

**BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO**  
**TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DÂN LẬP HẢI PHÒNG**

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**HẢI PHÒNG - 2010**

**HAIPHONG PRIVATE UNIVERSITY**  
**FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT**

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**GRADUATION PAPER**

**A STUDY ON HOW TO USE SOME COMMON  
PUNCTUATION MARKS IN WRITING ENGLISH**

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**Class:**

**Na1001**

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**HAI PHONG - 2010**

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**TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DÂN LẬP HẢI PHÒNG**

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**Nhiệm vụ đề tài tốt nghiệp**

Sinh viên:.....Mã số:.....

Lớp:.....Ngành:.....

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Tên đề tài: .....

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## Nhiệm vụ đề tài

1. Nội dung và các yêu cầu cần giải quyết trong nhiệm vụ đề tài tốt nghiệp

( về lý luận, thực tiễn, các số liệu cần tính toán và các bản vẽ).

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2. Các số liệu cần thiết để thiết kế, tính toán.

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3. Địa điểm thực tập tốt nghiệp.

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## CÁN BỘ HƯỚNG DẪN ĐỀ TÀI

### Người hướng dẫn thứ nhất:

Họ và tên:.....

Học hàm, học vị:.....

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Nội dung hướng dẫn:.....

### Người hướng dẫn thứ hai:

Họ và tên:.....

Học hàm, học vị:.....

Cơ quan công tác:.....

Nội dung hướng dẫn:.....

Đề tài tốt nghiệp được giao ngày 12 tháng 04 năm 2010

Yêu cầu phải hoàn thành xong trước ngày 10 tháng 07 năm 2010

Đã nhận nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

Đã giao nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

*Sinh viên*

*Người hướng dẫn*

*Hải Phòng, ngày tháng năm 2010*

**HIỆU TRƯỞNG**

**GS.TS. NGUYỄN Trần Hữu Nghị**

## PHẦN NHẬN XÉT TÓM TẮT CỦA CÁN BỘ HƯỚNG DẪN

**1. Tinh thần thái độ của sinh viên trong quá trình làm đề tài tốt nghiệp:**

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**Đánh giá chất lượng của khóa luận (so với nội dung yêu cầu đã đề ra trong nhiệm vụ Đ.T. T.N trên các mặt lý luận, thực tiễn, tính toán số liệu...):**

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**3. Cho điểm của cán bộ hướng dẫn (ghi bằng cả số và chữ):**

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*Hải Phòng, ngày ..... tháng ..... năm 2010*

**Cán bộ hướng dẫn**

*(họ tên và chữ ký)*

## **NHẬN XÉT ĐÁNH GIÁ**

### **CỦA NGƯỜI CHĂM PHẢN BIỆN ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP**

1. Đánh giá chất lượng đề tài tốt nghiệp về các mặt thu thập và phân tích tài liệu, số liệu ban đầu, giá trị lí luận và thực tiễn của đề tài.

2. Cho điểm của người chăm phản biện :

*(Điểm ghi bằng số và chữ)*

Ngày..... tháng..... năm 2010

**Người chăm phản biện**

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Hai Phong , June 2010

Student

Doan Minh Huyen

NA 1001



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**PART I – INTRODUCTION**

**I. Rationale of study**

After four years of studying at Haiphong Private University, I feel more confident with my skills and knowledge of English that I have been taught here. Since the first year I have made certain progresses in improving my English thanks to my HPU's teachers. The graduation is coming soon and up to now I feel no regret choosing English as my major. Of all subjects, I choose one small aspect of grammar for my graduation paper, it is punctuation marks. They are used in our four English skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing. So, you sometimes wonder why punctuation marks are used popularly in studying English. Punctuation is used to create sense, clarity and stress in sentences. They are signals, tools we use to organize word arrangements to facilitate readability. Punctuation affects the rhythm of how a sentence is read, as well as the actual meaning of the writing. When writing, you use punctuation marks such as comma, question mark or the others to make your meaning clear, and help reader read texts easily, avoid confusion and understand more clearly what the writer has intended. When you speak, you can pause, stop, or change your tone of voice to make your meaning clear, and make listeners understand the speaker's emotion. You can quickly see why and how important punctuation is in the following example if you try and read it without punctuation at all.

*Jack pulled the kitten s tail and his mother said to him don t pull the kitten s tail Jack Jack answered I m not pulling it Mummy I m holding it and the kitten s pulling*

Now let's see how punctuation makes a difference.

*Jack pulled the kitten's tail, and his mother said to him: "Don't pull the kitten's tail, Jack!" . Jack answered: "I'm not pulling it, Mummy. I'm holding it , and the kitten's pulling".*

Although punctuation marks are small aspect of grammar, they are one of the many important elements of writing. Without them, sentence is not sentence. Punctuation helps direct us through written language with its system of symbols and the rules for using them. Correct usage of punctuation marks as correct tense of verbs, correct forms of nouns, and so on, help we improve our writing skill and learn better.

## **II. Aims of the study**

Punctuation can be thought of as a means of indicating the pauses and changes of tone that are used in speech to help communicate the meaning of sentences. Punctuation help you to see the grammar of a sentence and which parts belong together. It also helps you to understand how the sentences would sound if the person using them is speaking instead of writing. However, many people find using punctuation marks very confusing, and even learners of English use punctuation badly or even incorrectly. So, my research is designed in such a way that it helps the Vietnamese beginners of English have basic knowledge of the punctuation marks, know their importance and how to use them correctly in writing English through doing some practicing exercises which will be available in the appendix.

## **III. Scope of the study**

The use of punctuation marks can be very complex and flexible. Each punctuation mark can be used in many different ways. Within the shortage of time, experience, and references, it is impossible for me to study all punctuation marks in English. So, I only choose to study the punctuation marks that are most commonly used and suggest ways to avoid misusing

them in writing. Moreover, I will give the explanations of their usages and examples.

#### **IV. Methods of the study**

In order to complete my study on punctuation marks in writing English, the following methods have been applied:

- Finding definitions of punctuation, classification of punctuation marks by reading reference books and documents, accessing the internet, looking for related dictionaries, and searching in library.
- Collecting specific examples.
- Having discussions with my supervisor.

#### **V. Design of the study**

My research paper is divided into three parts :

- \* The first part is the Introduction which states the rationale, the aims, the scope, the methods and the design of the research.
- \* The second part is the Development that includes three chapters :
  - Chapter I is the theoretical background which states some definitions of punctuation , classification of punctuation marks, the history of punctuation , and their roles in writing
  - Chapter II is a research on two parts: The introduction of punctuation marks, the functions of punctuation marks and how to use some common punctuation marks in writing English.
  - Chapter III is some attentions to avoid misuse of punctuation marks in writing English.
- \* The last part is the Conclusion that includes the summary of the study, suggestions for further study, and some practical exercises for a better use of punctuation marks.

**PART II – DEVELOPMENT**  
**CHAPTER 1**  
***THEORETICAL BACKGROUND***

**I. The history of punctuation marks**

Language was spoken before it was written. In speech, pauses are expressed naturally. When telling a story, no one says the word “*comma*” when the story calls for a pause, or “*period*” when an idea is complete. When language first was written, however, the reader had to guess where the pauses and breaks were. Indeed, readers in ancient times and the Middle Ages found it very difficult to understand texts due to the lack of punctuation marks. In ancient Greece, the preferred method of writing did not even allow spaces between words. Reading and comprehending were difficult tasks that only the best and most dedicated scholars could figure out.

According to historians, the ancient manuscripts had no punctuation, the words had been written serial no spaces. In ancient Roman times, when philosophers rewrote their speeches and lectures, they only used a single punctuation to alluded to pause for breath and get their breath. The first recognized formal system of punctuation was developed by the Greek scholar Aristophanes of Byzantium (c 257 BC – c 185–180 BC), librarian at Alexandria around 200 B.C. His system used only a set of three points of varying heights (distinctiones):

- For a short passage (a *komma*), a “*media distinctio*” dot was placed mid-level (·). This is the origin of the modern comma punctuation mark (a short pause), and its name.
- For a longer passage (a *colon*), a “*subdistinctio dot*” was placed level with the bottom of the text (.), similar to a modern colon or semicolon.
- For very long pauses (*periodos*), a “*distinctio point*” near the top of the line of text (ˆ).

For centuries after the invention of punctuation it was used haphazardly and illogically. William Caxton, who lived in the 15th century, is known to have been the first British printer. His use of punctuation marks reveals no clear system and often causes more confusion for the reader than it relieves. The invention of the printing press was the catalyst for the development of punctuation signs. For some 250 years after Caxton, printers both in the British Empire and in the United States increasingly felt the need for an adequate, understandable, and orderly system of punctuation. Their efforts eventually resulted in a reasonably uniform code, but it was not until the middle of the 19th century that books, magazines, and newspapers in the English language adopted a system which generally would seem clear and organically helpful to present-day readers. Other punctuation marks used in modern English include parentheses, question mark, exclamation mark, quotation marks, hyphen, apostrophe, backslash and ellipsis mark.

*(Source:*

*<http://www.physics.ohiostate.edu/writing/Resources/essays/punctuation> -  
*Punctuation in English since 1600**

*<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/punctuation>)*

*<http://www.reference.com/browse/punctuation>*

## **II. Definition of punctuation marks**

Punctuation is means to help readers easily understand the sentence. This is considered the end stage of sentence structure. Theodore Bernstein - Editor of The New York Time-ever compared punctuation as “traffic signals” along the way that readers are going.

The word “*punctuation*” comes from the Latin word “*punctus*”, which means “point”. There are some definitions of punctuation marks which I know.

According to *A grammar of the English language* (1998:186). Hanoi University of Foreign Studies: “*The punctuation marks separate , group and qualify words and elements in sentences; they help to suggest the pause , intonations, and gestures that would be used in speech. Eventually you may be able to punctuate almost by habit , but you need to form your habit consciously according to accepted practices.*”

According to the Wikipedia’s website: “*Punctuation marks are symbols which indicate the structure and organization of written language, as well as intonation and pauses to be observed when reading aloud. In written English, punctuation is vital to disambiguate the meaning of sentences. The rules of punctuation vary with language, location, register and time and are constantly evolving. Certain aspects of punctuation are stylistic and are thus the author's (or editor's) choice. Tachygraphic language forms, such as those used in online chat and text messages, may have wildly different rules.*”

In short, *punctuation is the system of symbols that we use to separate sentences and parts of sentences, and to make their meaning clear. Each symbol is called a “punctuation mark”*. The following punctuation marks are commonly used in English: full stop / period, question mark, exclamation mark, comma, colon, semi colon, quotation marks, hyphen , dash, apostrophe, parentheses, square brackets, ellipsis, and slash.

Punctuation is a set of symbols used in writing to help indicate something about the structure of sentences, or to assist readers in knowing when to change the rhythm or the stress of their speaking. Depending on the style of writing and the language used, punctuation may tend towards one of these purposes more than the other. Common units of punctuation in English and many other languages include the comma, period, apostrophe, quotation



mark, question mark, exclamation mark, bracket, dash, hyphen, ellipsis, colon, and semicolon. Each of these units indicates a different thing, and some may have multiple meanings depending on context.

### **III. Classifications of punctuation marks**

There are many ways to classify punctuation marks. According to “*A University Grammar of English*” of Randolph Quirk and Sidney Greenbaum, punctuation is classified by functions. In “*A Grammar of the English Language-1998*” of Hanoi University of Foreign Studies, punctuation is classified by place. And in “*Grammar, Punctuation, and Capitalization- A Handbook for Technical Writers and Editors*” of Mary K. McCaskill (Langley Research Center Hampton, Virginia), punctuation is classified by syntax. However, the best way to remember how many punctuation marks there are, that is the classification by place.

#### **1.Punctuation marks classified by function**

Punctuation is placed in text to make meaning clear and to make reading easier. The function of a punctuation mark is the basis for the rules governing its use and should be the basis for determining whether or not it is needed.

##### **1.1.Separation of language function**

###### **a.Successive units**

- Period/ Full stop
- Colon
- Semi colon
- Comma
- Hyphen

###### **b.Included units**

The two commonest types of included unit are:

- Parenthetical (Parentheses, comma, and dash)
- Quotation marks

The punctuation marking such included units must be correlative, one occurrence indicating the beginning of the inclusion , a second occurrence indicating its completion.

### 1.2.Specification of language function

The functions most commonly specified by punctuation signs are questions, exclamations, gentives , contractions, and addreviations.

- Period
- Question marks
- Exclamation mark
- Apostrophe

## **2.Punctuation marks classified by place**

This classification relies on the position of punctuation in sentence .

### 2.1.Separate punctuation marks

- |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| ▪ Comma           | ▪ Quotation marks |
| ▪ Semi colon      | ▪ Hyphen          |
| ▪ Colon           | ▪ Apostrophe      |
| ▪ Dash            | ▪ Slash           |
| ▪ Parentheses     | ▪ Ellipsis        |
| ▪ Square brackets |                   |

### 2.2.End punctuation marks

- Full stop or period
- Exclamation mark
- Question marks

## **3.Punctuation marks classified by syntax**

The basic fact about contemporary English punctuation is that its markers can be placed only at the syntactic junctures of a text (as external sentence-

markers) and at the syntactic junctures of a sentence (as internal sentence-markers).

### 3.1. The syntactic junctures of a text

The syntactic junctures of a text are the points between sentences. Those points are necessarily marked by external sentence-markers:

- Full stop
- Question mark
- Exclamation mark
- Colon
- Semi-colon

### 3.2. The syntactic junctures of a sentence

The syntactic junctures of a sentence are the points where its parts meet. Those points are marked, or left unmarked, in accordance with the part-of-speech function of the coinciding parts. The internal sentence-markers are:

- Comma
- Semi colon
- Colon
- Dash
- Parentheses
- Square brackets

But, if the punctuation marks are classified into syntactic, two markers, the apostrophe ( ' ) and the hyphen ( - ), are not punctuation marks because they are morphological, as distinct from syntactic markers: They are markers of words, not of sentences.

*(Source: <http://www.englishgrammartutor.com/grammarbook>)*

## **IV. Punctuation in different sentence structures**

Punctuation marks are the signposts in the structure of sentences. They guide you when looking at the way sentences are made up. You should be familiar with basic sentence construction, made up of a subject, object and verb, and understand the purpose of using basic punctuation such as commas and full stops.

### **1.Punctuation in simple sentence**

A simple sentence is composed of 1 independent clause.

There is no standard punctuation for simple sentences, almost punctuation marks can be used.

Ex: *I play CDs.*

The subject '*I*' carries out an action '*play*' and this is related to the object '*CDs*'.

The sentence starts with a capitalised word and ends with a full stop.

### **2.Punctuation in compound sentence**

A compound sentence is composed of 2 or more independent clauses.

- 2 independent clauses can be joined by a **comma** and a coordinating conjunction (and, but, or, for, nor, so).

Ex: *Road construction can be inconvenient, but it is necessary.*

- 2 independent clauses can be joined by a **colon** when you wish to emphasize the second clause.

Ex: *Road construction in Dallas has hindered travel around town: parts of Main, Fifth, and West Street are closed during the construction.*

- 2 independent clauses can be joined by a **semicolon** when the second clause restates the first or when the two clauses are of equal emphasis.

Ex: *Road construction in Dallas has hindered travel around town; streets have become covered with bulldozers, trucks, and cones.*

### **3.Punctuation in complex sentence**

A complex sentence is composed of 1 or more dependent clauses and 1 or more independent clauses.

- An introductory dependent clause with the independent clause can be joined by a **comma**.

Ex: *Because road construction has hindered travel around town, many people have opted to ride bicycles or walk to work.*

*Many people have opted to ride bicycles or walk to work because road construction has hindered travel around town.*

#### **4. Punctuation in compound-complex sentence**

A compound-complex sentence is composed of 1 or more dependent clauses and 2 or more independent clauses.

- An introductory dependent clause with an independent clause can be joined by a **comma**. Separate 2 independent clauses with a comma and a coordinating conjunction (and, but, or, for, nor, so).

Ex: *When it is filtered, water is cleaner, and it tastes better.*

- An introductory dependent clause with an independent clause can be joined by a **comma**. Separate 2 independent clauses by a **colon** when you wish to emphasize the second clause.

Ex: *Whenever it is possible, you should filter your water: filtered water is cleaner and tastes better.*

- An introductory dependent clause with an independent clause can be joined by a **comma**. Separate 2 independent clauses by a **semicolon** when the second clause restates the first or when the two clauses are of equal emphasis.

Ex: *When it is filtered, water is cleaner and tastes better; all things considered, it is better for you.*


## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE PUNCTUATION MARKS IN WRITING ENGLISH**


#### **I. An overview on punctuation marks**

According to “*Collins easy learning Grammar & Punctuation*” by Harper Collins Publishers - First edition 2009, “*English – Vietnamese dictionary (Từ điển Anh- Việt)*” by Trung tâm khoa học xã hội và nhân văn Quốc gia, Viện ngôn ngữ học, and there are 14 marks which punctuated in writing English.

##### *1.1. Full stop(Brit) or Period(Us)*

 It is the punctuation mark consisting of one dot. The full stop symbol derives from Aristophanes of Byzantium who invented the system of punctuation where the height of placement of a dot on the line determined its meaning. The word *period* comes from *periodos* (a going round) which in turn was derived from *peri* (round, about) and *hodos* (a way). For very long pauses (*periodos*), a “*distinctio point*” near the top of the line of text (·). The meaning is clear: the end of a sentence, which most often requires a period, marks a cycle, a circumference, of thought and expression.

##### *1.2. Comma*

 It is the punctuation mark and has the same shape as an apostrophe or single closing quotation mark in many typefaces, but it differs from them in being placed on the baseline of the text. Some typefaces render it as a small line, slightly curved or straight, or with the appearance of a small filled-in number 9. In the 3rd century BC, Aristophanes of Byzantium invented a system of single dots. For a short passage (a *komma*), a *media distinctio* dot was placed mid-level (·). This is the origin of the concept of a comma, though the name came to be used for the mark itself instead of the clause it separated.

### 1.3. Colon

- It is a punctuation mark consisting of two equally sized dots centered
- on the same vertical line. In the 3rd century BC, Aristophanes of Byzantium invented a system of single dots. For a longer passage (a *colon*), a “*subdistinctio dot*” was placed level with the bottom of the text (.), similar to a modern colon or semicolon.

### 1.4. Semi colon


- A semicolon is a punctuation mark consisting of one dot and one comma centered on the same vertical line. It’s a stronger stop than a comma but not as strong as a period. The Italian printer Aldus Manutius the elder was the first to use the semicolon to separate words opposed in meaning and to mark off interdependent statements. The earliest general use of the semicolon occurred in 1591; Ben Johnson was the first English writer of note to use the semicolon systematically. By the late 18th century, the semicolon had gained widespread acceptance throughout Europe.

### 1.5. Question mark

- This symbol originated from the Latin *questiō*, meaning "question", which was abbreviated during the Middle Ages to *Qo*. The uppercase *Q* was written above the lowercase *o*, and this mark was transformed into the modern symbol. However, evidence of the actual use of the *Q-over-o* notation in mediaeval manuscripts is lacking; if anything, mediaeval forms of the upper component seem to be evolving towards the *q*-shape rather than away from it.



questio questio qo < q o ? ? ?

### 1.6. Exclamation mark (Brit) or Exclamation point (Us)



 The exclamation mark comes from the term note of admiration, in which admiration referred to its Latin sense of wonderment. One theory of its origin is that it was originally the Latin word for joy, *Io*, written with the *I* written above the *o*.

The exclamation mark was introduced into English printing in the 15th century, and was called the "sign of admiration or exclamation" or the "note of admiration" until the mid 17th century. In German orthography, the sign made its first appearance in the Luther Bible in 1797.

### 1.7. Apostrophe ( ' or ’ )

 It is a punctuation mark, has the same shape as an comma or single closing quotation mark in many typefaces, but it differs from them in being placed on the top right of the text. The modern apostrophe is derived from a medieval mark of abbreviation, a suspension mark indicating that some letters are missing (and therefore we use the apostrophe to mark a contraction). 

### 1.8. Quotation marks (Brit ‘ ’ ) or (Us “ ” )


 They are punctuation marks used in pairs to set off speech, a quotation, a phrase, or a word. They come as a pair  of opening and closing marks in either of two styles: single (‘...’) or double (“...”).

In the first centuries of typesetting, quotations were distinguished merely by indicating the speaker, and this can still be seen in some editions of the Bible. Quotation marks were first cut in metal type during the middle of the sixteenth century, and were used copiously by some printers by the seventeenth. In Early Modern English, quotation marks were used only to denote pithy comments. They first began to quote direct speech in 1714. By




1749 single quotation marks, or inverted commas, were commonly used to denote direct speech.

### 1.9. Parenthese (( ))

 The earliest type to appear in English fifteenth-century.


### 1.10. Square brackets ([ ])

 Do not confuse them with parentheses, which are curved like this ( ). It invented in fifteenth-century.


### 1.11. Hyphen ( a-b )

A hyphen(-) is smaller than a dash. The first use of the hyphen—and its origination—is often credited to Johannes Gutenberg of Mainz, Germany circa 1455 with the publication of his 42-line Bible.

### 1.12. Dash ( a – b )

A **dash** is a punctuation mark. It is similar in appearance to a hyphen, but a dash is longer and it is used differently. The most common versions of  the dash are the en dash (–) and the em dash (—). It has an eighteenth century invention.

### 1.13. Dots (Brit) or Ellipsis (Us) ( ... )

The ellipsis (three spaced dots) is used to show that you  have left something out of a passage you are quoting. You can also use ellipsis to show a pause in a conversation.

### 1.14. Slashes ( / )



The slash used as punctuation mark and for various other purposes.

It is often called a forward slash (to distinguish it from the backslash, "\").

Slash goes back to the days of ancient Rome. In the early modern period, in the Fraktur script, which was widespread through Europe in the Middle Ages, one slash (/) represented a comma, while two slashes (//) represented a dash. The two slashes eventually evolved into a sign similar to the equals sign (=), then being further simplified to a single dash or hyphen (–).

## II. The functions of the punctuation marks

Marks of punctuation have four functions.

- Separating elements in a text.
- Joining elements in a text.
- Enclosing elements in a text.
- Showing omissions in a text

### 1. Punctuation that separates elements

#### a. Period

The period, of course, indicates the end of a sentence, thus separating it from the sentence that follows. This is such an obvious principle that we will not elaborate.

E.g. *I looked out of the window. It was snowing again.*

#### b. Question Mark

The question mark is the end punctuation for direct questions.

E.g.

*A : Can I help you?*

*B : Yes. I want a T-shirt.*

*A : We've got lots of T-shirts. Here you are. Which one do you want? This one or that one?*

#### c. Exclamation Point

The exclamation point is the written equivalent of stress in spoken language.

It is used after an interjection, an exclamation, or a command.

E.g.

Interjection: "**Hey!** Put that down!"

Exclamation: "*What an intelligent boy! He is only six year old.*"

Command: *Mary said, " Don't smoke in class!"*

#### d. Comma

It is used to separate independent clauses joined by coordinating conjunctions, and words, phrases, and clauses in a series.

E.g. *We wanted to go to the beach, but it rained that day.*

*Herbert plays tennis, soccer and cricket.*

#### e. Semicolon

It used to separate parts of a sentence or a list and indicate a pause longer than a comma but shorter than a period.

E.g. *Some people can write well; others cannot.*

*Adam and Kim, the movie stars; Larry, the music composer; and Vincy, the model, donated their time to this charity event.*

## **2.Punctuation that joins sentence elements**

#### a. Semicolon

The semicolon might be viewed as a symbolic conjunction, joining independent clauses.

E.g. *I woke up; I got out of bed.*

*Her plan is insane; neveethelese, it is our only hope.*

### b. Dash

Writers use dashes for emphasis, setting off what follows them for special attention. Often the dash is like an arrow pointing backward to what has gone before in the sentence.

E.g. *Lightning is an electrical discharge – an enormous spark.*

### c. Colon

E.g.

*Her father is a busy author: he has written more than twenty books since 1990.* (Colons, like semicolons, often join independent clauses when the second clause explains or recapitulates the first one.)

*He began his speech: “ Ladies and gentlemen...”* (Colons, like commas, often introduce direct quotes)

*Three countries were represented: England, France, Italy* (Colons introduce lists)

### d. Hyphen

E.g.

*Mother-in-law, Form-word.* (Hyphens join the parts of compound words)

*He is a small-businessman* (Hyphen between elements of a modified in attributive position in order to avoid ambiguity).

---

*\_\_\_\_\_ . The thought -  
ful girl brought cookies to her ailing neighbor.* (Hyphen is used to mark the break unfinished word at the end of a line)

## 3. Punctuation that encloses sentence elements

### a. Paired Commas

E.g.

*This novel, a best seller, has no real literary merit* (Paired commas set off interrupters within sentences).

*Oil, which is lighter than water, rise to the surface* (Paired commas set off nonrestrictive adjective clauses).

#### b. Paired Dashes

Paired dashes have the same functions as paired commas, setting off interrupters, nonrestrictive relative clauses, and internal adverb clauses.

E.g.

*His voice – over the noisy radio – soothed us*

*His mother – who rarely gets angry – really lost her temper.*

#### c. Quotation Marks

E.g.

*Halley said: “ I leaving tomorrow morning”.* ( It encloses direct quotations and dialogue)

*An imitation of Van Gogh’s “ Sun flower” hung on the wall above her desk.* ( It encloses the titles of essays, articles, short stories ,etc)

#### d. Parentheses

Parentheses are used to enclose loosely related comment or explanation within a sentence, and to enclose figures numbering items in a series.

E.g.

*She enjoyed all kinds of fruit ( especially grapes, oranges, and bananas).*

*He is hoping ( as we all are) that this time he will succeed.*

*Karem was vice chairman of that company ( 2005-2010).*

#### e. Square brackets

Brackets enclose material within quotes that is not a part of the quotation.

***Sic*** is a Latin word meaning "in such a manner", and it is normally placed within the quoted material, in square brackets and often italicized – [*sic*]. It is used to indicate that an error is in the original and was not a mistake made by the person quoting the original

E.g.

*In his memoir, the old man wrote, “ I was born on the banks of the Misissippi [Sic].”*

Note that the name of the river is misspelled, but sic in brackets lets readers know that the error was in the original.

Brackets are also used to enclose interpolations in quotations.

E.g. *I have read some famous works, such as: The Da Vinci Code [by Dan Brown], The Godfather [by Mario Puzo] and Don Quixote [by Miguel de Servantes].*

#### **4.Punctuation that indicates omission**

##### **a. Apostrophe**

The apostrophe indicates the omission of letters in a words (contractions).

E.g. can't / cannot, aren't/are not, she'll/she will, you've/you have, etc.

##### **b. Abbreviation period**

The period indicates abbreviations.

E.g. M.Phil for Master of Philosophy, p.m. for post meridiem(Latin), Ph.D for Docter of Philosophy, etc,

##### **c. Omission periods – ellipsis/dots**

An ellipsis is a series of three periods, separated by spaces, indicates the omission of material within a quotation, and a series of three periods following the end period indicates material omitted from the end of a sentence:

E.g. *“The ceremony honored twelve brilliant athletes from the Caribbean who were visiting the U.S.”* and I want to leave out *“from the Caribbean who were”*

-> *“The ceremony honored twelve brilliant athletes ... visiting the U.S.”*

### **III. How to use some typical punctuation marks in writing English**

The punctuation marks are very essential not only in the writing process but also in printing. These marks facilitate the audience to read every word, and sentence with the appropriate pause and break, without the punctuation marks the meaning of the sentence and the paragraph could be misunderstood. It is important for the beginners to learn how to use the punctuation marks, and the academic institutions should encourage the students from the very start to focus on the punctuation while writing either the assignments, or projects. So, in the part III of this chapter 2, I will present the uses of 6 common punctuation marks in writing english. And these matters are presented in the part III which refer to some books as :

- Thomas, S. Kane. *The Oxford Guide Essential to Writing*. Oxford University Press. (1987: 377).
- Edward, D. Johnson, *The Handbook of Good English: Revised and Updated*. New York –Oxford: Maple-Vail Book Manufacturing Group.(1991 : 81)
- E.S.C,Weiner and Andrew Delahunty*The Oxford Guide to English Usage (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed)*.Oxford University Press.(1993:237)
- Angela Burt.(2002).*The A-Z of Correct English (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed)*. How To Books Ltd, 3 Newtec Place, Magdalen Road, UK.
- Pam Peters. (2004).*The Cambridge Guide to English Usage* .Cambridge University Press.
- Penny Hands.(2009).*Collins easy learning Grammar & Punctuation* . (1<sup>st</sup> Ed).Britain: Harper Collins Publishers.

#### **1.COMMA ( , )**

Punctuation helps readers identify clusters of words between and within sentences. Between sentences, the most common mark of punctuation is the period; within sentences, the most common mark is the comma. Commas tell us how to read and understand sentences because they tell us where to pause.

A correctly placed comma helps move readers from the beginning of a sentence to the end. A misplaced comma can create more confusion than a conversation with a teenager. Its overuse and misuse also obscure meaning more than them is application of the other marks. If you can master the uses of the comma or even the basic ones no other mark can hold any terrors for you. As has been noted, the comma is a relatively weak mark as with the period, semicolon, etc. It shows a brief pause, compared less complete separation than other marks. Always used within the sentence, it serves several purposes: to introduce, to separate, to enclose, to show omission.

### **1.1. Commas to introduce**

a. Use a comma to introduce a word, phrase, or a clause.

E.g.

*He needed only one thing, encouragement.*

*Only one course is left, to get a job.*

*She had an important decision to make, whether she should get married or return to college.*

Either a dash or a colon could replace the comma in each of these illustrative sentences. The comma is less emphatic than either of these other marks; which you use depends upon your specific purpose, your stylistic.

b. Use a comma to introduce a direct question which is preceded by a mental question or by musing aloud.

E.g.

*You will refuse, won't you?*

*I wondered, should I tell the foreman of my mistake?*

c. Use a comma to introduce a direct quotation. Note: a comma set inside of quotation mark.



E.g.

*“Did you realize,” he said, “that you were going ninety miles per hour?”*

d. Use a comma after the salutation to introduce a friendly or informal letter.

E.g. *Dear Nancy, Dear Hank,*

## **1.2 Commas to separate**

a. Use a comma to separate independent clauses in compound sentence, a comma after the first independent clause when you link two independent clauses with one of the following coordinating conjunctions: and, but, nor, or, yet, for, so.

E.g. *She did not like her work, and her distaste for it was evident to everyone.*

*My brother had no reason for staying at home, yet he refused to go with us.*

*The dancers wore few clothes, but they were all wrapped up in themselves.*

Note: If the clauses are short, the comma may be omitted before the conjunction.

E.g. *The grass grew and the flowers bloomed. (The grass grew, and the flowers bloomed.)*

*Janet did not come nor did Harry. (Janet did not come, nor did Harry.)*

Even long clauses connected by a conjunction are sometimes written without a comma if their relationship is close or if the subject of both clauses is the same.

E.g. *Henry dressed as carefully as he could for he wished to make a good impression on the personnel manager.*

b. Use a comma to separate an introductory modifying phrase or adverbial clause from the independent clause which follows.

E.g. *By working hard and pleasing his employers, Steve got several promotions.*

*Driving as quickly as he could, David arrived just in time to pick me.*

c. Use commas to separate words, phrases, and clauses in a series.

E.g. *I chose a tray, selected my food, and paid the cashier.*

*In the huge jail were what seemed miles of narrow, sunless, low ceilinged corridors.*

*In this book, Mark Twain revealed the gloom, pessimism, skepticism, and fury which darkened his last years.*

Some writers omit the comma before the conjunction and punctuate such series as those illustrated as

\_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ *and* \_\_\_\_\_ .

\_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ *or* \_\_\_\_\_ .

For this reason its use is recommended, although it may be omitted. A variation on this series is three or more items with the last two not joined by a conjunction. Commas are used after each member except the last.

E.g. *This general store sells groceries, clothing, fishing supplies, camp equipment.*

When a conjunction is used to join each pair in a series, use commas if emphasis is desired and omit them if it is not.

E.g. *I have seen nothing of Jim or Joe or Mary Sue.*

*Jack has no energy, or enthusiasm, or desire left.* (Emphasis)

d. Use a comma to separate two or more adjectives when they modify equally the same noun.

E.g. *She is a stingy, unreliable woman.*

When the adjectives do not modify equally that is, when they are not coordinate, use no commas.

E.g. *A large green bug settled on the torn autumn leaf.*

e. Use a comma to separate contrasted elements in a sentence.

Such contrasted elements may be letters, numbers, words, phrases, or clauses.

E.g. *The answer should be 26, not 25.*

*Your error is due to carelessness, not ignorance.*

*Put your hat on the shelf, not on the floor.*

*The harder he tried, the less he succeeded.*

f. Use a comma to separate words or other sentence elements which might be misread.

Sentences in which commas are needed to prevent misreading are usually faulty in construction and should be rephrased. At times, however, a comma is essential to clarify meaning; without commas, the following sentences would be at least momentarily misunderstood.

E.g.

*The stock advanced five points, to twenty-one.* (The comma makes clear that the range of advance was sixteen upward, not between five and twenty-one.)

*In stead of scores, hundreds telephoned the station.*

*He arrived on February 10, 1786.*

*The day after, the supervisor was absent himself.*

*In 1962, 331 people took this same test.*

*To Mamie, the President was very kind.*

*"They prefer an education to drills and forced marches, and college dormitories to barracks."*

*Soon after, she got up and left the house.*

g. Use a comma (or commas) to separate thousands, millions, etc., in writing figures.

E.g. *In this contest 4,962 entries were received.*

*The deficit that year amounted to \$ 8,786,953,000.*

Commas are used with all numbers of four or more digits except telephone numbers, years, and house numbers.

E.g. *Her number is Cleanwater 1847.*

*He was born in 1952.*

*She lives at 11002 Prospect Avenue.*

The comma is also usually omitted from numbers in specialized use.

E.g. *motor number 136592; serial number 825364; 8.0946 inches; S/1200 of one inch.*

### **1.3 Commas to enclose**

a. Use commas to enclose parenthetical words, phrases, or clauses.

A parenthetical expression (word, phrase, clause) may be omitted from a sentence without materially affecting meaning. Usually, but not always, a parenthetical expression may shift its position in a sentence without changing meaning.

E.g. *However, the order was not filled thatday.*

*The order, however, wasnot filled thatday.*

*Oh, yes, I shall be glad to go.*

*You are, on the other hand, well suited for thiswork.*

b. Use commas to enclose inserted sentence elements.

Inserted sentence elements are similar to parenthetical words, phrases, and clauses but normally are more essential to the full meaning of a sentence than are the latter. They do not restrict the meaning of the sentence but they do add some degree of emphasis. Such emphatic expressions are set off by commas to indicate that they are to be considered forceful. Again, an inserted sentence element may interrupt or delay the meaning of a sentence, with holding (or suspending) important material until near the end of a sentence. Finally, an inserted sentence element may be transposed and thus require punctuation

unnecessary in normal word order. Consider these examples of inserted sentence elements which are emphatic or suspending or transposed.

E.g. *He is an honest man, a man of complete integrity, and has my full confidence.* (Emphatic)

*He is an honest man, not only because he obeys the letter of the law, but also because he exceeds even the teachings of the Golden Rule.* (Suspending)

*A personable boy, tall and dark and handsome, was what she expected a sanescort.* (Transposed)

c. Use commas to enclose nonrestrictive phrases and clauses within a sentence. This is the most involved of all rules concerning the comma: it is not easy always to determine whether a group of words is restrictive or nonrestrictive in essential function. As a broad distinction, restrictive phrases and clauses so limit and identify the word or words they modify that their contribution to the meaning of a sentence is essential. Nonrestrictive phrases and clauses do not limit or actually restrict the word or words they modify. Observe what the identical clause does in each of these sentences.

E.g.

*Our son Stephen, who was 17 last year, hopes to become a physician.*

*Our son who was 17 last year hopes to become a physician*

In the first of these sentences, the non-italicized clause may be omitted without materially affecting central meaning; the purpose of the clause is to supply additional information.

But the same clause in the second sentence is essential; it identifies, it tells "*Our son who was 17 last year hopes to become a physician.*"

True, the italicized clause in the second sentence could be omitted and a grammatically complete sentence would remain, but it would lack full meaning.

Therefore we say that the clause in the first sentence is nonrestrictive and we enclose it in commas to set it off from the remainder of the sentence.

The second is restrictive and should not be enclosed by commas or by any other mark of punctuation.

If you will carefully note comma usage in the following sentences, the principle of restrictive and nonrestrictive phrases and clauses should become clear.

E.g. *The books that I own are all paperbacks.*

*The books, those that I own, are all paperbacks.*

*The suit lying there on my bed has had long wear.*

*The suit, a blue one lying there on my bed, has had long wear.*

*The girl sitting in the front row is a secretary.*

*The girl wearing a green dress and hat, sitting in the front row, is a secretary.*

d. Use commas to enclose absolute phrases.

An absolute phrase is a group of words having no grammatical relation to any other word in a sentence. It is called "absolute" because it stands apart and conveys only its own meaning. Such a phrase may appear at various positions within a sentence.

E.g. *The performance over, we rose to leave.*

*He entered the office, hat in hand, to seek the job.*

*They were lonely that year, their only son being away on military duty.*

e. Use commas to enclose words in apposition.

Words in apposition follow another word or group of words and serve to identify or explain them. A word in apposition, called an appositive, is anoun

or pronoun, or a phrase acting as one of these two parts of speech, which provides explanation and is usually nonrestrictive in function. When the words in apposition actually limit or restrict meaning, then no enclosing commas are used.

E.g. *James Greene, our foreman, was a kindly man.* (Nonrestrictive)

*Our foreman, James Greene, was a kindly man.* (Nonrestrictive)

*Foreman James Greene was a kindly man.* (Restrictive )

*Barry Smith, Republican, is a senator from Ohio.*

*My assignment, to wash all the dishes, seemed endless.*

*Here comes Mary Perry, our gardening expert.*

f. Use commas to enclose vocatives.

A vocative is a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase used in direct address. That is, a vocative indicates to whom something is said. A vocative may appear at various positions within a sentence

E.g. *Mr. Noble, may I ask you a question?*

*May I, Mr. Noble, ask you a question?*

*May I ask you a question, Mr. Noble?*

*Let me tell you, all of you workers, that you have done a splendid job.*

*Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.*

g. Use commas to enclose initials or titles following a person's name.

E.g. *Joseph Clardy, Ph.D., and Robert Furth, D.D., are on the school board.*

*The letter was addressed to Marion High, Esq.*

*Miriam Jones, chairman, was a handsome woman*

*Are you referring to Roosevelt, T., or Roosevelt, F.D.?*

*James Exeter, Jr., was chosen as the first speaker.*

h. Use commas to enclose places and dates explaining preceding places and dates within a sentence.

E.g. *He left on July 20, 1960, for a trip around the world.*

*He lives in Columbia, Missouri, having been transferred there from Akron, Ohio.*

*Her new home is at 1607 Ravinia Road, Peru 29, Illinois.*

i. Use commas to enclose answers “yes/no” after questions and question tag.

E.g. *Yes, I'll be there.*

*No, I can't go with her.*

*You do take sugar in tea, don't you?*

*She is not the new student, is she?*

*Note:*

- Commas may be omitted when the complete date is not given.

E.g. *July, 1960, or July 1960.*

- A comma is used after a postal-delivery zone number but never before it.

E.g. *Sumter 57, Florida* not *Surnter, 57 Florida.*

- The second comma must be used when the state follows town or city and when the year follows both month and day. When month and year are used, employ either two commas or none only at all.

E.g. *In July, 1950, . . . or In July 1950. . .*

- Punctuation in the date line of a letter is optional. Formerly it was common practice to write *June 6, 1962*; increasingly popular is the form *6 June 1962*. Both are acceptable. For the sake of clarity, always separate two numerals; where a word intervenes, the comma may be omitted, as shown, if you prefer.



#### **1.4.Commas to indicate omission**

Most sentences which require a comma to make clear that some thing has been left out are poorly constructed and should be rephrased. In rare instances, however, using a comma to show omission helps to avoid wordiness.

E.g. *In this office are ten workers; in that one are sixteen.*

*In this office are ten workers; in that, sixteen.*

The comma in the second sentence clearly and correctly replaces the words “one are”.

Other examples:

*Smith is a collector of taxes; Jones, of stamps; Duane, of women.*

*He takes his work seriously, himself lightly.*

*A decade ago they were rich and powerful; only five years later, poor and weak.*

#### **2.PERIOD ( . )**

Second only to the comma, the period (.) is the most widely used of all marks of punctuation. Its use also causes less trouble than that of any other mark; even small children are accustomed to seeing, and putting, periods at the ends of sentences. More than 95% of all sentences end with a period, regardless of who writes them or where they appear. There are, however, a few simple principles regarding the use of periods which require attention.

It should be noted, for example, that periods have functions other than to end sentences. For the use of periods with abbreviations. For the use of periods (ellipsis periods or suspension dots) to indicate omission from a sentence. Important and minor additional uses of the period are detailed in the section which follow. Just because the period is a familiar mark, do not assume that its use presents no problems.

### **2.1. Use a period at the end of a declarative sentence.**

A declarative sentence states a fact, a condition, or a possibility and is distinguished from an interrogative sentence (which asks a question), an imperative sentence (which expresses a command or a strong request), and an exclamatory sentence (which expresses strong feeling or surprise). Sometimes, only punctuation will indicate whether a written sentence is declarative, interrogative, exclamatory, or imperative; in speech, this distinction is shown by tone of voice and inflection.

E.g. *His trip began with an inspection of the missile base.*

*He prefers winter to summer vacations.*

These are obvious statements of fact, or supposed fact, and are terminated by a period. But they might be spoken, or written, to indicate something other than a statement of fact.

E.g. *His trip began with an inspection of the missile base?*

*Did it really? What a surprise!*

*He prefers winter to summer vacations! Isn't this an unusual attitude? I have a different opinion.*

### **2.2. Use a period after an indirect question.**

A sentence asking a direct question must be ended with a question mark. But words such as when and what often introduce parts of sentences which ask a question so indirectly, so obliquely, that no question mark is called for although the tone of the sentence is mildly interrogative.

E.g. *The foreman asked me when I could come to work.*

*Please tell me what he said and how he said it.*

*The judge wanted to know why I couldn't pay the fine.*

A question mark after any of these three sentences would confuse your reader by distorting meaning.

### **2.3. Use a period after a mild command or polite request.**

A direct command is usually followed by an exclamation point ; a direct question is followed by a question mark. On command or question may be so mildly imperative or interrogative that a period should be used; the purpose is to suggest rather than to issue a command or ask a question requiring an answer.

E.g. *Take your time and work carefully.*

*Come up and see me some time.*

*May we please have a prompt reply to this letter.*

*Will you kindly sign and return the enclosed form.*

### **2.4. Use a period after a standard abbreviation.**

A number of exceptions to the use of periods with abbreviations is noted on those pages; be sure not to omit periods where convention calls for them and do not add them where they are not needed or are not customary. In short, a period must follow an abbreviation unless otherwise specified. Also, keep in mind these further comments on the use of periods with abbreviations or apparent abbreviations:

a. If a declarative sentence ends with an abbreviation, use only one period.

E.g. *His home was in Baltimore, Md.*

b. If an interrogative or exclamatory sentence ends with an abbreviation, the question mark or exclamation point follows the abbreviation period:

E.g. *Does he make his home in Baltimore, Md.?*

*You say he lives in Baltimore, Md.!*

c. Inside the sentence, an abbreviation period is followed by any mark which normally would be used:

E.g. *He lives in Baltimore, Md.; my home is in Philadelphia.*

*This is the meaning of A.W.O.L.: absent without official leave.*

- d. Use no periods after contractions (shortened words but not true abbreviations) . E.g. *don't, isn't, shan't, etc.*
- e. Use no periods after ordinal numbers when written thus: 1<sup>st</sup> , 2<sup>nd</sup> , etc.  
E.g. *the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.*
- f. Use no periods after nicknames or names which are not truly abbreviations of longer forms. E.g. *Bill, AZ, Alex, Sam, etc.*
- g. Use no periods after familiar shortened forms of words, such as *ad, taxi, cab, auto, phone, exam, per cent, and lab.*
- h. Use no periods after certain specialized abbreviations and most acronyms  
E.g. *Station KDKA, NBC, UNESCO, WAVES, TB (for tuberculosis), TV (for television).*
- i. Use no periods after chemical symbols, even though they are abbreviations.  
E.g. *O for Oxygen; NaCl for Sodium Chloride.*
- j. Use no periods after Roman numerals.  
E.g. *Louis XIV, Chapter VII, etc.*
- k. British practice usually omits the period after such standard abbreviations as *Mr., Mrs., Dr., St., Co.* In the United States such omission may be considered either an experiment or an affectation. In other words, don't omit.
- l. When in doubt about the use of periods with abbreviations, consult your dictionary. Dictionaries differ among themselves, but you cannot be "faulted" if you follow the dictates of any one good dictionary.

**2.5. Use a period before a decimal, to separate dollars and cents, to precede cents written alone, and in writing metric symbols.**

E.g. *3.7% per cent , \$10.63 , \$0.8 , 3 cc. (cubic centimeters)*

Periods have other minor miscellaneous uses of little practical concern to the average writer.

a. A line of periods (called *leaders*) is sometimes employed in such places as the tables of contents of books to guide the reader's eye across to a page reference.

b. Most dictionaries use periods, usually centered on a line, to mark the syllables of entry words.

c. Many continental European languages employ periods to mark thousands where we would use commas: \$1.230.456 for \$1,230,456.

d. Periods are occasionally used instead of parentheses to mark divisions in a series

E.g. *He left hurriedly for several reasons: (a) poor health, (b) lack of money, (c) dull companions, (d) a job in the city.*

Or

*He left hurriedly for several reasons: a. poor health, b. lack of money, c. dull companions, d. a job in the city.*

These infrequent or minor uses need hardly concern you; concentrate on the five principal rules given above. And isn't it comforting to come across one mark of punctuation which gives little trouble, the uses of which are fairly well standardized and easily learned.

### **3.APOSTROPHE ( ' )**

The apostrophe ( ' ), a mark of punctuation and a spelling symbol, has three uses:

- to indicate omission of a letter or letters from words and of a figure or figures from numerals.
- to form the possessive (genitive) case of nouns and of certain pronouns.
- to indicate the plurals of letters, numerals, symbols, and certain abbreviations.

The apostrophe is a somewhat silly, overused, and incongruous mark as George Bernard Shaw and numerous other writers have suggested but you must know how to employ it correctly for each of the purposes indicated if your writing is to be immediately clear and fully understandable to readers.

### **3.1. Omission**

a. Place an apostrophe where a letter or letters have been omitted in form contraction.

E.g.

*aren't (are not), can't (can not), couldn't (could not), doesn't (does not,) hasn't (has not,) mustn't (must not), o'clock (of the clock,) wasn't (was not), won't (will not), etc.*

b. Place an apostrophe where a figure or figures have been omitted in form contraction.

E.g. *class of '62 (1962), the '50's (the nineteen or other fifties) of '76 (1776) gold rush of '49 (1849) spirit.*

c. Use an apostrophe to indicate pronunciation, usually in dialectal speech.

E.g. *"I say it's 'bout time you start tryin' hard and quit foolin' around."*

*The late Will Rogers is quoted as having said, "A lot of people who don't say ain't, ain't eatin'."*

*Note:* Don't confuse contractions with possessive pronouns.

- Contraction: *it's (it is), you're (you are), they're (they are), who's (who is).*

- Possessive Pronoun: *its, your, their, whose.*

### **3.2. Possession case**

a. Use an apostrophe and *s* to form the possessive of a singular noun not ending in *s*.

E.g. *girl, girl's manuscript; student, student's ideas*

b. Use an apostrophe and *s* to form the possessive of singular noun ending in *s*.

E.g. *Charles, Charles's book; hostess, hostess's menu*

If the new word is hard to say, leave off the *s*.

E.g. *James' book, Louis' menu*. You won't get arrested by the grammar police for using your brain.

c. Use an apostrophe after the *s* to form the possessive of a plural noun ending in *s*.

E.g.:

*girls, girls' manuscript;*

*students, students' ideas*

*countries, countries' girls,*

*girls' the Smiths,*

*the Smiths' queens,*

d. Use an apostrophe after the *s* to form the possessive of a plural nouns not ending in *s*.

E.g. *women, women's books; mice, mice's tails doctors, doctors'*

Besides, there are some ways to use apostrophe with form the possessive.

e. In compound nouns add an apostrophe and *s* to the element nearest the word possessed.

E.g. *the daughter-in-law's children, Representative Smith of Colorado's vote.*

f. Use an apostrophe with the last element of a series to indicate joint possession.

E.g. *Wolcott and Browns' store, a soldiers and sailors' home.*

g. Use an apostrophe with each element in a series to indicate alternative or individual possession.

E.g. *Wilson's or Eisenhower's or administration.*

*Authors' and Printers' Dictionary.*

*Bob's, Kennedy's and Jim's plans.*

*Bachelor's and master's degrees.*

*soldiers' and sailors' uniforms.*

g. Use an apostrophe and *s* to form the possessive of indefinite pronouns.

E.g. *anybody's, everybody's, no one's, other's, somebody's, someone's.*

Do not use an apostrophe to form the possessive of personal and relative pronouns: *ours*, not *our's*; *yours*, not *yours'*; *hers*, not *her's*; *whose*, not *who's* (unless you mean *who is*); *its*, not *it's* (unless you mean *it is*).

h. With geographical terms and with names of firms, organizations, and institutions, follow the authentic form settled upon by usage or tradition.

E.g. *Hudson's Bay Company, St. Mary's Seminary, Citizen's Union, Rutgers' University.*

i. Certain idiomatic expressions require the use of an apostrophe even though actual possession is not clearly indicated.

E.g. *a day's wait; an hour's delay; a stone's throw; twenty cents' worth; at my wit's end.*

j. Certain double possessives require both an apostrophe and *of*.

E.g. *a book of my friends; a brother of Jane's; a nephew of my cousin's.*

k. A noun or pronoun followed by a gerund (verbal noun) should have an apostrophe.

E.g. *We objected to the foreman's leaving early. Anyone's leaving early will be penalized.*

### **3.3. Plurals form**

a. Use an apostrophe and *s* to indicate the plurals of alphabetical letters.

E.g. *Mind your p's and q's.*

*Dot your i's and j's.*

*Your i's look like e's.*



b. Use an apostrophe and *s* to indicate the plurals of figures.

E.g. *We have no more size 8's.*

*He suffered every year during the 1930's.*

*They came by 2's and 3's.*

c. Use an apostrophe to indicate the plurals of words referred to as words.

E.g. *Your remarks contained entirely too many buf's.*

*There are too many distracting like's and urn's in her speech.*

#### **4.COLON ( : )**

The colon ( : ) is a mark of expectation or addition. Its primary function is to signal the reader to "watch for what's coming." That is, it signals to the reader that the next group of words will fulfill what the last group promised. What does come after the colon is usually explanatory or illustrative material which has been prepared for by a word, or words, preceding the colon.

##### **4.1.Use a colon before a list.**

E.g.*The new ice-cream parlor offered a choice of the following flavors of the month: chicken fat ripple, pork and beans, and prime rib chip.*

##### **4.2.Use a colon before a long quotation, especially a formal one. Place colons outside closing quotation marks.**

E.g. *Abraham Lincoln said: "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."*

##### **4.3.Use a colon before part of a sentence that explains what has just been stated.**

E.g. *Life is a series of rude awakenings: It is what happens to you while you are making other plans.*

#### **4.4. Use a colon after the salutation of a business letter.**

E.g. *Dear Mr. President:*

*Dear Sir: Dear Mr. James*

*Gentlemen: My Dear Mr. Burnside*

It is customary to place a comma after the salutation of a friendly or personal letter (*Dear Jim,*), but the colon is not so formal a mark as to repulse friendship. Use either a colon or a comma after the salutation in such letters.

#### **4.5. Use a colon to distinguish chapter from verse in a biblical citation, hours from minutes, titles from subtitles.**

- Titles and subtitles of books may be separated by a colon.

E.g. *The English Novel: A Panorama.*

*Education for College: Improving the High School Curriculum.*

- Hour and minute figures in writing time may be separated by a colon.

E.g. *10:15; 4:46 P.M.*

In England, a period is often substituted for the colon in such uses, a practice being increasingly adopted by some American publications, particularly newspapers. You are urged to use the colon, however, since it is both clear and customary.

- Scenes and acts of plays may be separated by a colon.

E.g. *Shakespeare's Twelfth Night, II:v.*

The use of a period for the colon in this construction is increasing, but the colon seems clearer.

- Bible chapters and verses may be separated by a colon.

E.g. *Exodus 12:31.*

- Volume and page references may be separated by a colon.

E.g. *The History of the English Novel, IV:77.*

- In stating proportions, both a single colon and double colon may be used  
fertilizer mixed.

E.g. 6:3:3; 2:4::4:8 (two is to four as four . . .).

## 5. QUESTION MARK ( ? )

### 5.1. Use a question mark at the end of every direct question.

It is usually easy to recognize a direct query, but you should remember that sometimes a sentence which is declarative in form may actually be interrogative in sense. Also, remember that a question mark should never be used after an indirect question. Again, remember that although the question mark is considered a terminal (end of sentence) mark, it may appear elsewhere in a sentence than at the end.

E.g.

*"Do you like sushi?"* is a direct question, and it ends with a question mark.

*She asked if I liked sushi?* is not a question—it is a statement that contains an indirect question—and it should not end with a question mark.

Usually an indirect question is phrased differently from a direct question.

E.g.

*He asked, "What is sushi?"* is direct

*He asked what sushi was* is indirect.

Sometimes the phrasing is the same.

E.g.

*What is cooking? I wonder what is cooking.*

*"Do you like sushi?" she asked?* and *"Do you like sushi," she asked?* are both wrong. There should be a question mark after *sushi* but a period after *asked*, the quotation is a question, but the full sentence is a statement, not a question. The errors are frequent, perhaps because when such a sentence is vocalized the voice tends to rise on *asked*, and a rising inflection in speech almost always signals a question. In this case the ear cannot be trusted.

*Does he like sushi? she wondered* is correct; there are no quotation marks around the question because it is not voiced, only thought, but it is still a direct question.

*The question was, did he like sushi?* is also correct; the past tense of the question may seem to make it indirect, but it is still direct.

Note that *did* is not capitalized; it could be, and some editors routinely capitalize in such a situation, but a capital is a surprise after a comma and in the example would give the question more independence and emphasis than the writer may want it to have. Note also the comma after *was*, needed to set up the question, almost as a weak colon.

We could, of course, actually use the colon and capitalize after it:

*The question was: Did he like sushi?*

Or we could add quotation marks—which makes changing the tense desirable—and then would need no punctuation before the question.

*The question was "Does he like sushi?"*

These alternatives make the sentence rather stately, almost dramatic; the writer may prefer the smoother, more casual.

*The question was, did he like sushi?*

*Does he like sushi? I wondered* and *Does he like sushi? Mary wondered* are correctly punctuated. Unfortunately, since *I* and *Mary* are necessarily capitalized, each example is apt to be perceived by the reader as two sentences instead of one, a misreading the writer may be tempted to prevent by mispunctuating: *Does he like sushi, Mary wondered?* If the words are read aloud, the voice rises on *wondered* at least as strongly as on *sushi*, adding to the temptation. In general, I advise not giving in, but see the discussion of dialogue in fiction below.

*But did he like sushi, I wondered*, with a comma instead of a question mark (and a period at the end), is acceptable to avoid the ambiguous question mark; the past tense of the question lessens its urgency to the point that it hardly is a question.

Even *But does he like sushi, I wondered* may be acceptable in a narrative that has a deliberately flat, understated tone.

## **5.2. Use question marks to indicate a series of queries in the same sentence.**

E.g.

*Will you go with me? Or with your friend? or someone?*

*Who will be there? Sam? Violet? Carol? Marion?*

## **5.3. Question mark used within parentheses to express doubt about an immediately preceding phrase or fact.**

E.g. *Chaucer's dates are 1340(?) - 1400.*

This use within parentheses is overdone by amateurish writers, as in *The beds in the Grand Hotel (?) had no mattresses*, in which the question mark unnecessarily and annoyingly calls attention to the irony.

## **5.4. Position question marks properly when using them with other marks of punctuation.**

The position of question marks is always logical, though sometimes a compromise is necessary to avoid two question marks close together, and sometimes the convention prohibiting its use with the comma ignores logic.

a. The question mark should never be used with a period, except, of course, when the period is not a true period but merely a point indicating an abbreviation. E.g. *Is the proper form Ms. or Mrs.?*

b. The question mark should not be used with the comma. This causes a problem when the question mark ends a quotation and the sentence continues. *He asked, "Why me? which seemed an odd question* seems underpunctuated, because if the quotation were not a question a comma would signal both the end of the quotation and the beginning of the second clause, as in *He said, "I suppose I deserve it, "* which seemed an odd remark.

Nevertheless, *He asked, "Why me?" which seemed an odd question* is wrong, and *He asked, "Why me?", which seemed an odd question,* with the comma after the closing quotation mark, is doubly wrong. The comma should not be used even though using it would be quite logical . An exception is sometimes made when the question mark actually has no function in the sentence but is part of a title: *His first poem, titled "Why Me?," was dedicated to his mother.*

c. The question mark with the dash.

E.g. *He told me —who would have expected it?—that he had married again* logically puts the question mark within the dashes that enclose the parenthetical question. But do you suppose —It is an acceptable use of the dash and question mark to indicate a question that is cut off abruptly. However, the dash alone is sufficient if the phrasing indicates a question, as in the example. A novelist who too frequently combines dash and question mark in dialogue may leave readers feeling that all the characters are in a constant state of wild conjecture, psychotic indecision, or speechless wonder.

d. The question mark with the parenthesis.

E.g. *I think the company is bankrupt (who can think otherwise?).*

The question mark is part of the parenthetical question, so it goes within the closing parenthesis. Note the terminal period outside the parenthesis.

E.g. *Are we bankrupt (as these figures suggest)?*

The question mark is outside the parenthesis, since the whole sentence is a question; the material within the parentheses is not a question at all.

*Are we bankrupt (or do these figures lie ljl is permissible*—a question mark for the parenthetical question and another for the whole sentence—but the clumping of punctuation is ugly.

*Are we bankrupt (or do these figures lie)?* is also acceptable, and I think preferable, if for some reason one cannot go further and eliminate the parentheses: *Are we bankrupt, or do these figures lie?*

*Are we bankrupt (or do these figures lie?), and if we are, what now?* This is correct; the question mark is not directly followed by a comma because the closing parenthesis intervenes.

e. The question mark with the quotation mark.

They raised the question "*Are we bankrupt?*" The question mark is inside the closing quotation mark, where it logically belongs. Note that no period is used. A period cannot go outside a closing quotation mark or directly after a question mark, so the period is just omitted.

E.g. *Did they announce, "We're bankrupt"?*

The question mark is outside the closing quotation mark, since the whole sentence is a question and the material within the quotation marks is not a question.

f. The question mark with points of ellipsis

The committee's report then raised several questions: "*What is the present status of the company? . . .* When does the treasurer plan to return from Paraguay?" The points of ellipsis following the question mark indicate that something has been omitted following the completed question that ends with the word company.

If we transpose question mark and points of ellipsis—"What is the present status of the company . . . ? When does the treasurer plan to return from Paraguay?"—the points of ellipsis indicate that part of the first sentence has

## **6. EXCLAMATION POINT (!)**

Exclamation point is essentially an indicator of emotion— anger, pleasure, surprise, strong resolve. When it is used too frequently, it loses its force and is annoying to the reader. Certain sentences require it because they are worded as exclamations: *What a sunset! How we despised your annual report!*

Other sentences are given it to change them from declarations to exclamations: *The sunset was magnificent! We despised your annual report!*

Frequently exclamations are not grammatically complete sentences, and they can be single words. The principles governing the position of the exclamation point when it is used with other marks of punctuation are almost the same as those governing the position of the question mark.

The exclamation mark should be used thoughtfully and sparingly. Overuse of this device as is frequent in advertisements, informal letters, and many short stories, plays, and novels causes it to lose much of its effectiveness. The emotion expressed should be strong, the surprise genuine, the emphasis or command really vigorous, even imperative, to warrant its use.

### **6.1. The exclamation point uses to express surprise, emphasis, or strong emotion.**

For this purpose the mark may be used both within the sentence and as a terminal mark of punctuation. In exclamatory sentences, the mark is usually held until the end, but not always.

E.g. *What an incredibly rude thing to say!*

*So you really decided to go!*



**6.2. The exclamation point uses to express a command or vigorous request.**

E.g. *Get moving a tonce!*

*Think up things for other people to do!*

*"Please leave me alone!" the wounded-man begged.*

**6.3. The exclamation point uses to express sarcasm or irony.**

An exclamation point may be used after a phrase or sentence to express derision of some sort. When used for this purpose, the mark is often (but not always) placed within parentheses. When used in an ironical sense, an exclamation point calls attention to the contradictory nature of what precedes it: one thing is said but another is meant. As an indication of sarcasm, the mark emphasizes the harsh or cutting quality of what is said:

E.g. *"Big deal!" he replied scornfully.*

*Gorgeous day!*

*What an idiot!*

Do not use the exclamation point frequently to indicate irony or sarcasm. Usually you can convey what you have in mind without artificial use of the always obtrusive exclamation point.

**6.4. The exclamation point uses certain interjections.**

A strong and impelling interjection is a word which expresses dismay, anger, pain, etc. One which is fairly mild and quiet is usually followed by a comma. Strong interjections are words like *ahoy*, *bravo*, *gosh*, *hurrah*, and *ouch*. Mild interjections include *oh*, *so*, *well*. However, a mild interjection can be used in a strongly emotional manner, a strong one in a mild sense.

For example, *indeed* and *huh* can be followed by either a comma or an exclamation point depending upon what they are intended to express. The interjection *Oh* is always capitalized and is usually followed by an

exclamation point at the end of the phrase or sentence in which it occurs; *oh* is usually, but not always, followed by a comma.

E.g. *Pshaw! I should be in the left lane to make this turn.*

*He spoke to me about you - Oh, indeed.*

*O Lord, please help me now! (Oh, Lord, please help me now!)*

### **6.5. Position exclamation points properly when using them with other marks of punctuation.**

Like the question mark, the exclamation point is always positioned logically but sometimes forces one to forgo a logically desirable comma.

a. The exclamation point should not be used with a true period—one that ends a sentence—but it can be used with a point indicating an abbreviation.

E.g. *She insists on being addressed as Mrs.!*

It can also be used with points of ellipsis, which are not true periods.

b. The exclamation point should not be used with the comma. This causes a problem when the exclamation point ends a quotation and the sentence continues.

E.g. *He shouted, "Crown me!" which made us all laugh* seems underpunctuated, because if the quotation were not an exclamation a comma would signal both the end of the quotation and the beginning of the second clause, as in *He said, "I deserve to be chairman, " which made us all laugh.* Nevertheless, *He shouted, "Crown me!," which made us all laugh* is wrong, and *He shouted, "Crown me!", which made us all laugh,* with the comma after the closing quotation mark, is doubly wrong. The comma should not be used even though using it would be quite logical. An exception is sometimes made when the exclamation point actually has no function in the sentence but is part of a title: *His first poem, titled "Crown Me!," was dedicated to his mother.* This exception has some merit.

c. Combining the question mark with the exclamation point— *Why won't you crown me?!* or *Why won't you crown me!?*—is usually frowned on as childish.

d. The exclamation point with the dash

*He told me —we could have expected it!—that he had married again* logically has the exclamation point within the dashes that enclose the parenthetical exclamation.

e. The exclamation point with the parenthesis

E.g. *I think we're bankrupt (and we are!).* The exclamation point is part of the parenthetical exclamation and thus goes within the closing parenthesis, with a terminal period outside the parenthesis.

*I think we're bankrupt (and we are!), and we'd better decide what to do* shows the exclamation point followed by a parenthesis and a comma, - this is correct, but the exclamation point should not be directly followed by a comma.

*I think we're bankrupt (and we are)!* is not incorrectly punctuated if the whole sentence is intended to be exclamatory, but the urgency of the exclamation point contradicts the diminishing urgency of the sentence suggested by the parentheses.

*I think we're bankrupt, and we are!* and *I think we're bankrupt (and we are)* are obviously better; each has its own uncontradicted effect.

f. The exclamation point with the quotation mark

E.g. *The chairman shouted, "We're bankrupt!"* has the exclamation point inside the closing quotation mark, where it logically belongs.

*Note:* There is no period to end the sentence. A period should not be placed outside a closing quotation mark or directly after an exclamation point, so the period is just omitted.

E.g. *They just announced, "We're bankrupt"!* has the exclamation point at the end of the sentence, making the whole sentence exclamatory.

g. The exclamation point with points of ellipsis

*One furious stockholder wrote the chairman: "I want my money! . . . Get that treasurer back from Paraguay!"* The points of ellipsis following the exclamation point indicate some omission after the completed exclamation ending with *money*.

Novelists sometimes use points of ellipsis with the exclamation point in dialogue: *His eyes widened. "You mean . . . !"* Perhaps they pick it up from the balloon dialogue in comic strips.

**CHAPTER 3**  
**SOME ATTENTIONS TO AVOID MISUSE OF PUNCTUATION**  
**IN WRITING ENGLISH**

The correct use of punctuation marks is a necessity in writing; however, many people use them wrongly. There are many errors when we punctuate in texts or sentences. Because my study is about how to use some common punctuation marks, in this chapter, I focus on some errors that Vietnamese learners often make when using them.

**I. The comma splice and run-on sentence**

The comma splice and run-on (or fused) sentence are major punctuation errors that can commonly show up in your writing.

► A comma splice occurs when only a comma separates two independent sentences.

► A run-on (or fused) sentence occurs when no punctuation at all separates independent sentences.

In writing your ideas down, you are usually concerned with the meaning and detail of your sentences and often don't pay enough attention to punctuation, especially where one sentence ends and another begins. That's when you get into trouble with incorrect punctuation.

E.g.

*Tony is dishonest. He steals hubcaps for a living.* (two simple sentences)

*Tony is dishonest, he steals hubcaps for a living.* (comma splice)

*Tony is dishonest he steals hubcaps for a living.* (run-on sentence)

As you can see in these two sentences, comma splices and run-on sentences are similar mistakes. In both cases, the punctuation (or lack of it) does not indicate complete, independent sentences.

A comma splice or run-on sentence can also occur when you use transition words.

E.g.

*The U.S. Postal Service is usually very reliable, however, sometimes a letter is not delivered for weeks, months, or even years.* ( Incorrect)

Again, there are two independent sentences in the example above. Transition words (like however, therefore, nevertheless, consequently, and then) cannot be used to connect the two sentences.

Corrected versions of the previous sentences could be:

E.g.

*The U.S. Postal Service is usually very reliable; however, sometimes a letter is not delivered for weeks, months, or even years.*

OR

*The U.S. Postal Service is usually very reliable. However, sometimes a letter is not delivered for weeks, months, or even years.*

Note :

Look carefully at the next example. Is there a run-on sentence or comma splice problem in the following?

E.g.

*Because Jonathan is very competitive, he sometimes puts too much pressure on himself.*

The above is one complete, correctly punctuated sentence. Even though both parts of the sentence have a subject and verb, the dependent word because keeps the first idea from expressing a complete thought. It is dependent on the second part of the sentence to complete the meaning. Some common dependent words (subordinate conjunctions) are *because, after, although, if, until, since, and while.*

The best way to avoid such errors is to punctuate compound sentences correctly by using one or the other of these rules.

-Join the two independent clauses with one of the coordinating conjunctions (and, but, for, or, nor, so, yet), and use a comma before the connecting word.

\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

E.g. *He enjoys walking through the country, and he often goes backpacking on his vacations.*

-When you do not have a connecting word (or when you use a connecting word other than and, but, for, or nor, so, or yet between the two independent clauses) use a semicolon ( ; ).

\_\_\_\_\_;

E.g. *He often watched TV when there were only reruns; she preferred to read instead.*

Or

\_\_\_\_\_; however, \_\_\_\_\_.

e.g. *He often watched TV when there were only reruns; however, she preferred to read instead.*

So, run-ons and fused sentences are terms describing two independent clauses which are joined together with no connecting word or punctuation to separate the clauses.

E.g.

*They weren't dangerous criminals they were detectives in disguise. (Incorrect)*

*They weren't dangerous criminals; they were detectives in disguise. (Correct)*

*I didn't know which job I wanted I was too confused to decide. (Incorrect)*

*I didn't know which job I wanted, and I was too confused to decide. (Correct)*

(Source: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/598/02/>)

## II. Some attentions to avoid misuse of punctuation in writing english

### 1. Unnecessary commas

Comma usage varies with different writers and editors. Modern punctuation tends to omit many commas that were formerly used, although this decrease is not so obvious in well-edited magazines and books as it is in most newspapers. Reputable writers and editors do deviate on occasion from normally accepted practices, but their actions do not thereby establish new principles.

However, you should be able to justify the appearance of every comma you use. It is as great a sin against clarity to overuse or misuse commas as it is to omit them where they are needed as an organic part of writing. The most common misuses and overuses of the comma are discussed in the following "do not use" suggestions:

a. Do not use a comma before the first or after the last member of a series

E.g. *Chromatic colors include, red, green, purple, and brown.*

*The tea was a cold, sweet, refreshing, drink.*

Omit the first comma in the first sentence; the last in the second.

b. Do not use a comma to separate a subject from its predicate. No comma is needed in any of these sentences.

E.g. *We requested that the road be paved.*

*I quickly learned what sort of man he was.*

*They soon found the weather to be too cold.*

c. Do not use a comma before the indirect part of a quotation. No comma is needed in a sentence such as this:

E.g. *The candidate stated that he was against higher taxes.*



d. Do not use a comma between two independent clauses where a stronger mark of punctuation (semicolon, period) is required.

This misuse, sometimes called the “*comma fault*” or “*comma splice*” always causes confusion. Use a semicolon or period for the misused comma in such a statement as this:

E.g. *The foreman told me to be there early, I told him I couldn't.*

e. Do not use a comma, or pair of commas, with words in apposition which are actually restrictive.

The italicized words which follow really limit, identify, or define. To enclose them with commas is a mistake.

E.g. *My sister Margaret is a lovely woman.*

*Shakespeare's play Macbeth is one of his greatest.*

d. Do not use a comma indiscriminately to replace a word omitted.

On occasion, a comma can correctly and clearly be substituted for a word or even a group of words, but rarely can it take the place of pronouns such as that, who, whom, which.

E.g. In "*Robin said, he would come to see me soon*" the comma is incorrectly used for that.

In "*The person, I saw was a friend of mine*" whom should replace the comma.

g. Do not use a comma and a dash in combination.

Formerly, the comma followed by a dash was often used. Today, the combination never occurs in well-edited materials.

h. Do not use a comma between the name and number of an organization or unit.

In such items as the following, name and number are considered either in apposition or mutually restrictive.

E.g. *Lucius D. Clarke Lodge No. 15 Upholsterer's Union Local No. 239*

i. Do not use a comma before the ampersand (&).

There are rare exceptions to this suggestion, but normally you should omit the second comma in writing items such as the following:

E.g. *Baker, Weeks & Company*

*Chefs, Cooks & Pastry Cooks Association*

j. Do not use a comma in any situation unless it adds to clarity and understanding.

This is a catchall suggestion. Admittedly vague, it should call attention to the fact that comma usage is slowly growing more and more "open" and less and less "closed". Every comma in the following can be justified, but every comma could equally well be omitted since clarity is not affected in the slightest degree

E.g.

*Naturally, the first thing you should do, after reporting for work, is to see the supervisor.*

*After the play, Martha and I went home, by taxicab, because we wanted, at all costs, to avoid subway crowds.*

Commas are the most frequently used and most important-for clarity of all marks of punctuation. Use them when necessary to make your meaning clear but avoid using them when they interrupt or slow down thought or make a page of writing look as someone had used a comma shaker.

## **2. Misuse of period**

When you punctuate part of a sentence as if it were a complete sentence, you create a sentence fragment.

E.g.

(1) *We went out last night.* (2) *Saw a show.* (3) *Action, adventure, intrigue.* (4) *Grabbed some pizza afterwards, then hit the bars on Electric Avenue.*

Sentence (1) is complete. All the remaining which would be sentences are actually **sentence fragments**. They lack crucial elements of a complete sentence, such as a subject or verb.

Note: Sentence fragments are very common in conversation, advertising and journalism, but they are not acceptable for formal writing!

### **3. Overuse of colon**

The colon is a useful mark adding clarity to writing, but it should be used to accomplish only the two purposes suggested on pages 60-61. Used in other constructions, the colon becomes both obstructive and intrusive. Specifically:

a. Do not place a colon between a preposition and its object.

E.g. *I am fond of: New Orleans, Seattle, and Denver.* (There is no need for the colon or, indeed, for any mark of punctuation after of. )

b. Do not place a colon between a verb and its object or object complement

E.g. *He likes to see: TV plays, movies, and football games.* (Use no mark of punctuation after see. )

E.g. *She likes a number of activities, such as: swimming, dancing, and cooking.* (Use no mark after such as.)

c. Do not indiscriminately use the colon for the dash as a summarizing mark.

The colon anticipates whereas a summarizing dash suggests that something has preceded.

E.g. *Mutual funds, savings accounts, common stocks: these are popular methods of investing.* (A colon can be used in this construction, but a dash is preferable.)

d. Do not use a colon after such introductory words as "namely" and "for instance" unless what follows consists of a complete statement. Otherwise, use a comma, not a colon. "As follows" or "the following" normally requires the use of a colon in as much as the introducing words are incomplete without the illustrative or listed items that do follow.

E.g. *He gave us only one warning: namely, that we should not demonstrate again.*

*The main events were as follows: first, ...*

e. A good general rule for avoiding incorrect overuse of the colon is this: Never use a colon directly after any verb or after the conjunction *that*.

#### **4. Misuses of apostrophe**

a. Do not use an apostrophe to form the plural.

E.g.

*Hamburger's for sale three cat's in the house.* ( Incorrect)

*Hamburgers for sale three cats in the house.* ( Correct)

b. Do not use an apostrophe with the possessive forms of personal pronouns.

E.g.

*Is this book your's? That car is their's.* ( Incorrect)

*Is this book yours? That car is theirs.* ( Correct)

c. Do not confuse "its" (possessive pronoun) with "it's" (contraction of **it is**).

E.g.

*That book has lost it's cover. Its too late to go now.* ( Incorrect)

*That book has lost its cover. It's too late to go now.* ( Correct)

d.Do not confuse the possessive pronoun "whose" with the contraction "who's" (contraction of **who is**).

E.g.

*Who's coat is this? Whose going to the movie?* ( Incorrect)

*Whose coat is this? Who's going to the movie?* ( Correct)

### **5.Misuse of question mark**

Do not use a question mark to indicate your doubt about a choice of word, or to indicate that you are dubious about a particular statement.

E.g. *This was the most inspiring (?) book I have ever read.* (Incorrect)

### **6.Misuse of exclamation mark**

The most common misuse is overuse. In formal writing, the exclamation mark should be used very sparingly, if at all. Also, although the combination "?!" is commonly used in informal writing to indicate surprise and disbelief , it is not appropriate for academic writing. Neither should you use more than one exclamation mark in a row.

The following sentences would be out of place in an academic essay.

E.g.*You mean you actually loaned him another thousand dollars?!*

*I don't believe this!!!!*

*Source:*

Laurie Rozakis, Ph.D.(2003). *Grammar for the Utterly Confused*. U.S.A:The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

Paul Brians (1997).*Common Errors in English( 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed)* . U.S.A: William& James. Co

## **PART 3 – CONCLUSION**

### **1. The summary of the research**

Punctuation marks are signals to the reader that place emphasis, alter the function or show the relationship between elements of the text. Misplaced or insufficient punctuation can change the meaning unintentionally and create ambiguity. Well-used punctuation, on the other hand, can enhance clarity. Like traffic signals, punctuation keeps your ideas flowing in the right direction. So, my study is designed in such a way that it helps the Vietnamese beginners of English have basic knowledge of the punctuation marks, know their importance and how to use them correctly in writing English. Because, I limit time and knowledge for this study, my graduation paper only focus on six punctuation marks which used commonly in writing English. But, I hope contribute partly to learners in process of learning English.

### **2. Suggestions for the further research**

The use of punctuation marks can be very complex and flexible. Each punctuation mark can be used in many different ways. Due to the limitation of my time and knowledge, I cannot cover all punctuation marks in English. If I have opportunity to study more about punctuation , I would like to focus all punctuation marks in English, especially, the others which I do not study in this paper as semicolon, hyphen, dash, parentheses, square brackets, ellipsis, and slash.

## APPENDIX

Because each punctuation marks have different usages, many people use them very confusingly, and even learners of English use punctuation badly or even incorrectly. So, there are some practicing exercises in this appendix.

Exercise 1: Read the following sentences and insert the proper punctuation mark for each sentence.

1. When is your birthday \_\_\_\_\_
2. I love pizza \_\_\_\_\_
3. I am in elementary school \_\_\_\_\_
4. One example will explain what I mean \_\_\_\_\_
5. My bus stops at the next corner \_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you like to read \_\_\_\_\_
7. I love to skateboard \_\_\_\_\_
8. Do you have a library card \_\_\_\_\_
9. My favorite subject is science \_\_\_\_\_
10. Where are you going with your cousin \_\_\_\_\_
11. I was so scared \_\_\_\_\_
12. My grandmother is an archaeologist \_\_\_\_\_
13. Suddenly it occurred to me to try something different \_\_\_\_\_
14. The fireworks were spectacular \_\_\_\_\_
15. What are the odds of winning the lottery \_\_\_\_\_
16. What is your favorite season of the year \_\_\_\_\_
17. Twenty percent of the people in my class wear glasses \_\_\_\_\_
18. Do you know how fast a cheetah can run \_\_\_\_\_
19. Mrs. Thompson screamed, "I have had it up to here \_\_\_\_\_"
20. Do you like sunrise or sunset the best \_\_\_\_\_

Exercise 2: Punctuate the following sentences with apostrophes according to the rules for using the apostrophe.

1. Whos the partys candidate for vice president this year?
2. The fox had its right foreleg caught securely in the traps jaws.
3. Our neighbors car is an old Chrysler, and its just about to fall apart.
4. In three weeks time well have to begin school again.
5. Didnt you hear that theyre leaving tomorrow?
6. Whenever I think of the stories I read as a child, I remember Cinderellas glass slipper and Snow Whites wicked stepmother.

Exercise 3: Punctuate these sentences:

1. Edgar Allen Poe the father of the short story is buried in Baltimore
2. Since the expansion of the Internet research has become much less tedious
3. That movie in my opinion was too scary for children
4. Handguns knives and other weapons are turning up in locker checks
5. You will come to my dance recital wont you
6. The companys success was founded on two things service and value for money
7. There are three choices in this life be good get good or give up
8. I dont understand why everyone shops at that store: everything there is so expensive
9. My teachers remark on my final essay was very complimentary This essay coherently analyzes musical trends of the late 20th century

*Answer key*

Exercise 1:

- 1 ? 2 ! 3 . 4 . 5 . 6 ? 7 ! 8 ? 9 . 10 ?  
11 ! 12 . 13 . 14 ! 15 ? 16 ? 17 . 18 ? 19 ! 20 ?

Exercise 2:

1. *Who's* the *party's* candidate for vice president this year?



2. The fox had its right foreleg caught securely in the *trap*'s jaws.
3. Our *neighbor*'s car is an old Chrysler, and *it*'s just about to fall apart.
4. In three *weeks* time we'll have to begin school again.
5. *Didn't* you hear that *they're* leaving tomorrow?
6. Whenever I think of the stories I read as a child, I remember *Cinderella*'s glass slipper and *Snow White*'s wicked stepmother.

Exercise 3:

1. Edgar Allen Poe, the father of the short story, is buried in Baltimore.
2. Since the expansion of the Internet, research has become much less tedious.
3. That movie, in my opinion, was too scary for children.
4. Handguns, knives, and other weapons are turning up in locker checks.
5. You will come to my dance recital, won't you?
6. The company's success was founded on two things: service and value for money.
7. There are three choices in this life: be good, get good, or give up.
8. I don't understand why everyone shops at that store: everything there is so expensive.
9. My teacher's remark on my final essay was very complimentary: "This essay coherently analyzes musical trends of the late 20th century."

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