

## **Lecture 11: Punctuation**

Punctuation is also a critical element in writing. It helps to clarify the meaning of the written sentence and the whole text. The writer must supply, as well as he can with marks of punctuation. Most marks of punctuation have highly specialized functions, and once these are understood, it is easy enough to use them conventionally. The chief exception is the comma which is at once the most common mark of punctuation, and the one with the most complex uses. The major functions of the punctuation marks are as follows:

- 1- To enclose sentences.
- 2- To link sentences and parts of words.
- 3- To separate sentences and parts of sentences.

### ➤ **The Comma ( , )**

- a- We use a comma to separate two or more adjectives defining one noun.

e.g.: Jim was a clever, smart, quiet, gentle man.

b- We use a comma after an introductory adverbial clause or verbal clause.

e.g.: If I don't practice sport this month, I'll be fatter. (Adverbial clause)

To learn a language, you must practice. (Infinitive verbal clause)

c- We use a comma before a coordinating conjunction (compound sentence).

e.g.: Your answers are correct, but you did the wrong exercise.

d- A conjunctive adverb is always set off by a comma when it stands first in the sentence. (Besides, certainly, consequently, however, moreover, similarly, indeed, accordingly, therefore, furthermore).

e.g.: Furthermore, I don't have enough money for the trip.

e- We use a comma to set off a noun of address (i.e. addressing someone).

e.g. : « Jim, what 's up ? »

f- We use a comma to set off a speaker's directly quoted words from the rest of the sentence.

e.g.: Jim said, « I'll see later ».

« I'll see you later », Mickel said.

g- We use a comma for emphasis and contrast.

e.g.: I want coffee, not tea.

h- We use a comma to separate individual items in a list.

e.g. : « I noticed two chairs, a table, books, pens, papers, some broken pencils, a couple of packets of cigarettes, two cups of coffee, but no one was there ».

i- We use a comma to prevent a confused, ambiguous reading.

e.g.: « I do not care, for money isn't everything ».

j- We use a comma after an introductory « Yes » or « No ».

e.g.: « Yes, you can count on me ».

k- Punctuating compound sentences:

A comma is generally placed before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence. However, a comma should not be placed in a simple sentence to separate a compound predicate.

e.g.: The shop opens at 9 a.m. and closes at 6 p.m.

(Simple sentence with a compound predicate; no comma needed).

The shop opens at 9 a.m., and it closes at 6 p.m..

(Compound sentence with two independent clauses; comma needed).

### ➤ **The Paired Commas ( ,....., )**

a- Use paired commas to mark off words or phrases in apposition.

e.g.: Miss Clark, our English teacher, comes from England.

b- Use paired commas to mark off words in addressing a person.

e.g.: Believe me, my dear friend, he is innocent.

➤ **The Semi-Colon ( ; )**

- a- We use a semi-colon between two parts of a compound sentence if they are not joined by a coordinating conjunction.

e.g.: Your car is new; mine is very old.

- b- Use a semi-colon before a transitional connective (conjunctive adverb) between two main Clauses.

e.g.: His example is logic; however, he goes too far.

**Note:** The most common transitional connectives are: *so, then, therefore, also, besides, however, consequently, furthermore, moreover, yet.*

- c- We use also a semi-colon for separating elements in a series when they contain internal punctuation.

e.g.: Among those present at the party were Sue; Pierre, a Frenchman; Folker, a

German; and julio, an Italian.

### ➤ **The Colon (:)**

- a- In writing time, use a colon between the figure designating the hour and the figures designating the minutes.

e.g.: My mam usually gets up at 6: 00 a.m.

- b- Use a colon to introduce a conclusion or a climax.

e.g.: Taking all the circumstances into account, we did the only thing possible: we ran away.

- c- Use a colon after the expression as follows or the following to introduce a list.

e.g.: The names of the girls in the first row are as follows: Jane, Ann, Mary and Sue.

- d- Use a colon to introduce a passage of direct speech.

e.g.: This is exactly what he said: « The bridge can be built only in the dry season ».

### ➤ **End punctuation**

- **. A period** is used at the end of the statement

e.g.: I like travelling to European countries

- **? Question mark** is used at the end of question.

e.g.: What time is it?

- **! Exclamation mark** is used when you have an excited or emotionally charged statement.

e.g.: It is an amazing story!

## **3.1. The use of Capitalization**

Capitalization is also necessary and essential when we write. It is used in the following cases.

**Rule 1.** Capitalize the first word of a quoted sentence.

*e.g.:* She said: “**T**oday is beautiful”

**Rule 2.** Capitalize a proper noun (Names of specific building and monuments).

*e.g.:* Status of **L**iberty.

Empire State **B**uilding

Golden Gate **B**ridge

**Rule 3.** Capitalize a person’s title when it precedes the name. Do not capitalize when the title is acting as a description following the name.

*e.g.:* Chairperson **B**rown

Ms. **B**rown, the chairperson of the company, will address us at noon.

**Rule 4.** Capitalize the person’s title when it follows the name on the address or signature line.

*e.g.:* Sincerely,

- Ms. **B**rown, Chairperson

**Rule 5.** Capitalize the titles of high-ranking government officials when used with or before their names. Do not capitalize the civil title if it is used instead of the name.

*e.g.:* *The president will address people.*

*Governor Fortinbrass, Lieutenant Governor Poppins, Attorney General Dalloway, and Senators James and Twain will attend.*

**Rule 6.** Capitalize any title when used as a direct address.

e.g.: *Will you take my temperature, Doctor?*

**Rule 7.** Capitalize points of the compass only when they refer to specific regions.

e.g.: *We have had three relatives visit from the South.*

*Go south and then turn left.*

*We live in the southeast section of town.*

*Southeast* is just an adjective here describing section, so it should not be capitalized.

**Rule 8.** Always capitalize the first and last words of titles of publications regardless of their parts of speech. Capitalize other words within titles, including the short verb forms *Is, Are, and Be.*

**Exception:** Do not capitalize little words within titles such as *a, an, the, but, as, if, and, or, nor* or prepositions regardless of their length.

**Examples:** *The Day of the Jackal*

*What Color Is Your Parachute?*

*A Tale of Two Cities*

**Rule 9.** Capitalize *federal* or *state* when used as part of an official agency name or in government documents where these terms represent an official name. If they are being used as general terms, you may use lowercase letters.

e.g.: *The state has evidence to the contrary.*

*That is a federal offense.*

*The State Board of Equalization collects sales taxes.*

*We will visit three states during our summer vacation.*

*The Federal Bureau of Investigation has been subject to much scrutiny and criticism lately.*

*Her business must comply with all county, state, and federal laws.*

**Rule 10.** You may capitalize words such as *department, bureau, and office* if you have prepared your text in the following way:

e.g.: *The Bureau of Land Management (Bureau) has some jurisdiction over Indian lands.*

**Rule 11.** Do not capitalize names of seasons.

e.g.: *I love autumn colors and spring flowers.*

**Rule 12.** Capitalize the first word of a salutation and the first word of a complimentary close. (The beginning and closing of a letter).

- e.g.: **D**ear sir
  
- **S**incerely yours Ann
  
- **D**ear Ms. Anderson
  
- My dear Mr. Black:
  
- Very truly yours,

**Rule 13.** Capitalize words derived from proper nouns.

e.g.: I must take English and math.

English is capitalized because it comes from the proper noun England, but math does not come from math land.

**Rule 14.** Capitalize the names of specific course titles.

e.g.: I must take history and Algebra 2.

**Rule 15.** After a sentence ending with a colon, do not capitalize the first word if it begins a list.

e.g.: *These are my favorite foods: chocolate cake, spaghetti, and artichokes.*

**Rule 16.** Do not capitalize when only one sentence follows a sentence ending with a colon.

e.g.: *I love Jane Smiley's writing: her book, A Thousand Acres, was beautiful.*

**Rule 17.** Capitalize when two or more sentences follow a sentence ending with a colon.

e.g.: *I love Jane Smiley's writing: Her book, A Thousand Acres, was beautiful. Also, Moo was clever.*

**Rule 18.** Capitalize the beginning of a sentence.

e.g.: **T**hank you for your letter.

**Rule 18.** Name of days, months, and holidays are also capitalized.

*e.g.*: **Tuesday**

**Rule 19.** Use capitalization with titles of movies, books, films, TV shows...

*e.g.*: **Titanic** by James Cameron

**Rule 20.** Names of streets, cities and states are also capitalized.

*e.g.*: **Belouazded Avenue**

**Rule 21.** The pronoun **I** is capitalized

*e.g.*: My friend and **I** like watching horror films

**Rule 22.** People's first and last names, their initials and titles are capitalized.

*e.g.*: **Mrs. Brown** and **Ann** were seen by **Dr. Lee**.