

Punctuation

Full stop (Bre) Period (Ame) [.]

At the end of a sentence that is not a question or an exclamation.

I knocked at the door. There was no reply.
I knocked again.
Sometimes in abbreviations: Jan., e.g., a.m.
In internet and e-mail addresses (said 'dot')
<http://www.oop.com.uk>

Comma

to separate words in a list:

though they are often omitted before and a bouquet of red, pink and white
rose's tea, coffee, milk or hot chocolate

to separate phrases or clauses:

if you keep calm, take your time, concentrate and think ahead, then you're
likely to pass your test.
Worn out after all the excitement of the party, the children soon fell asleep.

Before and after a clause or phrase: that gives additional, but no essential,
information about the noun it follows:

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the Pennines Hills, which are very popular with walkers, are situated between
Lancashire and Yorkshire.

(do not use commas before and after a clause that defines the noun it follows).
The hills that separate Lancashire from Yorkshire are called the Pennines.

To separate main clauses especially long one, linked by a conjunction such as
and, as, but, for, or:

We had been looking forward to our holiday all year, but unfortunately it rained
every day.

To separate an introductory word or phrase, or an adverb or adverbial phrase
that applies to the whole sentence, from the rest of the sentence:

Oh, so that's where it was
As it happens, however, I never saw her again
By the way, did you hear about Sue's car?

To separate a tag question from the rest of the sentence:

It's quite expensive, isn't it?
You live in Bristol, right?

Before or after 'he said', etc. when writing down conversation:

Come back soon, she said

Before a short quotation:

Disraeli said, "Little things affect little minds"

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Colon: [:]

To introduce a list of items:

These are our options: we go by train and leave before the end of the show, or
we take the car and see it all.

In formal writing, before a clause or phrase that gives more information about
the main clause:

You can use a semicolon or a full stop, but not a comma, instead of a colon
here)

The garden had been neglected for a long time: it was overgrown and full of
weeds.

To introduce a quotation, this may be indented:

As Kenneth Morgan writes
The truth was, perhaps, that Britain in the years from 1914 to 1983 had not
changed all that fundamentally.
Others, however, have challenged this view

Semicolon: [;]

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Instead of a comma to separate parts of a sentence that already contain
commas:

She was determined to succeed whatever the cost; she would achieve her aim,
whoever might suffer on the way.

In formal writing, to separate two main clauses, especially those not joined by a
conjunction:

The sun was already low in the sky; it would soon be dark.

Question Mark [?]

At the end of a direct question:

Where's the car?
You're leaving already?

Do not use a question mark at the end of an indirect question:

He asked if I was leaving.
Especially with a date, to express doubt: John Marston
(1575-1634)

Exclamation Mark (Bre) or Exclamation Point (Ame): [!]

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At the end of a sentence expressing surprise, joy, anger, shock or another strong
emotion:

That's marvelous!
Never! She cried

In informal written English, you can use more than one exclamation mark, or an
exclamation marks and a question mark:

"Your wife's just given birth to triplets. 'Triplets!'"

Apostrophe: [']

With nouns to indicate that a thing or person belongs to somebody:

My friend's brother
The waitress's apron
King Jameel's crown
The student's books
The women's coats

In short forms, to indicate that letters or figures have been omitted:

I'm (I am)
They'd (they had/they would)
The summer of '89 (1989)

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Hyphen: [-]

To form a compound from two or more other words:

Hard-hearted
Fork-lift truck
mother-to-be

To form a compound from a prefix and a proper name:

Pre-Raphaelite
Pre-European

When writing compound numbers between 21 and 99 in words:

Seventy-three
Thirty-one

Sometimes in British English to separate a prefix ending in a vowel from a word
beginning with the same vowel:

Co-operate
Pre-eminent

Dash: [---]

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In informal English, instead of a colon or semicolon, to indicate that what follows
is a summary or conclusion of what has gone before:

Men were shouting women were screaming, children were crying --- it was
chaos: you've admitted that you lied to me --- how can I trust you again?

Singly or in pairs to separate a comment or an afterthought from the rest of the
sentence:

He knew nothing at all about it ----- or he said,

Dots/ellipsis: [...]

To indicate that words have been omitted, especially from a quotation or at the
end of a conversation:

... Challenging the view that Britain... had not changed all that fundamentally.

Slash/oblique/Forward Slash: [/]

To separate alternative words or phrases:

Have a pudding and/or cheese
Single/married/widowed/divorced
In internet and e-mail addresses to separate the different elements (often said
forward slash)
<https://www.classnotes.xyz/blog>

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Quotation Marks: Ame [“ ”] Br [“ ”]

To enclose words and punctuation in direct speech:

"Why on earth did you do that?" He asked.
"I'll fetch it, she replied.

To draw attention to a word that is unusual for the context, for example a slang
expression, or to a word that is being used for special effect, such as irony:

He told me in no uncertain terms to 'get lost'.
Thousands were imprisoned in the name of 'national security'.

Around the titles of articles, books, poems, plays etc.:

Keats' 'Ode to autumn'
I was watching 'Match of the Day'

Brackets/Parentheses: ()

To separate extra information or a comment from the rest of a sentence:

Mount Robson (12 792 feet) is the highest mountain in the Canadian Rockies. He
thinks that modern musk (i.e., anything written after 1900) is rubbish.

To enclose cross-references:

This moral ambiguity is a feature of Shakespeare's later works (See Chapter
Eight)

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Around numbers or letters in text:

Our objectives are (1) to increase output, (2) to improve quality and (3) to
maximize profits.

Square Brackets: []

Around words inserted to make a quotation grammatically correct:

Britain in [these] years was without.

Italics: [/italics]

Notes: In handwritten or typed text, and in the examples that follow, italics are
indicated by underlining.

To show emphasis:

I'm not going to do it – You are
..... Proposals which we cannot accept under any circumstances.

To indicate the titles of books, plays, etc.:

Joyce's Ulysses
The title role in Puccini's Tosca a letter in the Times

For foreign words or phrases:

the English oak (Quercus robur)

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I had to renew my permission di soggiorno (residence permit)

Quoting Conversation:

When you write down a conversation, you normally begin a new paragraph for
each new speaker. Quotation marks enclose the words spoken:

"You are sure of this?" I asked.
He nodded grimly.
'I am certain'.

Verbs used to indicate direct speech, for example he said, she complained, are
separated by commas from the words spoken, unless a question mark or an
exclamation mark is used.

"That's all I know" said Nick.
Nick said, 'That's all I know'
'Why?' asked Nick.

When he said or said Nick follows the words spoken, the comma is placed inside
the quotation marks, as in the first example above. If, however, the writer puts
the words said Nick within the actual words Nick speaks, the comma is outside
the quotation marks.

'That', said Nick, 'is all I know'.

Double quotation marks are used to indicate direct speech being quoted by
somebody else within direct speech.

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'But you said you loved me! I'll never leave you, Sue, as long as I live.' That's
what you said, isn't it?

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