

PUNCTUATION

PUNCTUATION: EXCELLENT RESOURCE

Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL)

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/6>

PUNCTUATION: NOT SO EXCELLENT RESOURCE

The textbook mentioned in the following slides:

Style: Lessons In Clarity & Grace

PUNCTUATION: REVIEW

Clause - subject + matching verb (and maybe other stuff)

Independent clause - a clause that COULD be a sentence - it completes a thought.

Grammatical sentence - essentially, an independent clause

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The textbook classifies the different ***types of punctuation*** by considering its location within a sentence: at the ***beginning, middle, or end*** of a sentence.

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Punctuation isn't some subtle, arcane concept that's hard to manage and that probably won't make much of a difference one way or another. It's not subtle, it's not difficult, and it can make all the difference in the world.

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✓ *I missed my flight; however, I made the meeting on time.*

X *I missed my flight, however, I made the meeting on time.*

According to the textbook, the first version is correct and the second is not. Apparently many write the second version which annoys the authors of the text.

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If you shouldn't use semicolons more than once every few pages, then **it should be easy to avoid using them at all!**

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Orville and Wilbur Wright had a bicycle-making business in Ohio; they loved experimenting with flying machines; they built the Wright Flyer in 1903.

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To join three or more sentences like this is **generally not a good idea**.

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2. Semicolon + Coordinating Conjunction

She thought she was early; in fact, she was the last to arrive.

I'd rather have the report by tomorrow; however, Monday will do.

The text suggests using a comma when the constituent sentences are short.

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Many would suggest replacing the commas with periods, semicolons, or conjunctions.

THREE SPECIAL CASES: COLON, DASH, PARENTHESES

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The second version is considered to have **more impact**. It connects the phrases “*marital problems*” and “*criminal activity*” by discussing them within the same sentence. The first clause implicitly asks - “*why can't it be dismissed?*” and the second answers it - “*it's a criminal activity*”.

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Dashes are used like colons but are considered less formal:

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Parentheses are also used similar to colons but also considered informal:

Abby gave me a terrible haircut (and she expected a tip)!

INTENTIONAL SENTENCE FRAGMENTS

Many good writers use sentence fragments.

They are used *informally* and *generally* not considered appropriate for *business* or *technical* writing.

Many of the people who drove by the scene of the accident refused to stop and help. But not all of them.

Where are you going?

Out for a walk.

- or even just *Out.*