

Punctuation & mechanics

31 End Punctuation (395)

The Period

The Question Mark (396)

31e Do not use a question mark after an indirect question.

The Exclamation Point (397)

31g Do not overuse the exclamation point.

32 The Comma (398)

32a Use a comma to separate main clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction.
Rebel patriots physically abused some Loyalists, or more often they verbally abuse those who would not shift their allegiance.

The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. (399)

The Mounties, dressed in red tunics and riding well-trained horses, were a familiar sight on the Canadian frontier; but few people in the United States saw Mounties except in the movies.

32b Use a comma to separate introductory phrases and clauses from a main clause. (400)

INTRODUCTORY *According to legend*, Hercules had enormous strength. [adverbial]

INTRODUCTORY *As soon as she had finished studying*, she left the library. [adverbial]

Note: (401)

Having been an arbitrator between labor and management for a decade, he felt confident in tackling one more labor dispute.

Having been an arbitrator between labor and management for a decade make him feel confident in tackling one more labor dispute.

32c Use commas to set off nonrestrictive elements. Do not use commas with restrictive elements. (402)

A person *who is honest* will succeed.
A person will succeed.

Jacob North, *who is honest*, will succeed.
Jacob North will succeed.

The onions simmering in beef broth taste sweet. (404)
The onions, simmering in beef broth, taste sweet.

32d Use a comma to set off adverbial phrases and clauses that follow the main clause and explain, amplify, or contrast it. Do not set off such elements if they are closely related to the main clause. (405)

Mrs Jones must have decided not to go outdoors today because the snow hasn't been shoveled from the walk.

Mrs Jones must have decided not to go outdoors today, because the snow hasn't been shoveled from the walk. (406)

The first example states that the unshoveled walk is the reason Mrs. Jones has not gone outdoors. In the second example, the *because* clause merely provides evidence for the fact that Mrs. Jones has not gone outside.

32e Use commas to set off all absolute phrases.

Other things being equal, short familiar words are better than long unfamiliar words.

Parenthetical elements (407)

Tractors, *unlike horses*, require gasoline.

32g Use commas to separate the items in a series. (408)

St Theresa was *humble, sincere, and devout*. (409)

32h Use commas to separate coordinate adjectives in a series. Do not use commas to separate cumulative adjectives.

COORDINATE The British colony of Hong Kong grew up around a *beautiful, sheltered, accessible* port.

CUMULATIVE Hong Kong is the *third-largest international financial* center in the world.

32i Follow conventions for the use of commas in dates, addresses, geographical names, titles, and large numbers. (411)

1 Dates.

The German surrender ended World War II in Europe on May 7, 1945.

The Vietnam Women's Memorial was unveiled in November 1993 in Washington, D.C.

If a date is written as day-month-year, use no commas.

11 November 1993 20 July 1946

2 Addresses.

205 Hayes Street, San Francisco, California 94102 (412)

39 West 12th Street, Olean, NY 71402

3 Titles.

Katherine Dugald, M.D.

4 Large numbers.

1,249 89,129 1,722,843

32j Use a comma to prevent misreading.

Long before, she had left everything to her brother.

Inside the house, cats are sometimes a nuisance.

33 **The Semicolon** (417)

33a Use a semicolon to separate closely related main clauses not joined by a coordinating conjunction. If the ideas in the main clauses are not closely related, use a period between them.

33b Use a semicolon to separate main clauses joined by a conjunctive adverb. (418)

I ordered the concert tickets by mail; *therefore*, I didn't have to stand in line.

33c Use a semicolon to separate main clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction if the clauses are long or internally punctuated. (419)

33d Use a semicolon to separate the items of a series if the items themselves contain commas.

34 **The Colon** (421)

- 34a Use a colon to separate a main clause and another sentence element when the second explains, illustrates, or amplifies the first. (422)

Charm, in the abstract, has something of the quality of music: radiance, balance, and harmony.

- 34b Use a colon to set off a list or series, including those introduced by the following or as follows.

Anything is possible on a train: a great meal, a binge, a visit from card players, an intrigue, a good night's sleep, and stranger's monologues framed like Russian short stories.

The recommended treatment for a cold is as follows: plenty of fluids, bed rest, and aspirin for fever.

(Not) We rented several classic Bogart movies, including: *Casablanca*, *Key Largo*, and *The Maltese Falcon*.

(But) We rented several classic Bogart movies, including *Casablanca*, *Key Largo*, and *The Maltese Falcon*.

(Or) Tours to Australia feature such stops as the following: Melbourne, Sydney, and Canberra.

- 34c Use a colon to introduce a formal quotation. (423)

- 34d Use a colon to separate items in biblical citations, titles and subtitles, and divisions of time.

Isaiah 40:28-31
9:20 A.M. 10:10 P.M.

The Dash (425)

- 35b Use the dash to emphasize nonrestrictive appositives and other parenthetical elements.

An American reader of translated Chinese poems may be taken aback—even put off—by the frequency, as well as the sentimentality of the lament for home.

- 35d Use the dash to set off introductory lists or summary statements. (426)

Parentheses

- 35f Use parentheses to set off information, explanation, or comment that is incidental or nonessential to the main thought.

- 35g Use parentheses to enclose numbers or letters labeling items listed within sentences. (426)

36 **Superfluous Internal Punctuation** (427)

37 **Quotation Marks** (433)

- 37a Use double quotation marks to enclose a direct quotation from speech or writing.

“I want the best,” she said, drinking her Scotch.

- 37b Use single quotation marks to enclose a quotation with a quotation. (434)

E.B. White wrote, “As an elderly practitioner once remarked, ‘Writing is an act of faith, not a trick of grammar.’”

37c Indent prose quotations of more than four lines and poetry quotations of more than three lines.

37f When quoted dialogue is interrupted by words such as they said, use a comma after the first part of the quotation. To decide which punctuation mark to place after the interrupting words, apply the rules for punctuating clauses and phrases. (436)

“I am not aware,” she said, “of any dangers from jogging.” [phrase]

“I have always worked hard,” he declared. “I was peddling newspapers when I was eight years old.” [independent clause]

37g Follow American conventions in placing other punctuation with quotation marks. (437)

1 Place commas and periods inside quotation marks.

2 Place semicolons and colons outside quotation marks.

3 Place a dash, question mark, or exclamation point inside the quotation marks when it applies only to the quotation; place it outside the quotation marks when it applies to the whole sentence.

She said, “Will I see you tomorrow?”
Didn’t she say, “I’ll see you tomorrow”?

37h Use quotation marks to set off titles of poems, songs, articles, short stories, and other titles that are part of a longer work. (438)

The song “I Letf My Heart in San Francisco” has become an anthem for that city.

37i Use quotation marks to set off words used in a special sense.

37j Do not use quotation marks in certain situations. (439)

(Not) A neighbor kid, “Butch” Jackson, taught me to whistle.
(But) A neighbor kid, Butch Jackson, taught me to whistle.

(Not) Bennazir brought an “awesome” souvenir back from her two-week hike—a baby black snake.
(But) Bennazir brought a squeal-inspiring, squiggly souvenir back from her two-week hike—a baby black snake.

39 **Italics** (442)

39a Italicize the titles of books, newspapers, magazines, works of arts, music, movies, television and radio programs, record albums, cassettes, CDs, and all publications issued separately.

The New York Times (443)
Death of a Salesman

People
Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary

Be careful not to add the word *The* to titles unless it belongs there and not to omit it if it does belong.

(Not) *The Reader’s Digest*
(But) *the Reader’s Digest*

Note that the titles of some very well-known works and documents are not italicized nor placed in quotation marks.

the Bible	Psalms
the Koran	the Constitutions of the United States
the Declaration of Independence	Matthew
the Bill of Rights	

39b Italicize the names of ships, spacecraft, and aircraft. (443)

Titanic *Challenger*

39c Italicize letters, numbers, and words used as words.

Your *r*'s look very much like your *n*'s, and I can't decide if this is a 7 or a 1.

39d Italicize foreign words and phrases that have not yet been accepted into the English language. Italicize the Latin scientific names for plants, animals, and so forth.

She graduated *magna cum laude*.

39e Use italics to give a word or phrase special emphasis. (444)

Always turn off the electricity before attempting to work on the writing.

We have government *of* the people, *by* the people, and *for* the people; dictatorships have government *over* the people.

40a Capitalize the first word of grammatically independent structures. (445)

2 A direct quotation. (446)

She thought, "Where shall we spend our vacation—at the shore or in the mountains?"

3 A complete sentence enclosed in parentheses or brackets.

The survey shows that cigarette smoking has declined nationally in the last ten years but that smoking among women and teenagers has increased. (See Table 3 for numerical data.)

4 A complete sentence following a colon.

There were fifteen or twenty women in the room: None of them was his mother.

40b Capitalize the first word of a line of poetry. (447)

40d Capitalize proper nouns, their derivatives and abbreviations, and common nouns used as proper nouns.

3 Specific organizations, historical events and periods, and documents.

African National Congress	the French Revolution
Declaration of Independence	

5 Religious terms, deities, and sacred texts. (448)

the Virgin Holy Ghost

6 Titles of books, plays, magazines, newspapers, journals, articles, poems, computer software, and copyrighted or trademarked names or products.

<i>Paradise Lost</i>	<i>War and Peace</i>
<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>	

7 Titles, and their abbreviations, when they precede a proper noun.

Professor Berger
President Clinton

John Leland, PhD

8 Common nouns used as an essential part of a proper noun.

Fifth Avenue (449)

Hamilton College

40e Avoid unnecessary capitalization. (449)

3 Capitalize nouns indicating family relationships only when they are used as names or titles or in combination with proper names.

I telephoned my mother.
(But) I telephone Mother.

My uncle has four children.
(But) My Uncle Ben has four children.

I went to high school in Cleveland.
(But) I went to John Adams High School in Cleveland.

I am a university graduate.
(But) I am a Stanford University graduate.

41 **The Apostrophe** (450)

1 Add an apostrophe and *s* to form the possessive of singular nouns, indefinite pronouns, and plural nouns that do not end in *s*.

the man's feet	the men's feet
the people's sandwiches (451)	the duchess's ring
James's gym shoes	Keats's famous poem

2 Add only an apostrophe to form the possessive of plural nouns ending in *s*.

the boys' blue jeans

3 In compounds, make only the last word possessive.

Nobody else's fault
I can't find my brother-in-law's pen. [singular possessive]

4 In nouns of joint possession, make only the last noun possessive; in nouns of individual possession, make both nouns possessive.

Margo and Paul's office is down the hall. [joint possession]
Margo's and Paul's offices are down the hall. [individual possession]

41c Use an apostrophe to indicate the omission of a letter or number.

can't it's

"An' one o' the boys is goin' t' be sick," he said.

41d In using apostrophes to form the plurals of letters, numbers, and words used as words, follow the guidelines of writing in your field. (452)

CPAs in the 1990s will have to mind their *p*'s and *q*'s while leading their clients through the *A*, *B*, *C*'s—the *ifs*, *ands*, and *buts*—of the income tax code.

42 **The Hyphen** (453)

42a Use a hyphen to form compound words that are not yet accepted as single words.

42b Use a hyphen to join two or more words serving as a single adjective before a noun. (454)

a well-known speaker (But) The speaker was well known.

Omit the hyphen when the first word is an adverb ending in *-ly*.

a slow-curving ball
(But) a slowly curving ball

42c Use a hyphen to avoid an ambiguous or awkward union of letters.

re-create [for “create again”]
(Not) recreate

42d Use a hyphen to form compound numbers from twenty-one through ninety-nine and to separate the numerator from the denominator in written fractions.

twenty-nine fifty-five two-thirds four-fifths

43 **Numbers** (460)

43a Use words and figures for numbers. (461)

43b Use figures for dates and addresses.

May 4, 1914 13 Milford Avenue
23 April 1978
17 B.C. to A.D. 21

43c Use figures to express precise measurements. (462)

DECIMALS	72% or 72 percent
VOLUME, CHAPTER, AND NUMBERS	Volume V, Chapter 7, page 518
ACT, SCENE, AND LINE NUMBERS	<i>King Lear</i> , 2.1.18-47
EXACT AMOUNTS OF MONEY	\$24.98 56¢
TIMES	4:30 P.M. 11:55 P.M. (but <i>half past two</i> , <i>quarter of six</i> , <i>seven o'clock</i>)

43d Except where clarity requires it in legal or business writing, do not repeat in parentheses a number that has been spelled out.

BUSINESS STANDARD The original order was for eight (8) pumps.
Katie lost all six credit cards yesterday.

43e Spell out numbers that occur at the beginning of a sentence.

44 **Abbreviations** (464)

3 Abbreviations of dates, times, and units of measurement.

The use of abbreviations without numbers should be avoided. (465)

(Not) We met in the p.m. to check the no. of ft. the river had risen.

(But) We met in the evening to check the number of feet the river had risen.

44b Spell out the names of people; countries and states; days, months, and holidays; and academic courses.

44c Spell out place names and the words *street*, *avenue*, *route*, and the like, except in addresses. (466)

FALTY The office is near the Michigan St. exit of I-70.

REVISED The office is near the Michigan Street exit of Interstate70.

44d Spell out references to books and parts of books.

FAULTY Rumi is discussed in Ch. 7, pp. 130-154 in *The Sufis*.

REVISED Rumi is discussed in Chapter 7, pages 130-154 in *The Sufis*.

44g When writing for a general audience, spell out most scientific and technical words.

Thanks to computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacturing (CAD-CAM), automobile companies are able to test new models on the drawing board. CAD-CAM saves thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours in engineering time.

44h Punctuate abbreviations according to the conventions of the field for which you are writing. (467)

45 **Word Division** (468)