

Punctuation Marks

7. Hyphen (-)

A **hyphen** (–) is a punctuation mark with three main uses. Many people confuse this punctuation mark with the dash, but the two are quite different. The hyphen can be used in compound words, to link words to prefixes, and also as a way to show word breaks.

The hyphen punctuation rules and examples:

- Use a hyphen to join two or more words together into a compound term. Do not separate the words with spaces.

Examples:

*My **eight-year-old** boy loves reading.*

*I work **part-time**.*

Self-expression

Self-confidence

Self-consciousness

***Nineteenth-century** history*

***Old-furniture** salesman*

- To link prefixes to words

Example:

*These things happened before the **pre-enlightenment** era.*

- To indicate word breaks

Example:

*Unlike what some people might think, the **twentieth-century** was very different from other preceding time periods.*

8. Dash (–)

The **dash** is used to separate words into statements.

There are two kinds of dashes, the **en dash**, and the **em dash**. The en dash shows range or connections. On the other hand, the em dash is used in places where a comma could also be used. The dash can also be used to mark off words or statements that are not important to the meaning of the statement. The dash can also be used in places where a comma would be typically used.

En dash (–)

Slightly wider than a hyphen, the **en dash** is a symbol (–) that is used in writing or printing to indicate a range or connections.

Examples:

1880–1945

Princeton–New York trains

Em dash (—)

Twice as long as the en dash, the **em dash** (—) can be used in place of a comma, parenthesis, or colon to enhance readability or emphasize the conclusion of a sentence.

- Indicates additional information, with more emphasis than a comma.

Example

*She is an author — **and a very good one too.***

- Indicates a pause, especially for effect at the end of a sentence.

Example

We all know what to expect — **the best.**

*She gave him her answer—**No!***

- Contains extra information (used instead of brackets).

Example

You solved that sum — **and I don't know how**— before anybody else.

9. Colon (:)

A [colon](#) is a fairly common punctuation mark with a varied number of uses. It can be used to introduce a quotation, an example, a series, or even an explanation.

- Introduces lists (including examples)

Example

We learned the following at the camp: rock-climbing, canoeing and rafting.

He has all the ingredients: [minced](#) clams, milk, potatoes, and onions.

- Introduces summaries

Example

During the salsa class we were told: dance salsa on any beat or across the beat.

- Introduces (direct) quotations

Example

My instructor always says: "bend those knees."

- It can be used to separate two independent clauses when the second explains the first, similar to a semicolon.

Example

The snow hardened: it turned into ice.

I didn't have time to get changed: I was already late.

- A colon can be used to show emphasis.

Example

There was one thing she loved more than any other: her dog.

10.Semicolon (;)

A [semicolon](#) represents a pause greater than a comma. Semicolon is used to separate the independent clauses of a compound sentence. Such clauses are NOT joined by a coordinating conjunction (and, but, or nor, for, so, yet).

In separating the two clauses of a compound sentence, the semicolon is slightly stronger than a comma, but weaker than a period. Remember that the clause before the semicolon and the clause after the semicolon should be complete on their own; we should be able to replace the semicolon with a period and get two grammatically correct and complete sentences.

Examples

My daughter is a teacher; my son is a doctor.

Ali always slept with the light on; he was afraid of the dark.

- It separates the items in a complex list.

Examples

There are eight members in the team: two from China, Pakistan; three from France, Spain; two from Brazil; and one from India.

You can go by and aeroplane, train and a taxi; channel tunnel train, coach, then a short walk; or aeroplane and car.

11. Parentheses ()

Parentheses are like quotation marks that show additional thoughts about a statement. In many scenarios, they can be replaced by commas without any changes to the meaning of the sentence.

We also often use parentheses to set off less important details.

Example:

The two brothers (Richard and Sean) were learning how to play guitar.

John and Jane (who were actually half brother and sister) both have red hair.

12. Brackets ([])

Brackets are squared off quotations ([]) that are used to show information of a technical nature. Even if this information is omitted entirely, the sentence would still make sense.

Examples

Was he [the defendant] there when you arrived?

He [Mr. Jones] was the last person seen at the house.

13. Ellipsis (...)

An **ellipsis** is usually represented by three dots (...), it can also be represented by three asterisks (***). This punctuation symbol is used to show that there has been an omission of some letters or words. In many cases, ellipses are used to cut statement short to avoid unnecessary or irrelevant words that have no impact on the meaning of the statement being made.

- We often use ellipsis to show that parts of sentences are left out.

Examples

To be continued...

You'll never believe what I saw...

The teacher moaned, "Look at this floor ... a mess... this class."

- It also indicates a pause.

Example

He said: 'I think I locked the door... no, hang on ... did I?'

14. Slash (/)

A **slash** is also known as a forward slash, a virgule, or even an oblique dash. The slash can be used to separate lines in a song or poem when they are written in a continuous line. The slash (/) is also used in place of the word or. The slash can also be used to show two contradictory notions.

The slash punctuation rules and examples:

- Use slashes to separate parts of internet (web) addresses and file names for some computer programs.

Example

<http://www.example.com/>

- Use slashes for fractions

Example

$1/3 = \textit{one-third}$

- Use a slash to separate the day, month, and year in date.

Examples

12/03/1990

- Use a slash to form some abbreviations or shortened forms of words or phrases. These should not be used in formal writing.

Examples

b/w = between

w/o = *without*

n/a or N/A = *not applicable or not available*

R/C = *radio control*

- Use a slash to show the word “per” in measurements.

Example

80 miles/hour = 80 miles per hour

- Use a slash to separate lines of poetry or rhymes in regular text.

Example:

Twinkle, twinkle, little star, / How I wonder what you are. / Up above the world so high, / Like a diamond in the sky.

- Use a slash instead of ‘or’ to show alternatives in a sentence.

Example:

Please press your browser’s Refresh/Reload button.

It is his/her book.

If/when the ice is heated, it melts.

ACTIVITIES RELATED TO PUNCTUATION MARKS

ACTIVITY (1)

1. Punctuation is a system of symbols that we use when _____ a language
 - a. Speaking
 - b. Writing
 - c. Hearing
2. What are the symbols used in this system called?
 - a. Punctual
 - b. Punctuations
 - c. Punctuation marks
3. Which are examples of punctuation marks?
 - a. commas and full stops

- b. dollar and pound signs
- c. plus and minus signs

4. "Full stops" are also called

- a. Periods
- b. Endings
- c. points

5. Which CANNOT come at the end of a sentence?

- a. a period
- b. a colon
- c. an exclamation mark

6. You must put a space _____ every comma in a sentence.

- a. Before
- b. Around
- c. After

7. What's the punctuation mark indicating a question called?

- a. a question tag
- b. a question mark
- c. a question sign

8. Which can be used to express strong feelings in written English?

- a. an exclamation mark
- b. a quotation mark
- c. a backslash

9. Quotation marks are put _____ the words being quoted.

- a. Before
- b. After
- c. Before and after

10. In British English, () are called "round brackets", but in American English they're often called

- a. round braces
- b. square brackets
- c. parentheses

ACTIVITY (2)

1. **"Ramesh invited all his friends to the party?" - Is the punctuation correct? If not, what should it be?**
 - a. The question mark is right and Ramesh should be written as ramesh.
 - b. The question mark is wrong and it should be an exclamation mark.
 - c. The question mark is right.
 - d. The question mark is wrong and it should be a full stop.

2. **"what a blast I had at the party" - How should this sentence be punctuated?**
 - a. First letter of first word in capitals.
 - b. Question mark (?)
 - c. Full stop (.)
 - d. First letter of first word in capitals and exclamation mark (!)

3. **"Please hand over the book to the headMaster!" - Is the punctuation correct? If not, what should it be?**
 - a. The exclamation mark is right.
 - b. The exclamation mark is wrong and it should be full stop.
 - c. The word headMaster is wrong and should be written headmaster.
 - d. The exclamation mark is wrong and it should be question mark.
 - e. The exclamation mark is wrong and it should be full stop.

4. **"this mango is very sweet" - How should this sentence be punctuated?**
 - a. First letter of first word in capitals and full stop (.)
 - b. Exclamation mark (!)
 - c. Question mark (?)
 - d. First letter of first word in capitals.

5. "you aren't going anywhere until the homework is done, young man" - How should this sentence be punctuated?

- a. Question mark (?)
- b. First letter of first word in capitals exclamation mark (!)
- c. Full stop (.)
- d. First letter of first word in capitals.

6. "Are you going to the concert!" - Is the punctuation mark correct? If not, what should it be?

- a. The exclamation mark is wrong and it should be a full stop.
- b. The exclamation mark is wrong and it should be a question mark.
- c. The exclamation mark is correct.
- d. The exclamation mark is wrong and concert should begin with a capital 'C'.

7. "don't you dare leave this house?" - Is the punctuation correct? If not, what should it be?

- a. The question mark is correct.
- b. The question mark is wrong and it should be a fullstop.
- c. The question mark is wrong and it should be an exclamation mark and don't should be replaced by Don't.
- d. The question mark is wrong and it should be an exclamation mark.

8. "Ayesha wants to know when she will be given her pocket money." - Is the punctuation correct? If not, what should it be?

- a. The full stop is wrong and should be a question mark.
- b. The full stop is wrong and should be an exclamation mark.
- c. The full stop is right and pocket money should be written as Pocket Money.
- d. The full stop is right.

9. "did you take the subway or the bus" - How should this sentence be punctuated?

- a. Question mark (?)
- b. First letter of first word in capitals and question mark (?)
- c. Full stop (.)
- d. Exclamation mark (!)

10. "What a game roger federer played in the finals." - Is the punctuation correct? If not, what should it be?

- a. The full stop is correct.
- b. The full stop is wrong and it should be an exclamation mark.
- c. The full stop is wrong and it should be an exclamation mark and also the name 'roger federer' is a proper noun and the first letters of the name should be in capitals.
- d. The full stop is wrong and it should be a question mark.

ACTIVITY (3)

1. Which of the following is correct?

- I. My pin number has two 5's. It's easy to remember.
- II. My pin number has two 5s. It's easy to remember.

2. The _____ was a period of great achievements. It followed the _____ and lasted from the 14th _____ until 1600.

- I. Renaissance, Middle Ages, Century
- II. Renaissance, Middle Ages, century
- III. Renaissance, middle ages, century
- IV. renaissance, middle ages, century

3. Which of the following is correct?

- I. The weather this winter has been: windy, wet, and unpredictable.
- II. The weather this winter has been windy, wet, and unpredictable.

4. Which of the following is correct?

- I. Waiting for the storm to stop I was anxiously looking out the window.
- II. Waiting for the storm to stop, I was anxiously looking out the window.

5. Which of the following is correct?

- I. The table was set -- knives, forks, candlesticks -- all were set up correctly.
- II. The table was set-knives, forks, candlesticks all were set up correctly.

6. Which of the following is correct?

- I. A friend of mine works as a translator for **U.N.**.
- II. A friend of mine works as a translator for **U.N.**
- III. A friend of mine works as a translator for **UN.**

7. Semicolons and colons should always be placed outside the closing quotation marks.

- I. True
- II. False

8. Which of the following is correct?

- I. Harvey is a good driver, moreover, he is a very friendly one.
- II. Harvey is a good driver. Moreover he is a very friendly one.
- III. Harvey is a good driver; moreover, he is a very friendly one.

ACTIVITY (4)

Click the link given below to solve the quiz related to ‘Punctuation Marks’.

https://www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/exercises/grammar/grammar_tutorial/page_55.htm