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ABBREVIATIONS IN FRENCH CHEMICAL LITERATURE¹

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The mania for abbreviations has become world-wide, especially in such languages as Russian and German. Abbreviations come in all lengths, sizes, and degrees of unrecognizability and are constantly being changed.

An abbreviation is defined as an arbitrary shortening of a word by cutting off letters from the end. A contraction serves the same purpose, but it is understood strictly to be the shortening of a word by cutting out letters from the middle, the omission sometimes being indicated by an apostrophe. Many English and foreign writers hold that a contraction in which the last letter of the word appears should not be followed by a period², though an abbreviation should.

The National Bureau of Standards, however, recommends that the period be omitted after all abbreviations of units unless the abbreviation forms an English word, and that the same abbreviation be used for both singular and plural. In German, French, and Italian, there is a trend to omit the period not only after abbreviations of units, but also after other abbreviations. Usage continues to differ widely, however.

Foreign scientific writers use either what they believe to be 'standard' abbreviations or, frequently, go to the trouble of coining new ones, presumably to endear themselves to their space conscious editors and publishers. The victim is, of course, the reader, especially if the language in question is not his native tongue. To make matters worse, abbreviations are perennially in a state of flux, from which they periodically emerge when the public clamor for standardization becomes too great. The cycle starts by abbreviations tending toward increasingly shorter forms as the demand for space saving becomes more pressing. Then, when they have been compressed into one or two letters and have finally become undistinguishable from other, identical-looking abbreviations representing entirely different and even antonymous words, they are once more lengthened to restore a semblance of intelligibility. Like some chemical reactions, this process is reversible at will.

(1) Extrait de "Abbreviation in the German, French, and Italian Literatures", paru dans *Advances in Chemistry Series*, numéro 10, pp. 510 sqq., 1954. Nous ne présentons ici que les abréviations françaises citées dans cet article.

(2) Comparer en français M. (*monseigneur*), Mme (*madame*) et mètre (*métropole*). On consultera H. Baudry, *Dictionnaire d'Abréviations françaises et étrangères, techniques et usuelles, anciennes et nouvelles*. Paris, 1951. On trouvera également de bonnes listes d'abréviations dans les dictionnaires de Kettridge, Mansion, Peyser, Patterson. H.F.

ABBREVIATIONS LISTED IN THE
BULLETIN DE LA SOCIÉTÉ CHIMIQUE DE FRANCE

ac.	acide, acid	mol.	molécule, molecule moléculaire, molecular
aig.	aiguilles, needles	p.	parties, parts
alc.	alcool, acohol	Eb ¹⁰⁰	point d'ébullition sous 100 mm., boiling point at 100 mm.
ald.	aldéhyde, aldehyde	F. (corr.)	point de fusion corrigé, melt- ing point (corrected)
anh.	anhydride, anhydride	0/0	pour cent, per cent
asym.	asymétrique, asymmetric (al)	0/00	pour mille, per mil
B.-M.	bain-marie, water bath	p. rot.	pouvoir rotatoire, rotatory power
comb.	combinaison, combination, compound, etc.	ppté	précipité, precipitated
comb. mol.	combinaison moléculaire, mo- lecular combination	pptation	précipitation, precipitation
conc.	concentré, concentrated	prép.	préparer, prepare préparation, preparation
condens.	condensation, condensation	proport.	proportionnel, proportional
corresp.	correspondant, corresponding	propr.	propriété, property
crist.	cristaux, crystals	R.M.	réfraction moléculaire, mo- lecular refraction
cristall.	cristallisation, crystallization	R ^t	rendement, yield
D	densité, density	sol.	soluble, soluble
dér.	dérivé, derived or derivative	sol. aq.	solution aqueuse, aqueous so- lution
dist.	distillation, distillation	sol. alcool.	solution alcoolique, alcoholic solution
déc.	décomposition, decomposition	sym.	symétrique, symmetric (al)
1,2 Aq.	eau de cristallisation, water of crystallization	T.	température, temperature
ébull.	ébullition, boiling	transf.	transformation, conversion, transformation, rear- rangement
F. 200° (déc.)	fusible à 200° avec décompo- sition, melts at 200° with decomposition		
gr.	gramme, gram		
insol. H ₂ O etc.	insoluble dans l'eau, etc., in- soluble in water, etc.		
m.	mètre, meter		
mm.	millimètre, millimeter		

ABBREVIATIONS LISTED IN THE *BULLETIN ANALYTIQUE*
DU CENTRE DE DOCUMENTATION DU CENTRE NATIONAL
DE LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE (FRANCE)

atm.	atmosphère, atmosphere	inf.	inférieur, inferior, lower, less
BF	basse fréquence, low frequency	IR	infrarouge, infrared
BT	basse tension, low pressure or low tension	j	jour, day
c	concentration, concentration	k	kilo, kilogram
c.a.	courant alternatif, alternating current	l	litre, liter
c.c.	courant continu, direct current	M	masse moléculaire, molecular mass
cal.	calorie-gramme, gram calorie	max.	maximum, maximum
ch	cheval-vapeur, horsepower	MF	moyenne fréquence, medium frequency
coeff.	coefficient, coefficient	min.	minimum, minimum
c/s	cycle par seconde, cycle per sec.	mol.	molécule, molecule
cte	constante, constant	moy.	moyen, mean, average, medium
d	densité, density	mn	minute, minute
db	décibel, decibel	N	Nord, North
diff. de pot.	différence de potentiel, potential difference	P	pression, pressure
dpl.	dépliant, folder	PE	point d'ébullition, boiling point
E	Est, East	PF	point de fusion, melting point
f.c.é.m.	force contre-électromotrice, back electromotive force	p.p.m.	partie par million, part per million
f.é.m.	force électromotrice, electromotive force	QR	quotient respiratoire, respiratory quotient
g	gramme, gram	rdt	rendement, yield
grouppt	groupement, group or connection	S	Sud, south
h	heure, hour	s	seconde, second
HF	haute fréquence, high frequency	sol.	solution, solution
HP	horsepower	sup.	supérieur, higher, upper, more
HT	haute tension, high pressure or high tension	to	température, temperature
		UI	unité internationale, international unit
		UV	ultraviolet, ultraviolet
		v	vitesse, velocity