

Punctuation

. Full stop

1. Use a full stop at the end of a sentence:
 - The man arrived. He sat down.
2. Use full stops with abbreviations (in an abbreviation the last letter of the word and of the abbreviation are not the same):
 - C**o**. (Companyy) / e**t**c. (et ceteraa) / M**P**. (Member of Parliamentt)
3. Do not use full stops with contractions (in a contraction the last letter of the word and of the contraction are the same):
 - L**t**d (Limitedd) / D**r** (Doctorr) / S**t** (Saintt)

! exclamation mark

An exclamation mark usually shows strong a feeling, such as surprise, anger, or joy. Using an exclamation mark when writing is rather like shouting or raising your voice when speaking. Exclamation marks are most commonly used in writing quoted speech. You should avoid using exclamation marks in formal writing such as an essay or business letter.

1. Use an exclamation mark to indicate strong feelings or a raised voice in speech:
 - She shouted at him, "Go away! I hate you !"
 - He exclaimed: "What a fantastic house you have !"
 - "Good heavens !" he said, "Is that true?"
 - "Help !" / "Shut up !" / "Stop !"

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2. Many interjections need an exclamation mark:
 - "Hi! What's new?" / "Oh! When are you going?"
 - "Ouch! That hurt."
3. A non-question sentence beginning with "what" or "how" is often an exclamation and requires an exclamation mark:
 - What idiots we are! (*We are such idiots.*)
 - How pretty she looked in that dress!
(*She looked very pretty in that dress*)
4. In very **informal** writing (personal letter or email), people sometimes use two or more exclamation marks together:
 - I met John yesterday. He is so handsome!!!
 - Remember, don't be late!!
 - I'll never understand this language !!!!

,Comma

Comma in writing is like a pause inside a sentence when speaking. Commas help us to see the structure and meaning of the sentence.

1. Use a comma between items in a series or **list**.

In a sentence, the last two items usually do not need a comma between them as they are separated by "and".

 - My favourite sports are **football, rugby, swimming, boxing,** and **golf**.
2. Use a comma between three or more **adjectives**, or **adverbs**.
 - He bought an **old, red, open-top** Volkswagen.
 - He ran **quickly, quietly,** and **effortlessly**.
3. For **two adjectives**, use a comma where you can not use "and".
 - I have a big, black dog. (~~I have a big and black dog.~~)
4. Use a comma for **numbers** over 999.

Example - 1,000 (one thousand)

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5. Use a comma for **addresses**, some **dates**, and **titles** following a name

- Los Angeles, California
- November 4, 1948
- Fred Ling, Professor of English

6. Use a comma before or after **direct speech**.

- He said, "**I love you**." "**I love you**," he said.

7. Use a comma before a **coordinating conjunction** (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) to join two independent clauses. If the independent clauses are short and well-balanced, a comma is optional.

- He didn't want to go, **but** he went anyway.
- I want to work as an interpreter, **so** I am studying the Hindi language.
- She is kind so she helps people.

8. **Sentence adverbs** (words like *however*, *unfortunately*, *surprisingly* that modify a whole sentence) often require one or two commas, depending on their position in the sentence.

- **However**, Anthony did arrive.
- We were, **unfortunately**, too late.
- He had, **not surprisingly**, lost his temper.

9. An **adverbial clause** often needs a comma when it comes at the beginning of a sentence (but not at the end of a sentence).

- **If I win the lottery**, I will buy a castle.
- I will buy a castle, **if I win the lottery**.

‘_____’ “_____”

Single Inverted comma or double inverted comma

Generally, single or double inverted comma is used to separate direct quotes from the rest of the sentences. In U.K generally, single inverted comma is used whereas in U.S.A double inverted comma is used.

Example: US-style: “Let’s go out and play,” said, John.

UK-style: ‘Let’s go out and play,’ said, John.

We use quotation marks to show (or mark) the beginning and end of a word or phrase that is somehow special or comes from outside the text that we are writing. Quotation marks are also called "quotes" or "inverted commas".

1. Use quotation marks around the title or name of a book, film, ship, etc:
 - The second most popular book of all time, "Quotations from the works of Mao Tse-tung", has sold over 8,00,000 copies.
 - 'Titanic' is a 1997 movie directed by James Cameron about the sinking of the ship 'Titanic'.

Note that in the above case, we may use "italics" also instead of quotation marks as under.

- ***Titanic*** is a 1997 movie directed by James Cameron about the sinking of the ship ***Titanic***.

However, use of italics is not possible in handwriting and old-style typewriters.

2. We use quotation marks around a piece of text that we are quoting or citing, usually from another source:
 - David Crystal argues that “punctuation plays a critical role in the modern writing system”.

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3. Use quotation marks around dialogue or direct speech:

- It was a moonlit night. James opened the door. Then Mary turned to him and said: "Do you love me, James ?"

4. Use quotation marks around a word or phrase that we want to make special in some way. Sometimes we use "italics" instead of quotation marks.

Double or single quotation marks?

Quotation marks can be double (" ") or single (' '). If we want to use quotation marks inside quotation marks, then we use single inside double, or double inside single.

- He said to her: "I thought 'Titanic' was a good film."
- He said to her: 'I thought "Titanic" was a good film.'

: Colon

1. Use a colon to introduce a **list**:

- There are three countries in North America: Mexico, USA and Canada
- We can see many things in the sky at night: the moon, stars, planets, comets, planes, and even satellites.

2. Actually, you can use a colon to introduce a **single item**, especially when you want to emphasize that item :

- We were all waiting for the hero of the evening: John.
- There is one thing that he will not accept: stupidity.
- The job of the colon is simple: to introduce.

3. Use a colon to introduce **direct speech** or a **quotation**:

- He stood up and said loudly: "Ladies and Gentlemen, please be seated."
- John whispered in my ear: "Have you seen Andrea?"

4. Use a colon to introduce an **explanation**:

- We had to cancel the party: too many people were sick.
- There is no need to rush: the meeting will be starting one hour late.

; Semi colon

We use a semi-colon instead of a full stop in order to separate sentences that are grammatically independent but that have closely connected meaning.

- Josef likes coffee; Mary likes tea.
- Tara is a good speaker; she speaks very clearly.
- Ram wants to go out; Anthony wants to stay home.

Note that in the above examples it is **not** correct to use a comma instead of the semi-colon. Use a semi-colon as a kind of "super comma".

When we have a list of items, we usually separate the items with commas. If the list is complicated, we may prefer to use semi-colons in some cases.

e.g.-Rental cars must be returned on time; with a full tank of petrol; in undamaged condition; and at the same location as they were collected from.

— A dash

A dash is a horizontal line that shows a pause or breaks in meaning, or that represents missing words or letters. A dash may or may not have space on either side of it. Do not confuse a dash (—) with a hyphen (-), which is shorter.

1. Use a dash to show a pause or break in meaning in the middle of a sentence

- My brothers- Richard and John— are visiting Hanoi.
(*here you can use commas also*)

2. Use a dash like a colon to introduce a list:

- There are three places I'll never forget- Paris, Bangkok, and Hanoi.
- Don't forget to buy some food— eggs, bread, tuna, and cheese.

3. Use a dash to show that letters or words are missing:

- They are really f——d up. (*Typically used for offensive words.*)
- I will look —— the children. (*Typically used in "missing word"*)

- Hyphen

Hyphen is a very short line between words. Note that there is **no** space between a hyphen and the character on either side of it.

Do not confuse a hyphen (-) with a dash (—), which is longer.

The points below are guidelines rather than rules.

1. Use a hyphen to join words to show that their meaning is linked in some way:
 - Book-case (*or* bookcase)
 - race-horse (*or* racehorse)
 - pick-me-up
2. Use a hyphen to make compound modifiers **before** nouns:
 - a blue-eyed boy (*but* The boy was blue eyed.)
 - the well-known actor (*but* The actor is well known.)
 - their four-year-old son (*but* Their son is four years old.)
3. Use a hyphen with certain prefixes. The prefixes *all-*, *ex-*, and *self-* usually need a hyphen : e.g. all-inclusive ex-wife self-control
When a prefix comes before a capitalized word, use a hyphen :
e.g. non-English
When a prefix is capitalized, use a hyphen: e.g. A-frame
4. Use a hyphen when writing numbers 21 to 99, and fractions:
 - twenty-one one hundred and sixty-five two-thirds

/ slash

The slash is also known as: forward slash, stroke, oblique.

You should use the slash with care in formal writing.

1. A slash is often used to indicate "or":
 - Dear Sir/Madam (*Sir or Madam*)
 - Please press your browser's Refresh / Reload button.
(*Refresh or Reload*)
 - The speech will be given by President/Senator Clinton.
(*President Clinton or Senator Clinton*)

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Do not over-use the slash to indicate "or". It can suggest laziness on the part of the writer. The "and/or" construction is widely considered to be very bad form.

2. Use a slash for fractions :

1/2 (*one half*) 2/3 (*two thirds*) 9/10 (*nine tenths*)

3. Use a slash to indicate "per" in measurements of speed, prices, etc:

- The speed limit is 100 km/h. (*kilometers per hour*)
- He can type at 75 w/m. (*words per minute*)
- The eggs cost \$3 / dozen. (*\$3 per dozen*)
- They charge €1.50 / litre for petrol. (*€1.50 per litre*)

4. People often use a slash in certain abbreviations:

- This is my a/c number. (*account*)
- John Brown, c/o Jane Green (*care of*)
- n/a (*not applicable, not available*) / w/o (*without*)

5. A slash is often used in dates to separate day, month, and year:

- On credit card: Expires end 10/2015
- He was born on 30/11/2007.
- It was invented on 11/30/2007.

6. The slash is used to separate parts of a website address (url) on the Internet, and to separate folders on some computer systems :

- <https://www.google.co.in>