

Other Punctuation

Period

To Punctuate Statements, Commands, and Indirect Questions.

Use a period at the end of a statement, a command, or an indirect question.

- Ali Mazahir was promoted and his salary increased.
- Deliver the food for the party before 5 p.m.
- Liz asked whether we had sent the price list.

To Punctuate Polite Requests

Use a period at the end of a command phrased as a polite request. These requests ask the reader to perform a specific action instead of responding with a yes or no.

- Would you please send me your latest catalog.
- May I suggest that you follow the instructions in your manual.
- Will you be sure to lock the door when you leave.

If you are asking a favor or if you think the reader may feel that your request is presumptuous, use a question mark rather than a period.

- May I ask you to fill in for me at the next board meeting?

If you are uncomfortable using a period at the end of a polite request, rephrase the sentence so that it is a statement.

- Will you please mail your check in the enclosed envelope.
- Please send your check in the enclosed envelope.

To Punctuate Abbreviations

Because of inconsistencies, abbreviations present problems to writers. The following suggestions will help you organize certain groups of abbreviations and provide many models. Always consult a good dictionary or style manual when in doubt.

Use periods after many abbreviations beginning with lowercase letters.

a.m. (ante meridiem)	i.e. (that is)
e.g. (for example)	ft. (foot or feet)

Exceptions: mph (miles per hour), wpm (words per minute), mm (millimeter), and kg (kilogram).

Use periods for most abbreviations containing capital and lowercase letters.

Dr. (Doctor)	Mr. (Mister)	Esq. (Esquire)
No. (number)	Sat. (Saturday)	Ms. (blend of Miss and Mrs.)

Use periods with abbreviations that represent academic degrees, geographical expressions, and initials of a person's first and middle names.

B.A. (bachelor or arts)	S.A. (South America)
M.B.A. (master of business adm.)	U.K. (United Kingdom)
M.D. (doctor of medicine)	U.S.A. (United States of America)
Ph.D. (doctor of philosophy)	Mr. J. A. Jones (initials of name)

Do not use periods for most capitalized abbreviations.

CEO (chief executive officer)	IBM
CIO (chief information officer)	ID (identification)
CPA (certified public accountant)	CPU
EPA	SASE
FAQ	FYI
EST	URL

To Punctuate Numerals

For a monetary sum, use a period (decimal point) to separate dollars from cents. Use a period (decimal point) to mark a decimal fraction.

- The two items in question , \$13.92 and \$98, were both charged in the month of October.
- Although a moderate vote turnout was predicted, only 18.6 percent of registered voters actually voted.

Question Mark

To Punctuate Direct Questions

Use a question mark at the end of a direct question.

- What qualities are necessary for a person to become a successful administrator?
- Have you compiled the figures requested by CyberVision, Inc.?

To Punctuate Questions Appended to Statements

Place a question mark after a question that is appended to a statement. Use a comma to separate the statement from the question.

- They have already established a Web site, haven't they?
- This personnel announcement should be sent by e-mail, don't you think?

To Indicate a Doubt

A question mark within parentheses may be used to indicate a degree of doubt about some aspect of a statement.

- After the dot-com was launched (2001?), it immediately experienced financial difficulties.
- The position carries a substantial monthly salary (\$3,500?), but no candidates have applied.

Exclamation Point

To Express Strong Emotion

After a word, phrase, or clause expressing strong emotion, use an exclamation point. In business and professional writing, however, exclamation points should be used sparingly.

- Impossible! We understood the deadline to be tomorrow.
- What a day! Will 5 p.m. never come?
- It is incredible that the timer is still working after such punishment!

Do not use an exclamation point after mild interjections, such as *oh* and *well*.

- Well, it seems we have little choice in the matter.

Dash

The dash is a legitimate and effective mark of punctuation when used according to accepted conventions. As an emphatic punctuation mark, however, the dash loses effectiveness when it is overused.

To Set Off Parenthetical Elements

Within a sentence parenthetical elements are usually set off by commas. If, however, the parenthetical element itself contains internal commas, use dashes (or parentheses) to set it off.

- All three major telephone carriers—AT&T, MCI, and Sprint—increased their rates.
- Four administrative assistants—Pricilla Alvarez, Vicki Evans, Yoshiki Ono, and Edward Botsko—received cash bonuses for outstanding service.

To Indicate an Interruption

An interruption or abrupt change of thought may be separated from the rest of a sentence by a dash. Sentences with abrupt changes of thought or with appended afterthoughts can usually be improved through rewriting.

- We'll have your computer up and running—you have my word—by Wednesday.
- Send the disks by Friday—no, we must have them sooner.

To Set Off a Summarizing Statement

Use a dash (not a colon) to separate an introductory list from a summarizing statement.

- Variety of tasks, contact with people, opportunity for advancement—these are what I seek in a job.
- Cross-country skiing, playing video games, and reading—those are Dirk’s favorite pastimes.

To Attribute a Quotation

Place a dash between a quotation and its source.

- “English is the language of men ever famous and foremost in the achievements of liberty.”—John Milton
- “An enemy has no worse enemy than himself.”—Cicero

Parentheses

To Set Off Nonessential Sentence Elements

Generally, nonessential sentence elements may be punctuated as follows: (a) with commas, to make the lightest possible break in the normal flow of a sentence; (b) with dashes, to emphasize the enclosed material; and (c) with parentheses, to deemphasize, the enclosed material.

- One of the blueprints, which appears on page 7, shows the internal structure of the engine clearly.
- One of the blueprints—which appears on page 7—shows the internal structure of the engine clearly.
- One of the blueprints (which appears on page 7) shows the internal structure of the engine clearly.

Explanations, references, and directions are often enclosed in parentheses.

- The bank’s current business hours (10 a.m. to 3 p.m.) will be extended in the near future (to 6 p.m.).
- We recommend that you use hearing protectors (see our comment on page 618) when using this electric drill.
- The Shanghai real estate tycoon bought the twin turbo shiny blue Bentley for 4.68 million yuan (\$656,000) in cash.

Quotation Marks

To Enclose Direct Quotations

Double quotation marks are used to enclose direct quotations. Unless the exact words of a speaker or writer are being repeated, however, quotation marks are not employed.

- “There is a world market for about five computers,” said IBM founder Thomas J. Watson.
- Dwight Moody said that character is what you are in the dark.

Capitalize only the first word of a direct quotation.

- “A lie gets halfway around the world,” said Sir Winston Churchill, “before the truth gets its pants on.”

To Enclose Quotations within Quotations

Single quotation marks (apostrophes on most keyboards) are used to enclose quoted passages cited within quoted passages.

- Delores Tomlin remarked, “In business writing I totally agree with Aristotle, who said, ‘A good style must, first of all, be clear.’”

To Enclose Short Expressions

Slang, words used in a special sense, and words following *stamped* or *marked* are often enclosed within quotation marks.

- Cheryl feared that her presentation would “bomb.”
- Federal Reserve Banks are called “bankers’ banks.”
- Some companies are employing Web logs, better known as “blogs,” to improve the flow of information among employees.
- The package was stamped “Handle with Care.”

To Enclose Definitions

Quotation marks are used to enclose specific definitions or words or expressions. The word or expression being defined is underscored or set in italics.

- The Latin word *ergo* means “therefore” or “hence.”
- Businesspeople use the term *working capital* to indicate an “excess of current assets over current debts.”

To Enclose Titles

Quotation marks are used to enclose the titles of subdivisions of literary and artistic works, such as magazine and newspaper articles, chapters of books, episodes of television shows, poems, lectures, and songs. However, italics (or underscores) are used to enclose the titles of complete words, such as the names of books, magazines, pamphlets, movies, television series, and newspapers.

- One source of information for your term paper might be the magazine article “A Glitch in Tech’s Upturn,” which appeared in *BusinessWeek* recently.
- Students find the chapter titled “Are Your Meetings as Waste of Time?” from *Teamwork Today* very helpful.

- The episode “Turnabout Intruder,” in which a vengeful woman took mental control of Kirk’s body, ended the long-running *Star Trek* TV series.

Additional Punctuation Considerations

Periods and commas are always placed inside closing quotation marks, whether single or double. Semicolons and colons are, on the other hand, always placed outside quotation marks.

Question marks and exclamation points may go inside or outside closing quotation marks as determined by the form of the quotation.

- Kalonji Watts said, “How may I apply for that position?”
- Do you know who it was who said, “Money is more trouble than it’s worth”?

Brackets-+

Within quotations, brackets are used by writers to enclose their own inserted remarks. Such remarks may be corrective, illustrative, or explanatory. Brackets are also used within quotations to enclose the word *sic*, which means “thus” or “so.” This Latin form is used to emphasize the fact that an error obvious to all actually appears thus in the quoted material.

- “A British imperial gallon,” reported Miss Sohoori, “is equal to 1.2 U.S. gallons [4.54 liters].”
- “The company’s reorganization program,” wrote President Theodore Bailey, “will have its greatest affect [*sic*] on our immediate sales.

Underscore and Italics

The underscore or italics are normally used for titles of books, magazines, newspapers, and other complete works published separately. In addition, words under discussion in the sentence and used as nouns are italicized or underscored.

- *Creative Financing*, the latest book of author Thomas Manley, was favorably reviewed in *Time Magazine* and *The Wall Street Journal*.
- Two of the most frequently misspelled words are *calendar* and *separate*.

Exercises

Directions: In the following sentences, some or all punctuation has been omitted. Insert necessary punctuation.

1. Will you please add Mary B Mancuso Esq to the address list
2. Abbreviations like am and pm often appear in business correspondence
3. Dr Delores K Garland was recently named CEO at MileHigh Enterprises
4. You did list your resume on the Monster.com site didn't you
5. It was Thu Thi Tran not Kim Sloan who should have received the cod shipment
6. Stop Don't touch that switch
7. Deliver the signed contracts to Ms C C Gigliotti before 6 pm
8. If IBM offers a full-service contract we should be interested
9. After completing her AA degree at Miami-Dade Community College Kim transferred and began working on a BS degree
10. The guest list includes the following individuals Dr Lyn Clark Ms Frances Hendricks and professor Jean Sturgill
11. "Perpetual optimism is a force multiplier." Colin Powell
12. (De-emphasize.) The Tony-award-winning production of *Hairspray* have you seen the reviews will be opening here shortly.
13. Fingerprints, mug shots, and arrest records these are now stored on microforms by law enforcement officers.
14. (Emphasize.) Three of the biggest problems with email privacy, overuse, and etiquette will be discussed.
15. (De-emphasize.) Three branch assistant managers Courtney Young Ramon Lopez, and Samantha Johnson will be promoted this month.
16. Funds for the project will be released on the following dates see Section 12.3 of the original grant: January 1, March 14, and June 30.
17. (De-emphasize.) As soon as you are able to make an appointment try to do so before December 30, we will process your insurance forms.

18. Quality copies, low cost, ease of operation, speedy output—what more could a customer want in an economical office copy machine?
19. (De-emphasize.) Although toy factories are heavily concentrate din three locations New York, Chicago, and Boston, the largest single manufacturer is located in Hawthorne, California.
20. The warranty period for this cordless drill is limited to sixty 60 days.
21. I have yet to hear a man, said Gloria Steinman, ask for advice on how to combine marriage and a career
22. Careful speakers use the word mad to mean insane
23. Dr. Holmes' chapter titled Capitalizing on Diversity appeared in the book Global Links
24. Did the basketball coach really say If winning isn't important why do they keep score
25. In his speech, the software billionaire said Our goal is to link the world irregardless [*sic*] of national boundaries and restrictions
26. Professor Scott said that he hoped we should call him if our team needed assistance
27. When Garth began shouting during the argument his friend Kendra told him to chill
28. The postal worker said Shall I stamp your package Fragile
29. Did you see the article titled The New Gender Gap in Newsweek
30. The expression persona non grata means one who is not acceptable