Mechanics of Writing

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References

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Kirkman J. Punctuation Matters
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- Comma
- Colon
- Semi colon
- Apostrophe
- Capitals
- Quotation Marks
Punctuation and body language

- Voice tone and emphasis
- Pauses
Comma

Use the comma to separate ideas in a sentence, in order to make the meaning clearer

• When joining two sentences with a conjunction (linking word), such as and, but, or, nor, so, yet.
• For example:
  • The sun was shining, so we went to the river.
  • I went to town yesterday, but I didn’t buy anything.
Comma

When adding extra information to the basic sentence:

For example:

- **At the beginning**
  - *Yesterday morning*, I went for a bike ride.
  - *In conclusion*, the survey demonstrated students make good use of the library.
  - *Nowadays*, many research projects are focused on finding effective treatments for cancer.

- **In the middle**
  - The woman, *who was feeling tired*, went home.
  - The student, *who came from Europe*, adjusted quickly to the New Zealand academic culture

- **At the end**
  - The student searched for hours without success, *becoming increasingly desperate.*
Comma

When listing a series of items:

• For example:
  • A pen, lined paper, and a calculator were required for the exam.

To introduce a quotation

• For example:
  • According to Winston Churchill, “To improve is to change, so to be perfect is to have changed often.”
Comma Fault

Comma fault refers to the joining of two sentences by a comma instead of a full stop.

• Example:
  • Please let me know if you can help in this matter, I would appreciate your reply as soon as possible.
  • Please let me know if you can help in this matter. I would appreciate your reply as soon as possible.
Comma Fault

When two sentences are closely related or reflect each other, they can be separated by a semi colon

• For example:
  • Drivers think cyclists are a menace on the roads, cyclists think drivers don’t give them enough room.
  • Drivers think cyclists are a menace on the roads; cyclists think drivers don’t give them enough room.

❖ The group of words on either side of the semi colon must be able to stand alone as a sentence.
Quiz

1. I took Angie the one with the freckles to the movie last night.
2. Jeremy, and I, have had our share of arguments.
3. You are I am sure, telling the truth.
4. She left Albany, New York on January 18 of that year.
5. We will grant you immunity if you decide to cooperate with us.
6. I am typing a letter and she is talking on the phone.
7. You said that I could go, didn't you?
8. To apply for this job you must have a Social Security card.
9. She wore a brightly colored dress.
10. She has a good healthy attitude about her work.
1. I took Angie, the one with the freckles, to the movie last night.
2. Jeremy and I have had our share of arguments.
3. You are, I am sure, telling the truth.
4. She left Albany, New York on January 18 of that year. (CORRECT. Comma after New York is optional.)
5. We will grant you immunity if you decide to cooperate with us. (CORRECT)
6. I am typing a letter and she is talking on the phone. (CORRECT. Comma after letter is optional.)
7. You said that I could go, didn't you? (CORRECT)
8. To apply for this job, you must have a Social Security card.
9. She wore a brightly colored dress. (CORRECT)
10. She has a good, healthy attitude about her work.
Colon

Introduce a list:
• Example:
  • I want an assistant who can do the following: input data, write reports, and complete tax forms.

Introduce a quotation:
• Example:
  • Copus (2009) comments: “Clear writing is inextricably linked to clear thinking”.
Colon

Expand an idea:
• Example:
• Both parties agreed on the final result: There would be increased participation in meetings by all those involved.

Add emphasis. The colon acts like a pointer:
• Example:
• He started the business because he wanted money.
• He started the business for one reason only: money.
Semi Colon

Join two complete sentences that are closely connected in meaning:

• Example:
  • Cats are independent creatures; dogs require more looking after.
  • The class was divided into two groups; the intake of first years was larger than expected.
Semi Colon

Join two complete sentences that are closely connected in meaning:

- Example:
- Treatments such as chemotherapy and radiotherapy cause undesirable side effects; therefore, the use of medicinal plants can be helpful in the treatment of cancer due to their fewer side effects.
Semi Colon

Listing complex items that contain commas:

• Example:
  • Research material can include the following: journals from the library, and from databases; hard copy, and online books; and relevant information from a practicum experience.

• This conference has people who have come from Boise, Idaho; Los Angeles, California; and Nashville, Tennessee.
Quiz

1. You asked for forgiveness, he granted it to you.

2. We ask; therefore, that you keep this matter confidential.

3. The order was requested six weeks ago, therefore, I expected the shipment to arrive by now.

4. Clothes are often made from synthetic material; for instance, rayon.

5. If you believe in magic, magical things will happen, if you do not believe in magic, you will discover nothing to be magical.

6. I have been to San Francisco, California, Reno, Nevada, and Seattle, Washington.

7. I need a few items at the store; clothespins, a bottle opener, and napkins.

8. I answered the phone; but no one seemed to be on the other end of the line.
Quiz

1. You asked for forgiveness; he granted it to you.

2. We ask, therefore, that you keep this matter confidential.

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The apostrophe has two main uses:
1. Contraction, to show that letters have been left out of a word

|- Did’nt = did not | doesn’t = does not |
|- it’s = it is | wasn’t = was not |
|- who’s = who is | can’t = cannot |
|- I’ll = I will | isn’t = is not |

⚠️ Contractions are not used in academic writing.
Apostrophe

2. Possession, to show that something belongs to someone or something.
   The apostrophe always comes directly after the name of the owner of the object, followed by what they own.

   • Example
     • a student’s essay = the essay belongs to a student
     • next week’s timetable = the timetable belonging to next week
     • the students’ pens = the pens belong to the students
Do not use the apostrophe

❖ Do not use the apostrophe with personal pronouns: his, hers, its, theirs, yours, ours
  • Example:
    • That house is theirs.

❖ Acronym plurals and dates:
  • Example:
    • FAQs, 1930s, 30s.

Resist the temptation to use an apostrophe whenever you see an s.
Quiz

1. His 6's and 8's looked alike.
2. Where would I find the mens room?
3. Both secretary vacations caused a delay in output.
4. New clients accounts showed an 11 percent increase in sales. (clients is plural)
5. Most childrens imaginations run wild when told that story.
6. Both sons-in-law opinions were considered.
7. These M.D. credentials are excellent.
8. Both brothers-in-laws jobs required physical labor.
9. You’re right to privacy will not be abused.
10. It's beauty is unsurpassed.
Quiz

1. His 6s and 8s looked alike.
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3. Both secretaries’ vacations caused a delay in output.
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5. Most children’s imaginations run wild when told that story.
6. Both sons-in-law’s opinions were considered.
7. These M.D.s’ credentials are excellent.
8. Both brothers-in-law’s jobs required physical labor.
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10. Its beauty is unsurpassed.
Capitals

The first letter of the first word of a sentence.

- Example:
  - The woman entered the room.

The pronoun I.

Acronyms and abbreviations which are formed from the first letters of words.

- Example:
  - WHO
Capitals

• All proper nouns, which include the names of people and their titles, specific places and organizations, and the names of months and days.
  • Example:
    • Dr. Mary Jones, France, Tuesday, Students’ Association

• The first letter of the first word in numbered or bulleted lists
What Not to Capitalize

• The spelled-out words in most acronyms and abbreviations, even though the words ordinarily appear in a shortened form in capital letters:
  • Field-replaceable unit (FRU)
  • Direct memory access (DMA)

• Any word for the sole reason of emphasizing it

• The first word following a colon if the word begins a text fragment
  • This button has only one purpose: to shut down the system.
Quiz

1. "You must understand," he pleaded, "That I need more time to pay you."

2. Mark Paxton, the Vice President of the company, embezzled over one million dollars.

3. I live in the northeastern part of the state where the climate is colder.

4. The West, especially California, is famous for its cutting-edge technology.

5. I enjoy Summer more than any other season.
Quiz

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Quotation Marks

For quotes: Quotation marks indicate that material was taken verbatim from another source.
Avicenna says: “Width of life is more important than length of life.”
Sara shouted: "Where are my keys?"

Around chapter titles and section headings: Use quotation marks to enclose titles of chapters and headings of sections in a book.
- “Sending Mail” on page 42 describes how to send an email message.

For emphasis: Use quotation marks to emphasize a word or phrase when it is used in an uncommon way or when it is the subject of discussion.
- The word “menu” is often used in technical writing, but not the word “restaurant”.

Sara shouted: "Where are my keys?"
Quiz

1. Sandi asked, "Did Jeri say, 'I am fired'?"

2. Did he ask? "Where are my keys"?

3. Harry needs to know if he can count on you?

4. Nicole said with shock in her voice! "I can't believe what I just saw."

5. It wouldn't surprise me if he quit his job?

6. I can't think of what to say?
Quiz

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2. Did he ask, "Where are my keys?"

3. Harry needs to know if he can count on you.

4. Nicole said with shock in her voice, "I can't believe what I just saw!"

5. It wouldn't surprise me if he quit his job.

6. I can't think of what to say.
1. Go **west** three blocks and turn right.
2. Yes, sir, I will do it immediately.
3. The woman who is standing there is his ex-wife.
4. I did not receive the order; therefore, I will not pay my bill. (CORRECT)
5. Is that book **yours**?
6. We have much to do; for example, the carpets need vacuuming.
7. **One-fourth** of the police force voted for a pay raise.
8. “Stop it!” I said. “Don’t ever do that again.”
9. You are required to bring the following: **sleeping** bag, food, and a sewing kit.
10. The three **companies’** computers were stolen.
• Comma
• Colon
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Further reading

Körner AM. *Guide to Publishing a Scientific Paper*

Kirkman J. *Punctuation Matters*

Straus J. *The Blue Book of Grammar and Punctuation*

Young DJ. *The Mechanics of Writing*
سپاس از توجه شما
خسته نباشید!