

SECTION - VIII PUNCTUATION

◆ **Punctuation** (formerly sometimes called **pointing**) is the use of spacing, conventional signs, and certain typographical devices as aids to the understanding and the correct reading, both silently and aloud, of handwritten and printed texts. Another description is: "The practice, action, or system of inserting points or other small marks into texts, in order to aid interpretation; division of text into sentences, clauses, etc., by means of such marks. **Punctuation** plays an important role in developing writing skills. It is very often proved that punctuation may alter the meaning of a sentence. The right use of the 'stops' in a sentence is basically known as Punctuation.

◆ The Main Punctuation marks are:

1. Full Stop [.]
2. Comma[,]
3. Semicolon[;]
4. Colon[:]
5. Interrogation Mark [?]
6. Exclamation Mark [!]
7. Inverted commas or Quotation Mark [""]
8. Apostrophe [']
9. Hyphen and the dash [-]
10. Parentheses and brackets [()]

The Full Stop (.)

◆ **It marks the longest pause.**

a) The Full Stop is used at the end of every Declarative or Imperative Sentence

- E.g.** Man is a social animal.
 Please come here.
 Don't go there.

b) Used after abbreviations and initials

E.g. The U.S.A., The U.N.O., B.A., M.A., W.H.O., The P.M., The C.M., Ph.D., M.P., Dr. V. K. Rao,

- The period (known as a full stop in British English) is probably the simplest of the punctuation marks to use. 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.**

EXAMPLES

- Rome is the capital of Italy.
- I was born in Australia and now live in Indonesia.
- The Dalai Lama is the spiritual leader of the Tibetan people.

• Indicate an Abbreviation

- Many abbreviations require a period. Dr, Mr, Mrs, and Ms do not take a period in British English, nor do most abbreviations taken from the first capital letters such as MA, Phd, or CIA. In American English, some of these do require periods or both usages are correct (with and without periods). If you require 100% accuracy in your punctuation, refer to a detailed style guide for the abbreviation usage rules in the variety of English you are using.

EXAMPLES

- I will arrive between 6 a.m. and 7 a.m.
- We are coming on Fri., Jan. 4.

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.

EXAMPLES

- The Lord's Prayer begins, "Our Father which art in Heaven..."
- 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.

EXAMPLES

- "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.

EXAMPLES

- \$10.43 = ten dollars and 43 cents
- 14.17 = fourteen point one seven

Comma

◆ It marks the shortest pause.

a) It is used to separate three or more words of the same parts or speech and forming a double or multiple subject, predicate, or object;

e.g.:

Rifles, cartridges, bayonets, and spare parts of guns were lying about in heaps. (Multiple subject.)

The newcomer entered the room, advanced to the platform, and cordially shook hands with the speaker. (Multiple predicate.)

From the hill we could see the scattered cottages of the village, the tall spire of the church, and the long road leading to the sea. (Multiple object.)

Noun: I saw Madhavi, Ramya, Jaya and Jyothi

Verb: I wrote, read, examined and put aside the document.

Adjective: Madhavi is beautiful, attractive, rich and polite.

Adverb: He explained the lesson very clearly, carefully, convincingly and effectively.

◆ **Note:** (i) No comma is required before 'and'

(ii) When words are arranged in pairs **connected by 'and', 'or', no comma is used.**

E.g. You can send the letter by ordinary post or by registered post or by air mail.

She got angry with you and me, her mother and father.

b) To mark of phrases in apposition

E.g. Gandhi, the father of the nation, was a great freedom fighter.

Mother Teresa, a great social worker, was a kind woman.

c) To mark off the nominative of address.

E.g. I tell you, Madhavi, I cannot forget you.

O God, give us strength and power.

d) After adverbial phrases of absolute contraction.

E.g. The weather being fine, we decided to carry on our work.

The meeting over, all left the conference hall.

e) Before and after an adjectival phrase formed with a participle.

E.g. Madhavi, having completed her studies, decided to marry Murty.

We, knowing all about her pride, praised our aunt and got permission to go on picnic.

Note: A defining phrase or clause should not be separated by a comma.

E.g. A girl wearing a white sari came out of the theater.

I presented Madhavi a bangle studded with diamonds.

A chain made of gold was presented to her.

f) To separate words/phrases/clauses inserted into the body of a sentence.

E.g. She, too, was partly blamed for the delay.

My mother did not, however, recover from her illness.

Madhavi is, after all, a poor girl.

She has, contrary to my expectation, passed the test.

g) To avoid the repetition of a verb.

E.g. I gave her a flower, and him, a watch.

Madhavi is an air hostess and Ramya, a teacher.

h) To separate a subordinate clause from the principal clause.

E.g. When she comes here, I shall ask her about it.

If you go to Delhi, please meet my sister.

i) To separate co-ordinate clause in a compound sentence.

E.g. Men may come, and men may go, but I go on forever.

I came, saw, and conquered.

The crowd shouted, cheered, waved and laughed at the film actress.

The player gasped, panted, and collapsed on the ground.

j) To mark off (i) nouns used in address, (ii) words or phrases in apposition, (iii) participial phrases (when not used restrictively), (iv) absolute constructions-

(i) I think, sir, that you are mistaken.

(ii) Venice, the queen of the Adriatic, had now lost her ancient glory.

(iii) Having finished my business, I returned home.

But – The effect produced by the news was immediate. (Restrictive phrase.)

(iv) Our horses being now rested, we pushed on.

k) To mark off words and phrases like *however, indeed, therefore, too, for instance, no doubt, in fact, of course-*

i) Commas separate two ideas in a sentence.

E.g. She was tired, but she kept walking.

m) It separates multiple adjectives describing the same thing.

E.g. She ran her fingers through her long, silky hair.

Semicolon (;)

◆ It marks a longer pause than a 'comma'.

a) To separate the clauses of a compound sentence if they contain a comma.

E.g. My uncle is a poor, uneducated, honest, simple man; but I love him.

The brilliant, beautiful girl appeared on the dias; and there was an unending applause.

b) To separate sentences which are closely connected in thought.

E.g. As Caesar loved me, I weep for him;

As he was fortunate, I rejoice at it;

As he was valiant, I honour him.

Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; writing an exact man.

- 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 (example 1 below). Semicolons can also be used instead of commas to separate the items in a list when the items themselves already contain commas.

EXAMPLES

➤ I like your brother; he's a good friend.

➤ 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.

e) Semicolon separates items with internal punctuation in a list.

E.g. She likes oranges; cherries; and red, yellow and green apples.

d) It separates two closely related clauses & it is slightly stronger than a comma, but weaker than a period. The clause before & after the semicolon should be complete sentences on their own; one should be able to replace semi-colon with a period and have two grammatically correct sentences.

Lord Radstock, who early made himself Clare's financial godfather, continued to look after him; local landlords, clergymen, and doctors intermittently remembered him; he was often asked for poems by second-rate editors; his first publisher retained his interest.

The primeval forests have disappeared; fields of corn now stretch as far as the eye can see; villages are dotted here and there in places where, but a few years ago, there was no human habitation; even a railway line now traverses the immense plains and opens up communication with the far West.

Colon (:)

◆ The colon marks a more complete longer pause than a 'semi-colon'.

a) **It is used to introduce a quotation.** (with or without a dash-)

E.g. i John Keats says: A thing of beauty is a joy forever.

ii Aristotle said: Man is a social animal.

iii Aunt Hester interrupted her: "Mind, Julia, you do it on your own responsibility."

b) **To introduce a list.**

E.g. The subject I like: History, Politics, Philosophy, Poetry and Music.

The poets I love most are: Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, Tagore, Wordsworth and Shelly.

c) **To introduce an explanation, a statement or a proposition.**

E.g. The reason for my delay in this: I did not get up early today.

- The colon expands on the sentence that precedes it, often introducing a **list that demonstrates or elaborates whatever was previously stated.**

EXAMPLES

- There are many reasons for poor written communication: lack of planning, poor grammar, misuse of punctuation marks, and insufficient vocabulary.
- He collected a strange assortment of items: bird's eggs, stamps, bottle tops, string, and buttons.

- Peter had an eclectic taste in music: latin, jazz, country and western, pop, blues, and classical.
- He had just one fault: an enormous ego.

- **The colon is also used to divide the hour from the minutes in writing a time in English.**

EXAMPLES

- 4:15 = "four fifteen"
- 6:45 = "six forty-five"

Interrogation Mark:

- a) **It is used after a direct question.**

E.g. What are you doing here?
 Have you ever been photographed?
 Did you post the letter?

Note: No Interrogation Mark is used after an indirect question.

E.g. She asked me when I was married.
 He enquired whether she had any reply from her husband.
 I wanted to know where she had gone.

- b) **Interrogation Mark is not used after a polite request.**

E.g. Would you mind telling me your name.

- Use the question mark at the end of all direct questions.

EXAMPLES

- What is your name?
- Do you speak Italian?
- You're Spanish, aren't you?

Note:- Do not use a question mark for reported questions

EXAMPLES

- He asked me what my name was.
- She asked if I was Spanish.
- Ask them where they are going.

• Long questions still need question marks

EXAMPLES

- 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?
- Why is it that even though you are unkind to me, ignore me when I ask you for help, and consistently forget to thank me when I do favors for you, you still claim to want me to be your friend and appear surprised when I prefer to hang out with other people?

• Question marks can sometimes appear within sentences

EXAMPLES

- 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.
- "Why is she here?" asked Henry.

Exclamation Mark:

- ◆ It is used at the end of an exclamatory sentence and interjections expressing some sudden emotion.

E.g. What a beauty!

What a tragedy!

What a great victory!

How foolish of you to lend him money!

Alas! She has failed in life.

Hello! Good luck! Congratulations!

◆ **It may be used after a short order.**

E.g.	Shut up!	Wait!
	Stop there!	Write down!
	Come here!	Look there!

◆ **The exclamation mark is used to express exasperation, astonishment, or surprise, or to emphasise a comment or short, sharp phrase.** In professional or everyday writing, exclamation marks are used sparingly if at all.

EXAMPLES

- Help! Help!
- That's unbelievable!
- Get out!
- Look out!

• **You can also use exclamation marks to mark a phrase as humorous, ironic or sarcastic.**

EXAMPLES

- What a lovely day! (when it obviously is not a lovely day)
- 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. **Double and triple exclamation marks are common in very informal writing styles, but are a sign of being uneducated in less casual correspondence.**

EXAMPLES OF CASUAL WRITING

- He's getting married!?
- That's insane!!!

Inverted Commas:

◆ **These are used to indicate direct speech.**

E.g. Padma said, "I have never seen such a cruel person."

“Did you post the letter?” Kavya said to me.

“I have nothing to speak further,” he said.

Note: The words of each speaker should be given a separate paragraph.

E.g. “What is your name?” she asked.

“My name is Murty,” I replied.

“What are you?”

“I am a teacher.”

- Use quotation marks to cite something someone said exactly. When rephrasing what someone told you, no quotation marks are needed.

EXAMPLES

- "I'm going to the store now," she said.
- Harry told me, "Don't forget your soccer jersey."
- Harry told me not to forget my soccer jersey.
- **If quoting others within a quote, both single and double quotation marks are used to set the two separate quotations off from each other.**

EXAMPLE

- '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**

EXAMPLES

- I've always thought that he was very annoying, a bit of a 'pain in the neck.'
- I'm not sure what you mean by "custodial care", but I'm sure you will explain it to me.

Note:- Quotation marks both single and double are also used for specific purposes in bibliographic references or when citing sources in academic writing.

EXAMPLES

- "The Migration Flight of the Lesser Tweazle", by Jeremy Adams, The Bird Spotter Magazine, July 2009.

Apostrophe

◆ THE APOSTROPHE IN CONTRACTIONS

- ◆ The most common use of apostrophes in English is for contractions, where a noun or pronoun and a verb combine. **Remember that the apostrophe is often replacing a letter that has been dropped.** It is placed where the missing letter would be in that case.

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
Using "is"	she is, there is, he is, it is, Mary is, Jim is, Germany is, who is	she's, there's, he's, it's, Mary's, Jim's, Germany's, who's
Using "am"	I am	I'm
Using "will"	I will, you will, she will, we will, they will	I'll, you'll, she'll, we'll, they'll
Using "would"	I would, you would, he would, we would, they would	I'd, you'd, he'd, we'd, they'd
Using "have"	I have, you have, we have, they have	I've, you've, we've, they've
Using "are"	you are, they are, we are	you're, they're, we're

EXAMPLES

- **It's** a nice day outside. (contraction)
- The cat is dirty. **Its** fur is matted. (possession)
- **You're** not supposed to be here. (contraction)
- This is **your** book. (possession)
- **Who's** at the door? (contraction)
- **Whose** shoes are these? (possession)

- **They're** not here yet. (contraction)
- **Their** car is red. (possession)
- His car is over **there**. (location)

Possessive Apostrophe

- In most cases you simply need to add 's' to a noun to show possession

EXAMPLES

- a ship's captain
- a doctor's patient
- a car's engine
- Ibrahim's coat
- Mirianna's book

- Plural nouns that do not end in s also follow this rule:

EXAMPLES

- the children's room
- the men's work
- the women's club

- Ordinary (or common) nouns that end in s, both singular and plural, show possession simply by adding an apostrophe after the s.

EXAMPLES

- the bus' wheel
- the babies' crying
- the ladies' tennis club
- the teachers' journal

- 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'), and many large organisations now drop the apostrophe completely (e.g. Barclays Bank, Missing Persons Bureau) when publishing their name.

EXAMPLES

- The Hughes' home (or the Hughes's home)
- Mr Jones's shop (or Mr Jones' shop)
- Charles' book (or Charles's book)

Hyphen and the dash [-]

◆ **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

◆ **Generally, hyphens are used to join two words or parts of words together while avoiding confusion or ambiguity.**

EXAMPLES

- run-down
- up-to-date

EXAMPLES

- co-operate
- bell-like
- anti-nuclear
- post-colonial
- great-grandmother
- son-in-law

• **In some cases therefore, a hyphen does change the meaning of a sentence.**

EXAMPLES

- 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.**

EXAMPLES

- fifty-one
 - eighty-nine
 - thirty-two
 - sixty-five
- In written fractions place a hyphen **between the numerator and denominator except if there is already a hyphen in either the numerator or the denominator.**

EXAMPLES

- two-fifths
 - one-third
 - three-tenths
 - nine-hundredths
 - sixty-nine eighty-ninths
- **Use a hyphen when a number forms part of an adjectival compound**

EXAMPLES

- France has a 35-hour working week.
- He won the 100-metre sprint.
- Charles Dickens was a great nineteenth-century novelist

◆ 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.

EXAMPLES

- You may think she is a liar - she isn't.
- She might come to the party - you never know.

Parentheses and brackets [()]

- ◆ The difference between a 'bracket' and a 'parentheses' can be a bit confusing. Generally, 'parentheses' refers to round brackets () and 'brackets' to square brackets []. However, we are more and more used to hearing these referred to simply as 'round brackets' or '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. Many grammarians feel that the parentheses can, in fact, be replaced by commas in nearly all cases.

EXAMPLES

- The government's education report (April 2005) shows that the level of literacy is rising in nearly all areas.
- I visited Kathmandu (which was full of tourists) on my way to the Himalayas for a trekking expedition.
- 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.)

The use of Capital Letters

- ◆ Capital letters are used in the following cases:

1. **At the beginning of a sentence**

E.g. Prevention is better than cure.

Necessity is the mother of invention.

Something is better than nothing.

2. At the beginning of each line in poetry.

E.g. My days among the dead are past.

When I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad song for me;
Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me.

3. For names of people, places, mountains, rivers.

E.g. Rajiv Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Delhi, Hyderabad, The Himalayas, The Godavari.

4. For nations and adjectives indicating nationality.

E.g. India, Indian, America, American, Canada, Canadian

5. For names of days, months, festivals and historical eras.

E.g. Monday, Sunday, December, November, Diwali, The Middle Ages, The Romantic Period, The French Revolution, The Indian Freedom Struggle, The Republic day, The Independence day.

6. For names of books, plays, works of art.

E.g. The Ramayana, The Bible, The Mahabharatha, The Taj Mahal, Paradise Lost, The Mona Lisa, The Tempest, As you Like It, King Lear.

7. For titles of people and names of things when we refer to unique examples.

E.g. The King of England, The President of India, The Emperor of China, The Chief-Minister of Andhra Pradesh, The Golden Fleece, The Eternal City.

8. For all adjectives derived from proper nouns.

E.g. Hindu, Christian, Himalayan, Herculean, Canadian, American, Biblical.

9. For all nouns and pronouns standing for God.

E.g. The Lord, The Trinity, Vishwambhara.

10. The pronoun 'I' and the interjection 'O'