

Punctuation

Punctuation marks are used as signals to the reader. When we speak, we can pause, stop, or change our tone of voice. When we write, we need to indicate to our reader how we want them to read our writing. If we do not have punctuation, our writing will be one long stream of thought with no coherence.

The following are some rules and examples to help you use punctuation appropriately:

Punctuation	Primary Uses	Examples
PERIOD (.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To end a declarative sentence - To end a quotation - To enclose an in-text citation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obama is from Hawaii. - She said, "I'll be there." - "I have a dream" (King 210).
ELLIPSIS (...)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To indicate a portion of a portion of a quite has been omitted. - To show a pause in speech or that a sentence trails off. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The author claims, "I went there... to find what I needed." - I guess I'm just not sure...
COMMA (,)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To separate two complete sentences with a coordinating conjunction. <p><i>NOTE: There are many different uses of commas. Please refer to the Comma Usage handout for more info.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - She went to the movies, and she bought popcorn and a Coke.
COLON (:)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduces an element or series of elements that illustrates or amplifies the information that preceded the colon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A basic essay consists of the following: an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.

SEMICOLON (;)	- Join two related, complete sentences without using a coordinating conjunction.	- I have an event tomorrow; I cannot go out tonight.
HYPHENS (-)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Separate compound adjectives, which are single adjectives made up of more than one word. - Separate specific prefixes, like self-, ex-, and all-, from the words they modify. -To indicate certain numbers and fractions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This store has a lot of high-priced items. - My ex-boyfriend is extremely self-absorbed. - Twenty-seven years ago, the population of Raleigh was only three-quarters of what it is today.
PARENTHESES ()	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To include an acronym for the first time in a text. -To set off information within a text or paragraph. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Curators from the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) have announced a new dinosaur exhibit. -While walking down the street (paying more attention to her phone than to her feet), Catherine tripped over the curb and sprained her ankle.
BRACKETS []	- To show that words have been added to a direct quotation.	- “We went [to the new dinosaur exhibit] and had a great time.”