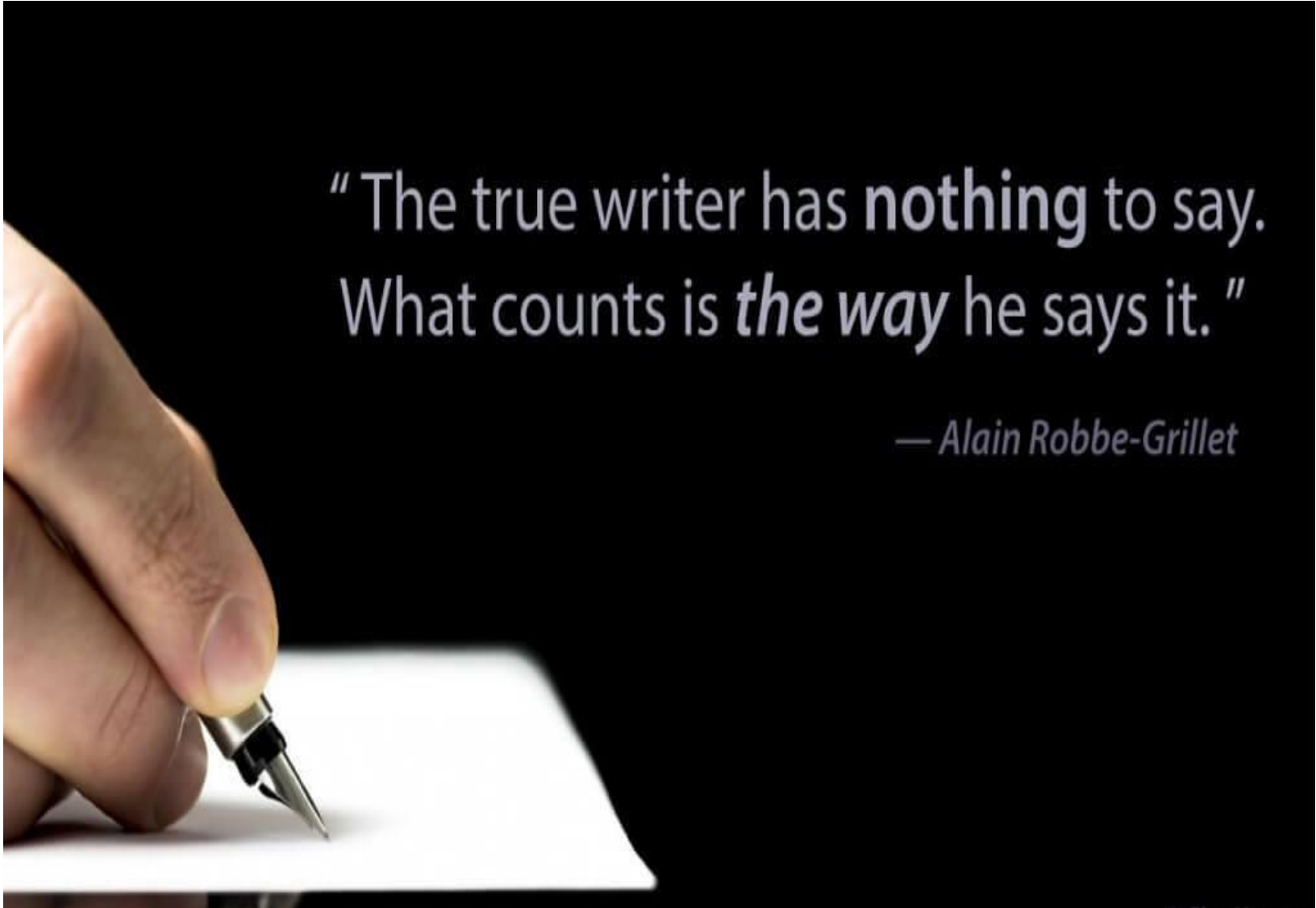


[Revised Manuscript]

The Use of PUNCTUATIONS

(Writing like a PRO)



“The true writer has **nothing** to say.
What counts is *the way* he says it.”

— *Alain Robbe-Grillet*

*“I want to thank Mister David for putting together this very useful tool.
Very small it is, but it has been of immense benefits to me.
I consult it whenever I write my assignments,
I have never had another returned.”*

Chidi Chidinma (CC), EIE, Covenant University.

By Davies & Emma

Punctuations under Review

In this Book are:

1. Comma(,) , Semi-Colon(;) , Colon(:) , and Dash(-)

Related: Dependent and Independent Clauses

2. Single(‘’) and Double Quotation (“”) Marks

3. Italics (*Emphasis*)

4. Full Stop (.)

5. Question Mark (?)

6. Exclamation Mark (!)

7. Apostrophe (’)

INTRODUCTION

It is no news that most of us struggle in writing perfect articles and journals, especially academic and business writings. We have therefore compiled into this little publication and explained intelligently a list of daily punctuations. We have also added practical examples that you can try out. We are assured that on full comprehension and daily practice of this lessons, you will be on your way to becoming a polished writer and proofreader.

This simple PDF tool is a product of many hours of intensive study. Expect better editions, as we commit many more hours of study on this very important aspect of the English language- **Punctuations!**

Happy Reading!

1. Comma, Semicolons, Colons, and Dashes

Comma

The *comma* is a punctuation mark (,) indicating a pause between parts of a sentence or separating items in a list.

Rules guiding the Comma include:

- **Rule:** Use a comma between two long independent clauses when conjunctions such as *and, or, but, for, nor* connect them.
Example: *I have painted the entire house, but she is still working on sanding the floors.*
- **Rule:** If the clauses are both short, you may omit the comma.
Example: *I painted and he sanded.*
- **Rule:** If you have only one clause (one subject and verb pair), you won't usually need a comma in front of the conjunction.
Example: *I have painted the house but still need to sand the floors.*
This sentence has two verbs but only one subject, so it has only one clause.

Semicolons

Now suppose that the three items I want to list are described in phrases that already contain some commas:

shiny, ripe apples
small, sweet, juicy grapes
firm pears

If I use commas to separate these items, my sentence looks like this:

I bought shiny, ripe apples, small, sweet, juicy grapes, and firm pears.

That middle part is a bit confusing—it doesn't give the reader many visual cues about how many items are in the list, or about which words should be grouped together. Here is where the semicolon can help. The commas between items can be "bumped up" a

notch and turned into semicolons, so that readers can easily tell how many items are in the list and which words go together:

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

2. To join two sentences.

An independent clause is a group of words that can stand on its own (independently)—it is a complete sentence. Semicolons can be used between two independent clauses. The semicolon keeps the clauses somewhat separate, like a period would do, so we can easily tell which ideas belong to which clause. But it also suggests that there may be a close relationship between the two clauses—closer than you would expect if there were a period between them. Let's look at a few examples. Here are a few fine independent clauses, standing on their own as complete sentences:

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

Now—where could semicolons fit in here? They could be used to join two (but not all three) of the independent clauses together. So either of these pairs of sentences would be okay:

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.

I could NOT do this:

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

But why would I want to use a semicolon here, anyway? One reason might have to do with style: the three short sentences sound kind of choppy or abrupt. A stronger reason

might be if I wanted to emphasize a relationship between two of the sentences. If I connect “I bought a ton of fruit” and “Apples, grapes, and pears were all on sale” more closely, readers may realize that the reason why I bought so much fruit is that there was a great sale on it.

Colons

Colons follow independent clauses (clauses that could stand alone as sentences) and can be used to present an explanation, draw attention to something, or join ideas together.

Common uses of colons

1. To announce, introduce, or direct attention to a list, a noun or noun phrase, a quotation, or an example/explanation. You can use a colon to draw attention to many things in your writing. The categories listed below often overlap, so don’t worry too much about whether your intended use of the colon fits one category perfectly.

Lists/series example:

We covered many of the fundamentals in our writing class: grammar, punctuation, style, and voice.

Noun/noun phrase example:

My roommate gave me the things I needed most: companionship and quiet.

Quotation example:

Shakespeare said it best: “To thine own self be true.”

Example/explanation example: Many graduate students discover that there is a dark side to academia: late nights, high stress, and a crippling addiction to caffeinated beverages.

2. To join sentences. You can use a colon to connect two sentences when the second sentence summarizes, sharpens, or explains the first. Both sentences should be complete, and their content should be very closely related. Note that if you use colons this way too often, it can break up the flow of your writing. So don’t get carried away with your colons!

Example: Life is like a puzzle: half the fun is in trying to work it out.

3. To express time, in titles, and as part of other writing conventions. Colons appear in several standard or conventional places in writing. Here are a few examples:

- With numbers. Colons are used to separate units of time (4:45:00 expresses four hours, forty-five minutes, and zero seconds); ratios (2:1), and Bible verses and chapters (Matthew 2:24).
- In bibliography entries. Many citation styles use a colon to separate information in bibliography entries.

Example: Kurlansky, M. (2002). *Salt: A world history*. New York, NY: Walker and Co.

- With subtitles. Colons are used to separate titles from subtitles.

Example: Everest: The Last Frontier

- After the salutation in a formal business letter. A colon can be used immediately after the greeting in a formal letter (less-formal letters tend to use a comma in this location).

Example: To Whom it May Concern: Please accept my application for the position advertised in the News and Observer.

Common colon mistakes

1. Using a colon between a verb and its object or complement

Example (incorrect): The very best peaches are: those that are grown in the great state of Georgia.

To correct this, simply remove the colon.

2. Using a colon between a preposition and its object

Example (incorrect): My favorite cake is made of: carrots, flour, butter, eggs, and cream cheese icing.

To correct this, simply remove the colon.

3. Using a colon after “such as,” “including,” “especially,” and similar phrases.

This violates the rule that the material preceding the colon must be a complete thought. Look, for example, at the following sentence:

Example (incorrect): There are many different types of paper, including: college ruled, wide ruled, and plain copy paper.

You can see that “There are many different types of paper, including” is not a complete sentence. The colon should simply be removed.

How to check for mistakes

Ask yourself a question: does the material preceding the colon stand on its own? One way to tell if the colon has been properly used is to look only at the words that come in front of the colon. Do they make a complete thought? If not, you may be using the colon improperly. Check above to see if you have made one of the most common mistakes.

Should you capitalize the first letter after a colon?

Different citation styles have slightly different rules regarding whether to capitalize the first letter after a colon. If it is important that you follow one of these styles precisely, be sure to use the appropriate manual to look up the rule.

Here’s our suggestion: generally, the first word following the colon should be lower-cased if the words after the colon form a dependent clause (that is, if they could not stand on their own as a complete sentence). If the following phrase is a complete (independent) clause, you may choose to capitalize it or not. Whichever approach you choose, be sure to be consistent throughout your paper.

Example with an independent clause, showing two different approaches to capitalization:

The commercials had one message: The geeks shall inherit the earth. (correct)

The commercials had one message: the geeks shall inherit the earth. (correct)

Example with a dependent clause (which is not capitalized):

There are three things that I love more than anything else in the world: my family, my friends, and my computer. (correct)

Dashes

The first thing to know when talking about dashes is that they are almost never required by the laws of grammar and punctuation. Overusing dashes can break up the flow of your writing, making it choppy or even difficult to follow, so don't overdo it.

It's also important to distinguish between dashes and hyphens. Hyphens are shorter lines (-); they are most often used to show connections between words that are working as a unit (for example, you might see adjectives like "well-intentioned") or to spell certain words (like "e-mail").

With that background information in mind, let's take a look at some ways to put dashes to work in your writing.

1. To set off material for emphasis

Think of dashes as the opposite of parentheses. Where parentheses indicate that the reader should put less emphasis on the enclosed material, dashes indicate that the reader should pay more attention to the material between the dashes. Dashes add drama—parentheses whisper. Dashes can be used for emphasis in several ways: A single dash can emphasize material at the beginning or end of a sentence.

Example: After eighty years of dreaming, the elderly man realized it was time to finally revisit the land of his youth—Ireland.

Example: "The Office"—a harmless television program or a dangerously subversive guide to delinquency in the workplace?

Two dashes can emphasize material in the middle of a sentence. Some style and grammar guides even permit you to write a complete sentence within the dashes.

Example: Everything I saw in my new neighborhood—from the graceful elm trees to the stately brick buildings—reminded me of my alma mater.

Example (complete sentence): The students—they were each over the age of eighteen—lined up in the streets to vote for the presidential candidates.

Two dashes can emphasize a modifier. Words or phrases that describe a noun can be set off with dashes if you wish to emphasize them.

Example: The fairgrounds—cold and wet in the October rain—were deserted.

Example: Nettie—her chin held high—walked out into the storm.

2. To indicate sentence introductions or conclusions

You can sometimes use a dash to help readers see that certain words are meant as an introduction or conclusion to your sentence.

Example: Books, paper, pencils—many students lacked even the simplest tools for learning in nineteenth-century America.

Example: To improve their health, Americans should critically examine the foods that they eat—fast food, fatty fried foods, junk food, and sugary snacks.

3. To mark “bonus phrases”

Phrases that add information or clarify but are not necessary to the meaning of a sentence are ordinarily set off with commas. But when the phrase itself already contains one or more commas, dashes can help readers understand the sentence.

Slightly confusing example with commas: Even the simplest tasks, washing, dressing, and going to work, were nearly impossible after I broke my leg.

Better example with dashes: Even the simplest tasks—washing, dressing, and going to work—were nearly impossible after I broke my leg.

4. To break up dialogue

In written dialogue, if a speaker suddenly or abruptly stops speaking, hesitates in speech, or is cut off by another speaker, a dash can indicate the pause or interruption.

Example: “I—I don’t know what you’re talking about,” denied the politician.

Example: Mimi began to explain herself, saying, “I was thinking—” “I don’t care what you were thinking,” Rodolpho interrupted.

All sentences are made up of one or more clauses. Some clauses are dependent, while others are independent.

What Is a Dependent Clause?

A clause is a group of words containing a subject and a verb or verb phrase. Though an independent clause expresses a complete thought, a **dependent clause** (also known as a subordinate clause) does not. In other words, a dependent clause cannot stand as a sentence by itself. It must be combined with one or more independent clauses to form a sentence. Dependent clauses can function either as noun clauses, adjective clauses, or adverb clauses in a sentence.

Dependent clauses begin with words such as *after, although, because, before, if, since, that, until, what, when, where, who, which, and why*.

Dependent Clause Examples

(*When we get enough snow* is a dependent clause. It contains the subject *we* and the verb *get*. The clause does not express a complete thought and cannot stand on its own as a sentence.)

Damian won't be able to play in the game **because he injured his foot**.

(*Because he injured his foot* is a dependent clause. It contains the subject *he* and the verb *injured*. The clause does not express a complete thought and cannot stand on its own as a sentence.)

Does anyone know **what we are having for dinner**?

(*What we are having for dinner* is a dependent clause. It contains the subject *we* and the verb phrase *are having*. The clause does not express a complete thought and cannot stand on its own as a sentence.)

The group can't start on its science project **until Bianca arrives**, so let's meet later.

(*Until Bianca arrives* is a dependent clause. It contains the subject *Bianca* and the verb *arrives*. The clause does not express a complete thought and cannot stand on its own as a sentence.)

(*Which book I want to read next* is a dependent clause. It contains the subject *I* and the verb *want*. The clause does not express a complete thought and cannot stand on its own as a sentence.)

After Aidan returned from his fishing trip, he took a long nap.

(*After Aidan returned from his fishing trip* is a dependent clause. It contains the subject *Aidan* and the verb *returned*. The clause does not express a complete thought and cannot stand on its own as a sentence.)

This year we rented the same cabin **that we stayed at last year**, and we had just as much fun.

(*That we stayed at last year* is a dependent clause. It contains the subject *we* and the verb *stayed*. The clause does not express a complete thought and cannot stand on its own as a sentence.)

When Maya entered the photography contest, she didn't expect to get first place.

(*When Maya entered the photography contest* is a dependent clause. It contains the subject *Maya* and the verb *entered*. The clause does not express a complete thought and cannot stand on its own as a sentence.)

I forgot **where I put the car keys**.

(*Where I put the car keys* is a dependent clause. It contains the subject *I* and the verb *put*. The clause does not express a complete thought and cannot stand on its own as a sentence.)

If Charlotte decides to join the softball team, then we will have enough members.

(*If Charlotte decides to join the softball team* is a dependent clause. It contains the subject *Charlotte* and the verb *decides*. The clause does not express a complete thought and cannot stand on its own as a sentence.)

Alicia and Jaime want to know **which restaurant we should meet them at**.

(*Which restaurant we should meet them at* is a dependent clause. It contains the subject *we* and the verb phrase *should meet*. The clause does not express a complete thought and cannot stand on its own as a sentence.)

I can't wait **until the pizza gets here!**

(*Until the pizza gets here* is a dependent clause. It contains the subject *pizza* and the verb *gets*. The clause does not express a complete thought and cannot stand on its own as a sentence.)

Dependent Clauses Versus Prepositional Phrases

Words such as *after*, *before*, *since*, and *until* can signal the beginning of either a dependent clause or a prepositional phrase. To distinguish between the two uses, remember that a clause contains a subject and a verb but a prepositional phrase does not.

Dependent Clause: I tend to be groggy **until I have my coffee in the morning.**

Prepositional Phrase: We slept **until five o'clock** and then had to get up.

Avoid Sentence Fragments

Sentence fragments are incomplete sentences. A fragment either lacks a subject or a verb, or it does not express a complete thought. Writers often mistakenly consider dependent clauses complete sentences because they contain subjects and verbs. However, dependent clauses do not express complete thoughts. Remember to pair a dependent clause with at least one independent clause to form a complete sentence.

Examples:

Sentence Fragment: After the play is finished. We'll meet you in front of the theater.

Complete Sentence: After the play is finished, we'll meet you in front of the theater.

Sentence Fragment: The actress tripped over a prop. **Before she stumbled onstage.**

Complete Sentence: The actress tripped over a prop before she stumbled onstage.

Sentence Fragment: I still enjoyed myself. **Though the play was a bit too long.**

Complete Sentence: I still enjoyed myself though the play was a bit too long.

2. Quotation Mark

Rules for Using Single and Double Quotation Marks

Learn when to use single versus double quotation marks.

Single Quotation Marks

In American English, the single quotation mark is most commonly used to quote someone who is quoting someone else. But in British, it is the opposite in style.

American English, for example: When asked why he preferred to sit while addressing his managers, the CEO said, "I had a professor in college who said, 'Always sit while talking to your managers so they do not feel intimidated.'"

British English, for example: 'I know', he said, 'that I heard him say "help me" as he fell.'

Note that the ending period for these sentences resides inside the quotation marks, not outside.

Double Quotation Marks

The most obvious and common use for double quotation marks is to surround a quote.

Following are other uses for double quotation marks:

- Surround the title of a short work like a magazine article or television episode. Italics are generally used for longer works: In the first episode of *Madmen*, "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," viewers first meet characters Peggy Olson, Don Draper, and Pete Campbell.
- When using a word or phrase as an ironic comment, place double quotation marks around it: She said she would do it "right away," but I don't believe she meant it.

It is not necessary to use double quotation marks around words you simply want to highlight. Using italics is a better way of highlighting or emphasizing words.

3. Italics (I), for *Emphasis*.

Italics can be useful for denoting titles in your text, setting off foreign words, and providing emphasis for your readers. But there are many different rules for using italics that can make it confusing to know how to use them the right way.

Using Italics to Denote Titles, Foreign Words, and Proper Names

1. Use italics to denote the titles of long creative works.

You should italicize the titles of long creative works in your paper. These include books, long poems, plays, television shows and films, artworks, or musical compositions. If you are writing in Chicago or MLA style, you should also italicize these titles on your works cited page or bibliography and use title case (i.e., Capitalizing Each Major Word in a Title). In APA style, italicize but do not use title case. Italicize:

- **Book titles:** I just can't stop reading Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.
- **Anthology and collection titles:** I need the *Norton Anthology of English Literature* for a class I am taking next fall.
- **Long poems:** The *Bhagavad Gita* is a long Hindu poem written in Sanskrit.
- **Plays:** Sophocles is one of the most famous ancient Greek playwrights. He wrote plays such as *Antigone* and *Oedipus the King*.
- **Movie and television show titles:** We watched *Halloween* last night, and it terrified us! Fortunately we followed it up with *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* to lighten the mood.
- **Album titles:** *In Utero* is my favorite Nirvana album.
- **Long musical works:** Mozart's *Don Giovanni* is one of my favorite operas. I also really enjoy Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata* for piano.
- **Works of art:** Mexican artist Frida Kahlo painted many self-portraits, including the famous *Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird*.
- An exception to italics exists for citing titles that incorporate other titles. For example, if you wanted to cite the (made-up) book titled *Shakespeare's King Lear and the Pagan Tradition*, you would need to de-italicize the title of the play because it is present in another book's title.

2. Italicize titles of journalistic media.

You should italicize the titles of newspapers, journals, magazines, and radio series. News programs with a specific name should also be italicized. As with the literary examples,

italicize these titles on your works cited page or bibliography in Chicago or MLA style and use title case. Italicize without title case for APA style. Italicize:

- **Newspapers:** My mom subscribes to the *New York Times*.
- **Journals and magazines:** I read articles from the *New England Journal of Medicine* for school, but when I'm reading for fun I prefer *People*.
- **Radio series and podcasts:** I listen to *This American Lifewhenever* I get the chance. Like nearly everyone else in 2014, I was also hooked on the podcast *Serial*.
- **News programs:** *The Rachel Maddow Show* is one of the top-performing news programs on cable news networks.

3. Italicize specific editions of sacred texts, but not the generic names of sacred texts.

You should italicize the titles of specific editions of sacred texts, such as the *The New American Standard Bible*. However, you should *not* write the names of holy books, such as the Bible, in italics. This rule applies whether you are including the title within your paper or on your works cited page or bibliography.

4. Don't italicize the names of public documents.

Names of documents like the Declaration of Independence or the Magna Carta are not italicized.

However, some academic styles such as the American Sociological Association (ASA) recommend that you italicize the titles of specific public documents, but not well-known documents (e.g., the Constitution). For example: *Telecommunications Act of 1996*.

5. Don't italicize or capitalize the word "the" at the beginning of titles.

Even if "the" is part of the official name, such as "*The Wall Street Journal*," most style guides recommend that you do not capitalize or italicize "the" when it comes at the beginning of a title.

Obviously, if you use the title as the beginning of your own title or a sentence, you would capitalize the word “the.” You would not italicize it, however. For example: *The Wall Street Journal* is the premier source of business and financial news in the US.

6. Use italics for foreign words that have not been integrated into the English language.

Words like *alumni* do not need to be italicized, but words like *semper fi* do need to be italicized. The difference is that *alumni* is understood by English speaking people as graduates of a particular university, whereas *semper fi* requires translation to be understood.

This rule, like several others, is open to interpretation. A general rule of thumb is that if the foreign word is in an English dictionary, you do not need to italicize it.

7. Italicize names of vehicles.

You should italicize the names of ships, airplanes, missiles, and man-made satellites. Do not italicize modifiers on the name such as “the” or “U.S.S.” or “H.M.S.”.

- The *Enola Gay*
- U.S.S. *Cole*
- Don’t italicize types of vehicles, such as the Learjet.

8. Use italics to denote legal cases.

When you need to provide the name of a legal case in a paper, italicize the case title including *v.* You should also italicize the legal case name on your works cited page or bibliography.

- The famous case of *Gideon v. Wainwright* was a landmark in American legal history.

9. Use italics to denote species names, variety, and subspecies names.

The Latin names of species, varieties, and subspecies need to be italicized, but common English names do not need to be italicized.

- For example: *Homo sapiens* is the binomial nomenclature for the human species. *Homo* is the Latin genus name, and *Homo sapiens* is our species name.
- In scientific writing, it is customary to give the full binomial nomenclature in the title and the first time it is used in the paper. After that, abbreviate like so: *H. sapiens*.
- You would not italicize “humans,” the common English name for *H. sapiens*.

10. Know the exceptions.

While most style guides recommend using italics as shown in the above examples, some don't. The AP (Associated Press) style does not use italics in news stories at all, even to refer to titles.

- In APA style, if you are not sure whether something should be italicized, the preference is to *not* italicize it.
- Many writers for the web prefer to use underlining or quotation marks to highlight text. This is because italics can be difficult to distinguish on a computer screen. Use your judgment to determine whether italics or other forms of highlighting are appropriate for your purpose.

Using Italics to Provide Emphasis or Show Contrast

1. Use Italics when you want to emphasize a certain word or phrase.

A common use for *italics* is to draw attention to a particular part of a text in order to provide emphasis. If something is important or shocking, you might want to italicize that word or phrase so that your readers don't miss it. For example:

- He had managed to eat *ten* cookies.
- I love the word *flabbergasted*.

2. Italicize words, letters, and numbers when used as specific terms.

If you want to call attention to a word, letter, or number as a specific term, use italics. For example:

- When defining an unfamiliar term, you may want to italicize its first appearance: “The scientific term for sneezing is *sternutation*.”
- Use italics to emphasize a letter on its own: I got an *A* in history this term.
- When he moved to the Denver Broncos, quarterback Peyton Manning retained his famous *18* on his jersey.

3. Use italics when you want to show a contrast between two words or phrases.

It is also common to use *italics* to show contrast to your readers. If you want your readers to notice a contrast between two words or phrases, you might want to italicize that word or phrase so that your readers don't miss it. You can italicize one or both words depending on your objective.^[24]

- He had managed to eat not nine, but *ten* cookies.
- The words *through* and *threw* may sound the same but obviously have very different meanings.

4. Avoid using italics to provide emphasis or show contrast in formal writing.

Using italics to provide emphasis or show contrast is usually accepted in informal writing. However, most style guidelines advise against these uses in formal, professional, or academic writing. In most cases, it's preferable to use syntax to emphasize your point in these types of writing.

- For example, APA style specifies that using italics to provide emphasis is inappropriate unless the reader might miss your intended meaning without the italics.
- Chicago style also does not recommend the use of italics for emphasis.

4. The Full Stop

The **full stop** (.), is also called the **period**. It is chiefly used to mark the end of a sentence expressing a statement, as in the following examples:

Terry Pritchett's latest book is not yet out in paperback.

I asked her whether she could tell me the way to Brighton.

Chinese, uniquely among the world's languages, is written in a logographic script.

The British and the Irish drive on the left; all other Europeans drive on the right.

Note how the full stops are used in the following article, extracted from *The Guardian*:

The opening of Ken Loach's film *Riff-Raff* in New York casts doubt on Winston Churchill's observation that the United States and Britain were two countries separated by a common language. In what must be a first, an entire British film has been given sub-titles to help Americans cut through the thick stew of Glaswegian, Geordie, Liverpoolian, West African and West Indian accents. With the arrival of *Riff-Raff*, English as spoken by many British citizens has qualified as a foreign language in the US. Admittedly, the accents on the screen would present a challenge to many people raised on the Queen's English. But it is disconcerting to watch a British film with sub-titles, not unlike watching Marlon Brando dubbed into Italian.

There is one common error you must watch out for. Here is an example of it (remember, an asterisk marks a badly punctuated sentence):

*Norway has applied for EC membership, Sweden is expected to do the same.

Can you see what's wrong with this? Yes, there are two complete statements here, but the first one has been punctuated only with a comma. This is not possible, and something needs to be changed. The simplest way of fixing the example is to change the comma to a full stop:

Norway has applied for EC membership. Sweden is expected to do the same.

Now each statement has its own full stop. This is correct, but you might consider it clumsy to use two short sentences in a row. If so, you can change the bad example in a different way:

Norway has applied for EC membership, and Sweden is expected to do the same.

This time we have used the connecting word *and* to combine the two short statements into one longer statement, and so now we need only one full stop at the end.

Here are some further examples of this very common error:

*Bangladesh is one of the world's poorest countries, its annual income is only \$80 per person.

*The British are notoriously bad at learning foreign languages, the Dutch are famously good at it.

*The proposal to introduce rock music to Radio 3 has caused an outcry, angry letters have been pouring into the BBC.

*Borg won his fifth straight Wimbledon title in 1980, the following year he lost in the final to McEnroe.

All of these examples suffer from the same problem: a comma has been used to join two complete sentences. In each case, either the comma should be replaced by a full stop, or a suitable connecting word should be added, such as *and* or *while*.

Later, I'll explain another way of punctuating these sentences, by using a semicolon

Full stops are also sometimes used in punctuating abbreviations

Summary of full stops:

- **Put a full stop at the end of a complete statement.**
- **Do not connect two statements with a comma**

5. The Question Mark

A **question mark (?)** is placed at the end of a sentence, which is a direct question. Here are some examples:

What is the capital of Wales?

Does anyone have a pen I can borrow?

Who told you that?

In which country did coffee originate?

If the question is a direct quotation, repeating the speaker's exact words, a question mark is still used:

"Have you a pen I can borrow?" she asked.

"How many of you have pets at home?" inquired the teacher.

But a question mark is **not** used in an indirect question, in which the speaker's exact words are not repeated:

She asked if I had a pen she could borrow.

The teacher asked how many of us had pets at home.

Here only a full stop is used, since the whole sentence is now a statement.

The question mark also has one minor use: it may be inserted into the middle of something, inside parentheses, to show that something is uncertain. Here are two examples:

The famous allegorical poem *Piers Plowman* is attributed to William Langland

The Lerga inscription fascinatingly contains the personal name *Vmme Sahar* (?), which looks like perfect Basque.

The question marks on the poet's birth and death dates indicate that those dates are not certain, and the one in the second example indicates that the reading of the name is possibly doubtful.

Summary of Question Marks:

- **Use a question mark at the end of a direct question.**
- **Do not use a question mark at the end of an indirect question.**
- **Use an internal question mark to show that something is uncertain.**

Rule 1. Use a question mark only after a direct question.

Correct: *Will you go with me?*

Incorrect: *I'm asking if you will go with me?*

Rule 2a. A question mark replaces a period at the end of a sentence.

Incorrect: *Will you go with me?.*

Rule 2b. Because of Rule 2a, capitalize the word that follows a question mark.

Some writers choose to overlook this rule in special cases.

Example: *Will you go with me? with Joe? with anyone?*

Rule 3a. Avoid the common trap of using question marks with **indirect questions**, which are statements that contain questions. Use a period after an indirect question.

Incorrect: *I wonder if he would go with me?*

Correct:

I wonder if he would go with me.

OR

I wonder: Would he go with me?

Rule 3b. Some sentences are statements—or demands—in the form of a question. They are called **rhetorical questions** because they don't require or expect an answer. Many should be written without question marks.

Examples:

Why don't you take a break.

Would you kids knock it off.

What wouldn't I do for you!

Rule 4. Use a question mark when a sentence is half statement and half question.

Example: *You do care, don't you?*

Rule 5a. The placement of question marks with quotation marks follows logic. If a question is within the quoted material, a question mark should be placed inside the quotation marks.

Examples:

She asked, "Will you still be my friend?"

The question *Will you still be my friend?* is part of the quotation.

Do you agree with the saying, "All's fair in love and war"?

The question *Do you agree with the saying?* is outside the quotation.

Rule 5b. If a quoted question ends in midsentence, the question mark replaces a comma.

Example: *"Will you still be my friend?" she asked.*

Are you ready for some enthusiastic **punctuation**? Because we're here to talk about exclamation marks!! Some would say we're a little overexcited about this!!!! But we can't help it!!!!

Ahem. Sorry. Got a bit carried away there. We're not alone though. Exclamation marks have become so common lately that they're pretty much standard in **some situations**. But there are still rules for how to use them in your **written work**, as we will now explain.

6. Exclamation Mark !

Traditionally, exclamation marks have been used to express excitement or admiration (they were originally called '**notes of admiration**', in fact). This is still true, with common uses including expressing excitement (e.g. 'I can't wait to see you!')

- Indicating surprise (e.g. 'I can't believe it!')
- Punctuating a short interjection (e.g. 'Wow!' or 'Hooray!')

All of these are common in informal and semi-formal writing, but you shouldn't need to use exclamation points if you're writing an essay or a business document. However, they can be used effectively in fiction (e.g. in dialogue) or when writing for a popular audience.

How Many Exclamations?

As a general rule, we think that one exclamation mark is enough. As the opening paragraph in this post shows, using several exclamation points can seem **a bit excessive**.

Thus, the only time you should use multiple exclamation marks is to give a sense of being out of control. THIS WORKS ESPECIALLY WELL IF YOU COMBINE IT WITH ALL CAPS!!!!

Punctuating Exclamations

Knowing how to use exclamation marks with other forms of punctuation can be tricky. At a basic level, exclamation marks are a form of **terminal punctuation**. As such, they replace a full stop:

This is right! – Correct

This is wrong!. – Incorrect

Things get more complicated when an exclamation point is used in parentheses. Usually, you still need to use a full stop after the closing bracket, even if this is at the end of the sentence:

I love punctuation (especially exclamation marks!). – Correct

I love punctuation (especially exclamation marks!). – Incorrect

But when a parenthetical sentence is used by itself, no extra full stop is required:

I love punctuation. (I especially love exclamation marks!) – Correct

Exclamation points in dialogue can be tricky, too. In this case, an exclamation point before the closing speech mark replaces the standard comma:

'I don't understand punctuation,' Tim said. – Correct

'I don't understand punctuation!' Tim said. – Correct

'I don't understand punctuation!,' Tim said. – Incorrect

Other than these situations, exclamation marks are fairly simple. As such, if you can remember the rules above, you should be able to avoid errors in your writing.

7. Apostrophe

Apostrophes (') can be confusing, even for native English speakers. However, they aren't difficult to master if you can remember a few apostrophe rules.

Apostrophes serve two basic functions; they show possession and indicate letters have been removed to form a contraction. Let's begin with an examination of apostrophes at work and then we'll break down all the rules.

Apostrophes at Work

You'll notice apostrophes aren't necessary when forming plural nouns or possessive adjectives (my, your, his, her, their, our, its).

In the following story, apostrophes are being used for multiple purposes. Let's take a look at where they are and how they're functioning:

"Robert and Lisa Smith have two beautiful children. Amy is nine and Ross is seven. The **Smiths'**house has two floors. The **children's** rooms are upstairs, and the **parents'** bedroom is downstairs. **Lisa's** room is always clean while **Ross's** room is always messy. The **Smiths'** lives are very busy this week. **Ross's** sports teams all have games. **Amy's** ballet class has a recital and **Robert's** car is in the shop. So, the Joneses are trying to get everything done with only **Lisa's** car. Today, **they've** been to school, practice, rehearsal, the grocery store, and the **veterinarian's** office. Mind you, they **aren't** finished yet. **They'll** be busy until late tonight and, tomorrow, **they'll** do it all again."

Apostrophe Rules for Possessives

It would be difficult for possessives to exist without apostrophes. Let's take a look at three different ways apostrophes dance around possessive words.

1. Use an apostrophe + S ('s) to show that one person/thing owns or is a member of something.

- Amy's ballet class, Lisa's car, Robert's car, Ross's room, Ross's sports teams Yes, even if the name ends in "s," it's still correct to add another "'s" to create the possessive form. It is also acceptable to add only an apostrophe to the end of singular nouns that end in "s" to make them possessive. In this case, you can show possession for Ross either way:

- Ross'
- Ross's

It makes no difference whether the item owned is singular or plural. We use "Ross's" to say that the room (singular) is his and that the sports teams (plural) are his.

2. Use an apostrophe after the "s" at the end of a plural noun to show possession.

- The parents' bedroom, the Smiths' lives

It is not necessary to add another "s" to the end of a possessive plural noun.

3. If a plural noun doesn't end in "s," add an apostrophe + "s" to create the possessive form.

- The children's rooms

Remember, a possessive noun needs an apostrophe and an "s" at the end. If there's already an "s" there, you can just add the apostrophe. If there's no "s," you have to add both - first the apostrophe, and then the "s."

Apostrophe Rule for Contractions

There's really only one rule for apostrophes and contractions, aside from careful placement:

1. When you combine two words to make a contraction, you will always take out some letters. In their place, use an apostrophe.

- they + have = they've; are + not = aren't; they + will = they'll

Imagine you're on a submarine that's diving deep into the ocean. As you dive deeper and deeper, the water pressure becomes greater. If you go too deep, the water will squeeze the submarine so hard it'll begin to leak, and you'll need to put something into the hole to stop the leak.

The same thing happens when you squeeze two words together. Something pops out. And, wherever it comes out, you must place an apostrophe to plug the hole. The one exception to this rule is the contraction "won't," which is "will + not."

Apostrophe Rules Summary

English apostrophe rules are not difficult to master. Just remember that all possessives need an apostrophe and an "s" at the end. If the word already has an "s," it only needs an apostrophe. If the word does not already have an "s," it needs the apostrophe followed by "s."

For More Study, Hit the following links:

- Yourdictionary.com
- www.k12reader.com
- thepunctuationguide.com

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