

Why, Punctuation Matters!

Have you ever had trouble figuring out what somebody's writing meant? Maybe that was because the writer didn't use proper **punctuation** (PUNK-chuh-WAY-shun).

Punctuation marks, such as commas and periods, help us understand written language. In honor of National Punctuation Day, Sept. 24, The Mini Page offers a review of proper punctuation.

Punctuation's origins

Since the beginning of writing, people have used different marks to add more information to written words. For example, ancient Greeks had a system of dots to tell actors how much breath to take before a word or a phrase in a speech.

After the printing press was invented almost 600 years ago, people started making more rules about punctuation. Readers needed to know where one idea ended and a new one began.

Today, technology is changing the rules again. Some people leave out capital letters and punctuation in emails and text messages.

Others use a lot of exclamation points and question marks when texting and emailing.

Punctuation is important

Even though rules may be changing for text messaging and emailing, the rules have

not changed for regular writing.

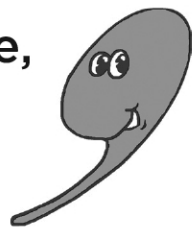
If you are writing school papers, letters or a book, commas and other punctuation marks are still needed. Punctuation marks help the reader figure out your message in texts and emails too. Use the punctuation rules that fit what you're writing.

Commas change meaning

If you put a punctuation mark in the wrong place, it can completely change the meaning of the sentence.

For example, compare these two sentences. How does the **comma** change the meaning?

Call me,
Tom!



Call me
Tom!

The confusing apostrophe

Apostrophes are used to show words are **possessive**, as in "the cat's paws," (one cat) or "the dogs' leashes" (two or more dogs).

Apostrophes are also used to show letters have been taken out of a word, as in "don't" instead of "do not."

Apostrophes are NOT used to make words plural.



K.

Delivered

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Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of punctuation are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:

APOSTROPHE, COLON, COMMA, EXCLAMATION, LANGUAGE, MARK, MEANING, MESSAGE, PERIOD, PLURAL, POINT, POSSESSIVE, PUNCTUATION, QUESTION, RULES, SENTENCE, SOUND, TEXTS, WRITE.

S C O L O N G E G A S S E M M
E G T P O S S E S S I V E J A
N E G A U G N A L R S E L U R
T W I H E H P O R T S O P A K
E P U N C T U A T I O N M J J
N M U D N O I T S E U Q P P A
C X L A R U L P W R I T E O M
E Y N O I T A M A L C X E I M
S O U N D H P E R I O D M N O
X M E A N I N G T E X T S T C



Cook's Corner

Broccoli With Orange Sauce

You'll need:

- 1 medium broccoli crown
- 1 cup water
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 tablespoons orange juice
- 2 tablespoons orange marmalade

What to do:

1. Cut broccoli into florets. Place in microwavable bowl with water; cover and microwave on high for 3 1/2 minutes.
2. Combine olive oil, orange juice and marmalade in a small saucepan. Cook over medium heat until mixture starts to bubble slightly.
3. Drain broccoli, chop as desired, and sprinkle salt and pepper to taste.
4. Pour orange sauce over broccoli. Top with chopped walnuts. Makes 4 side servings.

- sprinkle of salt and pepper
- 3 to 4 tablespoons chopped walnuts (optional)



* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

1. Group of words with a complete thought (8-letter noun)

2. True, right; factual; not wrong (7-letter adj)

3. Someone who puts down letters, words, numbers; an author (6-letter noun)

4. Short writing on a new line and having more than one sentence (9-letter noun)

1. Mia made this _____: The bunny hopped over the stick.
2. Janet gave the _____ answer to the hard question.
3. Greg plans to be a _____ because he enjoys reading.
4. Tony wrote one long _____ about the African zebra.

ROOTONYM®
by Jan & Carey Orr Cook



Study the definition. When you know the missing word, fill in the letter boxes and the sentence blanks.

Answers: Sentence, Correct, Writer, Paragraph.

At the end

The period, question mark and exclamation point all come at the end of a sentence. They tell the reader about the writer's tone of voice.

The **period** shows the writer is making a simple statement.

"Ali did her homework as soon as she got home."



The **question mark** is exactly what it sounds like: It shows someone is asking a question.

"Ali, have you done your homework yet?"



The **exclamation point** shows somebody is surprised or excited.

"Yahoo! I am all done with my homework!"



Use a **colon** when the second part of the sentence explains the first part.

"Becky couldn't speak: She was so shy."



Use a **semicolon** to link two thoughts together.

"I remember Becky when she was little; now she's so grown-up."



Resources

On the Web:

- bit.ly/MPpunctuation

At the library:

- "Eats, Shoots & Leaves" by Lynne Truss
- "Let's Eat Grandma!" by Karina Law



Mini Jokes



Pam: What did the student say when the teacher asked him to use the word "cousin" in a sentence?

Paul: "I put on my mittens 'cousin' the winter my hands get cold!"

Eco Note



Planet Earth supports millions of species. All life on Earth is known as the **biosphere**. Despite the enormous abundance of life on Earth, the biosphere is actually tiny compared to the total size of the planet. The vast majority of Earth — around 99.9 percent, including the upper atmosphere and fiery interior — is too hot, too cold or has too little water or oxygen to be able to support life.

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For later:

Look through your newspaper for examples of punctuation used correctly.

Teachers: For standards-based activities to accompany this feature, visit: bit.ly/MPstandards. And follow The Mini Page on Facebook!



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