

Basic English Review

Unit 10

Punctuation

Objectives

- To recognize and use periods, question marks, exclamation points, and commas
- To recognize and use other common punctuation marks
- To avoid comma splices

Section 27

Period, Question Mark, and Exclamation Point

- **Punctuation** in writing indicates pauses, gestures, and desired changes of expression.
- Punctuation keeps words from running together so the meaning is clear.



Photodisc/Getty Images

Period

- Use a **period** at the end of a **declarative sentence** (a statement of fact) or an **imperative sentence** (a command or request).
 - Cheryl works for the State Department.
 - Please fax these orders to Mr. Kimball.
- Periods are used in many **abbreviations**, but most abbreviations are not commonly used in formal writing.
- Some abbreviations are always acceptable.

Section 27 Period, Question Mark, and Exclamation Point

Period

- Use a period after an initial and after the courtesy titles *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, and *Ms.*
 - We read “The Waste Land” by T. S. Eliot.
- Most professional titles are spelled out. An exception is *Dr.*
- A professional title can be abbreviated if the person’s full name is used.
 - Sgt. Kate Spivey of the Salem Police Department spoke about the Neighborhood Watch program.

Section 27 Period, Question Mark, and Exclamation Point

Period

- Use periods in academic degrees that follow a person's name.
 - Sylvia Wright, M.D., has joined the clinic staff.
- Professional designations such as CPA are written without periods when used alone but with periods when used with academic degrees.
 - Jerry Wilson, CFP, has written many articles on financial planning.
 - The keynote speaker is Gabriel Alonso, M.B.A., C.P.A.

Section 27 Period, Question Mark, and Exclamation Point

Period

- Use periods with *a.m.* and *p.m.* to designate time.
 - The accident occurred at 1:45 p.m.
- Use United States Postal Service state abbreviations (no periods) in letter addresses.
 - CA (California)
- Do not abbreviate a company name unless the company officially does so.
 - Brian works for J. D. Power and Associates.
 - I sent the package by FedEx.

Question Mark and Exclamation Point

- A **question mark** is used after an **interrogative sentence** (a sentence that asks a direct question).
 - Where is the nearest gas station?
- An **exclamation point** is used after words, phrases, or sentences to express sudden emotion and forceful commands.
 - Don't touch that wire!
- Use exclamation points sparingly, to express truly strong feeling.

Section 27

Period, Question Mark, and Exclamation Point

- Choose the correct mark to end the sentence.
 - Will Marissa be joining us
 - Joe wears a weight vest when he exercises
 - Look out
 - Please order me a Caesar salad

Section 28 Comma

Series and Introductory Words, Phrases, and Clauses

- **Commas** separate three or more items in a series.
 - They grow grapefruit, oranges, and lemons.
- Introductory words and phrases are separated from the rest of the sentence by a comma.
 - During the debate, she made two key points.
- A comma also is used after a dependent clause at the beginning of a sentence.
 - When I called, they were already on their way.

Section 28 Comma

Nonessential Elements and Independent Clauses

- Use commas to set off **nonessential elements**.
 - The town, once a popular travel destination, has fewer visitors each year.
- Do not set off **essential elements** with commas.
 - The supplies that she asked for are on my desk.
- Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction when it links independent clauses (except for short or closely related clauses).
 - The upper extremity refers to the arms, and the lower extremity refers to the legs.

Independent Adjectives and Quotations

- Separate independent adjectives before a noun with a comma.
 - A cap cloud is a long, low cloud over the peak of a solitary mountain.
- Use commas to set off a quotation from the rest of the sentence.
 - That person was right who said, “Almost everything in life is easier to get into than out of.”

Dates, Addresses, and Letters

- The comma is used to set off the second and all following items in complete dates and in addresses.
 - Mark Twain was born on November 30, 1835, in Florida, Missouri.
- In a letter, a comma is used after the complimentary close if a colon has been used after the salutation.

Dear Ms. Ross:

Sincerely,

States, Countries, and Numbers

- Use commas to set off the name of a state or country that follows the name of a city.
 - Updike lived in Beverly Farms, Massachusetts, from 1982 until his death in 2009.
- For numbers greater than zero, use a comma to separate the digits into groups of three.
 - The Missouri River is 2,340 miles long.
- Do not use a comma in parts of a number that are less than zero (decimals) and years.

Comma Splice

- Using only a comma to connect two independent clauses in a compound sentence is a **comma splice**.
 - I have to hang up, I'm running out of minutes.
- Four ways to correct a comma splice:
 - Add a coordinating conjunction.
 - Add a conjunctive adverb.
 - Use just a semicolon.
 - Make two separate sentences.

Section 28

Comma

- Add the necessary commas.
 - The three longest rivers in the world are the Nile the Amazon and the Yangtze.
 - Rachel Carson the author of *Silent Spring* worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
 - Before she was queen Elizabeth was imprisoned in the Tower of London.
 - One of the documents that we saw at the National Archives was the Bill of Rights.

Section 29 Other Punctuation Marks

Semicolon

- Use a **semicolon** to separate independent clauses not joined by a coordinating conjunction.
 - Denmark is a member of NATO; it joined in 1949.
- Use a semicolon between independent clauses joined by a **conjunctive adverb**.
 - Barack Obama is the forty-fourth president of the United States; however, only 43 Americans have held the office.
- Use a semicolon before phrases like *as a result* or *for example* that connect and relate main clauses.

Section 29 Other Punctuation Marks

Colon

- The **colon** is used to direct the reader's attention to what comes after it, usually a list.
 - The panel includes the following employees: Emily Liao, Maya Paff, and Nathan Steiner.
- It is always preceded by an independent clause, except when the listed items are on separate lines.
- The colon is used in times (8:45).
- A colon may be used after the salutation in a letter. (A comma must follow the complimentary close.)

Dash

- The **dash** is most often used in place of commas, parentheses, a colon, or a semicolon when special emphasis is desired.
 - She couldn't have prepared more thoroughly for her interview—but then she forgot the time.
- The dash is also used when a sentence is interrupted abruptly and a different thought is added.
 - Have you seen the list of—oh, here it is.

Parentheses

- **Parentheses** are used to set off additions that are not necessary to the meaning of a sentence.
- Use them for explanations, references, directions, and numbers and letters of listed items.
 - At 1.95 square kilometers (about three times the size of the National Mall in Washington, D.C.), Monaco is one of the smallest countries in the world.
 - Parentheses (page 246) tend to de-emphasize what they set off.

Other Punctuation Marks

- True or false?
 - A semicolon is used between independent clauses when there is no coordinating conjunction.
 - You should use a comma between independent clauses joined by a conjunctive adverb.
 - Whatever comes before a colon must be an independent clause, except when the items listed are on separate lines.
 - You should use parentheses when you want to emphasize an item.

Apostrophe

- The **apostrophe** shows ownership or possession.
 - Abraham Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" is one of the most powerful speeches ever written.
- The apostrophe is also used in contractions.
 - "You Can't Take It With You" is a play by Moss Hart.
- An apostrophe plus *s* is used to form the plural of isolated lowercase letters and the capital letters *A*, *I*, *M*, and *U*.

Quotation Marks

- **Quotation marks** are used to enclose the exact words of a person (direct quotation).
 - “You can fool all the people all the time if the advertising is right and the budget is big enough,” said Joseph E. Levine.
 - “Your most unhappy customers,” wrote Bill Gates, “are your greatest source of learning.”
 - “I’ve opened my own company,” Anna told me. “It’s in the Dixie Terminal Building.”

Section 29 Other Punctuation Marks

Quotation Marks

- Use quotation marks to set off titles of parts of works, such as newspaper and magazine articles.
- Titles of complete works, such as books and newspapers, should be underlined when written in longhand and italicized or underlined when printed.
- Do not use italics, underlining, or quotation marks for website titles.
- Use quotation marks to enclose words or expressions that are unusual or are used in an unusual way.

Section 29 Other Punctuation Marks

Quotation Marks

- Place periods and commas inside quotation marks.
 - Please read the story “A Good Man Is Hard to Find.”
- Place semicolons and colons outside quotation marks.
- Place question marks or exclamation points *inside* quotation marks when part of the quoted matter and *outside* when they punctuate the entire sentence.
 - Gina asked, “Have you ever been to Europe?”
- Do not use quotation marks for indirect quotations.

Hyphen

- The **hyphen** is used in most compound adjectives that precede a noun and in some compound nouns.
 - The House met in a closed-door session.
- The hyphen is also used in spelled-out compound numbers, phone numbers, nine-digit ZIP Codes, and simple fractions.
- The hyphen is used to divide words between one line and the next.

Other Punctuation Marks

- Identify the error in each sentence.
 - We saw the movie “Sophie Scholl” in history class.
 - Max complained, “I don’t understand this problem”.
 - The essay is “Politics and the English Language;” the author is George Orwell.
 - The *American Rhetoric* website has text, audio, and video versions of many famous speeches.
 - Who wrote the short story “The Dead?”