

Punctuation

Punctuation Learning Packet

Apostrophe (‘)

Semicolon (;)

Colon (:)

Quotation Marks (“”, “”)

Exclamation Mark (!)

Dash (--)

PRE-TEST

A score of 90% or better on this test indicates a mastery of the specific punctuation skills for which this test has been designed.

DIRECTIONS: If you find some of the following sentences punctuated correctly, write a C (correct) in the space provided. If a sentence lacks necessary punctuation, write a W (wrong) and insert **BOLDLY** the missing marks.

- ___ 1. Have you read George Wills article in Time entitled Whatever Happened to Self Restraint.
- ___ 2. Pat entered the large conference room and held a meeting with the other members of the committee.
- ___ 3. Education said the professor enables one to meet lifes challenges with confidence and grace.
- ___ 4. Ferdinand wanted to grow a beard like that of the other mystic gurus however he could not tolerate the itch.
- ___ 5. I have only one complaint about new cars they have no fins.
- ___ 6. The 59 Chevrolet now that was a stylish automobile.
- ___ 7. Timothy Leary claimed that he enjoyed his time in prison.
- ___ 8. Surgical terms such as cut slice and chop have become part of the popular speech among young doctors.
- ___ 9. The now president one from the old party strutted down Pennsylvania Avenue.
- ___ 10. Help There is a shark in my soup.
- ___ 11. Johns car is much older than Bobs.
- ___ 12. I cant lie because I haven't any imagination.
- ___ 13. Mens clothes are conservative this year womens clothes are just expensive.

Answers are on the back.

PRE-TEST ANSWERS

- W 1. Have you read George Wills' article in Time entitled "Whatever Happened to Self Restraint"?
- C 2. Pat entered the large conference room and held a meeting with the other members of the committee.
- W 3. "Education," said the professor "enables one to meet life's challenges with confidence and grace."
- W 4. Ferdinand wanted to grow a beard like that of the other mystic gurus; however, he could not tolerate the itch.
- W 5. I have only one complaint about new cars: they have no fins!
- W 6. The '59 Chevrolet--now that was a stylish automobile!
- C 7. Timothy Leary claimed that he enjoyed his time in prison.
- W 8. Surgical terms such as "cut," "slice," and "chop" have become part of the popular speech among young doctors.
- W 9. The now president--one from the old party--strutted down Pennsylvania Avenue.
- W 10. Help! There is a shark in my soup!
- W 11. John's car is much older than Bob's.
- W 12. I can't lie, because I haven't any imagination.
- W 13. Men's clothes are conservative this year; women's clothes are just expensive.

LESSER USED PUNCTUATION:

Apostrophe - Semicolon - Colon - Quotation Marks - Exclamation Marks - Dashes

APOSTROPHE

The apostrophe is used to indicate three circumstances:

- 1) the possessive with nouns and indefinite pronouns,
- 2) contractions or the omission of one or more letters in a word,
- 3) and the plurals of letters or numbers.

1. POSSESSION

- a) Use an apostrophe plus s with any noun which does not end in s.

She drove Cosmo's car (the car of Cosmo).

This is Dr. Peterson's problem (the problem of Dr. Peterson).

Men's clothes are very conservative this year (the clothes of men).

- b) Use an apostrophe plus an s with indefinite pronouns.

Anybody's opinion is better than his.

Everybody's business is nobody's business.

Somebody's bathing suit floated downstream.

NOTE: THERE IS AN IMPORTANT EXCEPTION TO THIS RULE. THE POSSESSIVE FORM OF PERSONAL AND RELATIVE PRONOUNS DO NOT REQUIRE THE APOSTROPHE. HIS, HERS, ITS, OURS, YOURS, THEIRS, AND WHOSE ARE USED AS POSSESSIVES AND DO NOT TAKE THE APOSTROPHE.

- c) Add only an apostrophe to form the possessive of a plural noun which ends in s.

the lawyers' fees were outrageous.

(The fees of more than one lawyer).

The students' books were outdated.

(The books of more than one student).

The ladies' hats were absurd.

(The hats of more than one lady).

- d) Add only an apostrophe or an apostrophe plus an s to form the singular possessive of nouns ending in s. Here the writer may choose which conventional form to use. Since it is simpler to add only the apostrophe, many editors prefer the first usage.

Charles' coat OR Charles's coat.

Mr. Dryfuss' scandal OR Mr. Dryfuss's scandal.

Sam Clemens' book OR Sam Clemens's book.

- e) Also, there is a class of possessives called idiomatic expressions which are sometimes difficult to recognize, nonetheless, they require apostrophes. This convention employs nouns of specification in time, quantity, or value.

An hour's ride... A two hours' ride...

A week's wages... Two weeks' wages...

A moment's hesitation...

A dollar's worth...

- f) Finally, it is important to note an exception to the apostrophe rule in possessives. The apostrophe is often omitted in proper names which have become established, especially in brand names, commercial names, and instructional or place names.

Teachers College

Pikes Peak

Old Folks Rest Home

Manufacturers Trust Company

Fields Landing

2. THE APOSTROPHE WITH OMISSION OF LETTERS OR NUMBERS

Use an apostrophe to indicate the omission of letters or numbers in contractions.

I can't (cannot) do it now because I haven't (have not) any money.

I'm (I am) sure that he'll (he will) come at three o'clock (three of the clock).

It's (it is) the highest grade in the class of '97. (1997)

3. PLURALS OF LETTER AND NUMBERS

The apostrophe is generally used before an s to form the plurals of letters and numbers.

There are three "e's" in "cemetery."

He was told to dot his "i's" and to cross his "t's" in the early 1920's.

Mind your "p's" and "q's" or perish.

NOTE: DO NOT USE THE APOSTROPHE IN ORDINARY PLURALS.

The Days gave them a free lunch and indigestion.

We watched the trainers unwrap basketballs and prepare the bleachers.

The frycooks peeled potatoes and heaped flapjacks on plates.

SEMICOLON

When sentence patterns are joined by a sentence connector (*however, therefore, consequently*), writers usually use a semicolon between the patterns. [See also ASC Learning Package entitled "Conjunctions, Subordinators, and Sentence Connectors."] The semicolon is used most of the time as follows:

He wanted the sportscar; however, he could not afford it.

Every morning in Humboldt County is cool and moist; consequently, I keep a sweater in my car.

Such patterns could also be separated by a period, of course, for they are complete sentence patterns:

He wanted the sportscar. However, he could not afford it.

Every morning in Humboldt County is cool and moist. Consequently, I keep a sweater in my car.

The difference here is one of emphasis. The period throws a little more weight on the second pattern.

Semicolons are also used to link short, closely related sentences not joined by a sentence connector.

He was a conscientious teacher; the students respected him.

Both of these patterns could be punctuated as separate sentences, but they are connected by the semicolon because the writer wished to have them considered as one idea.

COLON

The principle use of a colon -a mark of anticipation - is to introduce a list or a series. Linguists suggest that a colon will catapult the attention of the reader forward, to seek further clarification, amplification, or example in the immediately following words.

Only three students came to the meeting: Wilbur, Fred, and Albert.

My parole officer asked me to steal the following: a loaf of bread, two cans of beer, and three pounds of liver.

Writers may also use colons to introduce a single example:

Walter had only one ambition: to pass English I A.

REMEMBER, Never use a colon after a verb or the relative pronoun “that.” Colons may follow only grammatically complete sentence patterns.

THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES ARE INCORRECT:

The important trees in the area are: Redwood, Douglas fir, and cedar.

The president said that: America is on the move.

Smith is an authority, and he suggests: people are stupid.

It is conventional to complete the first pattern with the phrase, “*the following*” or to remove the colon entirely and to indirectly quote following the relative pronoun that.

The important trees in the area are the following: Redwood, Douglas fir, and cedar.

The president said that: America is on the move.

Smith is an authority, and he suggest that: people are stupid.

Smith is an authority, and he suggests the following: people are stupid.

QUOTATION MARKS

1. Quotation marks enclose, and attribute exact words spoken or written in contextual conversation.

Single quotation marks identify an exact quote within a quote.

a) DIRECT *Don said, "I am going to go."* INDIRECT *Don said that he was going to go.*

b) *Mom said, "Don't ever say, 'I hate you!' to your brother again."*

2. Quotation marks are used for titles of brief works, such as an essay, an article, a poem, or a short story. In writing, however, the titles of major works, such as books, magazines, newspapers, films, television, shows, plays, and record albums are underlined.

Samuel Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" appears in Treasury of Great Poems.

George Wills' article, "What Happened to Self Restraint, appeared in last month's Time.

The song "I Can't Do My Homework Any More," by Smokey Robinson, graces the album Miracles.

Quotation marks are also used to mark off words that must be set apart from the rest of the rest of the text, for example, words that are being discussed as words.

Woodwork terms, such as "crummy," "window marker," "barber chair," and "kill gone" are part of the popular speech in McKinleyville.

Just the phrase, "cause to sue," is enough to get some lawyers chasing ambulances.

REMEMBER, A period or a comma is always placed inside the closing quotation marks; semicolons and colons are placed outside closing quotation marks.
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EXCLAMATION MARKS

Exclamation marks may be used at the end of a sentence to show urgency, excitement or extreme emotions.

USE THIS MARK SPARINGLY

Help! What a story! She was drunk! I'm done!

DASHES

The Dash-as a rule-is a mark of abrupt and emphatic interruption or separation between units in a sentence.

As in the use of exclamation mark- USE DASHES SPARINGLY

The new dean-and what a snob- strutted down the hall.

Linda came late-but that's another story-while Cindy didn't show up at all.

Dashes are useful and versatile punctuation marks, but they should be used with care and restraint. One popular structural use of dashes, which is always correct and which allows the writer to express much information in a dynamic, direct manner, is to summarize or list first and then to follow with the explanation by using the dash.

John, Peter, Mary, and Ron - these are the officers.

Psychology, political science, and history - these are the disciplines which prepare the mind for logical thought.

NOTE: If the clauses were reversed in order, in the above sentences, a colon would be used to precede the lists. *These are the officers: John, Pete, Mary, and Ron.*

POST-TEST

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DIRECTIONS: If you find some of the following sentences punctuated correctly, write a C (correct) in the space provided. If a sentence lacks necessary punctuation, write a W (wrong) and insert **BOLDLY** the missing marks.

- ___ 1. In this quarters Foreign Affairs, Caspar Weinberger has published an article entitle Cold War, Warm Heart.
- ___ 2. New York and London are not near each other in fact a man on foot would take several days to walk between these cities.
- ___ 3. The price of this new textbook get ready for a shock is fifty dollars.
- ___ 4. After several years rest, Rip Van Winkle said I'm hungry.
- ___ 5. Youre driving too fast, said the hitchhiker, slow down or I'm going to jump.
- ___ 6. Captain Jolly his real name was Poopdeck Paul cooked all meals aboard the Titantic.
- ___ 7. The helmsman had one ambition to remain dry during the cruise.
- ___ 8. Henry always thought of college students as fools consequently he associated with an illiterate crowd.
- ___ 9. Write, write, write thats how one learns to write.
- ___ 10. The ghost said, Blame Cambridge, when I asked why he had no physical body.
- ___ 11. I couldn't believe my eyes the professor was asleep on his feet.
- ___ 12. Education will absorb all of your time and money, will make your eyes tired and bloodshot, and is very difficult to discontinue after time in fact education is similar to drug dependency in these ways.
- ___ 13. Sentence patterns may be linked with any of these three conjunctions, subordinators, or sentence connectors.
- ___ 14. The Brown Wasps is a short story from Loren Eiselys book, The Night Country.

- ___15. Esteban and Etienne these are the Spanish and French equivalents of the English name, Steven.
- ___16. The words induce, reduce, and deduce all have a common Latin root.
- ___17. Latin is a dead language, she said, and I'm a living student.
- ___18. My English assignments have one practical purpose they help me get to sleep at night

Answers are on the back.

POST-TEST ANSWERS

- _W_1. In this quarter's Foreign Affairs, Caspar Weinberger has published an article entitle “Cold War, Warm Heart.”
- _W_2. New York and London are not near each other; in fact, a man on foot would take several days to walk between these cities.
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