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Punctuation

**Punctuation is the system of signs or symbols used in writing to show how a sentence should be constructed and how it should be read. Punctuation helps to make the meaning clear**.

Without correct punctuation, the meaning of a piece of writing can be drastically changed. Look at these two letters as an example:

Dear John,

I want a man who knows what love is all about. You are generous, kind, thoughtful. People who are not like you admit to being useless and inferior. You have ruined me for other men. I yearn for you. I have no feelings whatsoever when we're apart. I can be forever happy - will you let me be yours?

Jane

Dear John,

I want a man who knows what love is. All about you are generous, kind, thoughtful people, who are not like you. Admit to being useless and inferior. You have ruined me. For other men, I yearn. For you, I have no feelings whatsoever. When we're apart, I can be forever happy. Will you let me be?

Yours,  
Jane

As you can see, the simple addition of punctuation has changed Jane’s meaning entirely!

When we speak English, we have all sorts of things we can use to make our meaning clear: stress, intonation, rhythm, pauses - even, if all else fails, repeating what we've said. When we write, however, we can't use any of these devices, and the work that these devices do in speech must be almost entirely handled by punctuation. To help you we have put together some examples of punctuation you might use.

**Types of Punctuation**

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| **PUNCTUATION** | **SYMBOL** | **EXPLANATION** | **EXAMPLE** |
| **FULL STOP** | C:\Users\burnss\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.MSO\97182B35.tmp | It is chiefly used to mark the end of a sentence expressing a statement | ***The hotel had air conditioning.*** |
| **EXCLAMATION MARK** | Image result for exclamation mark | It is used at the end of a sentence or a short phrase which expresses very strong feeling | ***I can’t believe it!*** |
| **QUESTION MARK** | Image result for question mark | It is placed at the end of a sentence which is a direct question | ***Have you finished your assignment yet?*** |
| **COMMA** | Image result for apostrophe | Comma’s are used in 4 different ways:   1. **Listing** A listing comma can always be replaced by the word **and** or **or** 2. **Joining**  A joining comma must be followed by one of the connecting words **and, or, but, yet**or**while** 3. **Gapping**  This indicates that you have decided not to repeat some words which have already occurred in the sentence 4. **Bracketing** These commas often come in pairs, unless one of them comes at the beginning or the end of the sentence They always set off a weak interruption which could in principle be removed from the sentence | ***Daisy read The Times, The Guardian and The Telegraph***  ***The motorways in France and Spain are toll roads, while those in Britain are free.***  ***Jupiter is the largest planet and Pluto, the smallest.***  ***We have a slight problem, to put it mildly.*** |
| **COLON** | Image result for colon punctuationImage result for colon punctuation | A colon within a sentence makes a very pointed pause between two phrases.  It is used to indicate that what follows it is an explanation or elaboration of what precedes it. More general: more specific | ***We found the place easily: your directions were perfect.*** |
| **SEMI COLON** | Image result for colon punctuation | It is used to join **two** complete sentences into a single written sentence. It must however join two **complete** sentences, and could be replaced by and or split into two separate sentences and still make sense | ***It was the best of times; it was the worst of times.*** |
| **APOSTROPHE** | Image result for apostrophe | This is sometimes known as an inverted comma and has two uses:   1. Indicating **possession** or **ownership** 2. To indicate where **a letter is omitted** | ***The girl’s hat was green.***  ***We’re going to complete this course.*** *(We are going to complete this course)* |
| **QUOTATION OR SPEECH MARKS** | Image result for speech marks | These are used to:   * Mark out speech * Quote someone else’s speech | ***“Will you get your books out please?” said Mrs Jones.***  NB to report back an event does NOT need speech marks eg.  ***Mrs Jones told the pupils to take out their books*** |