

# Punctuation

Md. Mojibur Rahman

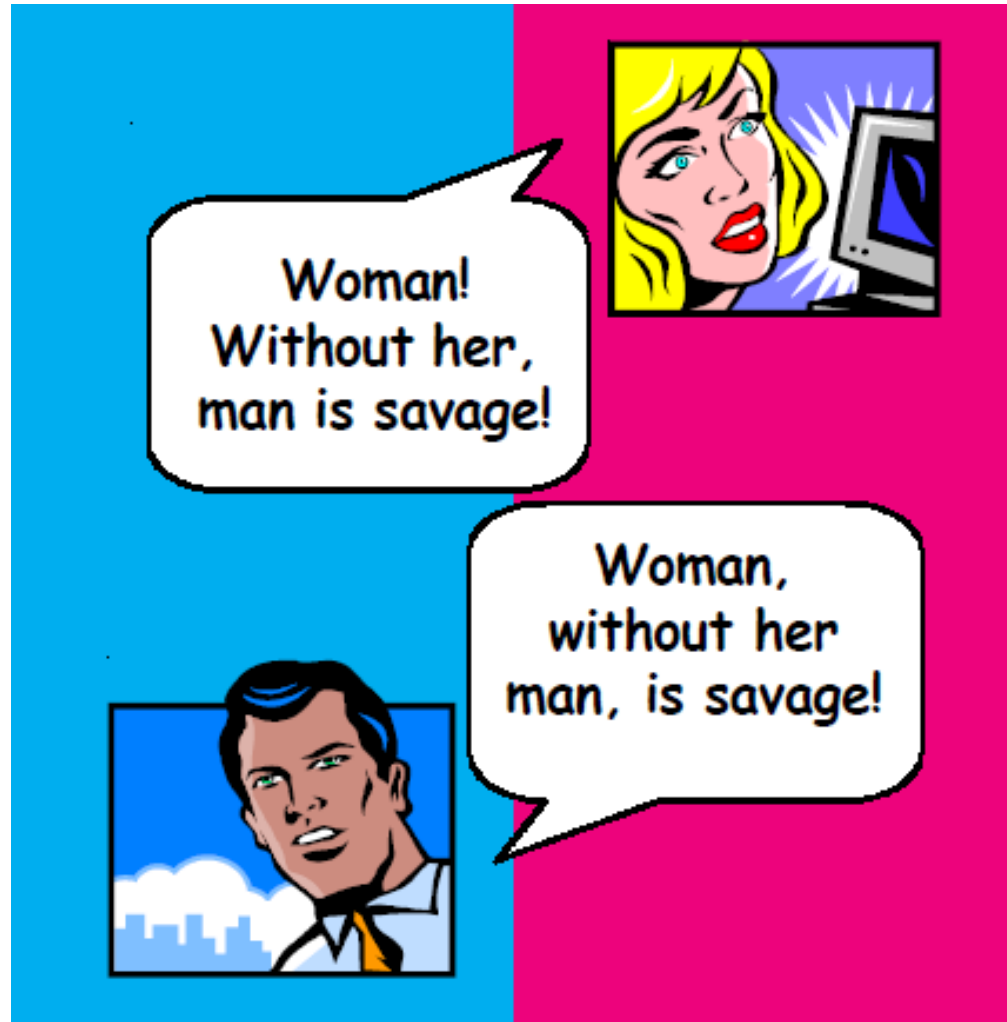
[mrahmanelt@iitism.ac.in](mailto:mrahmanelt@iitism.ac.in)



# Why do we need punctuation?

- Punctuation allows the authors writing to be easy to read and understandable for the reader.

# Punctuation Affects Meaning



# Punctuation Affects Meaning

“Let’s eat Grandpa!”



“Let’s eat, Grandpa!”

# Types of Punctuation

Period

Question  
Mark

Exclamation  
Point

Comma

Semi-Colon

Colon

Parentheses

Apostrophe

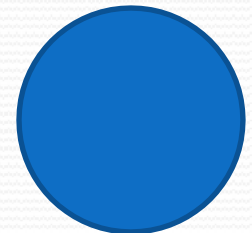
Quotation  
Mark

Hyphen

Dash

# Period

- Rule: Use at the end of a complete sentence.
  - Example: I went to the store for groceries.
- Rule: Use at the end of an indirect question.
  - Example: He asked where the milk was.





# Question Mark

- Rule: Use a question mark only after a direct question.
  - Example: Will you come over after school?



# Exclamation Point

- Rule: Use the exclamation point to show emphasis or excitement.
  - Summer is in three months!







**End marks** means **periods, question marks, or exclamation points.**

**End marks** don't necessarily go at the end of a sentence (as with abbreviations).

A CLARIFICATION...



**Use a period at the end of a statement, or you die.**

Tea is grown in Sri Lanka.

**Use a question mark at the end of a question, or you die.**

Did you see the exhibit about lightning?

**Use an exclamation point at the end of an exclamation, or someone else may die.**

Look out for that tree!

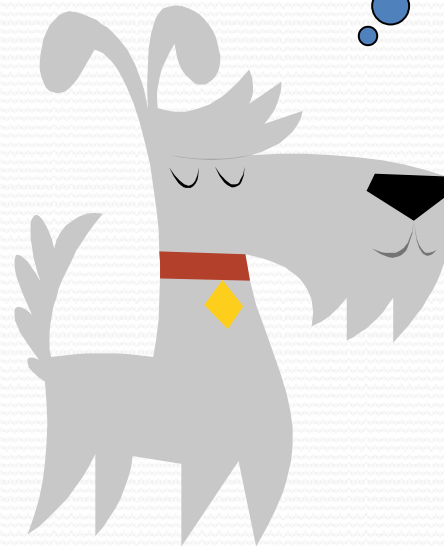
**Use either a period or exclamation point at the end of a request or command, depending on emphasis.**

Please call the dog. [average]

Call the dog! [strong]

HEY! MUFFINS!  
GET OVER HERE,  
YOU STUPID  
MUTT!

Muffins  
answers to  
no man.





## **Many abbreviations are followed by a period.\***

Personal names [A.B. Guthrie, W.E.B. DuBois]

Titles used w/ names [Mr. Mrs. Dr. Jr. Sr.]

Organizations & companies\* [Co. Inc. Corp. Assn.]

Addresses [Ave. St. Rd. Blvd. P.O. Box]

States\* [Tex. Penn. Ariz. Wash. N.C.]

Times [A.M. P.M. B.C. A.D.]





Government agencies & widely used abbreviations don't take periods.

NASA, FBI, CIA, NPR, NIH, NAACP, TV, UN, YMCA

Two-letter state abbreviations in ZIP codes don't take periods.

CA, FL, TX, AK, ME

Abbreviations for measurements don't take periods.

mm, kg, oz, lb, ft, yd, mi

Only *in.* does, so we don't confuse it w/ the word *in.*



When an abbreviation w/ a period ends a sentence, another period isn't needed.

We will arrive by 3:30 P.M.

However, a question mark or exclamation point is still needed.

Can you be here by 3:30 P.M.?

Be here at 3:30 P.M.!



# Comma

- Rule: Use a comma to separate words or items in a list.
  - Example: She has two dogs, three cats, one bird, and five fish in her house.
- Rule: Use a comma to separate a city from its state.
  - Example: I am from East Lansing, Michigan.
- Rule: Use a comma to separate the day of the month from the year.
  - Example: He was born on August 4<sup>th</sup> in 1990.
- Rule: Use a comma to separate two adjectives (describing the noun) and can be inserted between them.
  - Example: She was a young, beautiful dog.





## Use commas to separate items in a series.

A *series* is three or more items in a row.

### Words in a series:

The engine rattled, coughed, and stalled.

### Phrases in a series:

There were fingerprints at the top, on the sides, and on the bottom.

### Clauses in a series\*:

I knew that we were late, that the ice cream was melting, and that the car was nearly out of gas.



Only short independent clauses can be separated by commas; long ones need semicolons.

A *series* is three or more; two items do not need a comma to separate them.

If all the words are joined by *and* or *or*, you don't need commas.

Take water and food and matches with you.



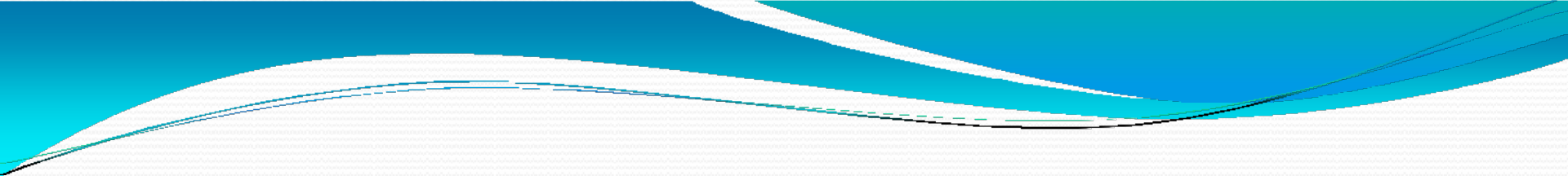
## **Use a comma to separate two or more adjectives that come before a noun.\***

A white dwarf is a tiny, dense star.

Venus Williams played a powerful, brilliant, inspiring game.

COMMAS: Modifiers





Sometimes the final adjective is actually part of a **compound noun**. When they are linked, don't separate them with a comma.

A huge **horned owl** lives in those woods. [not *huge, horned owl*]

An unshaded **electric light** hung from the ceiling. [not *unshaded, electric light*]



**Use a comma before *and*, *but*, *for*, *nor*, *or*, *so*, & *yet* when they join independent clauses.**

Tanisha offered me a ticket, **and** I accepted.

They had been working very hard, **but** they didn't seem very tired.

COMMAS: joining clauses





**Use commas to set off an expression that interrupts a sentence (an *interrupter*).**

Ann Meyers, **our neighbor**, is a fine golfer.

**Naturally**, we expect to win.

My answer is correct, **I think**.

Hint: when we read interrupters aloud, our voice usually drops to a lower register. Try it!

# 1. Use commas to set off nonessential phrases and clauses.

Nonessential phrases and clauses aren't necessary to the overall meaning of the sentence.

My sister, **listening to her radio**, did not hear me.

***listening to her radio*** is a nonessential participial phrase.

Paul, **thrilled by the applause**, took a bow.

***thrilled by the applause*** could be taken out, so it's nonessential.



## 2. Don't set off essential phrases and clauses w/ commas.

Essential phrases and clauses tell us *which one(s)*, so they are necessary to the meaning.

The man **who tells Navajo folk tales** is Mr. Platero.

The dress **that I liked** has been sold.

A bowl **made by Maria Martinez** is a collector's item.

HINT: a clause beginning with *that* is usually essential.



An **appositive** is a noun or pronoun that describes or identifies another noun or pronoun.

My oldest sister, **Alicia**, will be at practice until 6:00 P.M.

Jamaica, **a popular island for tourists**, is in the Caribbean Sea.

See how each of these re-identifies the previously mentioned word?





**3. If an appositive is non-essential, set it off w/ commas.**

**4. Do not set off essential appositives.**

The planet **Mercury** is closer to the sun than any other planet.

*Mercury* is essential because we have to know *which* planet the speaker means.

Our star, **the sun**, is a medium-sized star.

*the sun* is nonessential because we only have one star and it was already named.



## 5. Use commas to set off words that are used in direct address.

**Ben**, please get the door. **Ben's**

Mom needs you, **Francine**.

Would you show me, **ma'am**, where the craft store is?





## 6. Use commas to set off parenthetical expressions.

A **parenthetical expression** is a side remark that adds information.

Like a *by the way...* **interrupters**

Carla, **on the contrary**, prefers soccer to baseball.

**To tell the truth**, Jan is one of my best friends.

# COMMAS: Introductory elements

**Use a comma after *yes*, *no*, or a mild exclamation such as *well* at the beginning of a sentence.**

**Yes,** you may borrow my bike.

**Why,** it's Lena!

**Well,** I think you are wrong.

## Use a comma after introductory phrases & clauses.

Introductory participial phrase

**Beginning a new school year,** Zelda felt somewhat nervous.

2 or more introductory prepositional phrases

**At the bottom<sup>(1)</sup> of the hill<sup>(2)</sup>,** you will see the field.

Introductory adverb clause

**After I finish my homework,** I will go to the park.



## **Use commas to separate items in dates & addresses.**

She was born on January 26, 1988, in Cheshire, Connecticut.  
A letter dated November 26, 1888, was found in the old house  
at 980 West Street, Davenport, Iowa, yesterday.

- Don't separate day from month or street number from street.

A comma comes between the last item in a date or address and the word that follows it.





**Use a comma after the greeting of a personal letter & after the closing of any letter.**

Dear Dad,

Dear Sharon, *inventional uses*

Hey jerk,

With love,

Yours truly,

Hope you choke,



# SEMICOLONS: Joining clauses

**Use a semicolon between independent clauses if they are not joined by a conjunction.**

*(and, but, or, for, nor, so, or yet.)*

Jerry took my suitcase upstairs; he left his own bag in the car.  
After school, I went to marching band practice; then I studied for an hour in the library.





# SEMICOLONS: With commas

**If you are joining items that already contain commas, use a semicolon to join each item instead of a comma.**

**CONFUSING:**

I wrote to Ann, Ramona, and Mai, and Jean notified Charles, Latoya, and Sue.

**CLEAR:**

I wrote to Ann, Ramona, and Mai; and Jean notified Charles, Latoya, and Sue.



# SEMICOLONS: With commas

## CONFUSING:

They visited Phoenix, Arizona, Santa Fe, New Mexico, and San Antonio, Texas.

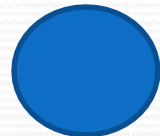
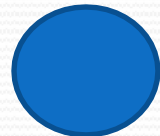
This makes it look like 5-6 places, b/c each of the places already has a comma.

## CLEAR:

They visited Phoenix, Arizona; Santa Fe, New Mexico; and San Antonio, Texas.

# Colon

- Rule: Use the colon after a complete sentence to introduce a list of items.
  - Example: On my trip I will bring: clothes, a pillow, a sleeping bag, a toothbrush, and my teddy bear.
- Rule: Use the colon after the greeting of the person's name in a business letter.
  - Example: Dear Mr. Smith:





# COLONS: Lists

**Use a colon before a list of items, especially after expressions such as *the following* or *as follows*.**

You will need these items for map work: a ruler, pencils, and paper.

Jack's pocket contained the following items: a key, a note, a button, and two quarters.

The primary colors are as follows: red, blue, and yellow.



# COLONS: Lists

 Don't use a **colon** between a verb and its object(s).

 Your heading should contain: your name, the date, and the title of your essay.

 Your heading should contain your name, the date, and the title of your essay.

Your heading should contain the following: your name, the date, and the title of your essay.



# COLONS: Lists

 Don't use a colon between a preposition and its object(s).

 This marinara sauce is made of: tomatoes, onions, oregano, and garlic.

 This marinara sauce is made of tomatoes, onions, oregano, and garlic.

This marinara sauce is made of the following: tomatoes, onions, oregano, and garlic.



# COLONS: Conventional

**Use a colon between hour & minute.**

8:30 A.M.

10:00 P.M.

**Use a colon after the greeting of a business letter.**

Dear Sir or Madam:

To whom it may concern:



# COLONS: Conventional

**Use a colon between chapter & verse in biblical references and between titles & subtitles.**

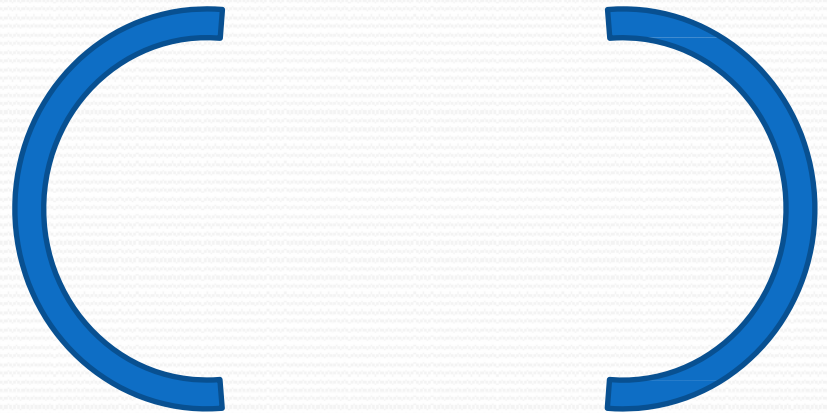
John 3:16

*The Chronicles of Narnia: The Silver Chair*

“Oral Storytelling: Making the Winter Shorter”

# Parenthesis

- Rule: Use parenthesis to enclose words or figures that clarify or are used as an aside.
  - Example: He received        one hundred and fifty points (150) on his math project.





# Apostroph

- e Rule: Use the apostrophe when combining two words. It is always placed in the spot where the letter(s) have been removed.
  - Example: She's (she is) only allowed candy on Friday.
- Rule: Use the apostrophe to show possession. Place the apostrophe before the s.
  - Example: They found Ms. Connor's gloves.





# Quotation Marks

- Rule: Use quotation marks to set off a direct quotation.
  - Example: “What is your favorite color?” she asked.
- Rule: Periods and commas always go inside quotation marks.
  - Example: “I don’t want to go to school today,” Alan said.



# Hyphens

## Rule #1: Compound Words

There is no specific rule – consult a dictionary!

Ex: Vice-president, self-awareness, X-ray

## Rule # 2: With Prefixes

all-, co-, ex-, half-, great-, numbers and capital letters

Ex: All-knowing, co-author, ex-convict, half-life, great-uncle, 10-yards, T-Shirt

## Rule # 3: Dates

11-19-1988

^I expect gifts..

# Hyphens

## Rule # 4: Compound Numbers from 21-99

Ex: twenty-three, one hundred and sixty-two.

## Rule #5: Fractions as Adjectives/Adverbs

The recipe called for one-half gallon of eggnog.

## Rule #6: Scores

We won the game 88-62

## Rule #7: Compound Adjectives

Not long ago you were eighth-grade students

## Rule #8: Instead of “through”

Read pages 1-234 for tomorrow



# Dashes

Dashes add emphasis.

Dashes make sentences stronger or more interesting than conjunctions.



# Dashes

**Rule #1: Use a dash to link two parts of a sentence.**

## Okay

**“Come to class on time *because it’s the rule.*”**

*^Conjunctions are too boring. Students will show up late.*

## Better

**“Come to class on time - *it’s the rule.*”**

*^Whoa! Students will be so impressed and intimidated by dash usage that they show up on time every single day.*



# Dashes

Rule #2 – Use dashes to emphasize by the way, parenthetical expressions.

-Ex: We have been learning grammar–my favorite subject–for the past week.

Rule #3 – Use a dash to set off a long appositive or an appositive with lots of commas.

**Okay** - I love Extreme **Trampoline**, a large warehouse in Carol Stream with dangerous, bouncy trampolines.

**Better** - I love Extreme **Trampoline** – a large warehouse in Carol Stream with dangerous, bouncy trampolines.

# Dashes

Rule #4: Use a dash to sum up a list or idea.

Ex: Red, white, and blue – those are the American colors.

Rule #5: Use a dash in dialogue to show hesitation or a break in the flow of a sentence.

Ex: Last Wednesday – no, it was the one before – you were free to do as you pleased.

# (Parentheses)

Rule #1: Set off parenthetical expressions (by the way information) from the rest of the sentence.

Ex: John Lennon (1940-1980) was the most gifted songwriter in The Beatles.  
Nobody (except his mother) can sit next to him because of his foul stench.  
I paid 10 euros (about \$8) for a Big Mac.

# Brackets

## Use brackets for Clarity

Often used when quoting another source

“Everybody wants the greatest teacher of all time [Mr. K] as their English teacher”

“They [ants] are taking over my apartment. I am powerless to stop them

“Read [chapters] 1-3 for homework tonight.