

Punctuation allows you to express your ideas clearly. You should aim to use a wide variety of punctuation marks accurately in your writing.

**Full stop.**

This is the most common way to mark the end of sentence and is used for statements.

*Most people are afraid of spiders.*

**Question mark?**

This is used at the end of a sentence that asks a question.

*How many people are afraid of spiders?*

**Exclamation mark!**

This is used to express strong feelings, excitement or orders.

*Afraid of spiders? Not me!*

**CAPITAL LETTERS**

Capital letters mark the beginning of every sentence. They are also used with proper nouns (names of people, places, days of the week and months),

*Once upon a time ...*

*Fred*

*London*

*Friday*

*July*

**Comma,**

Commas are used to show a pause. This can be to...

separate two parts of a sentence, sometimes joined by a connective, e.g. *First came the lightning, then the thunder.*

separate words in a list

separates a phrase or clause that gives extra information, e.g. *Fred, a boy in my class, was late for school.*

**Speech marks "..."**

These are used at the beginning and end of speech (words spoken out loud). The punctuation mark for the words spoken goes inside the speech marks.

*Fred asked, "Would you like some chocolate cake?"*

**Brackets (...)**

These are used to mark off extra information that isn't part of the main sentence.

*England (last year's winners) will play India in November.*

**Colon:**

A colon is often used at the start of a list:

*To do well in your test you will need: good revision notes, a nutritious breakfast and a decent night's sleep*

**Inverted commas or quotation marks '...'**

These are used at the beginning and end of quotations (words and phrases taken from a text).

*Macbeth says, 'This is a sorry sight.'*

**Apostrophe'**

Apostrophes have two functions:

to show that a letter(s) has been left out, e.g. *I'm, haven't.*

to show possession, e.g. *Newcastle's team, last year's winner.*

NB. Don't confuse **it's** (meaning 'it is') with **its** (meaning 'belonging to it', e.g. *Its branches swayed in the wind.*)

**Semi-colon;**

A semi-colon indicates a stronger pause than a comma and has two main functions:

to separate main clauses that are in some way connected, e.g. *That night I crept out of the house; I would never see it again.*

or they can break up lists containing more than one word, like a comma, e.g. *Before the picnic we packed everything: a box for the plates and cutlery; cartons of sandwiches; two bottles of lemonade; a table cloth and napkins.*

**Dash –**

A dash is used to give extra information in an informal way, as you would separate two clauses with brackets or commas.

A dash can also be used to emphasise the word or phrase that follows it, e.g. *It was more than just good – it was perfect.*

Dashes can sometimes be used to show a sudden shift in thought, e.g. *What she demonstrated was incredible – or so we thought.*

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