

PUNCTUATION

Punctuation gives meaning

- Punctuation helps your reader understand:
- where an idea ends;
- when someone is asking a question;
- when someone is speaking;
- which words belong together;
- what emotion or meaning the writer wants to communicate.

Example:

Let's eat, learners.

Let's eat learners.

The first sentence is inviting learners to eat.

The second sentence sounds as if learners are going to be eaten!

The comma changes the meaning.

Punctuation saves lives!

CAPITAL LETTERS

When to use:

At the beginning of a sentence

The learners entered the classroom.

For names of people

Ayanda

For names of places

South **A**frica

For days and months

Monday

September

For languages

English

Sesotho

For the word 'I'

My family and **I** are watching the game.

FULL STOP

A full stop marks the end of a statement.

The learners completed their homework.

The teacher entered the classroom.

We are studying punctuation.

After certain abbreviations.

e.g.

Remember:

New sentence = capital letter + full stop

Think of your writing like driving a car.

If you don't use capital letters and full stops, you are driving through red lights and ignoring the road signs!



Every single sentence **must** start with a **capital letter**.

If you keep adding ideas using 'and... and... and...' without stopping, your reader runs out of breath! Stop the sentence.

Add a **full stop**.

COMMON ERROR

thabo lives in bloemfontein he enjoys playing soccer.

Correct:

Thabo lives in **Bloemfontein**. **He** enjoys playing soccer.

COMMAS

A comma tells the reader to pause briefly or separates parts of a sentence.

There are several important uses.

COMMA IN A LIST

Use commas to separate items in a list.

I bought **bread, milk, eggs and fruit**.

Another example:

The learners brought **pens, pencils, rulers and books**.

Important:

Usually, you do not need a comma before **and** in a simple list.

COMMA AFTER AN INTRODUCTORY PHRASE

After school, the learners went home.

Early that morning, the family left.

Although he was tired, he continued working.

The comma helps separate the introductory information from the main idea.

COMMA FOR DIRECT ADDRESS

Thank you, Mrs Smith.

Come here, John.

Well done, learners.

To avoid confusion

Learners who study consistently perform well.

Learners, who study consistently, perform well.

DO NOT PUT COMMAS EVERYWHERE!

The boy, ran, quickly, to school. 

The boy ran quickly to school. 

A comma is not simply a place where you pause when speaking.
Use commas because they have a grammatical purpose.

QUESTION MARKS

Use a question mark after a direct question.

Where are you going?

Did you finish your homework?

Why were you late?

How did the accident happen?

Do not use a question mark for a statement.

I wonder where she is? 

If it is written as a statement:

I wonder where she is.

But:

Where is she?

This is a direct question.

EXCLAMATION MARKS

An exclamation mark can show strong emotion.

It may show:

surprise;

excitement;

anger;

shock;

fear;

urgency.

Examples:

Stop!

What a beautiful day!

Watch out!

I can't believe it!

DO NOT OVERUSE IT!

Weak:

That was amazing!!!!!!!! 

Better:

That was amazing!

One exclamation mark is normally enough.

Do not use several exclamation marks to make your writing look more exciting.

Let your words create the emotion.

APOSTROPHE

The apostrophe has two important uses.

1. CONTRACTIONS

It shows that letters have been left out.

do not → **don't**

cannot → **can't**

I am → **I'm**

they are → **they're**

we are → **we're**

2. POSSESSION

The apostrophe can show that something belongs to someone.

The girl's bag

The bag belongs to the girl.

The teacher's desk

The desk belongs to the teacher.

James's book

The book belongs to James.

QUOTATION MARKS

Quotation marks show the exact words spoken by someone.

Example:

Thabo said, **"I am tired."**

The exact words spoken are inside quotation marks.

- quotation marks surround the spoken words;
- the first word of the speech begins with a capital letter;
- punctuation is included with the speech.

SEMICOLON AND COLON

SEMICOLON (;)

- A semicolon can join two closely related complete ideas.
- The weather was terrible; we decided to stay at home.

There are two complete ideas:

- The weather was terrible.
- We decided to stay at home.
- The semicolon shows that the ideas are closely connected.

Tip:

If you are unsure about a semicolon, use a full stop.

It is better to write:

The weather was terrible. We stayed at home.

COLON (:)

Introduce a list.

Bring three items: a pen, a ruler, and an eraser.

We visited three South African cities during the holidays: Durban, Cape Town, and Pretoria.

The recipe requires the following ingredients: flour, sugar, eggs, and butter.

To introduce an explanation or a long quote.

Thabo finally made his decision: he was going to study engineering next year.

The weather forecast predicted severe conditions: a massive thunderstorm was heading our way.

The principal gave us a strict warning: "Latecomers will not be allowed into the exam room."

In Dialogue

In drama or play scripts, a colon is placed directly after the character's name to show who is speaking. No speech marks are used here.

Sipho: Have you finished studying for the English test?

Thandi: Not yet, I am still struggling with punctuation.

Common Exam Trap to Avoid

Do **not** put a colon directly after a verb like "are" or "include".

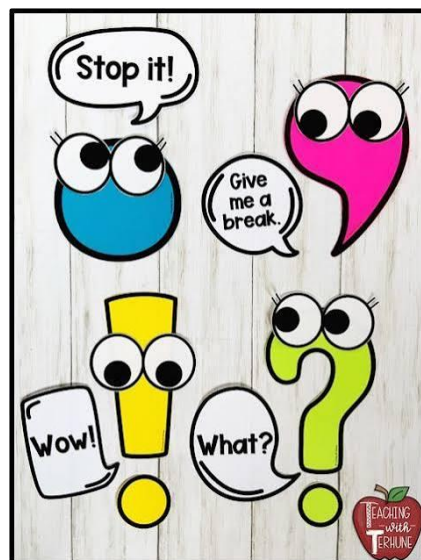
Incorrect: The ingredients you need are: flour, sugar, and milk.

Correct: The ingredients you need are flour, sugar, and milk.

Correct: You need three ingredients: flour, sugar, and milk.

Your punctuation can change the meaning of your writing.

- **Punctuate carefully.**
- **Write clearly.**
- **Communicate effectively.**



PUNCTUATION EDIT CHALLENGE

Correct the punctuation errors in the sentences below.

1. Planning is essential it prevents mistakes
2. Learners who work hard succeed
3. The teachers feedback was helpful
4. He asked when will the task be due
5. Success requires discipline patience and effort

Memo

1. *Planning is essential; it prevents mistakes.*
2. *Learners, who work hard, succeed. (or explanation-based acceptance)*
3. *The teacher's feedback was helpful.*
4. *He asked, "When will the task be due?"*
5. *Success requires discipline, patience and effort.*

THE PASSAGE (EDITING REQUIRED)

Much young people believes that succes is only measured by welth and popularity. This idea have been influencing by social media, where influencers constantly shows luxurious lifestyles. However, what is often ignored are the hard work, discipline and failures behind those achievements.

Social media create unrealistic expectations and can effect learners self-esteem negatively. When teenagers compare themself to others online, they feel unadequate and demotivated. This results in learners loosing focus on there education and personal goals. Education remain one of the importantest tools for suces, because it equips individuals with critical thinking skills and knowledge.

It is therefor inportant that learners understands that reel suces is not instantly but it requires perseverance and patiense. Parents, teachers and society as a whole must gude young poeple towards realistic and meaningfull goals.

MEMORANDUM

CORRECTED PASSAGE

Many young people **believe** that **success** is only measured by **wealth** and popularity. This idea **has** been **influenced** by social media, where influencers constantly **show** luxurious **lifestyles**. However, what is often ignored **is** the hard work, discipline and failures behind **these** achievements.

Social media **creates** unrealistic expectations and can **affect** learners' self-esteem negatively. When teenagers compare **themselves** to others online, they feel **inadequate** and demotivated. This results in learners **losing** focus on **their** education and personal goals. Education **remains** one of the **most important** tools for **success** because it equips individuals with critical thinking skills and knowledge.

It is **therefore important** that learners **understand** that **real success** is not **instant**, but it requires perseverance and **patience**. Parents, teachers and society as a whole must **guide** young **people** towards realistic and **meaningful** goals.