



# PUNCTUATION IN ENGLISH

---

Subject: English Language - Lecture # 9

مدرسة المادة : الدكتورة روضة برهان الدين عبدالرحمن

Kirkuk University - College of Science

Physics Department – 1st grade

- Punctuation is used to create sense, clarity and stress in sentences.
- You use punctuation marks to structure and organize your writing.
- You can quickly see why punctuation is important if you try and read this sentence which has no punctuation at all:
- perhaps you dont always need to use commas periods colons etc to make sentences clear when i am in a hurry tired cold lazy or angry i sometimes leave out punctuation marks grammar is stupid i can write without it and dont need it my uncle Harry once said he was not very clever and i never understood a word he wrote to me i think ill learn some punctuation not too much enough to write to Uncle Harry he needs some help

- Now let's see if punctuating it makes a difference!

Perhaps you don't always need to use commas, periods, colons etc. to make sentences clear. When I am in a hurry, tired, cold, lazy, or angry I sometimes leave out punctuation marks. "Grammar is stupid! I can write without it and don't need it," my uncle Harry once said. He was not very clever, and I never understood a word he wrote to me. I think I'll learn some punctuation - not too much, enough to write to Uncle Harry. He needs some help!

## PUNCTUATION RULES IN ENGLISH

- the period (or full stop in British English) .
- the comma ,
- the exclamation mark !
- the question mark ?
- the colon :
- the semicolon ;
- the quotation mark “ ”
- the apostrophe '
- the hyphen and the dash -
- parentheses ( ) and brackets [ ]

## THE PERIOD, FULL STOP OR POINT in British English

- You use it like a knife to cut the sentences to the required length.
- Generally, you can break up the sentences using the full stop at the end of a logical and complete thought that looks and sounds right to you.
- Mark the end of a sentence which is not a question (?) or an exclamation (!)
  - Rome is the capital of Italy.
- Indicate an abbreviation
  - I will arrive between 6 a.m. and 7 a.m.
- Ellipsis
  - Often you will see a sentence concluding with three dots. This indicates that only part of the sentence or text has been quoted or that it is being left up to the reader to complete the thought.
    - He is always late, but you know how I feel about that...

- Period after a single word

Sometimes a single word can form the sentence. In this case you place a full stop after the word as you would in any other sentence. This is often the case when the subject is understood as in a greeting or a command.

- "Goodbye."

- "Stop."

- Periods in numbers

Numbers use periods in English to separate the whole number from the decimal. A period used in a number is also called a "decimal point" and it is read "point" unless it refers to money.

- \$10.43 = ten dollars and 43 cents

- 14.17 = fourteen point one seven

# THE COMMA

- There are some general rules which you can apply when using the comma.

## **SEPARATE PHRASES, WORDS, OR CLAUSES IN LISTS**

- When making a list, commas are the most common way to separate one list item from the next.
- The final two items in the list are usually separated by "and" or "or", which should be preceded by a comma.

## **A SERIES OF INDEPENDENT CLAUSES (SENTENCES)**

- I met Harry, we went for a swim together, and afterwards Harry went home.

## A SERIES OF NOUNS

- For dinner I had soup, fish, chicken, dessert, and coffee.

## A SERIES OF ADJECTIVES

- A list of adjectives usually requires commas.
- She was young, beautiful, kind, and intelligent.
- if an adjective is modifying another adjective you do not separate them with a comma.
- She was wearing a bright red shirt.

## A SERIES OF VERBS

- Tony ran towards me, fell, yelled, and fainted.

## A SERIES OF PHRASES

- The car smashed into the wall, flipped onto its roof, slid along the road, and finally stopped against a tree.



## ENCLOSING DETAILS

- Use a comma to enclose non-defining relative clauses and other non-essential details and comments.
- The comma is placed on either side of the insertion.
  - China, one of the most powerful nations on Earth, has a huge population.

## PARTICIPIAL PHRASES

- Hearing that her father was in hospital, Jane left work immediately.

## TAG QUESTIONS

- She lives in Paris, doesn't she?

## INTERJECTIONS

- Yes, I will stay a little longer, thank you.

# THE EXCLAMATION MARK

- The exclamation mark is used to express exasperation, astonishment, or surprise, or to emphasis a comment or short, sharp phrase.
  - **Help! Help!**
  - **That's unbelievable!**
  - **Get out!**
  - **Look out!**
- You can also use exclamation marks to mark a phrase as funny, ironic or sarcastic.
- That was clever! (when someone has done something stupid)

- In very informal writing styles (SMS, chat, Twitter or Facebook, etc.), an exclamation mark is sometimes combined with a question mark to indicate both surprise and slight uncertainty.
  - He's getting married!?
- Double and triple exclamation marks are common in very informal writing styles, but are a sign of being uneducated in less casual correspondence.
  - That's crazy!!!

# THE QUESTION MARK

- Use the question mark at the end of all direct questions.
  - **What is your name?**
- Do not use a question mark for reported questions
  - **He asked me what my name was.**
- Long questions still need question marks
  - **Isn't it true that global warming is responsible for more and more problems which are having a disastrous effect on the world's climate and leading to many millions of people in countries that can least afford it having to contend with more and more hardship?**
- Question marks can sometimes appear within sentences
  - **There is cause for concern (isn't there?) that the current world economic balance is so fragile that it may lead to a global economic downturn.**

# THE COLON

- The colon expands on the sentence that precedes it, often introducing a list that demonstrates or elaborates whatever was previously stated.
- There are many reasons for poor written communication: lack of planning, poor grammar, misuse of punctuation marks, and insufficient vocabulary.
- The colon is also used to divide the hour from the minutes in writing a time in English.
- 4:15 = "four fifteen"

# THE SEMICOLON

- The semicolon is somewhere between a full stop and a comma.
- Semicolons can be used in English to join phrases and sentences that are thematically linked without having to use a conjunction.
  - I like your brother; he's a good friend.
- Semicolons can also be used instead of commas to separate the items in a list when the items themselves already contain commas.
  - Many great leaders, Churchill, leader of Britain during the Second World War; Alexander, the great Emperor and general; and Napoleon, the brilliant French general, had strong characters, which were useful when their countries were at war but which did not serve them well in times of peace

# QUOTATION MARKS

- Use quotation marks to cite something someone said exactly.
  - "I'm going to the store now," she said
- If quoting others within a quote, both single and double quotation marks are used to set the two separate quotations off from each other
  - 'I haven't spoken to Peter for months,' Dianne said. 'The last time I spoke to him he said, "I'm going to Bahrain and won't be back for about three years", I've heard nothing since then'.
- You may see single or double quotation marks used to mark out idiomatic or unfamiliar expressions
  - I've always thought that he was very annoying, a bit of a 'pain in the neck.'
- **a pain in the neck**, they are very annoying

- Quotation marks both single and double are also used for specific purposes in bibliographic references or when citing sources in academic writing. There are a number of ways of organizing bibliographies which set out standard formats. Most organizations and academic institutions will prefer one of these or have their own format published in a 'style guide'.
- R. B. Abdulrahman, H. Cansizoglu, M. F. Cansizoglu, J. B. Herzog, and T. Karabacak, "Enhanced light trapping and plasmonic properties of aluminum nanorods fabricated by glancing angle deposition," *J. Vac. Sci. Technol. A*, 2015.

IEEE style



# THE APOSTROPHE

- apostrophe has two very different (and very important) uses in English: possession and contractions.

## THE APOSTROPHE IN CONTRACTIONS

Type	Without contractions	Contractions
Using "not"	is not, has not, had not, did not, would not, can not	isn't, hasn't, hadn't, didn't, wouldn't, can't

## THE POSSESSIVE APOSTROPHE

- In most cases you simply need to add 's to a noun to show possession
  - **Ibrahim's coat**
- Plural nouns that do not end in s also follow this rule:
  - **the children's room**
- Ordinary (or common) nouns that end in s, both singular and plural, show possession simply by adding an apostrophe after the s.
  - **the bus' wheel**
  - **the babies' crying**
- Proper nouns (names of people, cities, countries) that end in s can form the possessive either by adding the apostrophe + s or simply adding the apostrophe. Today both forms are considered correct (Jones's or Jones')
  - **Charles' book (or Charles's book)**

# HYPHENS AND DASHES

- A hyphen joins two or more words together while a dash separates words into parenthetical statements.
- The two are sometimes confused because they look so similar, but their usage is different. Hyphens are not separated by spaces, while a dash has a space on either side.

# HYPHENS

- used to join two words or parts of words together
  - **run-down, up-to-date**
- There are some cases where hyphens preserve written clarity such as where there are letter collisions, where a prefix is added, or in family relations.
  - **co-operate, son-in-law**
- Many words that have been hyphenated in the past have since dropped the hyphen and become a single word (**email**, nowadays).
- In some cases though, a hyphen does change the meaning of a sentence.
  - **I am thinking of re-covering my sofa** (= to put a new cover on it)
  - **I would like to recover my sofa.** (= from someone who has borrowed or stolen it)

## HYPHENS IN NUMBERS

- Use a hyphen with compound numbers from **twenty-one** to **ninety-nine**.
- In written fractions place a hyphen between the numerator and denominator
  - **one-third** =  $\frac{1}{3}$
- except if there is already a hyphen in either the numerator or the denominator.
  - **sixty-nine eighty-ninths** =  $\frac{69}{89}$
- Use a hyphen when a number forms part of an adjectival compound
- **He won the 100-metre sprint.**

# DASHES

- Dashes can be used to add parenthetical statements or comments in much the same way as you would use brackets.
- In formal writing you should use the bracket rather than the dash as a dash is considered less formal.
- Dashes can be used to create emphasis in a sentence.
  - You may think she is a liar - she isn't.
  - She might come to the party - you never know.

# BRACKETS AND PARENTHESES

- 'parentheses' refers to round brackets ( ) and 'brackets' to square brackets [ ].
- Usually we use square brackets - [ ] - for special purposes such as in technical manuals.



- Round brackets - ( ) - are used in a similar way to commas when we want to add further explanation, an afterthought, or comment that is to do with our main line of thought but distinct from it.
- You can eat almost anything while travelling in Asia if you are careful to observe simple rules (avoiding unboiled or unbottled water is one of the main rules to be aware of.)
- Many grammarians feel that the parentheses can, in fact, be replaced by commas in nearly all cases.



Thank you for your attention

