

How to Use Punctuation Correctly? Part - I

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One of the most common and basic mistake that most of us commit while writing is the wrong use of punctuation marks. In today's modern age, when we are more fluent with the SMS language and the slang terms, we have forgotten the fundamentals of English like Punctuation. How many of us can proudly say we know A-Z about punctuation. Let's consider this article as your free English learning guide to punctuation.

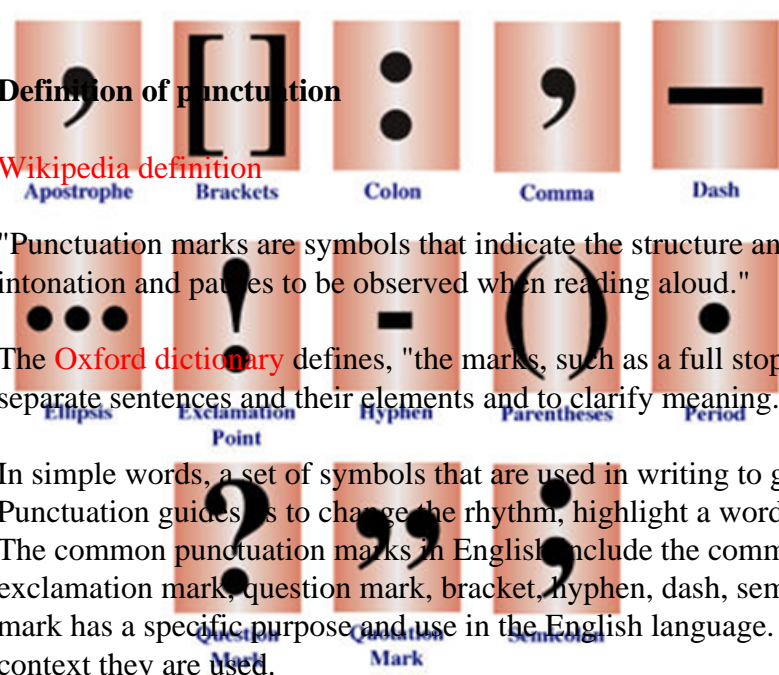
Definition of punctuation

Wikipedia definition

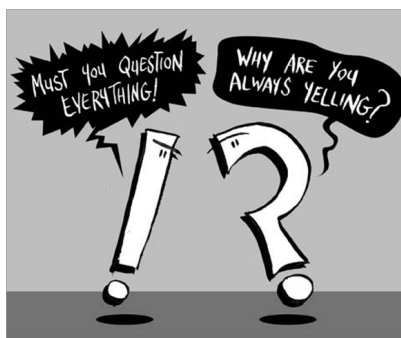
"Punctuation marks are symbols that indicate the structure and organization of written language, as well as intonation and pauses to be observed when reading aloud."

The Oxford dictionary defines, "the marks, such as a full stop, comma, and brackets, used in writing to separate sentences and their elements and to clarify meaning."

In simple words, a set of symbols that are used in writing to guide a reader know the structure of a sentence. Punctuation guides us to change the rhythm, highlight a word in our speech and show the right expression. The common punctuation marks in English include the comma, apostrophe, period, quotation mark, exclamation mark, question mark, bracket, hyphen, dash, semicolon, ellipsis, and colon. Each punctuation mark has a specific purpose and use in the English language. Some may have varied meanings; based on the context they are used.



Punctuation rules



End of the sentence punctuation

Every sentence that you write has to end somewhere. This ending punctuation mark can be a full stop or period, exclamation mark, question mark or an ellipsis. These punctuation marks terminate a sentence. The default terminal punctuation mark is a **period** or a full stop.

Ex: He lives in Chicago

The period is used here to finish the sentence without disclosing any other meaning.

Question mark: When you end a sentence in a question mark, you suggest an inquiry or an interrogatory

remark.

Ex: What is your name?

The question mark is used to inquire a person's name.

Exclamation mark: It is used to suggest excitement or emphasis in a sentence.

Ex: I can't believe I am going to UK!

Ellipsis: It is a punctuation that is used when some part of a sentence is being omitted; usually used in quotes.

Ex: "[...] the President was excited as he laid out the growth policies in the agricultural sector."

Semicolon (;) vs. colon (:)

We all have studied the use of Semicolon while learning English grammar in our school. However, do you understand the difference between a colon and a semicolon? A semicolon is used when the writer wants to link two related, but independent clauses. There is always an argument, why not a period but a semicolon. Of course, if you think your sentence is too wordy, you can use a period, but avoid using it if you think it will create a strong break between the sentences.

Example: Several fast food restaurants can be found within the cities: London, England; Paris, France; Dublin, Ireland; and Madrid, Spain.

Now, let's learn the English lesson on the use of the colon. This punctuation mark is used to introduce a list. It can be used with ratios, titles and subtitles of books, hours and minutes.

Example: The concert begins at 21:45.

The following are our services:

We shall continue our free [English learning](#) session in our next blog on how to use English punctuation correctly. Till then, practice and observe the above punctuation marks to [improve your English skills](#).

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