



# Punctuation

What **You** Need to Know

# Conquering the Navigation

Throughout this presentation you will find links to more information. You probably won't need all of them, but you will need some.

When you see a **bright green word**, you can click that and get more information. After you've clicked, the word will turn to a **darker green**.

The new pages will have **green** headings instead of the aqua ones you see here, so you will know where you are.

When you're finished, simply click your browser's "Back" button to return to the main presentation.

If you would like to open the presentation in a new window, use the "Ctrl" key while you click.

# The Basics

Correct punctuation tells readers when sentences end, when parts of sentences begin and end, and what parts of sentences go together.

Without correct punctuation, humans would not be able to communicate clearly in their writing.

# Common Punctuation Marks

There are really very few punctuation marks that people use on a regular basis.

## End punctuation:

Period .  
Exclamation Point !  
Question Mark ?

## Mid-sentence punctuation:

Comma ,  
Semi-colon ;  
Colon :  
Quotation Marks “ ”

## Punctuation used with words

Apostrophe ‘ ’

# Punctuation not commonly used

Dashes – —

Parentheses ( )

Single Quotation Marks ‘ ’

Ampersands &

These are used in very specific circumstances. The VPT will not likely test you on these, but you will learn what they are and how to use them during your time in college.

# End punctuation



Simply put, end punctuation shows the reader that the sentence has ended.

“We went to the beach and we all got sunburned.”—period shows the sentence has ended

“Did you not know you should re-apply sunscreen every hour?”—question mark shows a question has been asked

“Look out for that wave! It’s ten feet high!”—shows that the sentence has some importance

# Mid-Sentence Punctuation: commas ,

Commas are used in sentences in the following places:

- before coordinating conjunctions
- with dialogue
- after an introductory phrase
- to separate items in a series

Commas are never used

- Between the subject and the verb
- Between the verb and the object
- After a coordinating conjunction
- After “like” or “as”

# Mid-Sentence Punctuation: Semi Colons ;

**A semi-colon (;) is used as a “hard break” between two main ideas. It is not the same as the comma, which would be a “soft break” in comparison. Sentences that join two main clauses need to have a semi-colon between them.**

“I took my sunscreen when I went to the beach; you did not so you are red as a lobster.”

“I bought the groceries today; yesterday I bought the decorations.”

**A semi-colon is also used to separate items in a series or list when the items themselves have commas in them.**

“My college schedule is planned for several semesters, with history, math, and English the first semester; chemistry, biology, and art the second semester; and computers, sociology, and music the third semester.”



# Mid-Sentence Punctuation: Colons



A colon is used after a main clause and before a list. A colon can also tell the reader to sit up and take notice, that something important is coming up.

Note that the colon can only follow a main clause, one that expresses a complete thought and makes sense on it's own.

"I bought the groceries for the party: cheese, crackers, barbeque, and sodas."

"I had just one thought when I saw the bear: run."

# Mid-Sentence Punctuation: Quotation Marks

“ ”

Quotation Marks are used with dialogue, or quoted material.

Quotation Marks illustrate that the writer is replicating the exact wording of another person.

“Don’t touch my car,” the man said.

I asked my friend, “Did he say ‘don’t touch my car’?”

My friend said, “He certainly did.”

Mark Twain said, “The rumors of my death have been greatly exaggerated.”

# Punctuation Used with Words: Apostrophe



**Apostrophes are only used with possessives, never with just plain old plurals.**

Ex.: “The dogs wagged their tails,” is plural.

“The dog’s tail wagged,” is possessive.

**Apostrophes must also be used with contractions.**

Contractions are two words that have been joined. The apostrophe shows that there has been something left out when the two words were joined.

Ex. Will not=won’t (-ill and w- have been left out)

Other contractions are don’t, can’t, shouldn’t, and couldn’t

# The Last Word...

Punctuation is Important. It tells the reader when to stop reading a sentence and start reading a new one. It tells the reader what groups of words, or clauses, belong together. And most important, it saves lives:

Let's eat, Grandma!

Let's eat Grandma!

