

Punctuation – Exclamation Mark

Punctuation – Exclamation Mark

The 'exclamation mark' is sometimes called 'exclamation point'.

It is used to indicate a strong emotion, e.g. anger, excitement ...

It replaces a full stop at the end of an exclamatory sentence.

(Unless the last word is an abbreviation)

It adds urgency to imperative sentences.

It is used to add emphasis to individual words or phrases.

It is be combined with other exclamation and question marks.

It can be used to indicate sarcasm or irony.

You need to be careful when formatting titles with exclamation marks.

Exclamation Mark – Strong Emotion

They are used to indicate a strong emotion, e.g. anger, excitement ...

- Yuck! Liver and spinach for dinner again...
- Woohoo! Holiday starts tomorrow!
- You passed all your exams! Well done!

Exclamation Mark – Replaces a Full Stop

They replace a full stop at the end of an exclamatory sentence.

(Unless the last word is an abbreviation)

- I'm amazed that you know him!
- I'm amazed that you know Robert Downey Jr.!
- My operation is scheduled for 4a.m.!

Exclamation Mark – Imperative Sentences

They add urgency to imperative sentences.

Let us compare some examples.

- I need the report by Friday.
- I need the report by Friday!

- You need to calm down.
- You need to calm down!

Exclamation Mark – Add Emphasis

They are used to add emphasis to individual words or phrases.

The exclamation mark usually goes in brackets after the word.

This should be avoided in formal writing.

- We worked really late – it was midnight (!) before we left.
- She has had 5 (!) husbands and still hasn't found the right one.
- He really likes motorbikes – he has 10 (!) in his garage.

Exclamation Mark – in Combination

They can be combined with other exclamation and question marks.

This is used in informal writing only.

- Leave me alone!!!!!!!!!!
- She said what?!?!?!?
- OMG!!!! Who does he think he is?!?!?

Exclamation Mark – for Sarcasm

They can be used to indicate sarcasm or irony.

Context and/or tone of voice will tell us if the person is being genuine or sarcastic.

- You're so clever!
- She looked positively radiant!
- You failed your driving test again? Genius!

Exclamation Mark – Formatting

You need to be careful when formatting titles with exclamation marks.

Titles of books, films and so on are often *italicised* to show this.

If the name of the book or film includes an exclamation mark, then this would also get italicised.

However, if the name is without, then the exclamation mark is normal.

- How many times have you seen *Mamma Mia!* this month?
- I really liked watching *Groundhog Day!*