**BASIC PUNCTUATION RULES**

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| **PUNCTUATION** | **RULE/S** | **EXAMPLES** |
| **CAPITAL LETTER** | * Beginning of a sentence
* Personal pronoun “I”
* Proper nouns (important names)
 | **C**omets travel around the sun.**L**imestone forms in seabeds or lakes |
| **I** have found the median |
| **M**ount **A**spiring **C**ollege was founded in 1986.The **R**ichter scale measures the strength of an earthquake |
| **FULL STOP/PERIOD** | * End of a sentence
* To abbreviate (shorten) a word

**NOTE:** A period is **NOT** used in the abbreviation if the last letter of the full word is present. E.g. **Mr** Smith OR Alliance **Ltd** | My account is in credit**.** |
| Smith and **Co.** fix windows. |
| Stark **Bros** **Ltd** is a New Zealand owned marine engineering company |
| **QUESTION MARK** | * Placed at the end of a sentence to show the information is phrased as a question
 | What should the economy produce**?**  |
| **EXCLAMATION MARK** | * Placed at the end of a sentence to add emphasis
 | What a remarkable result**!** |
| **COMMA** | * To create a pause within writing
* To separate listed words/items
* Before/After speech
 | Though we are pressed on every side**,** we are not overcome. |
| Various time measurements are: milliseconds, seconds**,** minutes**,** days**,** weeks**,** months**,** years**,** decades or centuries. |
| Romeo stated**,** “It is the east and Juliet is the sun.”“Four score and seven years ago**,**” refers to the 87 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence. |
| **APOSTROPHE** | * To show the missing letter/s in a contraction
* To show possession/ownership

**NOTE:** The apostrophe is placed **before** the “s” to show **one ‘owner’**The apostrophe is placed **before** the “s” for **plural nouns**The apostrophe is placed **after** the “s” to show **more than one owner****NO** apostrophe is used when “it” has possession | **Will not Won’t****I have I’ve****She will She’ll** |
| Mandela’**s** speech has had an impact on generations of African citizens.  |
| The children**’s** lunches were given out.Men**’s** voices were heard in chorus. |
| The girls**’** uniforms should be returned after the event.The graphs**’** information showed the trends. |
| **Its** flame was blue.**Its** life cycle phases were interesting. |
| **SPEECH MARKS AND QUOTATION MARKS** | **Double inverted commas** are used to show direct speech **AND** quoted text.**NOTE:** there is no capital letter required after the second set of inverted commas **if the sentence is continued**.**NOTE:** Use **single** inverted commas around a quotation or direct speech that is **inside** a quotation/direct speech.**NOTE:** All punctuation goes **inside** the double inverted commas except where **logic applies.** | **“**Yellow card!**”** said the referee.The article states, “A referendum will be taken every seven years.” |
| **“**Yellow card!**”** **s**aid the referee.The computer must be “restarted before updating” **a**ccording to the manual. |
| She explained, “My teacher told me, **‘**Plan, ask, experiment with ideas,**’** and to this day I always do.” “Guidelines for safety are clearly outlined in the **‘**Indicating**’** and **‘**Breaking**’** chapters of the handbook.” |
| She asked, “Will you time my speech**?**”Do you agree with the saying, “If you can dream it, you do it”**?** |
| **Colon** | * To show a list
* To introduce a quotation (if desired)
 | Remember to have these items**:** a pack, a sleeping bag, tramping boots and a roll mat.Voltaire said: “Le vrai philosphe n'attend rien des homes, et il leur fait tout le bien don't il est capable.”(“The true philosopher expects nothing from others and offers them the best he can give them.”) |
| **Semi-colon** | * To connect independent pieces of information/clauses and **indicate a closer relationship between them**
 | "Management is doing things right**;** leadership is doing the right things." (Peter Drucker)Call me tomorrow; I will give you my answer then.To play the piano well you need: a strong pair of hands; the ability to read music; and a certain passion to perform. |
| **Parentheses (Brackets)** | * Use parentheses (brackets) to enclose words or figures that clarify or are used as an aside

**NOTE:** Periods/Question marks/Exclamation marks go **inside** parentheses only if **an entire sentence is inside the parentheses.** | She opened her mouth to speak (after a few minutes of contemplation) and suggested they rethink their decision.I expect five hundred dollars ($500).Please read the report (I enclosed it as “Appendix A.”).Please read the report *(*Appendix A*).* |
| **Hyphen** | **Look up possible “hyphenated” words in the dictionary to be sure of their use.****However, some instances where hyphens are used:*** Two or more adjectives before a noun to form one idea

 * In expressions where words are linked to express one idea
* When written as words, fractions and cardinal numbers consisting of two words are hyphenated
* Words prefixed by:ex, self, or all, and some words prefixed by cross
* When the second element is capitalised
* To clarify meaning

**Hyphens are NOT used:*** After an adverb ending in “ly”
* In a compound using a comparative or superlative adjective.
* In chemical terms
* Do not use a hyphen in a modifier using a letter or numeral as the second element
* Do not hyphenate words prefixed by: non, un, in, dis, co, anti, hyper, pre, re, post, out, bi, counter, de, semi, mis, mega, micro, inter, over, and under (among others)
 | First-class decisions require clear-headed thinking.This is a top-priority job. |
| mother-in-lawup-to-datetop-notch |
| twenty-threetwenty-fifthone-fourthtwo-thirds |
| self-evidentall-inclusivecross-reference**Note:** The noun “cross section” is two words |
| non-Englishun-American |
| I will re-sign the document **NOT:** I will resign the document |
| a carefully planned project |
| a more likely outcomethe best laid plans |
| calcium carbide solution |
| Type IV antibodyClass A priority |
| nonaffiliateduninfecteddisordercoworkersemifinalmisinformedmegabyteresubmit |