
- With a space between value and symbol
- Without a period after it
- In Roman style (i.e., not Italics)

Symbols of Composite Units

The symbol of a unit of measurement that represents the multiplication of two units (such as, "newton times meter") should be written using a period at mid character height between the two units. Because this is often impractical, the symbol is then written with the units separated by a space:

N m ("newton times meter")

V A s ("volt times ampere times second")

It is incorrect to write the symbols next to each other.

The symbols written attached to each other are used to indicate multiples and submultiples. Thus, for example, mK is millikelvin and not "meter per Kelvin" (more on multiples and submultiples later).

The symbol of a unit multiplied by itself is indicated by the power symbol (just like in English):

cm³ = cubic centimeters

kg m² = kilograms times square meter

The symbol of a unit that is the division of two units can be written in any of the following formats:

m/s (separating the units with a forward slash, no spaces)

$\frac{m}{s}$ (one over the other, in equation format)

m s⁻¹ (writing the two units with a space in between and negative power of 1 on the second)

In writing the measurement units as names, the division is indicated by writing "al" between the names, e.g., "metri al secondo" = "meters per second".

Multiples and Submultiples

Multiples and submultiples are formed by combining the unit name (or its symbol) with the name of a prefix (or its symbol). Unit names are matched with prefix names and unit symbols with prefix symbols. Mixing names and symbols is incorrect. For example:

kilo + hertz = kilohertz (not kiloHz)

k + Hz = kHz (not khertz)

The names and symbols of the most common prefixes are listed in *Table 1—Multiple and Submultiple Prefixes*.

Table 1—Multiple and Submultiple Prefixes		
Multiplying Factor	Prefix Name	Prefix Symbol
10 ¹²	tera	T
10 ⁹	giga	G
10 ⁶	mega	M
10 ³	kilo	k
10 ²	hecto (or etto)	h
10	deca	da
10 ⁻¹	deci	d
10 ⁻²	centi	c
10 ⁻³	milli	m
10 ⁻⁶	micro	μ
10 ⁻⁹	nano	n
10 ⁻¹²	pico	p

Continued on reverse.

SI Symbols and Italian Names

In Italian, the most commonly used set of unit names and symbols is the one included in the international system (SI). Other units, which are not included in the SI system but are mentioned in the ISO standards, are accepted in some particular cases.

Anglo-Saxon units, which are not included in the SI standard or in its accepted extensions, should not be used.

Table 2—SI Symbols and Italian Names lists the symbols and names of the measurement units commonly encountered when translating English literature, manuals, and engineering drawings of technical products into Italian.

Table 2—SI Symbols and Italian names

<i>Italian Name</i>	<i>English Name</i>	<i>SI Symbol</i>	<i>Quantity Measured</i>
ampere	ampere	A	Electrical current
candela	candela	cd	Light intensity
coulomb	coulomb	C	Electrical charge
farad	farad	F	Electrical capacity
grado Celsius	Celsius degree	°C	Temperature
grammo	gram	g	Mass
henry	henry	H	Electrical inductance
hertz	hertz	Hz	Frequency
joule	joule	J	Work, energy, heat quantity
kelvin	kelvin	K	Thermodynamic temperature
kilogrammo	kilogram	kg	Mass
lumen	lumen	lm	Light flow
lux	lux	lx	Illumination
metro	meter	m	Length
newton	newton	N	Force, weight
ohm	ohm	Ω	Electrical resistance
pascal	pascal	Pa	Pressure
radiante	radian	rad	Angle on plane
secondo	second	s	Time
steradiante	steradian	sr	Solid angle
volt	volt	V	Electrical potential
watt	watt	W	Electrical power

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