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PUNCTUATION GUIDE

PERIODS:

- A-1: At the end of sentences: (I am a student.)
- A-2: After abbreviations: (N.Y./New York) (Dr./Doctor)
- A-3: After numbers and letters that label items: (A. 1. A.)

COMMAS:

- B-1: To separate 2 sentences joined by such conjunctions as *and*, *but*, *so*:
(John called her on the phone, and they talked for hours.)
EXCEPTION: No need for a comma if the sentences are very short:
(John called and they talked.)
- B-2: No comma is needed in a sentence with a single subject and a compound verb:
(John called her on the phone but hung up quickly.)
- B-3: To set off phrases called *appositives*:
(Good writing, an important skill, takes lots of practice.)
- B-4: To set off introductory phrases or clauses:
(Between you and me, I can't stand her.) (Because she always talks in class, she got a detention.)
- B-5: To set off names in direct address:
(John, what's your phone number?) (Go over there, Susan, and wait.)
- B-6: To set off certain words when they're used alone initially in a sentence:
(No, I didn't do it.) (However, you can go.) (Well, I just don't get it.)
- B-7: To set off interrupting expressions:
(His work, fortunately, is improving.) (She, on the other hand, wants more.)
- B-8: To set off clauses not essential to the sentence's meaning:
(Our car, now two years old, is blue.) (My cat, a Siamese, scratched me.)
- B-9: No comma is needed if the clause is needed for meaning:
(Students who skip homework and cheat usually get low grades.)

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B-10: To separate items in a series:

(She had to bring in pencils, glue, crayons, and tissues.)

B-11: To set off each item after the first in dates and addresses:

(He was born on Monday, July 2, 1945.) (She's at 2 Smith Lane, Easton, PA.)

B-12: In dialogue to differentiate between the speaker and the spoken words:

(He said, "I love you.") ("Be on time," she said.)

B-13: No need for a comma in a spoken question or exclamation:

("I hate you!" she cried.) ("What time is it?" he asked.)

B-14: After the salutation in a friendly letter or the closing in all letters:

(Dear Jen,) (Very truly yours,) (Sincerely,)

QUOTATION MARKS:

C-1: To indicate spoken words:

(Mike asked, "Will you promise to call tomorrow?")

C-2: To quote another in your writing:

(I love the Shakespeare line, "To be or not to be, that is the question.")

(Karen always says "way to go" when I get the right answer.)

C-3: In the titles of chapters, stories, or articles in books or magazines:

(Chapter 5 is called "Tool Time.") (The article's title is "Merkel's Miracle.")

ITALICS/UNDERLINING:

D-1: Use either for such longer works as books, longer poems, plays, movies, works of art, symphonies, newspapers, and magazines, as well as the names of ships, planes, and spacecraft.

(I love Tchaikovsky's *Violin Concerto*.) (I get my USA Today delivered.) (The *Titanic* had too few lifeboats.)

D-2: Use either when noting specific words or letters in your writing:

(There is one s in desert, but there are two *s*'s in *dessert*.)

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APOSTROPHES:

E-1: To show the possessive form of a noun:

(Brian's house) (the boys' locker room) (the people's choice)

E-2: In a contraction to indicate the missing letter or letters:

(doesn't) (shouldn't) (won't) (who's)

EXCLAMATION MARKS:

F-1: At the end of strongly emotional language:

(Hurry up!) (Look out!) (No way!)

COLONS:

G-1: To indicate that something will follow:

(She wanted just two things: a new job and a boyfriend.)

(Know this: Your dad is going to hear about what you did.)

G-2: After the greeting (salutation) in a business letter:

(Dear Mr. Jones:) (Dear Recipient:)

RUN-ONS: (When 2 or more independent clauses are joined together incorrectly)

H-1: To correct a run-on such as, She wanted to leave but couldn't get a ride:

a) Add a semicolon: She wanted to leave; however, couldn't get a ride.

b) Add a subordinating conjunction: While she wanted to leave, she couldn't get a ride.

c) Add a coordinating conjunction + a comma: She wanted to leave, but she couldn't get a ride.

d) Separate into 2 complete sentences: She wanted to leave. She couldn't get a ride.

HYPHENS:

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I-1: To divide a word at the end of a line but only between syllables:
(Please come to complete attention when the bell rings.

I-2: In compound numbers: (sixty-eight) (ninety-nine)

I-3: After prefixes: (un-American) (pre-determined) (pro-civil rights)

ELLIPSIS:

J-1: Consists of three evenly spaced dots (periods) with spaces between them and surrounding letters, making for 4 dots altogether.
(After all we've learned ... why is it so hard to get kids to like school?)

J-2: At the end of a sentence, add the ellipsis after the period, with no space between the sentence's last word and the period.
(Just know how worried I am about you. ...)

J-3: Use it to indicate a pause in a sentences' flow.
(I've been wondering about that ... and probably will for a long time."