

1 LEDBURY

2 St. Michael's Church ****

3 Floating Norman chancel, Decorated baptistery chapel

4

5 Ledbury is an attractive town, set against a limb of the Malvern hills and named for
6 the River Leadon. Within the town, St Michael's church is unobtrusive, shut off
7 from the hubbub of the high street by a rabbit-warren of tiny lanes.

8 The steeple is detached from the church to the North. It dates from the early
9 13th C., its spire replaced in the eighteenth by a Worcester architect, Nathaniel
10 Wilkinson. Ledbury is thus a church of all periods. The west front is basically
11 Norman, with turrets and zig-zag carvings round the doorway. Inside, the eye is
12 drawn to the piers of the 12th-century chancel arcades, holding up rough-hewn
13 limestone walls with port-hole windows at the upper level.

14 Round the chancel, the Gothic masons conduct a courtly dance. The aisles
15 are wide, grand, and airy, embracing the chancel with majestic windows of the
16 "decorated" period that dominate the whole interior. Most are filled with Victorian
17 and later stained glass. Even finer windows light the North chancel chapel,
18 designed as a chapterhouse in 1330 and later used as a baptistry. The windows are
19 splendid accumulations of quatrefoils, trefoils and ballflower, enlivening every
20 shaft. Only St Peter and St Paul, Leominster, can compete with this richness.

Exercise 1 Commentary

Did your marked-up version of Exercise 1 look like a rainbow? This commentary lists the discrepancies you should have highlighted and explains the decisions you might make to resolve them. We shall revert to the reasoning behind these decisions in later units. (Note that issues to do with italic type did not come up in this text.)

spelling and hyphenation

baptistery / bapistry	Although the former spelling is common and the latter less so, both are viable. It would probably be best to choose the more common version.
rabbit-warren / rabbit warren	There is no reason to hyphenate ‘rabbit warren’, and a glance at online hits shows no instances with a hyphen. The author seems to favour hyphens – see the similarly rare ‘zig-zag’ in line 11 and ‘port-hole’ in line 13. None of these is exactly wrong, but they contrast oddly with ‘chapterhouse’ in line 18 and ‘ballflower’ in line 19. An authoritative source would suggest these forms: ‘rabbit warren’, ‘zigzag’ and ‘porthole’, and following that lead you could leave ‘chapterhouse’ and ‘ballflower’ unchanged.
zig-zag / zigzag	
port-hole / porthole	
chapterhouse / chapter house /chapter-house	
ballflower / ball flower / ball-flower	

punctuation

single / double quotation marks	The text has single quotation marks in line 3 and doubles in line 16. In real life, the decision would probably not be yours, as it is almost bound to be catered for by the house style.
serial / no serial comma	In line 15 there is a serial comma but the list in line 19 lacks one. Again, the house style would probably decide this for you.

capitalisation

Church / church	It would be usual to capitalise the whole name ‘St Michael’s Church’ but, in a context where such names happen on every page, it might be better not to (too many capital initials tend to bludgeon the reader’s eye in heavily factual text). In making a decision, you would also need to consider other forms such as ‘the Church / church of St Peter and St Paul’.
Decorated / decorated’	In one case, the name of this architectural style is capitalised and in the other set in quotation marks with a lower-case initial. If you check authoritative source, you will find that it should be capitalised (like Gothic in line 14).

Malvern hills / River Leadon

The discrepancy here is disguised, as in one case the critical element follows the proper name and in the other it precedes. The form 'river Leadon' would be quite unusual, so it would be better here to capitalise 'hills'. Such a decision would come up again and again in the book, in references to rivers, estuaries, hills, downs, valleys, mountains, etc.

North / west

Authors are often tempted to capitalise points of the compass, particularly in specialist contexts like this. However, especially as 'north', 'south', 'east' and 'west' will come up frequently in a book about churches (which will anyway contain plenty of capital initials), it would be better to go for lower-case initials for both adjectival and nominal forms of these words.

numbers

13th / eighteenth / 12th

It looks as though 'eighteenth' in line 9 is the aberration in this case. As the text will repeatedly refer to centuries, it would be best to use digits for them, even though other numbers may conform with a rule to spell out up to and including 'ninety-nine'.

abbreviations

St. / St

The first of these forms is not 'wrong', but it is rare in British style (see Unit 2 for a discussion of British and American style). Impose 'St' without the full point across the board.

C. / century

There would be some justification for deciding to abbreviate 'century' to 'C.' when it occurs with a number, as the form will come up often. But the spelt-out version predominates in the extract, and, if this were typical of the text as a whole, it would be better to alter the anomalous example.