

IT1080

English for Academic Purposes

Mechanics of Writing

Faculty of Humanities and Sciences

English Language Teaching Unit



SLIIT



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FACULTY OF COMPUTING

Learning Outcomes

- Explain the usage of capital letters and use them appropriately
- Explain the usages of apostrophe, quotation, exclamation, colon, semi-colon
- Identify when and where to apply these mechanics of writing

Capitalization

- Proper nouns:
 - Specific people: **J**ane, **J**ack
 - Places: **C**olombo, **N**ew York
 - Organizations: **N**ation's **T**rust **B**ank
- The letters of many abbreviations and acronyms
UN, UNESCO, SLIIT
- Relationship of a family member when it is included with the name
I received a gift from **U**ncle **H**enry

- The names of countries, nationalities, and specific languages
Costa Rica, Spanish, French, English, Japan, Sri Lanka
- The first word of a sentence
He is a famous businessman.
This is a university.
- The pronoun "I"
The last time I visited Atlanta was several years ago.
I am reading for a degree at SLIIT.

- The days of the week, the months of the year, and holidays (**but not the seasons**)

Halloween

October

Friday

- Capitalize seasons like spring or winter when:
 - they are part of a proper name (The Fall Festival).
 - they begin a sentence (Winter is beautiful.).

- Trademarks

Pepsi, Honda, Microsoft Word

- The major words in the titles of books, articles, and songs (but not short prepositions or the articles "the," "a," or "an," if they are not the first word of the title)

One of Jerry's favorite books is The Catcher in the Rye.

- The first letter of the first word in numbered or bulleted lists
- The first letter of these terms when they are followed by a letter or number: “table,” “figure,” “example,” “appendix,” “chapter,” “section,” “part,” and “step”

Go to **C**hapter 3.

The Apostrophe

- In academic writing this is used to show possession or relationship.
- In informal writing it is used to show contraction.



It's me

Possession or relationship

1. The apostrophe **precedes the 's' in singular words** and **in plurals that do not end in 's'**.

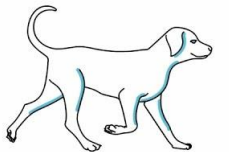
Ex: Modern estimations of **England's** total population vary between 1 and 3 million.

Ex: The **children's** room is richly furnished.



This is Mike's sister, Heather.

Mike's dog, Toby.



...and Mike's house.



2. It **follows the 's' in plurals that end in 's'**.

Ex: In contrast to the all-inclusiveness of other **countries'** socialized medical services, 40 million Americans have no coverage at all.

3. The apostrophe is **not used with the possessive pronouns** 'hers', 'yours', 'theirs' and 'its'.

4. In place of numerals, use an apostrophe to **replace omitted numerals**.

- Class of '66
- Technology of the '90s



- The **possessive of two or more names** depends on ownership.

Malcolm and Mary's files - ownership is joint

Malcolm's and Mary's files - ownership is individual.



Quotation Marks



- Enclose the quoted words followed by the in text citation.

Hillocks (1986) similarly reviews dozens of research findings. He writes, "The available research suggests that teaching by written comment on compositions is generally ineffective" [1].

Commas & Colons with Quotation Marks

1. A reporting verb + , + “...”

Ex: Thoreau suggests the consequences of making ourselves slaves to progress when he **says** , “**We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us.**” [2]

(says, comments, remarks, states, reports)

2. Subject + **that** + “....”

Ex: Richterich and Chancerel found **that** “**assessment should be an integral part of the learning material.**” [3]

3. Complete sentence + : + “....”

Ex: Thoreau ends his essay with a metaphor : “**Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in.**” [2]



Colon



1. To introduce a list.

- He wanted to see three cities in Italy : Rome, Florence, and Venice



2. Before explanations/justifications

- Many books would be briefer if their authors followed the logical principle known as Occam's razor
: Explanations should not be multiplied unnecessarily.

3. Before quotations followed by a complete sentence

- Thoreau (1988, p. 265) ends his essay with a metaphor : "Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in."

Semi-Colon



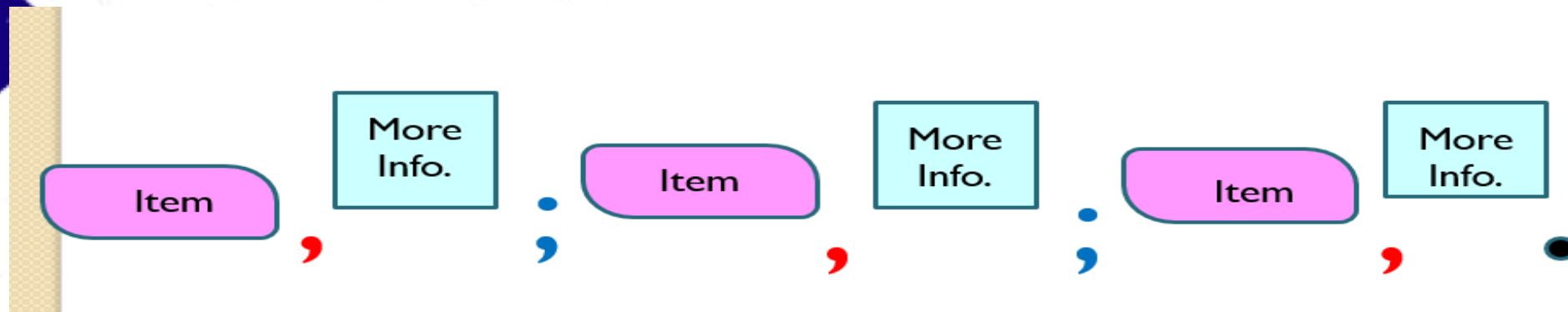
1. To separate two independent clauses which are closely related in meaning.

- Few newly enrolled students know exactly what career path their studies will eventually offer; most find their area of interest during their studies.



2. With complicated lists, especially if the items are long and already contain commas.

- In the meeting today we have Professor Wilson, University of Barnsley; Dr Watson, University of Barrow in Furness; Colonel Custard, Metropolitan Police ; and Dr Peter Clavis, Genius General, University of Otago, New Zealand.



References

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