

PUNCTUATION

Punctuation marks are like pauses in speech. These are the visual indicators used in a written or printed text in order to separate sentences or a part of sentence from another. They are a guide to the structure of sentence and help us understand the meaning.

Important punctuation marks :-

1. full stop (.)

The full stop is used to mark the end of an affirmative, negative or imperative sentence. Eg:

* She did not know the way to the market.

It is also used in abbreviations, such as:

* He is an M.B.B.S. doctor.

Note:- Earlier Mr. & Mrs. (customary)

But now, Mr & Mrs (as they are seen as full spellings).

2. Comma (,)

Just as a full stop marks the end of a sentence, a comma (,) suggests a pause in the writing.

Following are the main uses of a comma:

It indicates omission of a word, especially a verb.

1. You can do that; I, never
2. Her mother was an English; her father, an American.

It separates the co-ordinate clause(s) in a compound sentence

1. I came, I saw, I conquered.
2. Father is in the office, mother is in the kitchen.

It separates the subject and long preceding phrase that characterize it.

* Harassed and distraught right from the early days of her marriage, she decided to embark on a journey of her own.

It separates the same parts of speech used in the same sentence

* She was tall, slim and beautiful.

It separates the parenthetical ideas from the core ideas in a sentence.

* Your suggestion, however, is quite tempting.

It marks a non-defining clause. It is used to contribute to the original idea in a parenthetical way and can be omitted without doing any harm to the core meaning of the sentence.

* My friend, who is a journalist, doesn't think so.

It is used to separate two or more nouns in opposition.

* Shakespeare, the greatest dramatist of all times, was born in 1564.

It is used to address people.

* How are you, my dear?

* Come here, (Little) girl.

It marks off direct quotations from the rest of the sentence.

* Mother said to her children, 'Have your food'.

It is used to separate an adverbial clause from the principal clause

* When we came back, we found the doors open.

It is used before and after words, phrases or clauses that are introduced to the main thought in a parenthetical way:

* This, in no way, is my problem.

3. Dash (-)

A dash indicated by a long horizontal line is often used in place of a colon or parenthesis

It is used to emphasize the idea anticipated in the sentence

Distractive role - to mark a break or change of direction

* He is what you expect him ^{in a statement} to be - the greatest fool (on earth)!

At times, much like a comma, a dash is used to separate an expression from the rest of the sentence.

* He is - after all - his mother's son

It is also used after the colon to indicate something that follows

* These are some of the views -

It is also used to indicate an abrupt change of idea.

- * Once you reach here - but wait, you are, coming, aren't you?

4. Hyphen (-)

A hyphen is a shorter line than a dash.

It is used to join two or more words in a compound word, & join prefixes to other words. Also used to show word break.

- * she was truly tormented by her daughter-in-law
e.g. light-hearted, sugar-free, home-made, break-in

5. Semicolon (;)

A semicolon stands for a longer pause than a comma.

It is used to separate clauses.

- * Man proposes; God disposes.

It is used to express different ideas without writing a new sentence.

- * In the morning, he fought with his wife; in the afternoon, he reconciled with her.

6. Colon (:)

A colon is used to list examples and enumeration.

The professor shouted : "Get out of the class!"

* There are - the points to be kept in mind : ...

* following are - the examples of parts of speech:
noun, pronoun, adjective, adverb etc

The headlines read : "Petrol price likely to stay."

7. Single and Double Inverted Commas

Double inverted commas (" ") are used to quote the exact words of - the person being quoted.

* He said, " you are my friend."

Single inverted commas (' ') are used to cite a quotation within another quotation.

* There is no point in keeping a pulled face, " said he, " even if you are perturbed by the ' to be or not to be' conundrum."

8. Apostrophe

The apostrophe (') is used to indicate - the possessive of a noun. If - the noun is singular, the apostrophe is followed by an s; if - the noun is plural, the s is followed by the apostrophe, except when - the plural does not end in s, or in - the case of a few irregular nouns,

for eg., children's:

* The children's books are lying there.

* The girl's purse was lost.

It is also used to show words in a contracted form.

* You're just a complete fool.

* Don't you dare speak to him like that!

It is also used to show the letters and figures in the plural form to avoid confusion.

* In 1970's was seen - the first wave of Parallel Hindi Cinema.

9. Parentheses ()

Parentheses are used by writers to indicate an afterthought by introducing some words, a phrase, or a clause.

* The great man (this is how he is seen to be in the area) is reported to have killed his wife.

10. Sign of Interrogation / Question mark (?)

The sign of Interrogation / Question mark is used after a direct question or a tag question that is appended to a statement:

* Do you understand what I say?

* Shall we take some rest?

Note: Remember that a question mark is not used after an indirect question.

* I am not sure what to do in life.

11. Exclamation mark (!)

It is used in phrases & sentences that express sudden, strong emotion or a wish!

* May you live long!

* What a terrible sight!

12 Capital letters

Capital letters are used for various purposes. To begin with, we start a sentence with a capital letter:

* We can't do anything about it.

- They are used to begin a sentence
inside inverted commas

It is said, 'To err is human.'

They normally begin a proper noun
and the adjectives we form from it.

* Pinter is known for his theatre language
popularly known as Pinteresque idiom

They are used to refer to a person's
title or degree.

* Pandit Nehru was the first prime
minister of India.

They are used to refer to the names
of days, weeks, months and events.

* On Sunday, we generally get up quite
late.

They are used to mark the imp.
words in a title.

* 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' is a great
poem by John Keats.

- Names of races, languages, countries - - -
- Names of holidays, festivals.
- Titles of books, magazines

They are chosen to refer to the word God and the pronouns replacing it.

- * God is great.
- * No one knows His ways.

They are used in words of exclamations.

- * Oh! You are back.
- * This is the solution, Eh!

The personal pronoun I is always written in capital letters.

- * I can't see you.

Punctuation

Assignment 1

Punctuate the following choosing appropriate punctuation marks at appropriate places.

1. that he was alone and wanted to be alone was a matter of concern for all
2. if you want to be healthy in life do this get up early work hard lead a natural life
3. when i heard a knock at the door i turned around
4. it is however not all that important to speak all the time
5. when he was young shakespeare who went on to become the greatest writer of all times married a woman eight years his senior.

Punctuation

Assignment 2.

Punctuate the following using suitable punctuation marks.

1. have you finished your meal
2. alas he is no more
3. thats what said he
4. whats wrong with you asked he
5. I am not sure which way to decide
6. what a superb shot