

USING A COMMA



TO SEPARATE A LIST OR SERIES

*Mary bought milk, sugar, butter
and cream.*

*At the zoo we saw tigers, pandas,
crocodiles and elephants.*

BETWEEN TWO CLAUSES JOINED WITH FANBOYS

*They went to get ice-cream,
but came back with candy floss.*

*I do not want to do this,
nor do I want to do that.*

ADDING A PAUSE TO A SENTENCE

*Once upon a time, there was an
evil witch.*

*A long, long time ago, dinosaurs
roamed the earth.*

USING A FULL STOP

THE END OF A SENTENCE

*The sun was shining and the birds
were singing.*

*That was the best chocolate I
have ever tasted.*

IN WEBSITE AND EMAIL ADDRESSES

*www.google.com
www.lego.com*

*mrs_email@yahoo.com
mickeymouse@disney.com*

ABBREVIATIONS

*He couldn't sleep and it was
approaching 11 p.m.*

*Strong (adj.) — having the
power to move heavy weights.*

USING AN APOSTROPHE

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CONTRACTION

It's so good to finally have some pleasant weather.

You're looking very smart this morning.

POSSESSION

Please take a seat in Andrew's office.

My dog's bed is softer than my own!

POSSESSIVE PLURAL

The aeroplanes' wings were gliding through the clouds.

Three days' dental work is needed to repair your teeth.

USING A QUESTION MARK



AT THE END OF A QUESTION

*What time does the football
game finish?*

*What is the biggest mammal
in the world?*

GOOD QUESTION WORDS

*Who?
What?
When?
Which?
Where?*

DO NOT USE WITH A FULL STOP

*What time does the football
game finish? .* ✗

*What is the biggest mammal
in the world? .* ✗

USING AN EXCLAMATION MARK



TO INDICATE STRONG FEELINGS OR HIGH VOLUME

*Remove your hand from the
cookie jar!*

*Our sponsored walk raised
over £3000!*

USE VERBS THAT ARE LINKED TO THE PURPOSE

*“Don’t answer back!” he yelled
angrily.*

*All of the party guests shouted
“happy birthday!”*

USE SPARINGLY FOR EFFECT

*I can’t believe you threw me
a surprise party.*

*I can’t believe you threw me
a surprise party!*

USING SPEECH MARKS

”

TO SHOW WHAT'S BEING SPOKEN

*"What's the time Mr Wolf?"
the children chanted.*

*The wizard muttered his spell
repeating "hocus pocus."*

WITH COMMAS, QUESTIONS AND EXCLAMATION MARKS

*"Mum!" Sarah shouted,
"where are my football boots?"*

*"They're over there," she sighed
with frustration.*

WITHIN A SENTENCE

*"Simon stopped, took a deep breath and
called back, "I'm over here."*

*The police officer shouted, "freeze!"
as loud as she could.*

USING CAPITAL LETTERS



FOR PROPER NOUNS

*Doctor Pollock was always late
for her appointments.*

The capital of Spain is Madrid.

AT THE START OF SENTENCES

*My favourite season is spring
because it's full of colour and hope.*

*Although it can be quite rainy at times,
my favourite place is Scotland.*

DON'T FORGET I'M AND I

*It's not easy being a gymnast,
I have to practise a lot.*

*When I'm sick I like to watch
the Narnia films.*

USING A COLON

TO INTRODUCE AN ELEMENT OR SERIES OF ELEMENTS

There are three types of muscle in the body: cardiac, smooth, and skeletal.

*We have two options here:
stay and fight, or run like the wind.*

SEPARATING INDEPENDENT CLAUSES

*A dolphin is not a fish:
it is a warm-blooded mammal.*

*The research is conclusive: climate
change is a reality.*

COLON MISUSE

*The three types of muscle in the body
are: cardiac, smooth, and skeletal.* ✗

*When I graduate, I want to go to:
Australia, New Zealand, and Japan.* ✗

USING A SEMICOLON



TO CONNECT RELATED INDEPENDENT CLAUSES

*Riding a bicycle is good exercise;
I ride mine everyday.*

*Rosie has gone to the library;
David has gone to play rugby.*

IN A SERIAL LIST

*I need the 7-day weather forecast
for the following cities:
London, England;
Edinburgh, Scotland; Cardiff, Wales;
Belfast, Northern Ireland.*

WITH CONJUNCTIVE ADVERBS

*I needed to go for a walk and get some
fresh air; also, I needed to buy milk.*

*Roses look beautiful; however, I don't
think they smell very good.*

USING A HYPHEN



TO JOIN WORDS OR PARTS OF WORDS

This rock-hard cake is absolutely impossible to eat.

We're looking for a dog-friendly hotel.

FOR WRITTEN NUMBERS

I've watched the Lord of the Rings movies one-hundred-and-forty times!

My pet tortoise is sixty-three years old.

WITH A PREFIX

Ex- (ex-husband).

Self- (self-assessed).

Mid- (mid-nineties).

USING PARENTHESES



TO ADD INFORMATION OR CLARIFICATION

*I went to the park to meet
James (my big brother).*

*I love all fruit (except bananas) but
I'm very picky with vegetables.*

BRACKETS, COMMAS OR DASHES

Tim studied, all night, for the big exam.

*Joe's favourite team - whom he had
supported since the age of six - was
the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.*

SENTENCES STILL MAKE SENSE WITHOUT PARENTHESES

Tim studied for the big exam.

*Joe's favourite team was
the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.*

USING AN ELLIPSIS

TO CREATE SUSPENSE BY ADDING A PAUSE

Captain Hook opened the chest and discovered the treasure had ... gone!

Peter, can you, um ... never mind, I forgot what I was saying.

TO SHOW CONTENT HAS BEEN REMOVED FROM A QUOTE

Rebecca likes chocolate, which she never shares. She has a bar in the cupboard.

Rebecca likes chocolate ... she has a bar in the cupboard.

TO SHOW THE TRAILING OFF OF A THOUGHT

Remember when we went camping? That was one crazy rainstorm ...

That rollercoaster looks too scary. I don't think I can go on it ...