

Punctuation

An **Exclamation mark** is used to indicate shouting, excitement, surprise or a **command**. It is found at the end of a sentence and is always followed by a capital letter (except for in speech).

E.g. Get here now!
"Help!" she shouted.



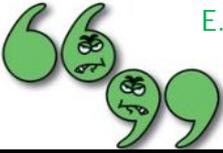
Question marks are used to indicate that a direct **question** has been asked. They are found at the end of a sentence and are always followed by a capital letter (except for in speech).

E.g. Can I play outside?
"How?" he asked.



Inverted commas, speech marks or quotation marks, as they are sometimes called, always appear in pairs. They go around the words that are being said by a person or character.

E.g. "I like horses," she said.
He said, "Today's my birthday."



Commas are used to mark a short break within a sentence and tell the reader to take a brief pause.

They separate items in a list and mark **clauses** or **phrases**.

E.g. I bought eggs, milk, bread and cheese.
Without delay, she ran home.
If it rains, I'll wear my coat.



An **Elipsis** is used to show that words are missing or a sentence has been left unfinished. It can also signal a long pause, particularly in speech.

E.g. "I wonder if...." she thought.
I'm not sure...I might.



Brackets or parentheses are used to separate a word or phrase from the main text. They contain information which could be removed without altering the meaning. Brackets always come in pairs.

E.g. Mr Brown (my neighbour) was gardening.
Shakespeare (born in 1564) was a writer.



A **dash** is used to mark off information (often an 'aside' comment) that is not essential to the meaning of the sentence. Dashes work in a very similar way to brackets although they don't always come in pairs.

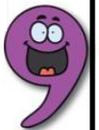
E.g. My favourite cousin is coming – Oliver.
She – my mother – was so excited.

NB This is not to be mistaken for a hyphen which is used to join two words to make a compound word (e.g. newly-built).



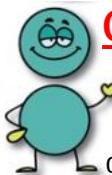
Apostrophes are used in two ways: to show possession and to show omission.

Possession apostrophes show that something belongs to someone (e.g. Frank's car; Mum's shoes). Omission apostrophes show that something (usually one or more letters) is missing in a contracted word (e.g. don't – the o of do not is missing; can't – the n and o of cannot are missing).



Colons are used to introduce a list, an example or an explanation. The **clause** before a colon should make sense on its own but the **phrase** or **clause** after it need not.

E.g. There are three things I need: cheese, milk and eggs.
She is always ill: last year she had measles & mumps!
He finally won it: the trophy.



A **Semi-colon** goes between two separate **clauses** to show that they are linked. It goes in the same place you could put a **conjunction** if you wanted to join the **clauses** together.

E.g. She went west; I went east.
I was cold; it was snowing outside.
It can also be used to separate items in a list if each item is a long **phrase** rather than a word or two.
E.g. I got four pints of milk; seven cans of coke and some biscuits.

