



Punctuation grammar

.	full stop
'	apostrophe
' '	quotation marks (single)
" "	quotation marks (double)
()	brackets
-	hyphen
—	dash
!	exclamation mark
?	question mark
,	comma
;	semi colon
:	colon
...	ellipsis
•	dot point

Full Stop .

This shows the end of a sentence. When reading it means you take a long pause.

The lunch was delicious.

It is also used in some abbreviations, eg

Co. Jan. Mr. Ltd.

However, there is a modern trend not to use full stops in abbreviations, eg

Mr and Pty Ltd

Apostrophe '

There are two types of apostrophe:

- apostrophe of omission/contraction
- apostrophe of ownership/possession.

See examples in the table on page 2.

Apostrophe of omission/contraction	
was not	wasn't
does not	doesn't
had not	hadn't
should not	shouldn't
where is	where's
there is	there's
we will	we'll
they will	they'll
I will	I'll
we are	we're
you are	you're
they have	they've
you have	you've
we would	we'd
I would	I'd
he would	he'd
I am	I'm

Apostrophe of ownership/possession	
The apostrophe is actually saying of eg The hat of the boy.	
The boy's hat. (singular)	The boys' hats (plural)
The cat's bowl. (singular)	The cats' bowls (plural)
The lion's mane. (singular)	The lions' manes. (plural)
The lady's handbag. (singular)	The ladies' handbags. (plural)
The child's homework. (singular)	The children's homework. (plural)

- If there is one owner (singular) the apostrophe goes before the "s".
- If there is more than one owner (plural) the apostrophe goes after the "s", but if it doesn't, then the apostrophe goes before the added "s", eg men's, children's.
- *Children* is an exception to this rule, as it is already a plural.

Be careful with these words as they are not contractions:

its – belonging to it

whose – belonging to who

your – belonging to you

their – belonging to them

there – a place

Be careful with plurals.

They do not require an apostrophe, unless they also involve ownership, eg the children's coats, the girls' hats.

Quotation marks

There are two types of quotation marks:

Double quotation marks " "

These are used to show speech in written texts.

"What did you have for lunch today?" asked Tricia.

Single quotation marks ' '

They are used around titles of books, songs, TV programs, films and magazines.

He read 'The Lord of the Rings' in three weeks.

They are used to show a quote within a quote.

"The teacher said to me, 'Don't forget your excursion money',
when I went to school today," informed Lucy.

Note: This is standard American use of quotation marks. The UK often reverses this use by having single quotation marks around the full quote and double quotation marks around the quote within a quote. Either is acceptable in Australia, provided that the chosen approach is used consistently throughout a text. However, the NSW English syllabus uses the American style.

Brackets ()

These are used to put additional information into a sentence. Commas could be used instead.

The two girls (who were twins) dressed in similar clothes.

Hyphen -

This is a short stroke without spaces either side. It is used if a word goes over two lines; the word should be hyphenated at a syllable.

The teacher asked the children to write something about themselves at the beginning of the year.

It is also used when an adjective has several words.

The fur coat was very old-fashioned.
Technology use is very much twenty-first-century.

Dash –

A dash is longer than a hyphen and is used to add more information to a sentence. Commas or brackets can also be used.

The school boys – who were constantly late for class – were advised to use an alarm to wake themselves up in the morning.

Exclamation mark !

This shows a strong feeling or emotion. It is used for an exclamation or interjection.

Wow!

What a fabulous sight!

Watch out! There's a huge puddle.

Help! I've just had an accident.

Comma ,

This usually indicates a short pause when reading. It is used to help a sentence make sense.

The two women, who had just caught a train to the city, were planning a day of shopping.

To divide items in a list or to separate a series of adjectives.

The shopping list included bread, butter, oranges, potatoes and a jar of honey.

The splendid, big, red balloon looked wonderful at the birthday party.

To make sentences clearer in meaning.

He left, happily.

(people think it was a good thing he left)

He left happily.

(this is how he felt)

Used instead of a dash or brackets to add more information to a sentence.

The house, which had just undergone a renovation, was on the market.

To separate spoken words.

"Don't walk in the puddle," instructed the teacher.

"Gosh! I never saw it," replied the student.

Semicolon ;

This is stronger than a comma but not as complete as a full stop. It may separate phrases or clauses that already include commas.

Ten workers started the project;
only five remain.

We visited Suva, Fiji;
Wellington, New Zealand;
and Sydney, Australia.

Colon :

This shows the end of the main part of the sentence before introducing more information.

For the excursion to the museum please bring the following: a raincoat, sunhat, water, food for recess and lunch, and a notebook and pen.

The holiday was much better than I expected: exciting, adventurous, with wonderful food and fabulous companions.

Ellipsis ...

This is used to show that words have been left out or there has been a break in thought.

You know, after discussing, I still can't decide ... but I hope to make a decision soon.

According to the magazine article, "The best remedy ... is to drink plenty of liquids."

Dot point •

This is used to separate items in a list or for noting key points in written text.

You will need to get the following items:

- a blue pen
- two lead pencils
- a note pad.