How to Use English Punctuation Correctly

Lecture 1
People who do not use punctuation deserve a long sentence.
Enemies of punctuation

- many people are starting to forget the fundamental aspects of punctuation
Proper punctuation is a must!

• If you would like to write a great paper for one of your classes or
• submit a polished, impeccably written essay to your teacher or
• write formal letters to your boss’s business partners
FORGOT TO PUNCTUATE YOUR ESSAY?

YOU SHALL NOT PASS!
Warnings

- While using English punctuation appropriately may help your writing to flow more smoothly, don't overdo it. It's better to err by omission than to include superfluous, even confusing apostrophes, commas and other marks.

- Try to distinguish between the punctuation rules of different languages in order to avoid using punctuation incorrectly.
Warnings

• Keep in mind that punctuation should be used to enhance writing and create a more "intelligent" appearance. The whole point of punctuation is to increase clarity.

• Punctuation is not an end in itself.

• Do not use punctuation just because it seems more intellectual.
During the course keep in mind these differences between American English and British English:

1. Parentheses are called brackets.
2. Periods are called full stops.
3. Exclamation points are called exclamation marks.
4. 7:30 is written 7.30.
5. Americans place all terminal punctuation inside closing quotation marks, while British usage sometimes “picks and chooses.”
Joy means “happiness”. (British)
Joy means “happiness.” (American)

6. The “ [ ] “ symbols are called square brackets in Britain, and brackets in the US.

7. The punctuation for abbreviations:
Dr, Mr, Mrs, St, Rd, Ct (British)
Dr., Mr., Mrs., St., Rd., Ct. (American)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Punctuation Mark</th>
<th>Use to...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( . ) Period</td>
<td>End a sentence: Dinner was delicious.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( ? ) Question Mark</td>
<td>End a sentence and denote inquiry: What time is it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( ! ) Exclamation Point</td>
<td>End a sentence and denote excitement or emphasis: Watch out for that tree!</td>
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<tr>
<td>( , ) Comma</td>
<td>Denote a break within a sentence or direct address of a person or group: Mary, listen to me.</td>
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Separate any of the following:
- Two or more adjectives: He is a charming, attentive listener.
- Items in a list: Please buy eggs, milk, butter and flour.
- The name of a city from the name of a state: I live in Salt Lake City, Utah.
- Two independent clauses: The waiter still hasn’t taken our order, and the play starts in five minutes.
- Direct quotations: Quoth the raven, “Nevermore.”
| ( ; ) Semicolon | Separate two related but independent clauses: I asked Anne to look at my computer; she has a knack for them.  

Separate a series of items that already contain commas:  
- For our wedding colors, I chose white, the color of innocence; red, the color of passion; and yellow, the color of lemons.  
- I have lived in Detroit, Michigan; Paris, France; and Sydney, Australia. |
| --- | --- |
| ( : ) Colon | Introduce a list.  
For Christmas, I would like the following presents: a hula hoop, a hippopotamus, and my two front teeth.  
Introduce a statement that expands upon the clause before the colon.  
And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—as ask what you can do for your country. |
| ( - ) Hyphen | Add a prefix: Trans-Atlantic flights are costly.  
Create compound words: Spider-Man is my favorite superhero.  
Write numbers as words: I have lived in this house for thirty-three years. |
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>(− or ―) Dash</strong></th>
<th>Make a brief interruption within a sentence or a parenthetical phrase: Johnny asked me—with a straight face, I might add—if he could borrow the car for the weekend.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>(“”) Double Quotation</strong></td>
<td>Enclose a direct quotation: “If you pick up a starving dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you. This is the principal difference between a dog and a man.”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **(( )) Parentheses** | Indicate clarification: Please bring home some real butter (as opposed to margarine).  
Indicate an afterthought or personal commentary: Anyone can edit Wikipedia (not that there’s anything wrong with that). |
Other punctuation rules still to come