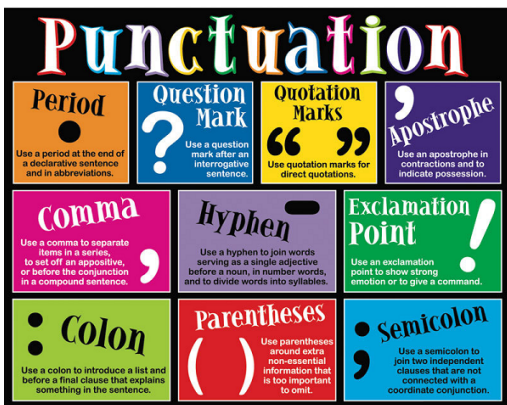


Simple guide to punctuation

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Most of us believe we are great at writing, but we all struggle with the mighty punctuations. You might be an expertise in writing, but may lose hope when it comes to punctuations. Don't worry. Learn and overcome it as these can help you become a more [effective communicator](#). You can learn it from famous writers that punctuation is simple and not very complicated. In other words, over the years good writers have used punctuation in ways that have made their messages clear to their readers. Writers have agreed to follow these practices because these have proven to be very effective. Therefore, follow this simple guidelines.



1. Full stop

- Full stop indicates the end of a sentence, indicates abbreviated words or used for punctuating numbers and dates.

Examples:

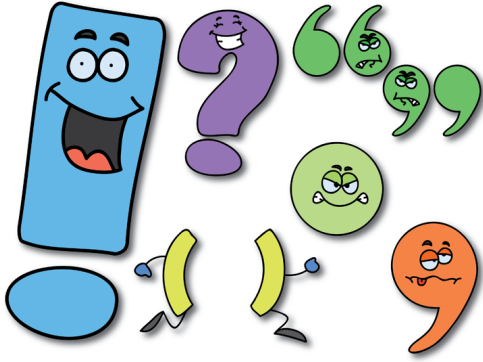
- The cat is completely white.
- Mrs. Padma (Ph. D) will be your new teacher.
- She is getting married on 12.09.2015

2. Semicolon

- Semicolon separates two complete sentences that are closely linked. You can replace semicolon with a full - stop, but by doing so the direct link between the two parts is lost.

Examples:

- To err is human; to forgive, divine.
- Don't go near the dogs; they could bite you.



3. Colon

- Colon is used to indicate that a list, quotation or summary is about to follow.

Examples:

- Buy these things: a packet of peanuts, two loaves of bread and a kilogram of chicken.
- Writing the assignment is not easy: to begin with you have to do a lot of research.

4. Question mark

- A question mark is used at the end of a sentence which is a question.

Example:

- Have the students completed the exam?
- When are you going to Goa?

5. Exclamation mark

- An exclamation mark is used at the end of a sentence and indicates surprise, anger, or alarm.
- Exclamation marks should be used very sparingly and must not be used often.

Example:

- The police stormed in and arrested her!
- How disgraceful!

6. Apostrophe

An apostrophe can be used in two ways. One is for contractions, which is a shortened version of a word. An apostrophe is used to show that something has been left out, and where it has been left out. Second one is used to indicate ownership/possession with nouns. To show ownership by a single individual, you must insert the apostrophe between the noun and the 's'. To show ownership for more than one individual, use the apostrophe at the end of the word.

Examples:

- Don't (do not)
- The dog's tail (belonging to a single dog)
- The women's magazines

7. Comma

- Commas separate longer sentences. A pair of commas in a sentence denotes separating items from a list.

Example:

- The details required are name, date of birth, address and telephone number.

These are basic rules of punctuation. Read poems and books to understand the difference between its usages. Also, learn grammar which will automatically [improve your English skills](#).

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-By Shailja Varma

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