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**TAMKANG ENGLISH**

**專題報導**

Acronyms1

In writing and in speech, shortened word forms are com-monly used to save time and space. They have been in use for a very long time. Although there are no specific rules about abbreviations, the following are some of the common ways by which they are formed: (1) first two or first and last letters (for example,2 MA for &quot;Massachusetts&quot; and PA for &quot;Pennsylvania&quot;3) (2) key identifying4 letters (for example, apt. for &quot;apartment&quot;) (3) initial5 syllables (for example, anon. for &quot;anonymous&quot;6) (4) initials (for example, PLO for Palestine Liberation Organization7). The last shortened word form is called an &quot;acronym.&quot;

An acronym is a word formed from the initial letters of a compound term.8 It is widely used in the newspaper. The following, for example, is taken from a recent newspaper re-port on the disease that is attacking Asia now: &quot;According to the WHO, 9 SARS10 begins with a fever11 greater than 100.4&#176; F.&quot;12 Here WHO stands for13 &quot;World Health Organization&quot; and SARS is an acronym for &quot;Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome.&quot;

Notable14 acronyms also include GIO (&quot;Government Informa-tion Office&quot;),15 AIDS16 (&quot;Acquired Immune Deficiency Syn-drome&quot;), UK17(&quot;United Kingdom&quot;), and USA18(United States of America), to name just a few. If you want to have a good command of English you must learn such acronyms by rote,19 especially if you want to be able to read the newspa-per.

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1. acronym 詞首字母縮略詞。2. . for example 例如。3. Pennsylvania 賓夕法尼亞〔美國州名〕。4. identify 辨認、辨別。5. initial 起頭的，開始的(adj.) 一個字的第一個字母(n.)。 6. anonymous 匿名的無名的。7. Palestine Liberation Organization 巴勒斯坦解放組織。8. compound term 複合字。9.WHO (World Health Organization) 世界衛生組織。10. SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) 嚴重呼吸道症候群。initial 詞首字母縮略詞。11. fever 發熱，發燒。 12. F=Fahrenheit 華氏溫度計(的)。 the Fahrenheit scale 華氏溫標。 a Fahrenheit thermometer 華氏溫度計。在台灣我們使用的是攝氏溫度表︰C=Celsius (Centigrade) 攝氏的。Fahrenheit 和 Celsius 都是形容詞。13. stand for 代表。14. notable 有名的。15.GIO (Government Information Office) 新聞局。16. AIDS ＝ acquired immune deficiency syndrome 愛滋病，後天性免疫不全症候。17.UK (United Kingdom) 聯合王國，即英國。 18. USA (United States of America) 美利堅合眾國，即美國。19. by rote 熟記，背起來。

在閱讀英文書刊或報章雜誌時，我們常常會遇到英文縮寫(abbreviations)的問題。如果我們把英文字串的第一個字母挑選出來，讓這些字母變成一個單字，我們將它稱為英文字首單字縮寫(acronym)。例如，美國有線新聞網CNN (Cable News Network) 是由Cable的 &quot;C&quot;、News 的 &quot;N&quot; 和Network的 &quot;N&quot; 三個英文字的字首字母所組成的簡稱。教育部 MOE是Ministry Of Education 的簡稱。國科會NSC 是National Science Council的簡稱。疾病管制局CDC是Center for Disease Control的簡稱。美國中情局CIA 是Central Intelligence Agency的簡稱。認識英文首字字母縮寫也是一種文化識字性(cultural literacy)的表現，如果我們忘記或不清楚一些縮寫單字，我們可以查閱與acronym相關的字典或上網查尋(如acronym finder: http://www.acronymfinder.com) 這類縮寫到底代表何種涵義。