



The Writing Centre's 10 points to Punctuation

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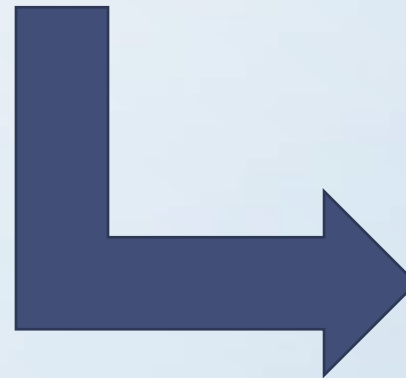
WE ARE

WRITING TUTORS

List of punctuation points

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What about
apostrophes
and commas?



Apostrophe and
Comma support can
be found in
PowerPoints specifically
created for those
points of punctuation

Quotation Marks



Rules:

1. Put quotation marks around direct quotes – a speakers or writer's exact words
2. Put quotation marks around short titles of work



Quotation Marks

Examples:

Direct Quotes

My best friend warned me,
"Stay away from that guy."

The author states, "The
population has grown due to
urbanization."

Around Titles

In Grade Eight, we read Robert
Frost's poem "The Road Not
Taken."

My little sister has learned to sing
"Itsy Bitsy Spider"

Numbers

Rules:

1. Numbers ten and under must be spelled
2. Spell out numbers that are written as one or two words
3. Use the numbers themselves if it takes more than two words to spell them
4. Use numbers to write dates, times, and addresses

Examples:

- I have five courses this semester.
- Alice mailed two hundred brochures.
- She took 243 photographs.
- We live at 24 Cambridge Street.
- They got married on April 6, 1993.

Abbreviations

Common Abbreviations

- You should spell out most words, but you may use common abbreviations such as:
- Mr., Mrs., Ms., Jr., Sr., and Dr. when they are used with a proper name
- Other abbreviations would be when dealing with time (a.m. or p.m.) or organizations that are common (CIBC)

Some Rules

- Don't use periods in abbreviations with more than two letters
- Spell out the names of places, months, days of the week, courses of study, and words referring to a part of a book

Abbreviations

Examples:

- The moderator asked **Mr.** Steinman to comment.
- The bus left at 5:00 **p.m.**, and the trip took five hours.
- He works for **CBC**.

Try this: I never got the notes for Chapter Three

Not this: I never got the notes for Chap. Three

Try this: He lives on Chestnut Street in Winnipeg, Manitoba

Not this: He lives on Chestnut St. in Winnipeg, MN.

Semicolons

(A semicolon is half a colon)

Rules:

1. Use a semicolon to join two independent clauses.
2. Use semicolons to separate items in a list that have commas.



HINT: If you cannot replace it with a period, it isn't used correctly when joining independent clauses.



Semicolons



Examples:

1. Joining independent clauses:

Michael loves his old Camaro; he worked on it every weekend.

2. If they are joined by a conjunctive adverb, you still need a semicolon:

He was fluent in Spanish; consequently, he was the perfect person to bring on our vacation to Venezuela.

3. In a list with commas:

The contestants came from Kenora, Ontario; Brandon, Manitoba; and Estevan, Saskatchewan.

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Colons

Rules:

1. Used at the end of a complete sentence
2. Introduces a list
3. Introduces an explanation



Colons

Examples:



When I went grocery shopping, I picked up a few things: milk, eggs, and coffee.



The room was a mess: dirty clothes were piled on chairs, wet towels were thrown on the floor, and an empty pizza box was tossed in the closet.



Colons

Examples:

○ When I went grocery shopping, I picked up a few things: milk, eggs, and coffee.

- The words after the colon explain what few things I picked up

○ The room was a mess: dirty clothes were piled on chairs, wet towels were thrown on the floor, and an empty pizza box was tossed in the closet.

- All the words after the colon explain what the mess was like



Colons

HINT:

Some people use a colon for every list, but this is not a good rule to follow.

Remember:

A colon, even one that introduces a list, only comes after a complete sentence.



Parentheses

Use parentheses to enclose extra material and afterthoughts.

Examples:

I was sure that Ridgefield (the town I'd just visited) was not the place for me.

If your sentence includes a comma, make sure to place it after the second parenthesis

She was accepted at the college (her first choice), but her parents wanted her to go to a school that was closer.

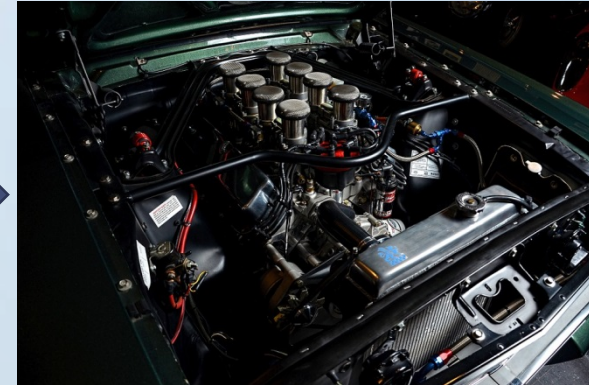
Hyphens

Rule:

A hyphen joins two or more descriptive words that act as a single word.

Example:

The old car had a **souped-up** engine. 



James was a **smooth-talking** charmer.



Dashes

Rules:

Use a dash to interrupt a sentence; use a pair of dashes to set off words within a sentence.

A dash is somewhat **dramatic**,
so be careful not to overuse it.



Dashes -----

Examples:

1. This is my last chance to warn him – and he'd better listen to my warning this time.
2. That silly show – believe it or not – is number one in the ratings.

Exclamation Marks!

Rules:

The exclamation mark is used at the end of a sentence that expresses **strong emotion**

Examples:

Appropriate: You've won the lottery!

Inappropriate: We had a great time! ("Great" already implies excitement)

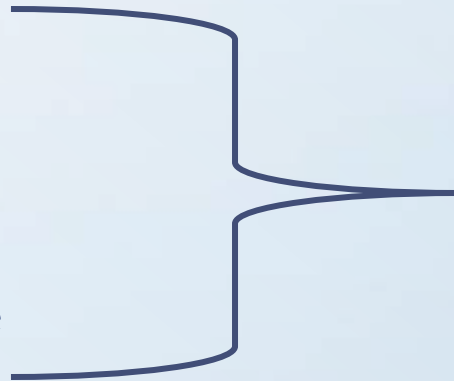


Ellipses...

Rules:

1. Intentionally leaving out words in a quoted text.
2. Can also have different meanings

- Unfinished thought
- Brief pause in text
- Nervous or awkward silence




These examples are for **informal** writing.

Ellipses...

Examples:

Thoreau believes that "if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, . . . he will live with the license of a higher order of beings."



A portion of the quote is replaced with an ellipsis to shorten it and make it easier to read.

Now you have all the tools to use punctuation in your writing. If you have questions about apostrophes and commas, remember to look at our separate PowerPoints to learn more about them.

You're finished!

**If you found this helpful, please speak to one of our Writing Centre tutors on ways to view these slides on your own time

