



Present

The Untamed World of Punctuation (Part 1)

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Part 1: What is Punctuation?

Part 2: End Marks

Section A: Periods

1. Ending sentences
2. Ending abbreviations

Section B: Question Marks

1. Writing interrogative sentences
2. Neat things you can do with question marks

Section C: Exclamation Points

1. Indicating strong emotion
2. Deciding when not to use an exclamation point

Part 3: Commas

Section A: Separating Items in a list

Section B: Following introductory clauses and phrases

1. Following interjections
2. Following prepositional phrases
3. Following participial phrases
4. Following subordinate clauses

Section C: Interrupters

1. Interrupting a sentence with words and phrases
2. Interrupting a sentence with nouns of direct address
3. Interrupting a sentence with appositive phrases
4. Interrupting a sentence with nonrestrictive clauses

Section D: Style

1. Preventing misreadings
2. Setting off parts of a sentence

Part 4: Middle Marks

A. Semicolons

1. Showing balance of ideas
2. Avoiding confusion in lists

B. Colons

1. Elaborating or listing information

Pragmatic Proposals for Punctuating Properly (Helpful Hints)

1. Think of punctuation as a tool you can use to add interest and clarity to your writing, not as a rigid system of rules.
2. Periods are your friends. Use them freely, but make remember to make sure you're not inadvertently making a sentence fragment. Those horrible fragments.
3. Only use abbs. that you know your aud. will rec. (Only use abbreviations that you know your audience will recognize.)

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4. Question marks follow questions, not statements that begin with something like "I wonder."

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5. Exclamation points are great! They're packed with emotion! But don't use them too often! They can be annoying!

6. SUPREME RULE OF COMMAS: If you don't know whether or not to use a comma in a sentence, look at the sentence without a comma. If the meaning of the sentence seems unclear, try adding a comma. If all's well without the comma, leave it out.

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7. Don't be afraid of semicolons! Fearless (and correct) use of semicolons is the mark of a sophisticated writer. Use them to join two sentences that are balanced in meaning.

The FURTHERMORE Test

Generally speaking, if you can use the word "furthermore" between two independent clauses and it makes sense, you've found a potential site for a semicolon.

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8. Don't be afraid of colons either! Using colons is even easier than using semicolons: use them to elaborate on something you've just written.

The AND HERE IT IS Test Generally speaking, if you can use the phrase "and here it is" between a sentence and the stuff that comes after it, you've found a potential site for a colon.