

Punctuation

Quotation Marks

- Quotation marks are used to enclose direct quotations.
 - “A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds,” wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson.
- Single quotation marks are used to enclose a quotation within a quotation.
 - According to Paul Elliott, Eskimo hunters “chant an ancient magic song to the seal they are after: ‘Beast of the sea! Come and place yourself before me in the early morning!’”

Quotation marks are used around the titles of newspaper and magazine articles, poems, short stories, songs, episodes of television and radio programs, and chapters or subdivisions of books.

Parentheses

- Parentheses enclose supplemental material, minor digressions, and afterthoughts.
 - After taking her temperature, pulse, and blood pressure (routine vital signs), the nurse made Becky as comfortable as possible.
 - The weights James was able to move (not lift, mind you) were measured in ounces.

Use parentheses sparingly. The information contained within parentheses is easily ignored. If the information is important enough to be in the piece, attempt to integrate it into the text.

Dash

- The dash is used to set off parenthetical material that deserves emphasis.
 - Becky blamed everything that went wrong on the move—from cutting her hand to losing the cat.
- The dash is also used to set off appositives that contain commas.
 - In my hometown, the basic needs of people—food, clothing, and shelter—are less costly than in Los Angeles.

The dash is used to prepare for a list, a restatement, an amplification, or a dramatic shift in tone or thought. The dash should be used sparingly as it is better to emphasize the ideas by using strong verbs rather than the dash.

Question Mark

- A question mark completes a direct question.

What is the horsepower of your new truck?

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Semicolon

- The semicolon is used between closely related independent clauses not joined by a coordinating conjunction.
 - Example: Injustice is relatively easy to bear; what stings is justice.
- The semicolon is used between independent clauses linked with a transitional expression.
 - Many teams were equally matched; in fact, any of them could have won the tournament.
- The semicolon is used between items in a series containing internal punctuation.
 - Duke University in Chapel Hill, NC; the University of Maryland in College Park, MD; and Michigan State University in East Lansing, MI all have strong basketball programs.

Colon

- The colon can be used like a semicolon to separate two ideas. The phrase following the colon should clarify or expand on the phrase before the colon.
- The colon is most commonly used after an independent clause to direct attention to a list, an appositive, or a quotation.
 - I enjoy many hobbies: watching basketball, knitting, and quilting, to name a few.
 - Consider the words of John F. Kennedy: “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.”

Apostrophe

- The apostrophe is used to indicate that a noun is possessive, that is, to indicate ownership.
- If the noun does not end in **s**, add **'s**
 - The driver's side.
- If the noun is plural and ends in **s**, add only the apostrophe.
 - Both diplomats' briefcases.
- An apostrophe is also used to mark contractions.
 - It's = it is
 - Can't = can not

Exclamation Point

- An exclamation point is used after a word group or sentence that expresses exceptional feeling or deserves special emphasis. The exclamation point should not be overused.

Commas (See additional handout)