

## COLONS, DASHES, HYPHENS, AND PARENTHESES

1. A **colon (:)** is used at the end of a complete thought to introduce a list, an explanation, or a formal quotation. (Do not use a colon if the list or explanation is connected to the sentence without a complete stop.)

To repair this truck, we need the following parts: a radiator hose and a head gasket.

This amplifier is not worth repairing: the required replacement parts cost too much.

Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" begins with these words: "Four score and seven years ago."

The three students who scored 100 were Josh, Belinda, and Sara. (No stop, so no colon needed.)

2. A **dash (--)** indicates a dramatic pause or special emphasis. Dashes are used to emphasize information that interrupts the flow of the sentence. A dash can also be used to highlight a special comment or shift in meaning at the end of a sentence. A dash is also found before a summarizing phrase or clause that follows a list. Study the following examples:

Three prominent citizens--Edwin Wilkes, Tom Smith, and Roberta Marsh--were elected to the board.

I knew the material perfectly--until test day.

Math, English, psychology, communications--I have a busy schedule this quarter.

3. A **hyphen (-)** is used to join two or more words together that are being used to describe a noun. It is also used in some compound words and with some prefixes (all-, ex-, self-) and suffixes. It is used with numbers and to divide a word between syllables at the end of a line. Study the following examples:

We were delayed by a slow-moving train. My impatient sister-in-law was really upset.

All twenty-one students in my math class appeared to be self-motivated.

Everyone was supposed to read pages 24-94 over the weekend.

4. **Parentheses ( )** are used to set off information that is useful (or helpful) but not essential to the meaning of the sentence. Study the following examples:

Chapter Four (pages 123-156) is one of the most difficult we will study this quarter.

I have seen many changes (most of them for the better) at Sinclair during the last ten years.

Note: As you read, notice when writers use colons, dashes, hyphens, and parentheses (as well as other marks of punctuation). If you do not understand why a writer is using one or the other of these, show the example to your instructor for an explanation. Good writers use punctuation to emphasize and clarify. They have reasons (beyond just being aware of rules) for punctuating the way they do just as they have reasons for using certain words and sentence structures.

A. Insert **colons** and **dashes** as needed in the following sentences. Do not change or add any other punctuation marks. All sentences will require at least one or the other to be added.

1. No one and I mean no one should be permitted to smoke in a restaurant.
2. Here's what I need at the store milk, bananas, grapefruit, and ice cream.
3. Folk, blues, and Celtic these are all types of music I really enjoy.
4. I can work with anyone in this department except Sally.
5. Being a success in this class is easy all it takes is the ability to think!

B. Insert **hyphens** and **parentheses** as needed in the following sentences. Do not change or add any other punctuation marks. All sentences will require at least one or the other.

1. Seventy two people have been invited to the wedding.
2. Yard work not my favorite pastime can be a time consuming activity.
3. The president elect of our company the daughter of the former president is an outstanding individual whom everyone respects and admires.
4. Marriage such a wonderful institution does not agree with me, a four time loser in divorce court. I should have remained a happy go lucky bachelor.
5. Students at least the ones who hope to pass the quiz should read pages 150 225 before the next class.
6. The Civil War 1861 1865 caused great pain and suffering, especially among families who happened to have members as unusual as this sounds fighting on opposite sides.

## Lesson Objectives

**You will be able to**

- Use punctuation marks correctly, including end marks, commas, colons, semicolons, apostrophes, and quotation marks
- Write clearly and demonstrate command of standard English conventions

## Skills

- **Core Skill:** Demonstrate Command of Standard English Punctuation
- **Core Skill:** Edit to Ensure Correct Use of Punctuation

## Vocabulary

abbreviations  
 appositive  
 clauses  
 compound sentence  
 conjunction  
 phrase  
 punctuation

**KEY CONCEPT:** Along with correct capitalization, correct punctuation will make your writing clear and effective.

You have learned that writing in complete sentences helps to make your ideas clear. Using punctuation marks helps to further clarify the meaning of the sentences you write. Read the following sentences, paying close attention to punctuation. After each sentence, write a "C" if the meaning is clear and write a "U" if the meaning is unclear.

*Anna I said I don't want to go to the game with you.*

*The menu had a salad with olives, tomatoes, lettuce, and cheese.*

*Slow animals crossing.*

*Do you want to eat Patrick.*

## Punctuation

There are many types of **punctuation** marks that separate and clarify parts of a sentence, such as periods, commas, question marks, apostrophes, and quotation marks. There are also rules for each type. Using punctuation correctly will help you clarify your meaning to readers.

## End Marks

End marks are the types of punctuation used to end sentences. You may end a sentence with a period, a question mark, or an exclamation point.

When stating information, feelings, or wishes, use a period. When asking for a response, use a question mark. When showing strong excitement or emotion, use an exclamation point.

- The Riveras will arrive tomorrow.
- Why does Jonathan always work late?
- Help! Please hurry, Doctor!

## Comma

The comma has several uses. One is to separate parts of a sentence, such as items in a series, **appositives**, and other nonessential elements. Appositives are phrases that rename or further identify nouns. A **phrase** is a group of words that has a subject or verb, but not both.

## Commas in a Series

When you use more than two nouns, verbs, adjectives, or adverbs in a series, separate them with commas. The final item in the series of nouns or verbs is usually introduced by a **conjunction** such as *and* or *or*. A conjunction is a word that connects other words or phrases. Use a comma before the conjunction. Do not use the comma and conjunction to write a series of adjectives.

- We had hamburgers, baked beans, and salad.
- That big, smelly, ill-tempered dog is a nuisance.

Use commas to set off phrases or **clauses** that are written as a series. Clauses are groups of words that contain subjects and verbs.

- Thomas grabs the ball, dribbles to his left, pulls up, and shoots.

## With Appositives and Other Non-Essential Elements

Appositives and other nonessential elements are not necessary parts of sentences. They interrupt sentences to add information. If you remove the phrase or word, the sentence retains its meaning. Three types of interrupting phrases are set off from the rest of a sentence by commas.

Type of Phrase	Examples
Appositive, or a phrase that renames or further identifies a noun	Manuel Suarez, <u>the man behind the desk</u> , is an accountant.
Direct Address, or a sentence directed to a named specific person	If you will go with me, <u>Latona</u> , we can carpool to the conference.
Extra or Contrasting Information	Mary Ellen, <u>in fact</u> , refused to leave. Pavel will work today, <u>not on Friday</u> .

Before setting off a phrase with commas, make sure the phrase is not essential to the meaning of the sentence. In the example below, if the underlined phrase is removed, the sentence loses its meaning, so do not use commas to set it off.

- Anyone who submits the assignment early will be rewarded.
- Anyone will be rewarded.

## WORKPLACE CONNECTION

### Use Punctuation in Job Skills Lists

Want ads and résumés often list job skills as a series in sentences. You will need to separate the skills with commas and use a conjunction before the final item in the series of skills when you write a want ad or a résumé:

My pet-sitting services include walking dogs, feeding a variety of animals, and giving pets medication.

Compile a list of skills that you might include in your own résumé.

### Core Skill

Demonstrate Command of Standard English Punctuation

Periods are used with abbreviations that end in a lower case letter and with initials. They are not used in abbreviations with full capitals, including the abbreviation for United States. For example:

*Dec. 3 (December 3)*  
*John F. Kennedy (John Fitzgerald Kennedy)*  
*Chicago, IL (Chicago, Illinois)*  
*the US Fish and Wildlife Service*

Use commas to separate parts of an address or date. Commas are used in dates that include the day of the month, but are not used if only the month and year are given. For example:

*20 Any Street, Akron, OH 44303*  
*May 7, 2013*  
*June 2013*

Commas are used after both greetings and closings in letters. For example:

*Dear friends, (informal usage only)*  
*Sincerely, (informal and formal usage)*

In a notebook, correctly punctuate these abbreviations and parts of letters.

John Q Adams  
Boston, M.A.  
August, 2013  
Dear Mr. Grant

## THINK ABOUT WRITING

**Directions:** Read the following sentences, noticing the end marks used. Then rewrite any that require commas or need a different end mark. If a sentence is correct as it is, write "Correct."

1. Caitlin look out for that bus.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Did Deisha finish her résumé yet?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. It was in fact the best cheesecake Ms. Littleshield ever had.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Why don't you ever wear your yellow sweater Malik?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Yolanda the woman who got me this job has now quit.  
\_\_\_\_\_

## DEMONSTRATE COMMAND OF STANDARD ENGLISH PUNCTUATION

Some end marks and commas are found frequently in workplace documents.

### Abbreviations and Initials

Use periods with **abbreviations** and initials, which are shortened forms of words or names. However, periods are not used in abbreviations that appear in full capitals, including US postal abbreviations of state names.

### Addresses, Dates, Greetings, and Closings

Use commas to separate parts of an address or date. Commas are used in dates that include the day of the month, but commas are not used if only the month and year are given. Commas are also used after greetings or closings in a letter.

**Directions:** Do an online search to find and print out a sample letter of recommendation. Label the special usages of end marks or commas for abbreviations, initials, addresses, dates, greetings, or closings. With a partner, discuss why print or online publishers may prefer to use abbreviations.

## Edit to Ensure Correct Use of Punctuation

You can edit errors in the use of end marks and commas by thinking of the meaning of your sentences.

### Editing for End Marks

To edit for end marks, consider the message that your sentence conveys.

You can recognize a statement or command because it supplies a fact or gives an order. Use a period at the end of the sentence.

- The paper is due on Friday.

You can recognize a question because it asks for a response.

- When is the paper due?

Context can help you to recognize an expression of strong feelings.

- I made a mistake. The paper is due on Friday, not Monday!

### Editing Commas in a Series

To edit commas in a series of words, consider their part of speech. Nouns, verbs, and adverbs in a series use commas, a conjunction such as *or* or *and* before the last word in the series, and a comma before the conjunction.

- The clerk answered my questions cheerfully, quickly, and helpfully.

Adjectives in a series use commas but do not include a conjunction.

- Look at that big, funny, colorful hat!

### Editing Commas with Appositives and Nonessential Elements

To edit using commas with appositives and other nonessential elements, reread your sentence without the phrase within the commas. If the sentence has lost its original meaning, delete the commas.

- I'm giving you this gift, Kyoko, to say thank you.

### Colon

A **colon** introduces something, or several things, that tell more about a complete thought. Use a colon after a complete thought that introduces a list. Do not use a colon if the introduction to the list is not a complete thought.

- We packed the following items: apples, cheese, and bread. (correct)
- We packed: apples, cheese, and bread. (incorrect)

Use a colon after the greeting in a very formal or business letter, rather than the more informal comma.

- Dear Sir or Madam:

Use a colon to separate the hour from minutes in written time.

- It is now 6:45.

#### Core Skill

#### Edit to Ensure Correct Use of Punctuation

Good writers constantly ask themselves, "What am I trying to say? What do I want my reader to take away from this piece of writing?"

In a notebook, correctly punctuate the following sentences. Consider the meaning of each sentence.

The club president was not in fact at the meeting

Where are you going this afternoon

Look Dad that is the store we wanted to visit

My sister the girl in the red shirt likes to paint

## 21st Century Skill Media Literacy

Advertisers are sometimes so focused on selling their ideas or products to the public that they neglect the rules of punctuation. For example, while stopped at a red light, you may find yourself reading a cardboard sign that reads as follows: *Neighborhood Yard Sale "Today."* Why has the writer used quotation marks in this way? Is he or she capturing someone's direct words?

Find a print or digital advertisement that makes use of quotation marks, ellipses, or exclamation points within the copy or text. In a notebook, evaluate whether the writer has used the punctuation correctly.

Respond to these questions:

*How does the writer's intended meaning compare or contrast with the actual meaning conveyed by the punctuation?*

*How should the ad copy or text be rewritten to show correct punctuation?*

*How do errors in punctuation in advertising affect your impression of the advertiser and/or his or her ideas or product?*

## Semicolon

A semicolon is used in two ways to form **compound sentences**. A compound sentence is made up of two simple sentences, or **independent clauses**, that are joined together. When the clauses in a compound sentence are linked using a conjunctive adverb, place a semicolon before the adverb.

- Emily sets two alarm clocks before going to bed; otherwise, she is likely to oversleep.

You can also link closely related clauses in a compound sentence without using either a conjunction or a conjunctive adverb. Use the semicolon by itself to show that the two clauses are independent.

- It is a beautiful day; I should be spending it outdoors.

A semicolon can also be used to separate items in a series when there are already commas within the items.

- The contestants in the dog show were Fido, a brown and white mutt; Fifi, a French poodle; and Farley, a golden retriever.

## THINK ABOUT WRITING

**Directions:** In a notebook, edit the following informal letter for correct punctuation.

*Dear Great-uncle Quincy:*

*I am excited about seeing you when you come for a visit next week we will pick you up at Kennedy Airport on Saturday March 15 at 7 pm Please be sure to bring a bathing suit towel and sunscreen could you also please bring the latest family photos I cannot wait to see you*

*Love  
Cantrice*

## Quotation Marks

Use quotation marks to show the exact words of a speaker. Do not use quotation marks in a statement about what someone says or for an indirect quotation.

- "Stop yelling," Ernesto said, "or we will go home."
- Ernesto said that we should stop yelling or we will go home.

When using other punctuation with quotation marks, follow these rules.

Periods and commas are always placed inside the quotation marks. Use commas to separate quotations from the rest of the sentence.

- "Elephants," Tyrell said, "can be dangerous."

Colons and semicolons are always placed outside quotation marks.

- The zookeeper said, "Have your tickets ready"; they ignored her directions.

Question marks and exclamation points are placed inside the quotation marks if they are part of the quotation. Use a comma to introduce a quotation. If question marks or exclamation points are not part of the quotation, they are placed outside the quotation marks.

- Did Keith say, "That elephant is loose"?
- "Is that elephant loose?" Marisol asked.

## Apostrophe

The apostrophe has two main uses. The first is to show **possession**. When used for possession, an apostrophe shows that one thing belongs to another.

- Piri's laptop helps her take notes in meetings.

The second use for apostrophes is to form **contractions**. A contraction is one word that is made up of two words with one or more letters left out. The apostrophe is used in place of the missing letters.

- "There's a fire!" Akira yelled into the phone. "Please send help quickly!"

## Ellipsis

An ellipsis, three periods with spaces between each, is used to leave out part of a quotation.

- "We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice . . . and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

An ellipsis can also be used to show a pause in dialogue or speech.

- As Maxine looked all over her house, she moaned, "Where . . . are . . . my . . . keys?"

## Parentheses

Use parentheses to highlight interruptions in a sentence that provide useful, but nonessential, information such as dates, definitions, or explanations.

- The Bombers will play (Jan. 3) at Johnson Field in Omaha, Nebraska.
- The ant used its mandibles (jaws) to collect its food.
- I can't wait to show you our new dog (a beagle).

## Dash

Use a dash, a horizontal line, to separate parts of a sentence. It can be used in place of a comma, semicolon, or colon to show sudden breaks, expressions, or emphasis. However, the dash should not be overused, or it loses its impact.

- Mr. Chung—after getting the mysterious call—raced from his house!
- She received top honors in her class—how impressive!
- The doctor explained the test—the one for bone density.

## WRITE TO LEARN

Choose a family member or a friend and write an informal letter or e-mail message to this person. Make sure the letter includes a minimum of three paragraphs, along with a date, greeting, and closing. You may either write about a topic of your choosing or use this sentence starter:

*I am excited to . . .*

Make sure to use correct punctuation, including end marks and commas. Use colons, semicolons, quotation marks, apostrophes, ellipses, parentheses, or dashes, as needed. Include at least one example of a series and an appositive or other non-essential element. Underline each example. When you are finished, you can send your letter or e-mail to the person you chose.



## Vocabulary Review

**Directions:** Match each vocabulary word with its definition.

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. _____ abbreviations     | A. made up of two simple sentences, or independent clauses     |
| 2. _____ appositive        | B. word that connects other words, phrases, or clauses         |
| 3. _____ clauses           | C. groups of words that have a subject and a verb              |
| 4. _____ compound sentence | D. shortened forms of words or names                           |
| 5. _____ conjunction       | E. renaming word, phrase, or clause                            |
| 6. _____ phrase            | F. group of words that does not have both a subject and a verb |

## Skill Review

**Directions:** Which is the best way to write the underlined portion of the sentence? Choose the one best answer to each question. If the original is the best way, choose the first option (A).

- "Is Mark's new company located in Philadelphia," Julie asked.
  - located in Philadelphia," Julie asked.
  - located in Philadelphia," Julie asked?
  - located in Philadelphia?" Julie asked.
  - located in Philadelphia?" Julie asked?
- Teresa really wanted to go to Mexico; nevertheless, she agreed to spend her vacation at the lake.
  - Mexico; nevertheless,
  - Mexico, nevertheless;
  - Mexico, nevertheless,
  - Mexico; nevertheless;
- He gave these reasons for moving a bigger yard, more bedrooms, lower taxes, and a better school district.
  - moving a bigger yard,
  - moving: a bigger yard,
  - moving, a bigger yard,
  - moving; a bigger yard
- It is now 7:00, Stan just got here.
  - 7:00, Stan
  - 7:00: Stan
  - (7:00), but Stan
  - 7:00, and Stan
- Kalindi yelled to her brother, Who's going to feed the dog?
  - brother, Who's going to feed the dog?
  - brother, "Who's going to feed the dog?"
  - brother, Whos going to feed the dog?
  - brother "Who's going to feed the dog?"
- Theyre looking for a new car; the one they have is worn out.
  - Theyre looking for a new car;
  - They're looking for a new car,
  - Theyre looking for a new car because
  - They're looking for a new car;

## Skill Review (continued)

7. Paulo wished he could remember everything; he was always forgetting the details.
- A. everything; he was always forgetting the details.
  - B. everything, he was always forgetting the details.
  - C. everything: he was always forgetting the details.
  - D. everything, and he was always forgetting the details.
8. When the engine caught on fire Sachi yelled "Get out of the car!"
- A. Sachi yelled "Get out of the car!"
  - B. Sachi yelled, "Get out of the car!"
  - C. Sachi yelled "Get out of the car."
  - D. Sachi yelled "Get out of the car?"
9. Ricardo and Felicia went to a basketball game their school won 88-72.
- A. basketball game their school won 88-72.
  - B. basketball game, their school won 88-72.
  - C. basketball (game their school won 88-72).
  - D. basketball game (their school won 88-72).
10. "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."
- A. America one nation under God,
  - B. America (one nation under God)
  - C. America . . . one nation under God
  - D. America—one nation under God—
11. Lucita's favorite play which she has read ten times is Death of a Salesman.
- A. favorite play which she has read ten times is
  - B. favorite play which she has read ten times is:
  - C. favorite play—which she has read ten times—is
  - D. favorite play which she has read (ten times) is
12. When Trivets, Inc., didn't hire her, Gina wanted to know what she had to do to get a job
- A. what she had to do to get a job
  - B. what she had to do to get a job?
  - C. what she had to do to get a job.
  - D. what she had to do to get a job;