

virgin atlantic 

Our tone of voice

A style guide



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Introducing
our tone of voice

Our tone of voice

What is it, and why do I need to know about it?

What makes customers choose Virgin Atlantic? After all, we fly people to a lot of the same destinations as other airlines. Things like price, products and service are important, but the fact that we have a different personality to other airlines really appeals to people.

Let's compare us to British Airways. If they're like a comfy, sensible loafer, then we're more of a stylish red high heel. While we're more of a beautifully shaken cocktail, BA is a traditional gin and tonic. BA use words like reliable, pleasant and exclusive, while we use words like fun, fabulous and friendly. It's differences like these that give our brand a noticeably different personality. For our customers and suppliers, one of their biggest connections to our brand is through our writing.

They visit our website, see our ads, read our magazines and receive emails from us. Words help bring our brand personality to life. Because of this, it's important that whatever you're communicating sounds as if it's coming from a consistent Virgin Atlantic personality. That's what these guidelines are for. They help us all write from the same 'voice' so that our audiences really understand who we are. And to help you understand who we are, we'll explore our personality principles and how we can bring our brand to life through language.

Bringing our
personality to life

This is who we used to be

Play
with
yourself.

9-inch private seatback screens. 300 hours of audio/video on demand. 60 movies, over 100 hours of TV, 120 full-length CD albums and 18 video games. All playing on non-stop flights to London and Sydney. Nobody entertains you better in the sky than Virgin Atlantic.

www.virginatlantic.com.hk

 **atlantic** Enjoy.

9 inches
of
pleasure.

9-inch private seatback screens. 300 hours of audio/video on demand. 60 movies, over 100 hours of TV, 120 full-length CD albums and 18 video games. All playing on non-stop flights to London and Sydney. Nobody entertains you better in the sky than Virgin Atlantic.

www.virginatlantic.com.hk

 **atlantic** Enjoy.



BA don't give a Shiatsu.

UpperClass Free onboard massage.

virgin atlantic 

virgin atlantic 

Optimistic. Inclusive. Adventurous.

It's who we are now

These three personality principles form our Virgin Atlantic tone of voice.

It's our personality, so it doesn't ever completely change. Which helps make our writing and communications always sound like they come from the same place.

For everything you write, try to always bring 'optimistic' and 'inclusive' to life. Use your discretion regarding 'adventurous' as it's not always appropriate in every circumstance. After all, no one's expecting Legal to suddenly glitz up contracts with occasional 'wow' words.

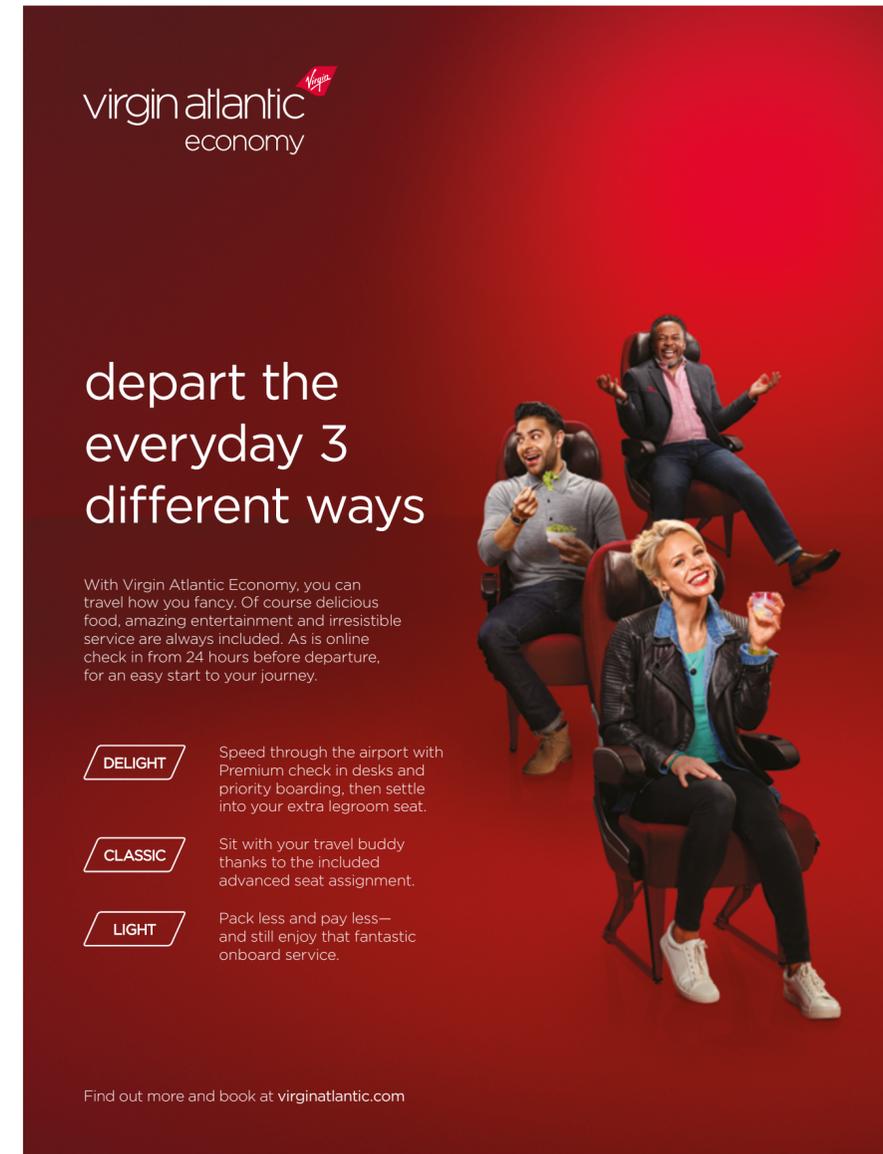
Ultimately, our tone of voice should enhance, and not detract from the message we're communicating. Have fun with, and bring joy to, your writing. So our brand personality springs to life.

Optimistic

Confident. Vibrant. Witty. Upbeat.

We love to fly. Every journey with us is an excellent adventure. So we turn up the optimism, and write with warmth and a smile. And then we smile a bit more.

- Turn up the positives. Turn down the negatives
- Chop the waffle
- Shorten your sentences
- One point, one sentence
- Write about benefits, not just features



virgin atlantic
economy

depart the
everyday 3
different ways

With Virgin Atlantic Economy, you can travel how you fancy. Of course delicious food, amazing entertainment and irresistible service are always included. As is online check in from 24 hours before departure, for an easy start to your journey.

DELIGHT Speed through the airport with Premium check in desks and priority boarding, then settle into your extra legroom seat.

CLASSIC Sit with your travel buddy thanks to the included advanced seat assignment.

LIGHT Pack less and pay less— and still enjoy that fantastic onboard service.

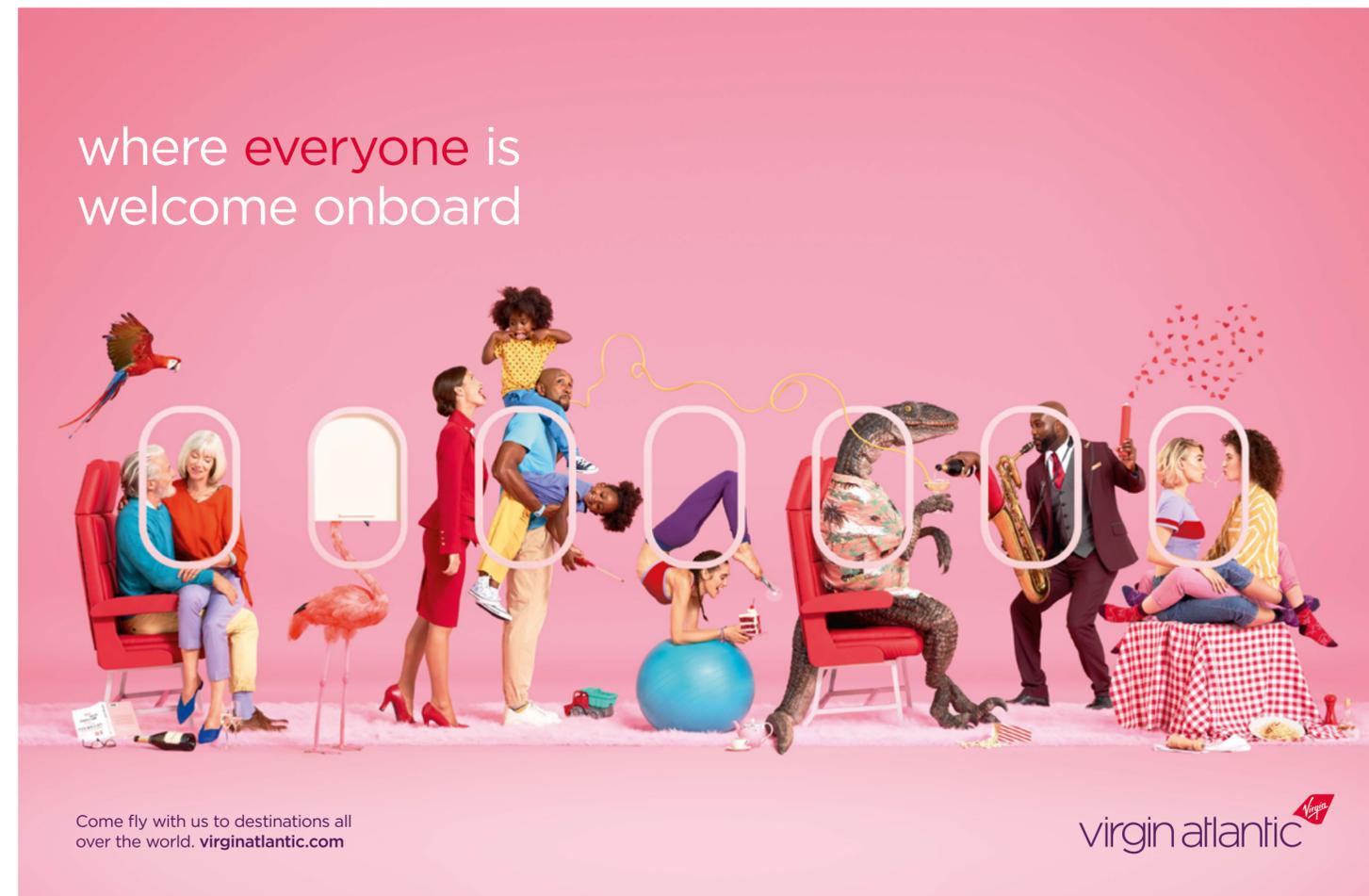
Find out more and book at virginatlantic.com

Inclusive

Welcoming. Warm. Open. Attentive.

At the heart of inclusive writing is the idea that no matter who is flying with us, and no matter what class they're flying, we always speak with the same personality. Our passengers are not better or more distinguished just because they're flying Upper Class. After all, they might fly Upper Class for business, and Economy with their families.

- Be human (use conversational language)
- Avoid jargon (would a passenger know what you're talking about?)
- Talk one to one, not to a big collective group
- Use contractions (we'll, I'll, we're)

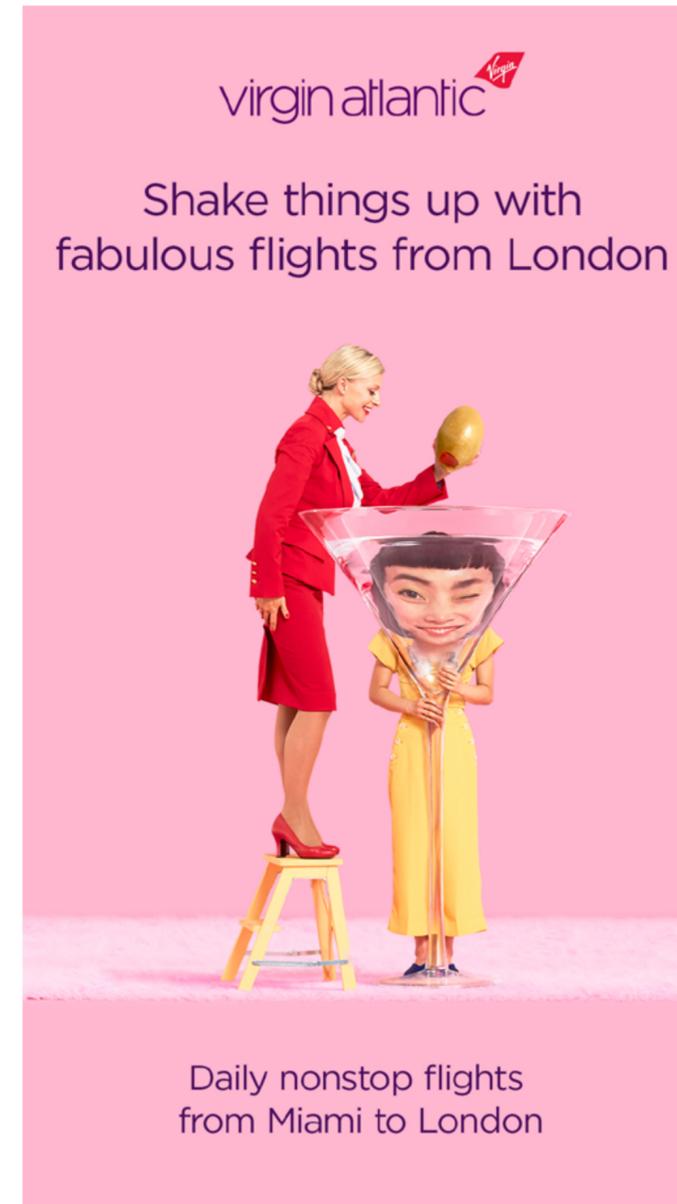


Adventurous

Innovative. Sassy. Audacious. Maverick. Extraordinary.

For us, adventurous writing is a flash of red, a touch of sparkle and a cheeky wink thrown in for good measure. We live by Richard Branson's motto of 'Screw it, let's do it', and never miss a chance to dial up the sass. But we really need to be careful that it doesn't come at the expense of inclusiveness and optimism. If what we're writing is a bit too adventurous, and it makes people feel uncomfortable, then that isn't right.

- Use 'wow' words (amazing, fantastic, brilliant, fabulous)
- Get enthusiastic (but don't overdo it)
- Use very short sentences



Some practical examples

Here are some practical examples of how we bring our tone of voice to life. For each, we've looked at an 'undercooked' example that doesn't have enough of our personality, an 'overbaked' example that's pushed our personality too far and another that, like Baby Bear's porridge, is 'just right.'

Our Premium seat

Undercooked

Your seat is covered in purple leather, with 38 inches of legroom.

Overbaked

Stretch out and relax in your luxuriously spacious purple leather seat. At up to 21in (53cm) wide, with a 38in (over 96cm) seat pitch, it's one of the roomiest and comfiest in its whole class.

Just right

Stretch out and relax in your spacious leather seat. At up to 21in (53cm) wide, with a 38in (over 96cm) seat pitch, it's one of the roomiest in its class.

The Upper Class Wing

Undercooked

Thanks to our Upper Class Wing the airport is stress free.

Overbaked

A seamless, stress free and exclusive experience awaits at our wonderful Upper Class Wing. Taking you from your car to our fantastic Clubhouse within just a few short minutes.

Just right

Seamless, stress free and calm, with our Upper Class Wing you can go from your car to the Clubhouse within minutes.

Customer relations

Undercooked

Please be reassured that we want to give our passengers the best experience when they fly with us.

Overbaked

Thank you so much for giving us such important feedback. I guarantee you'll have a far more fabulous experience when you next choose to fly with Virgin Atlantic.

Just right

Thank you. Your feedback is really important to us. It'll help us make your experience even better next time you fly.

Our audience



Our audience

Who are we talking to?

Our broad customer base that we try to appeal to are called **Maximisers**. We're not concerned with age, gender or race. We care about their personality and attitude to travel.

These are people that love the novel to experience more than the ordinary; with a touch of luxe. They want the most from every moment and experience. These are people that see time as the new money and experiences as the new wealth. They share an optimistic and open-minded.

Maximisers are a great guide to have in mind when you write. But as we have such a huge breadth of audiences that we speak to – internal employees, external agencies, business travellers, leisure travellers, suppliers, and many more – make sure you're always thinking about the appropriate tone to use.

For example, you wouldn't address a member of the Wings programme in the same way you might address a family heading for Disneyland. Use your judgement on when and where you dial up – or down – the fun.

Every time you write, think carefully about who you're talking to. Put yourself in their shoes – how would you want them to feel? Remember, be human, be friendly, and be you.

Most of our communications will fall into one of two main categories:

Inspire

For writing that sells, persuades or influences.

For example: launching a new product, sales brochures, contact centre on hold messages. This is where you can dial up the adventure, use wow words, punchy sentences and enthusiasm.

Tell it like it is

For writing that informs.

For example: Business updates, contracts, legal documents, emails to suppliers, PA safety announcements.

Somewhere in the middle

Often, what you're writing will cross over both of these. For example, making a service announcement on social media, where our tone would usually be more inspirational and fun.

Style guide, dictionary and index

A word of advice

What follows is a guide to how we style our writing, how we reference particular products, and how we address common themes like times or numbers. Please do follow this as closely as you can, as consistency across the company in how we talk is really important. That said, there are almost always exceptions to every rule.

We want to aim for coherence and consistency, but not at the expense of clarity. **Use your judgement. We trust you.**

Style guide

Abbreviations

Don't use full stops in between letters of abbreviations. For example, UK, USA, NASA, PRASK.

Capital letters and sentence case

We use all lower case in some headlines, but only when standalone. If it's more than one sentence, switch to sentence case. If there a subhead, use sentence case. If it looks weird or wrong in all lower case, use sentence case. Do not use all caps for anything except abbreviations, eg PRASK.

Dates

We would write, for example, 14th September 2018. Try and include the year to avoid any confusion.

Emojis

Use sparingly. If you choose to use emojis, restrict it to social and email subject lines. As a general rule, stick to travel-related ones – palm tree, plane, sunshine and so on – or reaction faces.

Exclamation marks

Use very, very sparingly. Preferably avoid.

Italics

We don't use them.

Job titles/departments

Jobs should be all lower case, eg prime minister, US secretary of state, chief rabbi, chief executive. If using a job title as an actual title, then use capitals, eg President Barack Obama (but the US president, Barack Obama, and Obama on subsequent mention); Chief Executive Officer Shai Weiss, (CEO or Shai Weiss thereafter).

Numbers

We write out numbers one to ten. From 11 onwards, we use digits, unless it's the start of a sentence. When you go into the thousands, use a comma, eg 3,000.

Oxford comma

When making lists of three or more. For example; You'll be welcomed onboard with a choice of champagne, orange juice, or water.

Quote marks

Use double quote marks for something that's actually a quotation, single quote marks when it is not.

Social phrases

It's fun to use trending phrases you've seen on social media – but keep them there. Please don't use OMG, lol, rofl, TBH or so on in customer or business comms. The same goes for phrases such as 'just saying' or 'don't @ me'. If used on social media, use sparingly and preferably in a 'tongue in cheek' way.

Times

We wouldn't use the 24 hour clock unless needed in a timetable etc. So write 10am, 10pm. And use a full stop, not a colon for minutes, for example, 10.38am.

US and UK spellings

We're a British company, so as a rule of thumb, always use the British spellings, words, weights, measures, dates and temperature. If the communication is for a US audience only, you can adjust appropriately.

Quick reference, dictionary and index

[Check here for our most used phrases, style points and advice.](#)

We are one brand, Virgin Atlantic. We also have service names like Upper Class, Clubhouse and Premium. We then have product names within the service names like Upper Class Wing or product names that exist by themselves, such as Bag Drop. These all usually appear capitalised. We also have generic product names like welcome drinks or menus that we join on to service names, which appear in lower case.

Aircraft

You can say aircraft, or plane. Plane is the more relaxed, conversational choice.

We have the following aircraft types in our fleet. Where they begin with an A, it stands for Airbus. Where they begin with a B, it stands for Boeing.

A330 - We have both A330-300 and A330-200. They can be referred to as A333 or A332 respectively in technical documents, schedules or internal comms.

A340 - We operate the A340-600 variation of this aircraft. They often appear as A343 or A346 in technical documents or schedules.

A350 - We have 12 A350-1000s on order, with the first due to arrive in spring 2019.

These large aircraft will gradually replace our B747s and A340s.

(B)747 - Our biggest aircraft is based at London Gatwick. The biggest difference is what's onboard. They are 747-400s, but we always refer to them as a 747 or our 747s when talking about them as a group. Note the lower case 's' with no apostrophe. You'll find these aircraft referred to as 744 in technical documents or schedules.

(B)787 - The latest addition to our fleet, these are widebody aircraft with two engines. They're also known by the name Dreamliner. They'll be referred to as 789 in technical documents or schedules, due to the fact that the ones we operate are the 787-900 version of the aircraft. The B stands for Boeing.

Bag Drop

If our customers have checked in online or used an airport kiosk, and they need to check in bags, they do so using Bag Drop. As it's a product name, it's capitalised.

Baggage or luggage?

We can use both. Use your judgement as to which suits the audience. Just try not to use a mix of both terms in the same document.

Brand names

If we're referring to a brand other than our own, for example, those stocked in the Clubhouse Spa or brands of crisps served onboard, we always refer to the brand exactly as they would refer to themselves.

Quick reference, dictionary and index

Check here for our most used phrases, style points and advice.

Cabin crew

Our people who look after passengers on the flight are called cabin crew, not stewards, air hostesses or flight attendants. This can be shortened to just crew.

check in

When you want to check in, it's lower case. When you're at check in, it's lower case too, except if you're at Upper Class Check In, when it's a product name, so it's capitalised. This is also the case for Premium Check In and Economy Check In. We don't hyphenate check in.

Clubhouse

Our award-winning airport lounge for Upper Class, Flying Club Gold and Delta One™ customers. As a service name, the Clubhouse is always capitalised. Spaces within – eg, the deli, are not. When we have pop up events within the Clubhouse, for example the Coppa Club igloo, these tend to be brand partnerships and as such would be capitalised. Clubhouse Spa Our spa facility

inside the Clubhouse. This is considered a service name, so it has a capital.

chauffeur car service

A service provided to Upper Class customers depending on what kind of ticket they've booked. No capitals.

codeshare

The word we use to describe shared services with other airlines.

customer

This is the word we use to describe our passengers in all communications externally and internally. When we're talking to the travel trade, it becomes 'your customers.' When customers are going through the actual booking process, we may refer to them as passengers to make it clear on numbers.

Delta

Delta are our partners, so please make sure you reference them and their products in

the correct way. They are Delta Air Lines® - three separate words, and always include the trademark. After the first instance you can refer to them as Delta. Their business cabin is Delta One®. If in doubt, check their website.

domestic

We refer to other airlines' internal flights as domestic services, not shorthaul.

Drive Thru Check In

Offered at the Upper Class Wing at London Heathrow Terminal 3. It's a product name, so use capitals.

Economy

A service name, sometimes preceded by Virgin Atlantic. In copy, this has a capital, unless we're talking about another airline's product, when it doesn't need one.

Quick reference, dictionary and index

[Check here for our most used phrases, style points and advice.](#)

We use Economy when we're referring to the overall Economy cabin, rather than the three different fares. You can also refer to it as Virgin Atlantic Economy in the first instance – after that it's fine to refer to it as Economy only.

Economy Light

Always use capitals as this is a product name. Always use Economy and Light together, do not use Light on its own to refer to this service. Economy Light is our basic level of Economy, but never use the word basic to describe it. It's for customers who prefer to pack light and pay less. No hold luggage is included, so we refer to it as a 'hand baggage only fare'. We can also use hand luggage if it fits better. You can also refer to it as Virgin Atlantic Economy Light, but only in the first instance – after that it's fine to refer to it as Economy Light only.

Economy Classic

Always use capitals as this is a product name. Always use Economy and Classic together, do not use Classic on its own to refer to this service. Economy Classic is our middle level of Economy, and includes advance seat choice and hold luggage. You can also refer to it as Virgin Atlantic Economy Classic, but only in the first instance – after that it's fine to refer to it as Economy Classic only.

Economy Delight

Always use capitals as this is a product name. Always use Economy and Delight together, do not use Delight on its own to refer to this service. Economy Delight is our highest level of Economy, and includes extra legroom seats, hold luggage, Premium Check In (caps as this is a product name) and priority boarding (no caps, this is not a product name). You can also refer to it as Virgin Atlantic Economy Delight, but only in the first instance – after that it's fine to refer to it as Economy Delight only.

eTicket

A shortened version of electronic ticket, which is now how we issue tickets to most customers. No dash, joined together and it always has a lower case 'e' and a capital 'T.'

exit row seat

The seats by the aircraft doors with no seats in front of them. Economy Classic passengers can upgrade to these seats for a fee. It doesn't have capitals.

extra legroom seat

Exclusively for our Economy Delight customers. No capitals, and legroom is always one word.

fast track

A facility available to certain customers at some airports. This isn't a Virgin Atlantic service, so no capitals.

Quick reference, dictionary and index

Check here for our most used phrases, style points and advice.

flight crew

This is collectively what the pilots are called. This includes the Captain, Senior First Officer and First Officer.

flight deck

This is what we call the cockpit.

Flying Club

Our loyalty programme for frequent travellers. It's a service name, so initial capitals. The members are referred to as just that, no capital. The same goes for miles, partners etc.

Flying Club Red/Flying Club Silver/ Flying Club Gold

These are the various membership levels of Flying Club.

Flying Co

The business loyalty programme within Flying Club. This is a service name, so it should have initial capitals.

flying lady

The flying lady is not only the name of the character that graces our aircraft, but it's also the collective name of our aircraft ie. our flying ladies.

headrest

All of our seats have headrests. In Economy and Premium, they're often winged headrests. We join head and rest together as one word.

inbound

When you're heading home from your destination, you're travelling inbound. The words are joined together.

inflight

As above, these two words are joined together ie. inflight entertainment. When you're talking about a situation like 'we're in flight mode' when they exist as separate words.

joint venture

Referring to our partnership with Delta. Generally only used internally. Both words are lower case in copy.

inseat

As in inseat charging. We join these two words together.

London Heathrow Terminal 3

The home of our international services at London Heathrow (and where we co-locate with Delta). As with all of our airports, these are place names, therefore initial capitals. It's also one of the rare instances we'll use the number 3 instead of writing it out as three, as this is the way Heathrow refers to its terminals.

longhaul

Drop the dash and join the words together.

Quick reference, dictionary and index

Check here for our most used phrases, style points and advice.

mobile check in

A way to check in online via your smartphone. It's not a branded product or associated with a sub brand, so it doesn't need capitals.

onboard

These words are joined together, unless it make grammatical sense to separate them. Eg our credit card communications asked customers if they wanted to come back on board.

onboard bar

A feature of our Upper Class cabin. It's not a branded product, so no capitals.

online check in

One of the various different ways you can check in, in this case through our website. It's not a product name, so it doesn't need capitals.

outbound

When you're travelling to your destination, you're flying outbound. These words are joined together.

preflight

The customer experience on the ground before the flight takes off. The two words are joined together.

Premium

This is a service, so use a capital when referring to it. We no longer use Premium Economy as a name. The Premium logotype has the name in lower case letters, but it's always upper case when we're writing it. You can also refer to it as Virgin Atlantic Premium, but only in the first instance - after that it's fine to refer to it as Premium only.

Private Security Channel

A feature of our Upper Class Wing at London Heathrow Terminal 3. This is a product name, so capitalise the first letters.

Retail Therapy

Our onboard and internet tax free shopping service. It's a product name so it has capital letters.

Revivals

Our arrivals lounge at London Heathrow Terminal 3. It's a service name, so capitalise. However, we often add a lower case lounge to its title to explain that it's a place ie, Revivals lounge.

seatback

This is the word we use to describe the screens on the back of the seats. The two words are joined together.

sleep suit

The complimentary pyjamas we give our Upper Class customers. This is not considered a product name.

Quick reference, dictionary and index

Check here for our most used phrases, style points and advice.

Special Assistance

A part of the business that looks after customers flying with children or those customers with disabilities. When we're referring to it as a product name it has capital letters but when it's being referred to generically, just use lower case ie. we can offer special assistance to disabled customers.

take off

We're ready for take off. Two words.

Twilight Check In

A check in option at Gatwick Airport allowing our customers to check in the night before their flight. A product name, so capital letters.

US or USA?

We usually drop the 'A.' Just US. The exception is when we have advertising headlines in capitals. We use USA here so that it's not confused with the word 'us.'

Upper Class

Our fantastic top cabin (the equivalent to other airlines' business class). This is a service name, so it has capital letters. You can also refer to it as Virgin Atlantic Upper Class, but only in the first instance – after that it's fine to refer to it as Upper Class only.

Upper Class Wing

A space for our Upper Class customers at London Heathrow Terminal 3. This is a product name, so it has capital letters.

VA/VAA

Virgin Atlantic and Virgin Atlantic Airways as an abbreviation. These should be avoided wherever possible externally.

Vera

The name of our inflight entertainment system and the inflight magazine, found in every seat pocked onboard. It's a product name, so the 'V' is a capital letter.

Virgin

Our parent brand, the Virgin Group. When you're talking about Virgin Atlantic, it's always better to refer to it in full, to avoid confusion with the parent brand. It must always have a capital letter. Please don't be tempted to use it in a context that could be detrimental to the brand eg. Virgin on the ridiculous.

Virgin Atlantic

Our brand. In print, never let it run onto another line or be split between columns or pages. The words must always be together. Sometimes it isn't possible online, but we should aim to not split it up. Please never use 'Virgin Atlantic's' ie.

Virgin Atlantic's Upper Class. Rewrite your sentence so the name isn't compromised ie. Upper Class from Virgin Atlantic or Virgin Atlantic Upper Class.

Quick reference, dictionary and index

[Check here for our most used phrases, style points and advice.](#)

The Virgin Atlantic logotype is lower case, but we always capitalise the first letter of each word in our writing. Also, we always refer to Virgin Atlantic in the singular, so ‘Virgin Atlantic is...’ rather than ‘Virgin Atlantic are...’

Virgin Atlantic Airways

This is our full official company name, but we always use the shorter version. Except sometimes in official company documents.

Virgin Atlantic Airways Ltd

This is the full legal name we use in terms and conditions and other legal documents. It should appear like this when first mentioned, and then Virgin Atlantic after that. The first letter of each word is capitalised.

VS

Our airline code, issued by IATA, is the two letters you find before our flight numbers. It’s also common practice for people in the travel industry to use this as an abbreviation of our name. This shouldn’t be used in a situation

where the audience would be unfamiliar with its meaning. It’s usually capitalised.

vsflyinghub

The name of our website for the travel trade. This should always be joined together as one word and is followed by .com most of the time.

WiFi

We write this as above as one word, with capital letters for the ‘w’ and ‘f’.

Thank you

For any clarification, questions or advice,
please contact Liz East, brand copywriter
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virgin atlantic 