

Rules of Punctuation

Some of the most common punctuation marks are:

Full stop/period, comma, semicolons, colons, hyphen, quotation mark, question mark, parenthesis, etc

Full stop

Used at the end of a complete sentence.

- Example: I went to the store for groceries.

Used after titles in American English but not in British English.

Example:

- Mr., Mrs., Dr., ... (American)
- Mr, Mrs, Dr, ... (British)

.

- Mr. James will come today. (American)
- Dr Singh is correct. (British)

For Abbreviation

- etc.
- i.e.
- e.g

.

- AM/ PM (American)
- a.m./ p.m.(British)

Common full stop mistakes:

No space after full stop.

- Incorrect: I went to the store for groceries.But I forgot to bring the grocery list that my mother handed it to me.
- Correct: I went to the store for groceries. But I forgot to bring the grocery list that my mother handed it to me.

Even though the statement is complete within the quotation marks, we only use a period at the end of the complete sentence.

- Incorrect: "*I'm so tired.*" She said.
- Correct: "*I'm so tired,*" she said.

In this case, the period should always come inside the quotation marks when the quote is ending the sentence.

Comma

Use a comma to separate words or items in a list.

- Example: She has two dogs, three cats, one bird, and five fish in her house.

Use commas to separate independent clauses when they are joined by any of these seven coordinating conjunctions: *and, but, for, or, nor, so, yet*.

- Example: The game was over, **but** the crowd refused to leave.

Use a comma after an introductory clause or phrase.

Example:

- Correct: **While** I was eating, the cat scratched at the door.
- Incorrect: The cat scratched at the door, while I was eating.

Common introductory words that should be followed by a comma include *yes, however, well*.

- **Well**, perhaps he meant no harm.

Use of comma in direct and indirect speech

- Mary said, "I dislike concerts because the music is too loud."
- "I dislike concerts because the music is too loud," she said.

Use commas to enclose clauses not essential to the meaning of a sentence. These nonessential clauses are called nonrestrictive. Clauses which are essential are called restrictive.

- Tom, ***the captain of the team***, was injured in the game. (nonrestrictive)
- Steven Strom, **whose show you like**, will host a party next week. (nonrestrictive)
- She was, ***however***, too tired to make the trip. (nonrestrictive)
- The gentleman who is standing by the fireplace is a well-known composer. (restrictive)

Quiz

1. Wordsworth, the famous English poet, was a lover of nature.
2. He spoke easily, clearly and eloquently.
3. The children laughed, danced, jumped and cried for joy.
4. The farmer owned sheep, cattle and poultry.
5. Gentleman, I bring good news.
6. His conduct, to say the least, was disgusting.
7. The pet store has cats, dogs, hamsters, fish and turtles.
8. I drove to the dance with Sally, Sam and Tom.

Colon

Use the colon after a complete sentence to introduce a list of items

- Example: On my trip I will bring: clothes, a pillow, a sleeping bag, and my toothbrush.

To elaborate on a statement.

- Example: The participants indicated two potential solutions: giving students more time during tests and having more office hours available.

Colons can also introduce a quotation:

- Example: Sam said to the group: "Dinner is ready everyone."

Quiz

1. Sally plays three sports: softball, soccer, and tennis.
2. My neighbor has a “green thumb”: excellent gardening skills.
3. I want the following items: butter, sugar, and flour.
4. I need an assistant who can do the following: input data, write reports, and complete tax forms.
5. Math is such a hard subject: if you don’t follow the rules, you can’t find the answer!
6. It’s easy to describe the old school busses: smelly, sticky, rickety and slow!
7. He got what he worked for: he really earned that promotion.
8. I have three ways to get to school: walking, biking, or taking the bus.

Semi-colon

To help separate items in a list, when some of those items already contain commas.

- Example: I bought shiny, ripe apples; small, sweet, juicy grapes; and firm pears.

Use a semicolon in place of a full stop to separate two sentences. where the conjunction has been left out.

Example:

- I went to the grocery store today; I bought a ton of fruit. Apples, grapes, and pears were all on sale.

OR

- I went to the grocery store today. I bought a ton of fruit; apples, grapes, and pears were all on sale.

Quiz

1. If you bring your sunglasses, sunscreen, and a towel; we can go to the beach.
2. The groups of siblings who will be coming to camp include John and Anne; Jeff, Lisa, and Tommy; and Mark and Jonas.
3. Marie made a 100 on the quiz; Lois made a 95.
4. I love ice cream; it is my favorite food.
5. I like cake; however, ice cream is my favorite dessert.
6. My shirt is green; my brother's is blue.
7. I have my own bed; the cat sleeps on the pillow.

Hyphen

When using compound adjectives

- a one-way street
- well-known author

When using a hyphen with compound numbers:

- forty-six
- sixty-three

· Our much-loved teacher was sixty-three years old.

Use a hyphen with the prefixes

- ex-
- self-,
- all-

Using hyphen when you add prefix to proper noun or numbers

- anti-American
- post-1950 politics

Capital Letters

Use capital letters to start a sentence, languages, days of the week, months and names of countries, and in the beginning of quotations.

Sentence

- Example: She went to the park.

Languages

- Example: Julie speaks English, French and German.

Days of the week

- Example: I have a class on Monday.

Months

- Example: Emma's birthday is in March.

Countries

- Example: It is hot in India.

Quotations

- Example: “What's your favourite fruit?”

Thank you