



End Punctuation

Periods

Purpose:	To end declarative sentences, indicate abbreviations, and represent ellipses.
Declarative Sentences:	. - Used to mark the end of a statement. Example: The cat sat on the mat.
Abbreviations:	. - Used in abbreviations. Example: e.g., i.e., Mr., Dr.
Ellipses:	... - Indicates omitted words or a pause. Example: I was thinking about... what was I saying?

Question Marks

Purpose:	To end interrogative sentences.
Interrogative Sentences:	? - Placed at the end of a direct question. Example: What is your name?
Indirect Questions:	Do not use a question mark for indirect questions. Example: I wonder what time it is.

Exclamation Points

Purpose:	To express strong emotion or emphasis.
Exclamatory Sentences:	! - Used to indicate excitement, surprise, or strong emphasis. Example: That's amazing!
Overuse:	Avoid overuse, as it can diminish the impact. Example: Instead of: "I can't believe it!!!!" use "I can't believe it!"

Internal Punctuation

Commas

Purpose:	To separate elements in a series, introduce clauses, and set off introductory phrases.
Series:	, - Separates items in a list. Use the Oxford comma for clarity. Example: I like apples, bananas, and oranges.
Introductory Elements:	, - After introductory words, phrases, or clauses. Example: However, I disagree. After eating, I went for a walk.
Coordinate Adjectives:	, - Separate coordinate adjectives that modify the same noun. Example: It was a dark, stormy night.
Nonessential Information:	, - Sets off nonessential phrases or clauses. Example: The book, which was very long, was boring.

Semicolons

Purpose:	To connect related independent clauses and separate items in a complex list.
Independent Clauses:	; - Joins related independent clauses without a coordinating conjunction. Example: The sun was shining; the birds were singing.
Complex Lists:	; - Separates items in a list when the items contain commas. Example: I visited Paris, France; Rome, Italy; and London, England.

Colons

Purpose:	To introduce a list, explanation, or example.
Lists:	: - Introduces a list of items. Example: I need to buy: milk, bread, and eggs.
Explanations:	: - Introduces an explanation or clarification. Example: There's only one thing to do: give up.
Emphasis:	: - Adds emphasis to a word or phrase. Example: His goal in life: to be happy.

Parenthetical Punctuation

Parentheses

Purpose:	To enclose supplementary information or explanations.
Supplementary Information:	() - Adds extra details that are not essential to the sentence. Example: My dog (a golden retriever) loves to play fetch.
Clarifications:	() - Provides clarification or definitions. Example: The acronym NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) is well-known.

Brackets

Purpose:	To insert editorial comments or corrections within quotations.
Editorial Comments:	[] - Adds clarification or correction in quoted material. Example: "He said he would [definitely] be there."
Omissions:	[...] - Indicates omitted text within a quote. Example: "Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth [...] a new nation."

Dashes

Purpose:	To indicate a sudden break in thought or to set off parenthetical information.
Em Dashes:	— - Used to indicate a break or interruption. Example: I was about to leave—but then the phone rang.
En Dashes:	– - Indicates a range or connection between words. Example: Pages 100–200. The New York–London flight.
Hyphens:	- - Joins words to form compound adjectives or nouns. Example: A well-known author. A self-made millionaire.

Quotation Marks and Apostrophes

Quotation Marks

Purpose:	To indicate direct speech, quotations, or titles of short works.
Direct Speech:	" " - Encloses words spoken by someone. Example: He said, "Hello, world!"
Quotations:	" " - Used for quoted material from another source. Example: "To be or not to be, that is the question."
Titles of Short Works:	" " - Encloses titles of short stories, poems, articles, and songs. Example: I read the article "The Power of Punctuation."
Single Quotation Marks:	' ' - Used for quotations within quotations. Example: He said, "She told me, 'I'm going to the store.'"

Apostrophes

Purpose:	To indicate possession, contractions, or plurals of single letters.
Possession:	's - Indicates ownership. Example: The dog's bone. s' - Indicates plural ownership. The dogs' bones.
Contractions:	' - Replaces omitted letters in contractions. Example: I can't. They're. It's.
Plurals of Single Letters:	's - Forms the plural of single letters. Example: Mind your p's and q's.