



Punctuation

Period:

- place at the end of a sentence
- place at the end of a request
- place inside of quotation marks

Comma:

- separate words and phrases in a series
- separate a name and title or degree
- separate transitional words such as:
Indeed, moreover, nevertheless, of course, then
Nevertheless, he was right about the car.
- introductory words such as:
That is, for example, for instance, namely
- if the following is at the beginning of a sentence
yes, no, why, well, oh
- dates
Example: November 28, 2000
- numbers of more than four digits
Example: 3,123
- two sets of numbers that appear back to back
Example: On March 5, 119 people were injured in a building fire.

See our additional handouts: "The Elusive Often Abused Comma" and "Additional Comma Uses."

Notice that any punctuation is placed inside of the quotation mark.

Colon:

- introduce a long quote (*varies by style*)
- introduce a list
- extended explanation, especially if 'first,' 'second,' or 'more' are used

The Semicolon:

- use in place of a conjunction to link two complete clauses
- use in a list of names and titles
- use to separate long statements following a colon
- place it outside of quotation marks

Question Mark:

- place at the end of a direct question
- a question being asked in a quotation such as:
"I know the answer," she said, "but do you know it?"

Apostrophe:

- used to show possession
Singular: That is Sam Houston's cane. - Jason Piece Jr.'s office is on the third floor.
This is someone else's bag. - I looked in Kyle and Trey's room.
Plural: The girls' dormitory is on the west side of campus.
The donations will go to the Children's hospital.

See our additional handout: "Those Pesky Apostrophes."

Quotation Marks:

- use to express a direct quotation such as:
“Ethane made dinner.”
- if a quote begins in the middle of a statement, do not capitalize it
The Surgeon General said that “people have been warned about the dangers of tobacco.”
- use a single quotation mark for a quote in a quote such as:
“According to Jessica, Ryan said, ‘I don’t like chocolate cake.’”
- titles of the following:
Short story, poem, article, website
- place quotation marks outside of a comma or a period
- place quotation marks inside of a semicolon, colon and exclamation mark (note: this is only if the punctuation is not part of the quote)
- first time use of unfamiliar words
See our additional handout: “How to Quote Effectively.”

The Dash:

- indicates an abrupt change in a sentence
- use to set off related material that is inserted into the sentence

Parentheses:

- use to separate extra information
- use to enclose letters or numbers labeling items in a series

Hyphen:

- a single idea represented by two or more words
Example: Up-to-date changes were made to the web page.
- division of words into syllables
Example: hal-le-lu-jah
- in place of ‘to’ in dates, pages, paragraphs, verses, and cantos such as:
1983-1987
Cantos III-VII
Paragraphs 7-10

Italics:

- titles of the following are italicized:
books, newspapers, works of art, magazines, plays, films, pamphlets, radio series,
television series, specific titles of boats, trains, air craft
- words that express continuance or cross-referencing such as:
see, see also, to be continued
- when a word is referred to as a word such as:
The word *love* has many different meanings.
- foreign words (unless commonly used in English language), such as:
adagio, gracias, nien, niet
- Latin abbreviations (unless commonly used in English language), such as:
et. al. (means ‘and others’)
sic (means ‘thus’)
- to add emphasis to a word or expression, such as:
I tasted *all* twelve of the desserts.