

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

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# **KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP**

**NGÀNH: NGÔN NGỮ ANH**

**Sinh viên: Trần Thùy Dương  
Giảng viên hướng dẫn: ThS. Nguyễn Thị Quỳnh Hoa**

**HẢI PHÒNG - 2018**

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
HAIPHONG PRIVATE UNIVERSITY**

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**A STUDY ON USING SOME TYPICAL TYPERS OF  
PUNCTUATION PROPERLY IN WRITEN ENGLISH  
AND COMMON MISTAKE MADE BY VIETNAMESE  
LEARNERS**

**GRADUATION PAPER**

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**Class : NA1804**  
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**HẢI PHÒNG – 2018**

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**NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP**

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Tên đề tài: A study on using some typical typers of punctuation properly  
in writen English and common mistake made by Vietnamese learners

## **NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP**

**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 tính toán:**

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## **CÁN BỘ HƯỚNG DẪN ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP**

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Nội dung hướng dẫn: A study on using some typical types of punctuation properly in written English and common mistakes made by Vietnamese learners.

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Yêu cầu phải hoàn thành xong trước ngày tháng 11 năm 2018

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Đã giao nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

*Sinh viên*

*Người hướng dẫn*

**Hải Phòng, ngày tháng năm 2018**

**Hiệu trưởng**

**GS.TS.NGƯT *Trần Hữu Nghị***

## PHẦN NHẬN XÉT 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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### 2. 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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*Hải Phòng, ngày ... tháng ... năm 2018*

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*(Ký và ghi rõ họ tên)*

## **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.**

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**2. Cho điểm của người chấm phản biện : .....**

*(Điểm ghi bằng số và chữ)*

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## **PART I: INTRODUCTION**

### **1. Rationale**

During four years studying at the university, I have realized that writing is a difficult skill, which requires a basic background of English grammar. In written English, writers always have to pay attention to many grammar factors such as tenses, sentence structures, parts of speech, conjunctions, and punctuation marks. Each of them plays a vital role in making a correct sentence, especially punctuation. A complete sentence hardly ever misses punctuation marks. Each of them plays an important part in making a correct sentence, especially punctuations. A complete sentence hardly ever misses punctuation marks. In fact, punctuation marks have a big role in making clear the meaning of a sentence, avoiding the ambiguity.

Despite having learned it from the university, I am still aware of that I need to study much more about punctuation and their rules because of some reasons. Firstly, I also have made many mistakes on punctuation when I write. Moreover, I want to find out the reasons and solution for those mistakes. Secondly, understanding well the usage of some typical punctuation such as period, comma, colon, semicolon, question mark, and exclamation mark is necessary for my life.

For the reasons mentioned above, I have decided to choose the title “How to use some typical types of punctuation properly in written English and common mistakes made by Vietnamese learners” for my study.

### **2. Aims of the study**

The fact is, we all write in such these days, and punctuation is one of the first casualties. Difficulties with punctuation affect all writers, whether they are native speakers or otherwise. Therefore, I particularly want to take clear the rule of using punctuation in my study with there following aims:

- Giving a general view on written English and punctuation with its definition, classification, function, role.

- Providing the basic rules of some typical types of punctuation such as period (or full stop), commas, colon, semicolon, question mark, and exclamation mark.

- Indicating some common mistakes made by Vietnamese learners, giving solution for them.

### **3. Scope of the study**

Punctuation marks in written English are rather various. However, the research on all kinds of punctuation in written English is too hard for an undergraduate student like me. Therefore, in this paper, I just focus on studying the rules of using some typical types of punctuation that are often used most in writing such as comma, colon, semicolon, period (or full stop), question mark (or interrogation mark), and exclamation mark.

### **4. Methods of the study**

Quantitative method: During my research process, I chose the quantitative method to analyze my data that I collected through the survey questionnaires on the common punctuation mistakes made by Vietnamese learners. I also use some charts to express the figures and analyze them.

Other methods:

- Acquiring and referring to the guidance from my teachers.
- Getting all necessary information from internet, books, dictionaries, and library.

### **5. Design of the study**

This paper provides a clear organization consisting three main parts that help an easy exploration and practical benefits gained for readers as well.

**PART I** starts with an INTRODUCTION including Rationale, Aims of the study, Scope of the study, and Method of the study and Design of the study.

**PART II** consists of DEVELOPMENT consisting three chapters as following:

**Chapter 1:** Theoretical background of written English, punctuation with its definition, classification, functions, and role.

**Chapter 2:** An investigation on some typical types of punctuation in written English.

**Chapter 3:** The implication of the body.

**PART III** ends with CONCLUSION, which summarizes the knowledge mentioned through three chapters above.

## **PART II: DEVELOPMENT**

### **CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

#### **I. GENERAL VIEW ON WRITTEN ENGLISH**

##### **1. What is written English?**

Written English is a way of recording English language using any of various instruments and material, such as pen and paper, chisel and stone, or computers. The language itself is either spoken or signed, so written language develops as a way of representing what has been said. In many cultures, community languages are unwritten.

There are several writing systems in use around the world, which record different elements of the languages they record. A syllabary, for example, assigns a symbol to each significant syllable of the language, while an alphabet records individual phonemes. Other systems involve symbols that usually incorporate meaning, such as Chinese characters. The decision over which system to use can be purely political or historical in nature, or there can be arguments that one system is better suited to the nature of a particular language.

In fact, written English has many differences from spoken language. One of the most essential differences between them is the degree of formality. In general, we often our writing is often more formal than our speaking. Because, in spoken English, we can see listeners and may know well about them, our speaking can be less formal. Nevertheless, in written English, writer does not know readers personally. Therefore, they have to use words and sentences formally and clearly in order to serve a variety of readers.

##### **2. Types of written English**

In written English, types of texts are very various depending on the using purposes of writers. According to Writing of Hedge, T. 1988. Oxford University Press, written English has some types as follow:

- Personal writing: Diaries, Journals, Shopping Lists, packing Lists, Addresses, Recipes.



- Public writing: Letters of enquiry, complain, request, Form filling, Applications (for membership).

- Creative writing: Poems, Stories, Rhymes, Drama, Songs, Autobiography.

- Social writing: Letters, Invitations, Notes, Cablegrams, Telephone messages, Instructions to friends or friends.

- Study writing: Making notes while reading, talking notes from lecturer, making a card index, SUMMARIES, Synopses, Reviews, Reports, Essays, Bibliographies.

- Institutional writing: Agendas, Minutes, Memoranda, Reports, Contracts, Business letters, Public notices, Advertisements, Speeches, Curriculum Vitae, Specifications, Note-making.

All the types of written English mentioned above are commonly used in life. Some of them such as social writing, study writing, and institutional writing are required to be strict in English grammar and punctuation. If one of above texts has poor punctuation and grammar, it cannot convey a writer's senses to his readers. Therefore, knowing how to use punctuation and grammar properly in written English is extremely important to language learners.

## **II. ENGLISH PUNCTUATION MARKS**

### **1. What is punctuation?**

Punctuation is the practice or system of using conventional marks or characters to make clear the meaning of written or printed language. Punctuation marks are used to add emphasis, minimize ambiguity, and aid reader comprehension.

In *Principle of English punctuation* (1898), George Smallfield stated that: "Punctuation is the art of dividing a written or printed composition into sentences, or into parts of sentences, by the use of points, or stops, for the purpose of making the different pauses which the sense and an accurate pronunciation require".

We also have another definition of punctuation: “In every language, besides the sounds of the words that are strung together, there are other features such as tone, accent, and pauses that are equally

significant. Such features are represented by punctuation, indicated by signs inserted usually between words, and often following the feature they mark”.

Because of the popularity of punctuation, each writer or dictionary has its own definitions of punctuation. In my opinion, punctuation is *set of symbols used in writing to help indicate something about the structure of sentences, or to assist readers in understanding the whole meaning of texts given by writers.*

## **2. Classification of punctuation.**

Punctuation marks in written English can be classified into four main groups: *Grammatical points, Grammatical and Rhetorical points, Letter, syllabic and quotation points, Miscellaneous points.*

### **2.1. Grammatical points**

In this part, I would like to devote the consideration of the principal sentential marks including comma, semicolon, colon and period.

#### **2.1.1. The Comma [,]**

The comma is used for a wide range of different purposes in punctuation. A comma may be used to separate units of a sentence such as an introduction or parenthetical thought, to separate items in lists such as this one, to lead a sentence into a quotation, and to separate independent clauses joined by a word such as “and” or “yet”. Comma also has a large number of uses, which will be shown in details in the Chapter 2.

Here is an example of using comma in sentences:

*He is a greedy, stubborn, and selfish child.*

### **2.1.2. The Semicolon [;]**

Semicolons, like all punctuation marks, ensure clarity in written language by joining independent clauses and separating items in a list. Let's see an example of semicolon:

*She lives in a small cottage in Roma, miles from the nearest town; the cottage is without gas, running water or electricity.*

### **2.1.3. The Colon [:]**

We often see a colon to appear in lists, or quotation marks. A colon is a unit of punctuation typically used to introduce a subsequent sentence that is in some way logically linked to the preceding sentence.

Example:

1. Success depends on three things: talent, determination, and luck.
2. Dear Mr. Mayor:  
(John E. Lincoln, Writing a college handbook, 433)

### **2.1.4. The Period [.]**

A period is the default terminal punctuation mark, used to end a sentence without conveying any additional meaning. Its primary purpose is to separate complete thoughts, to mark the end of declarative and imperative sentences.

Example:

She is a beautiful and talent singer.

## **2.2. The Grammatical and Rhetorical points**

A part from the above punctuation marks, there are some other marks, partly grammatical and partly rhetorical including the Question or Interrogation mark, the Exclamation mark, the Dash, and the Parenthesis.

### **2.2.2. The Exclamation mark [!]**

An exclamation mark indicates that the preceding sentence is somehow excited or extremely important, and if read aloud should be given special stress. There are some examples of exclamation mark as follows:

*What a beautiful girl it is!*

### 2.2.3. The Dash [---]

Dashes are used for many different purposes, often to link special things together. Dashes include three types: figure dash, end dash, and em dash. A *figure dash* is used to link numbers together such as in a phone number. An *end dash* is used to link things that are within a closed range of values, such as those between dates, times, or page numbers. An *em dash* is traditionally used to separate a thought from the flow of the sentence – like this – in an almost parenthetical manner.

**En dash:** *June-July 1967 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. For ages 3-5*

*Page: 38-55*

**Em dash:** “The whole group had attended --- even Matt and Rebecca --- and I knew it was going to be a great night”

### 2.2.3. The Parenthesis [()]

A parenthesis consists of two curved lines (), which is a clause containing some necessary information, or useful remarks introducing the body of a sentence indirectly, but can be omitted without affecting the sense or the construction of the whole sentence, for example:

Ex: only a few weeks late, the company announced its intention to purchase the consumer products division (flour and pasta) of one of its smaller competitors.

## 2.3. Letter, syllabic and quotation points

The marks being considered in this chapter are the Apostrophe, the Hyphen, and the Quotation marks.

### 2.3.1. The Apostrophe [']

Apostrophe is a mark, which is distinguished from a comma, only being placed above the line; but its uses are very different. This mark of elision or shortening is used chiefly in poetry and in familiar dialogue, to denote the omission of a letter or words.

For example:

I have → I've

Over → o'er

Them → 'em

Do not → don't

The genitive case of nouns, in both the singular and the plural, is also marked by an apostrophe.

### **2.3.2. The Hyphen [-]**

Hyphens are punctuation marks, which look similar to dashes, but are shorter, and are used to join compound words, which have not yet become independent words.

The hyphen is sometimes used to join the constituent parts of compound and derivative words. Here are some examples of hyphen:

*Can you spell your name? - Yes, M-A-R-C-T-H-O-N-Y*

*The vice-chairman has just resigned for six months.*

### **2.3.3. The Quotation mark [“”], [‘’]**

Quotation marks are used to show that the words of an author or a speaker are quoted. These marks consist of two inverted commas placed at the beginning, and two apostrophes at the end. The most common type of quotation marks is double quotes [“”]. Single quotation marks [‘’], which are a type of punctuation that look similar to an apostrophe, may be used for quotations within quotations. For example:

“There is much to like about that.” She said.

## **2.4. Miscellaneous points**

In addition to the sentential points and marks spoken in the preceding parts, there are other points, which sometimes occur in written English and will be explained in the following parts.

### **2.4.1. The Brackets []**

The brackets are used for the same purpose nearly as the marks of parenthesis; but they are usually confined to words, phrases, or sentences, inserted in or appended to a quotation, and not belong to it. For example:

*“The captain had several men died [who died] in the ship.”*

(John Wilson, 1868:236)

#### **2.4.2. A Comma Inverted [‘]**

According to John Wilson, a comma inverted is sometimes used instead of a very small c, in many proper names beginning with Mac; as, McDonald, the abbreviation of Macdonald.

#### **2.4.3. Two Commas [.,]**

These marks are occasionally employed to indicate that something is understood which was expressed in the line and work immediately above, for example:

*John Jones, Esq..... Plymouth*

*John Smith, Esq.....*

(John Wilson, 1868:237)

#### **2.4.4. The Caret [^]**

John Wilson also stated that the caret is used, only in manuscript, to show where a letter or a word was accidentally omitted, but which has afterwards been placed over the line; as,

p            are

Disappointments and trial often blessing in disguise.

^            ^

#### **2.4.5. Marks of Ellipsis [...]**

Marks or points of ellipsis are used in formal writing to indicate an omission from quoted matter, for example:

*This combination caused Wright to wonder whether “since the interference velocities due to ... walls are opposite signs..., opposite effects might be so combined in a slotted tunnel as to produce zero blockage.”*

#### **2.4.6. Slash [/]**

A slash, also called *solidus* or *virgule*, can be correctly used in *and/or*, in fraction ( $x/y$ ), to indicate *per* ( $m/sec$ ), and when quoting poetry.

### **3. Main functions of Punctuation Marks**

▪ Punctuation is the system of signs or symbols given to a reader to show how a sentence is constructed and how it should be read.

▪ Sentences are the building blocks used to construct written accounts. They are complete statements. Punctuation shows how the sentence should be read and makes the meaning clear.

▪ Every sentence should include at least a capital letter at the start, and a full stop, exclamation mark or question mark at the end. This basic system indicates that the sentence is complete.

## CHAPTER 2. AN INVESTIGATION ON SOME TYPICAL TYPES OF PUNCTUATION IN WRITTEN ENGLISH.

### I. WHAT IS TYPICAL TYPES OF PUNCTUATION MARKS IN WRITTEN ENGLISH?

1. Comma
2. Semicolon
3. Colon
4. Period
5. Question Mark
6. Exclamation Mark

### II. RULES OF USING SOME TYPICAL TYPES OF PUNCTUATION MARKS

#### 1. Comma.

##### **1.1 The Use of a Comma in the Words or Phrases that are joined by coordinating conjunctions.**

Conjunctions are words or phrases that are used to join two independent clauses together.

Coordinating conjunctions are and/or/but/nor/ as/for/so. When they are used to connect two independent clauses together they should be accompanied by a comma, which comes before the coordinating conjunction.

**AND** of all the coordinating conjunctions, ‘and’ is the most common and the one where the use or otherwise of the comma is possibly most troublesome. The comma is needed if the ‘and’ is used to connect two independent clauses.

*Paul went to Kenya for his holiday, and Steve went to Dorset.*

If, however, it is used simply to connect two elements in the same or sentence, no comma is required.

*Paul and Steve went to sunny Barrow in Furness on holiday this year.*



**BUT** requires a comma when acting as a coordinating conjunction, connecting two independent clauses.

*The weather was fine on Sunday, but we chose to stay in and watch TV.*

When used to connect two ideas with the idea of ‘with the exception of’, no comma is needed.

*Everybody but Jim got a new pencil.*

**OR** Again, a comma is required when or is used to separate two independent clauses.

*I can cook something special tonight, or Jim can zoom down to the fish and chip shop.*

If it is used to separate two elements in the same sentence, no comma is needed.

*You can have fish or chicken.*

## **1.2 The Use of Comma in Series of Words.**

**Rule 1:** Use commas to separate words and word groups in a simple series of three or more items.

Example: *My estate goes to my husband, son, daughter-in-law, and nephew.*

**Rule 2:** Use a comma to separate two adjectives when the order of the adjectives is interchangeable.

Example: *He is a strong, healthy man.*

**Rule 3a:** Many inexperienced writers run two independent clauses together by using a comma instead of a period. This results in the dreaded **run-on sentence** or, more technically, a **comma splice**.

**Incorrect:** He walked all the way home, he shut the door.

**Correct:** He walked all the way home. He shut the door.

**Rule 3b:** In sentences where two independent clauses are joined by connectors such as *and, or, but, etc...*, put a comma at the end of the first clause.

**Incorrect:** He walked all the way home and shut the door.

**Correct:** He walked all the way home, and he shut the door.

**Rule 3c:** If the subject does not appear in front of the second verb, a comma is generally unnecessary.

**Example:** He thought quickly but still did not answer correctly.

But sometimes a comma in this situation is necessary to avoid confusion.

**Confusing:** I saw that she was busy and prepared to leave.

**Clearer with comma:** I saw that she was busy, and prepared to leave.

Without a comma, the reader is liable to think that “she” was the one who was prepared to leave.

**Rule 4a:** When starting a sentence with a dependent clause, use a comma after it.

**Example:** If you are not sure about this, let me know now.

Follow the same policy with introductory phrases.

**Example:** Having finally arrived in town, we went shopping.

However, if the introductory phrase is clear and brief (three or four words), the comma is optional.

**Example:** When in town we go shopping.

But always add a comma if it would avoid confusion.

**Example:** Last Sunday, evening classes were canceled. (The comma prevents a misreading.)

When an introductory phrase begins with a preposition, a comma may not be necessary even if the phrase contains more than three or four words.

**Example:** Into the sparkling crystal ball he gazed.

If such a phrase contains more than one preposition, a comma may be used unless a verb immediately follows the phrase.

**Example:**

Between your house on Main Street and my house on Grand Avenue, the mayor’s mansion stands proudly.

Between your house on Main Street and my house on Grand Avenue is the mayor’s mansion.

**Rule 4b:** A comma is usually unnecessary when the sentence starts with an independent clause followed by a dependent clause.

**Example:** Let me know now if you are not sure about this.

**Rule 5:** Use commas to set off nonessential words, clauses, and phrases (see Who, That, Which)

**Incorrect:** Jill who is my sister shut the door.

**Correct:** Jill, who is my sister, shut the door.

**Rule 6:** If something or someone is sufficiently identified, the description that follows is considered nonessential and should be surrounded by commas.

**Examples:** Freddy, who has a limp, was in an auto accident.

If we already know which Freddy is meant, the description is not essential.

**Rule 7a:** Use a comma after certain words that introduce a sentence, such as *well, yes, why, hello, hey, etc.*)

**Example:** Why, I can't believe this!

No, you can't have a dollar.

**Rule 7b:** Use commas to set off expressions that interrupt the sentence flow (nevertheless, after *all, by the way, on the other hand, however, etc.*)

**Example:** I am, by the way, very nervous about this.

**Rule 8:** Use commas to set off the name, nickname, term of endearment, or title of a person directly addressed.

**Examples:** Will you, Aisha, do that assignment for me?

Yes, old friend, I will.

Good day, Captain.

**Rule 9:** Use a comma to separate the day of the month from the year, always put one the year, also.

Example: It was in the Sun's June 5, 2003, edition.

No comma is necessary for just the month and year.

Example: It was in a June 2003 article.

**Rule 10:** Use a comma to separate a city from its state, and remember to put one after the state, also.

**Example:** I'm from the Akron, Ohio, area.

**Rule 12:** Similarly, use commas to enclose degrees or titles used with names.

**Example:** Al Mooney, M.D., is here.

**Rule 13a:** Use commas to introduce or interrupt direct quotations.

Examples:

He said, "I don't care."

"Why." I asked, "don't you care?"

This rule is optional with one-word quotations.

Example: He said "Stop".

**Rule 14:** Use a comma to separate a statement from a question.

Example: I can go, can't I?

**Rule 15:** Use a comma to separate contrasting parts of a sentence.

**Example:** That is my money, not yours.

**Rule 16a:** use a comma before and after certain introductory words or terms, such as namely, that is, i.e., e.g., and for instance, when they are followed by a series of items.

**Example:** You may be required to bring many items, e.g., sleeping bags, pans, and warm clothing.

**Rule 16b:** A comma should precede the term etc. Many authorities also recommend a comma after etc. when it is placed midsentence.

**Example:** Sleeping bags, pans, warm clothing, etc., are in the tent.

### **1.3. The Use of Comma with Words in Apposition (Nouns or Phrases in Apposition).**

**Definition of Apposition:** Is a grammatical construction in which two elements, normally noun phrases (np), are placed side by side, with one element serving to identify the other in a different way. The two elements are said to be *in apposition*. One of the elements is called the **appositive**, although its

identification requires consideration of how the elements are used in a sentence.

**Examples: The living room, the biggest room in the house,**

[NP 1]

[NP 2]

looks out on to a beautiful garden.

(The living room and the biggest room in the house are the same room)

The second noun phrase tells us something more about the first noun phrase (its identify or its qualities). We also reserve the order of the phrases:

**Example: The biggest room in the house, the living room,**

[NP 1]

[NP 2]

looks out on to a beautiful garden.

### **Types of apposition**

In writing, we often separate the noun phrases by commas. We do this when the second noun phrase gives extra information which is not necessary to identify the person or thing.

**Example:**

**Edinburgh, Scotland's capital city,** has a population of around 450,000.

(Scotland's capital city is extra information which is not necessary to identify Edinburgh.)

Sometimes the second noun phrase contains information which specifies which person or thing we are referring to from a number of possible people or things. In these cases, we don't use a comma.

### **1.4. The Use of Comma in Relative Clauses.**

English has two types of *relative clauses*: *Non-essential* and *essential* relative clauses. But a comma is only needed when the relative clause contains non-essential information.

**Example:**

*Defining Relative Clause*

<b>Non – essential relative clauses</b>	<b>Defining Relative clauses</b>
<b>Example:</b> At the end 1999, he was appointed Finance Manager of Carlson Ltd, <b>which</b> was subsequently sold to a third party.	<b>Example:</b> The place <b>where</b> I went to school is a wonderful town.
<b>Explaining:</b> “At the end 1999, he was appointed Finance Manager of Carlson Ltd” and “ <b>which</b> was subsequently sold to a third party” is <b>extra information</b> that grammatically is not necessary. Both parts are grammatically complete sentences.	<b>Explain:</b> We can’t say “The place is a wonderful town”, because we <b>don’t know which place it is</b> . This means that it is essential to put the complete defining clause because “ The place where I went to school” is the subject of “ is” in “ is a wonderful town”.( grammatically this is called a Defining Relative Clause -> DO NOT USE COMMAS.

- **A reminder:** Don’t put a comma in front of ‘that’, unless the word or phrase that needs to be separated by commas in front of ‘that’.

Example: The evidence shows **Ø that** this variable does have a significant influence.

**1.5 The Use of Comma in Adjectival, Participial, and Absolute Phrases.**

The Use of Comma in Adjectival Phrases.

**-Definition:** An adjectival phrase modifies a noun or pronoun. It could be a prepositional phrase or a participle phrase.

	Restrictive adjectival phrases	Nonrestrictive adjectival phrases
The Use of Comma in Adjectival phrases	If an adjectival phrase is essential to understanding the noun or pronoun it belongs to, it is restrictive, and no commas should be used.	They are not essential to understanding the sentence. They provide parenthetical information without which the reader would still glean the writer’s meaning.
Examples	This weekend my friend Sandra and I prepared the signature dish <b>featured in Julie and Julia</b> .	Sandra bought the vegetables, <b>including mushrooms and onions</b> , at the farmers market on Sunday morning.
Explaining	Reread the example, but stop after “dish”, it doesn’t make sense. So participle phrase <i>featured in Julie and Julia</i> is essential to understanding the sentence – it’s a restrictive phrase - > No Commas should be used.	The adjectival phrases are not required for the sentences to make sense. <i>Don’t need including mushroom and onions to figure out</i> what Sandra bought at the farmers’ market, and <i>with shopping list in</i>

		<p><i>hand</i> doesn't help you understand how I is. Therefore, there are nonrestrictive phrases and should be set off by commas.</p>
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### The Use of Comma in Participial Phrases.

- **Definition:** The participial phrase contains a participle and the other words in the phrase that modify the noun or pronoun.

#### - The Use of Comma:

Before the main clause, the participial phrase is followed by a comma:

“**Speeding** down the highway, Bob didn't notice the police car.”

After the main clause, it is preceded by a comma:

“The gamblers silently arranged their cards, losing themselves in thought.”

In mid-sentence position, it is set off by commas before and after:

“The real estate agent, thinking of her profit potential, decided not to buy the property.”

### The Use of Comma in Absolute Phrases.

- **Definition:** An absolute phrase is a phrase that modifies a whole independent clause (a full sentence); not just one word. It generally combines a noun and a participle, so it can be as short as two words, or sometimes have other modifiers and objects too.

#### - The Use of Comma in Absolute Phrases.

An absolute phrase is set off with a comma (or with a pair of commas if it occurs in the middle of the sentence.)

#### **Noun + participle**

Her work completed, Amanda flew home.



## Noun + other modifier

His mind on other matters, Jordan didn't notice the growing storm.

## Pronoun + infinitive

The audience filed out, some to return home, others to gather at the pub.

### 1.6. The Use of Comma in Adverbs and Adverbial Phrases.

The Use of Comma in Adverbs Phrases.

- **Definition of Adverbs Phrases:** Is simply two or more words that act as an adverb. It can modify a verb, adverb, or adjective and can tell “how”, “where”, “why”, or “when”. An adverb clause which also modifies verbs, adverbs and adjectives; but, an adverb clause also includes a subject and a verb.

- **The Use of Commas with an adverb clause** depends on the position of the clause and its degree of importance.

<b>Adverb clause at the beginning</b>	Example: When I hear the song “Spanish Eyes.” I always feel like dancing.	When placed <b>before</b> the independent clause, an adverb clause takes a comma after it.
<b>Adverb clause in the middle</b>	Example: My cousin, whenever she travels, sends me a postcard from every port.	When placed <b>in the middle</b> of the independent clause, an adverb clause generally acts as an interrupter and requires a pair of commas (one before and one after).
<b>Adverb clause at the end</b> (When placed at the end of the	The package came after you had left. (identifies the time of delivery.)	<b>Essential Clauses:</b> provide essential information and are not set off with commas.

independent clause, an adverb clause may or may not require a comma, depending on whether it is essential to the meaning of the sentence.)	The package came at 8:30, after you had left. (The phrase at 8:30 identifies the time of delivery; the clause is just additional information.)	<b>Non-essential clauses</b> provide additional, non-essential information and need commas.
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❖ The Use of Comma in Adverbial Phrases.

- **Definition of Adverbial Phrases:** Is the term for two or more words which play the role of an adverb.

- We often use a comma to separate multiword adverbial phrases or clauses from the rest of the sentence when the phrase or clause comes first.

**Example: When the clock strikes twelve,** my dog howls.

(A Dependent Clause)

**Over the course of a very long night,** the

(A prepositional phrase)

surgeon operated on three children.

**Wanting to earn a place on the podium,**

(A participial phrase)

the runner accepted the steroids.

- The use of commas after prepositional phrases isn't always straightforward.

We use a comma after some prepositional phrases at the beginning of a sentence but not after others. So when do you use a comma and when don't you? Use a

comma after prepositional phrases of five or more words, use a comma to eliminate confusion, and use a comma when a series of prepositional phrases starts the sentence.

**Example:**

1. **On the counter** sat a bundle of old letters. (fewer than five words)
2. **From the elevator’s control panel**, red paint dripped like blood. (five or more words)
3. In the contest, entries were arranged alphabetically. (Without a comma after *contest*, readers might assume that *contest entries* were a unit, with *contest* modifying *entries*.)
4. **During drought and famine, in good times and bad**, I’ll be there for you. (A series of two prepositional phrases.)

**1.7. The Use of Comma in Dependent Clauses.**

**- Definition of Dependent Clause:**

A dependent clause - also called a subordinate clause – will begin with a **subordinate conjunction** or a **relative pronoun** and will contain both a **subject** and a **verb**. This combination of words will *not* form a **complete sentence**. It will instead make a reader want additional information to finish the thought.

**- The Use of Comma in Dependent Clause:**

✓ When you attach a subordinate clause in front of a main clause, use a comma:

**Example:** Even though the broccoli was covered in cheddar cheese, Emily refused to eat it.

✓ When you attach a subordinate clause *at the end* of a main clause, you will generally use no punctuation:

**Example:** Diane decided to plant tomatoes in the back of the yard **Ø where the sun blazed the longest during the day.**

- Subordinate clauses can begin with relative pronouns (and thus are called relative clauses, a type of subordinate clause). When a subordinate clause starts with who, whose, or which, for example, punctuation gets a little bit trickier. Sometimes you will need a comma, and sometimes you won't, depending on whether the clause is essential or nonessential.

- When the information in the relative clause clarifies an otherwise general noun, the clause is essential and will follow the same pattern

**Example:** Nick gave a handful of potato chips to the dog Ø *who was sniffing around the picnic tables.*

- When a relative clause follows a specific noun, punctuation changes. The information in the relative clause is no longer as important, and the clause becomes nonessential. **Nonessential clauses** require you to use commas to connect them.

**Example:** Nick gave a handful of potato chips to Button, *who was sniffing around the picnic tables.*

- Relative clauses can also interrupt a main clause. When this happens, use no punctuation for an essential clause. If the clause is nonessential, separate it with a comma in front and a comma behind.

**Example:**

Essential Relative Clause	Nonessential Relative Clause
After dripping mustard all over his chest, the man Ø <b>who was wearing a red shirt</b> Ø wished that he had instead chosen ketchup for his hotdog.	After dripping mustard all over his chest, Charles, <b>who was wearing a red shirt</b> , wished that he had instead chosen ketchup for his hotdog.

### 1.8. The Use of Comma in Direct Quotations.

- **Definition of Direct Quotations:** Is a report of the exact words of an author or speaker and is placed inside quotation marks in a written word.

Example: Dr. King said, "I have a dream."

### - The Use of Comma in Direct Quotations:

➤ As a general rule, you should use a comma to introduce quoted material or dialogue. That's because in most types of dialogue, the quoted material stands apart from the surrounding text. In grammatical terms, it's "syntactically independent."

- Here are an example from the first book in the "Game of Thrones" series.

Master Luwin said, "Bran, the children of the forest have been gone for thousands of years."

- You can also use commas when a quotation is interrupted by a phrase like "he said" or "she said". In fact, you use two commas.

**Example:** "What the king dreams," [Ned] said, "the Hand builds."

➤ In certain cases, you can skip the comma when introducing a quotation.

First, skip the comma if the quotation is introduced by a conjunction like "that," "whether," or "if."

#### **Examples:**

- Eddard Stark is constantly reminding people that "winter is coming".

- Lord Varys wonders whether "we've grown so used to horror we assume there's no other way."

Second, ask yourself whether the quotation blends into the rest of the sentence – or, speaking grammatically, if it's a syntactical part of the surrounding sentence. If the quotation blends in, the comma comes out.

#### **Examples:**

It was the third time he had called her "boy." "I'm a girl," Arya objected.

Fat Tom used to call her "Arya Underfoot" because he said that was where she always was.

### **1.9. Other Conventional Uses of Commas.**

There are 2 rules in Convention Uses of Commas.

➤ **Comma rule #1:** Use a comma in a conventional situation (where a rule has become a rule, such as dialogue, the date, etc.)

➤ **Comma rule #2:** Use a comma to separate/join items in lists/IC's.

**1.9a. Comma rule #1:** There are five common rules.

Situation 1: Dates                      *Use a comma after these elements*

*if the sentence continues*

Situation 2: Addresses              *Ex: She was born January 19,1999,  
in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, to two proud parents.*

Situation 3: Certain parts of friendly letters

*Greeting and closing*

Situation 4: In names that have a title

*For example: Luther King, Jr., was a great man.*

*Dr. Phil, P.H.D., is on television*

Situation 5: Use in dialogue.

**1.9b. Comma rule #2: Use a comma to separate items in a series.**

- Comma act as dividers for items in a series. You could connect them with the conjunctions **and/or** or you can, and should, use commas. But we consider that poor style.

Example:

*Fish and ice cream and banana    Or    Fish, ice cream, and bananas*

- A series is considered three or more words, phrases, or clauses. Otherwise you would just use **and/or**.

Example: Pens, pencils, and paper...(words)

In the morning, at lunch, and after dinner... (phrases)

I came, I saw, and I went home. (clauses)

Although an adjective list requires only two that occur side by side (w/o the use of a conjunction)

Comma: Jeff ate a spicy, steamy bowl of chili.

No comma: Jeff ate a spicy and steamy bowl of chili.

\* Be sure to also remember the forward – backward rule to determine if adjectives are equal.

Equal: It was a damp, dreary day.

Unequal: That is my favorite red sweater.

- Use a comma with conjunctions when separating/joining two sentences instead of periods.

- A compound sentence has not one but two parts to the sentence. Those two parts are each sentences, or if you want to get fancy, those parts are called independent clauses.

(Independent means it can stand alone.)

Here are two simple sentences with one independent clause each:

Alexis ate an enchilada. Artie gobbled up four tacos and an order of rice.

Since they are two independent clauses, they **MUST BE** separated. We most often do this with a period. However, we have two other ways of doing so...

## **2. Semicolon.**

### **2.1. The Use of Semicolon in Coordinate Clauses.**

- **Definition of Coordinate Clauses:** Is a clause (i.e., a word group containing a subject and predicate) that is introduced by one of the coordinating conjunctions most commonly *and our but*. Contrast with a subordinate clause.

**Example:** I wasn't a fan of most vegetables; but I didn't mind peas." (Gene Simmons, Kiss, and Make-Up. Crown, 2001)

- **The Use of Semicolon in Coordinate Clauses:**

▪ Similarly, semicolons can be used to separate coordinate clauses in long sentences. Many of these clauses contain commas, allowing semicolons to emphasize the overall structure and distinct parts of the sentence. They steer the reader through long and sometimes complex passages (though neither of the following examples is particularly complex):

**Example:** "It would have been in vain for Scrooge to plead that the weather and the hour were not adapted to pedestrian purposes; that bed was warm, and the thermometer a long way below freezing; that he was clad but lightly in his slippers, dressing-gown, and nightcap; and that he had a cold upon him at that

time.” (Charles Dickens)

- Semicolons can be used to coordinate independent clauses that are not joined by a coordinating conjunction. Coordinating conjunctions are *but, and, so, or, nor, for* and *yet* – basic words that show the relationship between two connected clauses. If any of these is present there is usually no need for a semicolon, unless the writer wants a bigger pause, perhaps to emphasize whatever follows (see quote by Bacon, below).

- Sometimes the clauses joined by a semicolon reflect one another, in the sense that they contain mutually antithetical or complementary ideas:

“In taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy; but in passing it over, he is superior.” (Sir Francis Bacon)

## **2.2. The Use of Semicolon in a Series.**

- Items in lists are usually separated with commas (as in the first example below). However, if the list items themselves contain commas, then semicolons can be used as separators to outrank those commas.

### **Examples:**

- I have been to Newcastle, Carlisle, and York.

*(In this example, commas have been used to separate the list items.)*

- I have been to Newcastle, Carlisle, and York in the North; Bristol, Exeter, and Portsmouth in the South; and Cromer, Norwich, and Lincoln on the East.

*(In this example, semicolons have been used to separate the list items because the list items themselves contain commas.)*

## **3. Colon**

### **3.1. The Use of Colon in Clauses.**

#### **Colons Separating Independent Clauses:**

- A colon can be used to separate two independent clauses when a/ the second clause is directly related to the first clause (not just vaguely related) and when the emphasis is on the second clause. While you can also use a semicolon or a



period between two independent-yet-related clauses, the colon is a little softer than the period, but a little harder than the semicolon.

**Example:** A dolphin is not fish: it is a warm-blooded mammal.

**Example:** The research is conclusive: climate change is a reality.

In British English, the word following a colon is not capitalized unless it is a proper noun or an acronym. In American English, styles differ, but it is best to capitalize the first word after a colon if what follow a two or more complete sentences.

**Example:** I have several plans for my immediate future: First, I'm going to win the lottery. Second, I'm going to buy a unicorn. Third, I will marry Brad Pitt.

### **3.2. The Use of Colon in Quotations**

- The Proper Punctuation: Can use the correct punctuation as you introduce quotations. If you use a complete sentence to introduce a **quotation, use a Colon (:)** just before the quotation.)

**Example:** In "Where I lived, and What I lived for," Thoreau states directly his purpose for going into the woods: "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to reach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."

**Example:** Thoreau's philosophy might be summed up best by his repeated request for people to ignore the insignificant details of life: "Our life is frittered away by detail. An honest man has hardly need to count more than his ten fingers, or in extreme cases he may add his ten toes, and lump the rest. Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity!"

This is an easy rule to remember: If you use a complete sentence to introduce a quotation, you need a colon after the sentence. Be careful not to confuse a colon (: ) with a semicolon (;). Using a comma in this situation will most likely create a comma splice, one of the serious sentence-boundary errors.

### **3.3. The Use of Colon in Introducing a List or a Series.**

- Use a colon with the phrases as follows and the following.

**Example:** To make a cake you need the following ingredients: butter, sugar, eggs, milk, flour, leavened and salt.

Combine the ingredients as follows: first, cream the butter with the sugar; second, add the eggs and milk; third, add the flour, leavened, and salt.

- Use a colon before a series or list only if the words that introduce the list make up a complete sentence:

**Example:** To make a cake you need a few basic ingredients: butter, sugar, eggs, milk, flour, leavened, and salt.

- If the words before the colon do not constitute a sentence, do not use a colon:

**Example:** To make a cake you need butter, sugar, eggs, milk, flour, leavened, and salt.

### **3.4. The Other Conventional Uses of Colon.**

▪ Use a colon after a complete sentence that is followed by a bulleted or numbered list.

**Example:** The English language is spectacular. There are 14 different types of punctuation marks:

- Periods
- Question Marks
- Exclamation Points
- Commas
- Semicolons
- Colons
- Dashes
- Hyphens
- Brackets
- Braces
- Parentheses
- Apostrophes
- Quotation Marks

## ○Ellipses

Capitalization and ending punctuation are optional for single words or short phrases in bullet points or numbered lists.

▪ Use a colon following a greeting (also known as a salutation) in a formal or business letter. It does not matter if you are using the person's first name, both first and last name, or their title, you should always use a colon if the letter is formal. If the letter is personal, then either a colon or comma is appropriate.

### **Examples:**

To Whom It May Concern:

Dear Mr. Wilson:

## **4. Periods**

• **Definition of Period:** Is a small dot-shaped punctuation mark that is used at the end of any sentence that is intended to make a statement. As with other punctuation marks that end sentences, the period should be placed directly behind the last letter of the last of the sentence.

### **4.1. The Use of Period in Sentences.**

• Use periods in sentences that make statements

**Examples:** - My dog retrieves the paper for me each morning.

- Our city's police cars are painted black and white.

• Use periods at the end of sentences that are intended to instruct or command.

**Examples:** - Rinse the dishes before putting them in the dishwasher.

- Lock the door behind you.

• Periods can also be used at the end of a sentence that contains an indirect question.

**Examples:** - The coach asked Jared why he was late for practice.

- My mother used to wonder why my brother's room was cluttered.

• Periods are also used with abbreviations.

**Examples:** -Washington, D.C.

- 5 p.m.

- In the event that the abbreviation ends a statement, a command, or an indirect question, the period that ends that abbreviation is also used to complete the sentence.

**Example:** Arrive at 5:30 p.m. to get a seat for the concert; it begins at 6 p.m.

- Although acronyms are abbreviations, they do not normally require periods. If you are using an acronym that is pronounced as a word such as NOW, NATO, RADAR, or SCUBA, you don't need to insert periods between the letters. If you are using an acronym that is pronounced by speaking the letters individually. You may or may not need to use periods between the letters. Some examples include FBI, NBA, U.S.A, and U.N.I.C.E.F.

#### **4.2. The Use of Period in Headings and Subheads.**

##### ➤ The Use of Period in Headings.

###### ▪ Definition of Headings:

- Headings are the titles and subtitles you see within the actual text of much professional scientific, technical, and business writing. Headings are like the parts of an outline that have been pasted into the actual pages of the document.

- Headings are an important feature of professional technical writing: they alert readers to upcoming topics and subtopics, help readers find their way around in long reports and skip what they are not interested in, and break up long stretches of straight text.

###### ▪ The Use of Period in Headings:

- The title of a complete work is usually centred near the top of the first page; if possible, it should be printed either in large letters or in boldface, or even in both. It should not be italicized or placed in quotation marks, and **should not have a period at the end.**

##### ➤ The Use of Period in Subheads.

###### ▪ Definition of Subheads:

1. An additional headline or title that comes immediately after the main headline or title.

**Example:**

The newspaper headline read “House burns down on Elm Street” with the *subheading* “Arson suspected.”

2. A title given to one of the parts or divisions of a piece of writing.

**Example:**

You can find the chart in the “Financial Matters” chapter under the *subheading* “Mortgages and Loans.”

- The Use of periods in Subheads: They don’t end in a period.

**4.3. The Use of Periods in Abbreviations.**

➤ **Definition of Abbreviations:** A shortened form of a word or phrase.

Example: “SKU is the abbreviation for Stock Keeping Unit.”

➤ **The Use of Periods in Abbreviations**

▪ It is considered untidy to mix abbreviations with full stops and ones without full stops in the same article. The first two examples below are both correct because the writer has been consistent.

**Examples:** - The band travelled around UK and USA last year.

- It was only shown on ITV and not B.B.C.

▪ The Tendency: Do not use Period in Uppercase Abbreviations but use them in Lowercase Abbreviations.

**Examples:**

- **BBC**

(British Broadcasting Corporation)

- **LRS**

(Linear Recursive Sequence)

- a.m

(ante meridiem – before midday)

**Note:** This is a tendency not a rule.

▪ If the abbreviation is a company name, copy whatever convention the company uses.

### **Examples:**

- The shop will be taken over by the clothing company s.Oliver in June.
- Our team was hosted by the Italian club A.S. Livorno Calico.  
(A.S. *Livorno Calico* is the name shown on the logo and in all correspondence.)

▪ Do not use two periods if a sentence ends with an Abbreviation.

(If a sentence ends with an abbreviation that ends with a period, then do not use a period to show the end of the sentence. However, other end marks, such as question marks, exclamation marks should be used.

### **Example:**

- I need milk, bread, cheese, etc.
- She moved from I.T.V. after an irresistible offer from the B.B.C..
- Will she move back to the B.B.C.?

(This is correct, but it looks a little scruffy. To avoid this, use BBC instead of B.B.C.)

➤ The only exception to doubling up end marks with periods is ellipsis (...).

**Example:** Standing tall and with the Lord's Prayer mumbling across our lips, we entered the chamber...."

(This ends in four dots: three for the ellipsis and one to end the sentence.)

## **5. Question Mark**

### **5.1. The Use of Question Mark in Indicating queries.**

▪ Use the question mark when posing a direct query in an interrogative sentence. This denotes that the speaker is seeking information.

**Examples:** Are there any letters for me this morning?

When did you finish writing that report?

▪ Use the question mark to turn a statement into a question. This denotes that the speaker is assuming or hoping for a certain reply.

**Example:** - You promise to finish going through these invoices ?

- Use the question mark in statements ending with a word inflected as a query and with question tags.

**Examples:** - Just leave these papers on my desk. OK?

-You didn't find those documents, did you? (question tag)

- Use the question mark after a direct question which is inserted into a statement. If the question comes at the end, separate it with a comma. Capitalization of the question after the comma is used for extreme emphasis but is rarely recommended.

**Example:**

- Her boss wondered, Was she really doing her job the best she could? (question capitalized for extreme emphasis)

- The question was, was she really doing the best she could? [question not capitalized – recommended]

- If the inserted question comes in the beginning, put the question mark in the middle but do not capitalize the word following it.

**Examples:**

- Was she really doing her job the best she could? Her boss wondered.

- Was she really doing the best she could? was the question.

- When writing a series of questions, use a question mark for each item, even if items are not complete sentences. Capitalization of the question items is optional so be consistent with whatever option you choose.

**Example:** The board members had to decide on a new course of action for the company. Expand? Sell out? Consider new financial reforms?

- Do not use a question mark in statements that contain indirect questions (written as declarative sentences).

**Example:**

NO: Her boss wondered whether she was really doing her job the best she could?

Yes: Her boss wondered whether she was really doing her job the best she could.

## 5.2. The Use of Question Mark in Requests.

- Use a question mark with a mild command or polite request instead of a period that would make the request more demanding.

### Examples:

- Would you take these reports down to accounting?

(polite request – It would be nice if you do.)

- Would you take these reports down to accounting.

(directive order – Take these reports!)

## 5.3. The Use of Question Marks in Rhetorical question.

### - Check this out !

Aren't his painting amazing? (interested or surprised reaction)

Aren't his painting amazing. (uninterested or musing reaction)

Are't his paintings amazing! (indignant or exciting reaction)

### - Analysis!

When the above rhetorical question is used with different punctuation marks, the rhetoric implication is altered (as shown in the brackets). This demonstrates the emotional effect punctuation marks may have in a text.

### The Punctuation Rules for Indicating Rhetorical Questions:

- A rhetorical question is a question for which no answer is expected or for which the answer is self-evident. A rhetorical question can end in either a question mark, or an exclamation point or a period, depending on context and the writer's purpose.

**Example:** I did everything I could for that company, do you think they thanked me ? (apparently not)

How can I ever thank you enough!

(obviously you will have to work hard thanking)

- Rhetorical questions in a dialog are better ended with a period, as this imparts a more realistic tone.



### **Examples:**

Look, “why don’t we just forget about this deal.”

“Well, isn’t that what I expected to hear!”

- You can use a question mark with italics to show shock or incredulity.

Example: She said what ?

### **5.4. The Use of Question Mark in Parenthesis to indicate uncertainty (?)**

- Use a question mark enclosed in parenthesis (?) if a date or other number is unknown or doubtful among the experts. Do not use a question mark to communicate that you are unsure of the information you write, as this weakens the authority of your writing.

**Example:** Joan of Arc, 1412 (?) – 1431, is considered a French heroine.

- To avoid using (?) for expressing uncertainty, consider using the word about.

**Example:** Joan of Arc, born about 1412-1431, is considered a French heroine.

- Do not use (?) to express irony or sarcasm in serious academic writing.

**Examples:** Most people find office filing a pleasant (?) assignment

**or** Most people find office filing as pleasant as having a bad case of the flu.

### **5.5. The Uses of Question Mark with Other Punctuation Marks.**

- Do not use a comma after a question mark occurring in the middle of a sentence.

**Example:** “You didn’t actually agree to that offer? ”

- Do not use a period after a question mark occurring in the end of a sentence, even if followed by quotation marks.

**Example:** Did you actually take that offer?

- When a question mark follows a quoted text, put it before the closing quotation mark if it applies just to the quoted text. Put the question mark outside the closing quotation mark if it applies to the entire sentence.

### **Examples:**

Do you think it would be better in this case to stick to the attitude of “what’s in it for me ?” (entire sentence in question)

I really do not like her attitude of “what’s in it for me? ”

(only quoted text is in question, no extra period after a question mark)

- When a question mark is used with parenthesis, put it inside the parenthesis if the enclosed sentence stands alone. When the parenthesis enclose just part of a sentence, put the question mark outside the parenthesis. Always add another terminal punctuation mark to the end of the sentence.

**Examples:**

- For months, she stayed in extra hours to complete the project (Was she that eagerto get promoted?).

(Question mark inside the parenthesis, enclosed text is a stand alone sentence)

- Did she really stay in extra hours to complete the project (despite being denied of a promotion) ?

(question mark outside the parenthesis, enclosed text is part of a sentence)

- When a question mark immediately follows an italicized text, italicize it as well.

**Example:** You’re kidding, he didn’t promote her?

## **6. Exclamation Mark**

### **6.1.The Uses of Exclamation Marks in Strong Emotion or Emphatic Declaration.**

- In dialogue, use the exclamation point to indicate a strong command in an imperative sentence. This denotes a firm and direct order.

**Example:**

Clean the elephant enclosure now!

Look out, there’s an elephant running behind you!

- In dialogue, use the exclamation point to convey an emphatic declaration, which can indicate any of the following emotions:
  - Shock: “There’s been a terrible accident ”
  - Excitement: “Oh my God! What a fantastic birthday gift!”

- Urgency: “Drive carefully! Watch out for traffic signs! If you don’t, you could die !”

- Vehemence: “Down with the new anti-elephant laws! ”

- Astonishment: “I just can’t believe what she’s done! It’s simply beyond me!”

• Even in literary or dialog writing, over-use of the exclamation point should be avoided, using alternative wording or other punctuation marks to express emotion. Experienced writers know how to make their readers infer emotions from context.

**Avoid:** The Japanese food at Kyoto was just out of this world !!! Superduper !!! These guys know how to cook!

(Exaggerated enthusiasm using too many exclamation points)

**Consider:** The Japanese food at Kyoto was the best we have ever had. It appears that the chefs there are highly professional.

(Subtle enthusiasm using alternative wording with periods instead of exclamation points)

• Do not use the exclamation point with a period, comma, or semicolon.

- No: He shouted: “Watch out!”

- No: “Watch out!” he shouted.

- Yes: “Watch out!” he shouted.

• Do not use the exclamation point to express overt amazement or sarcasm. Use other words for rephrasing.

**Example:** At 3.3 meters and 7 tons (!), the African elephant is the biggest (!) land animal on Earth. Yet, Johnny (!) thinks elephant is the Indian elephant is bigger.

(1st exclamation point expresses amazement, 2nd exclamation point expresses sarcasm)

• “In was back again, a hopeless cripple.” Literary prose or poetry, an exclamation point is sometimes seen in the middle of sentences, where it need

not be followed by a capital letter. See also the exclamation point style conventions below.

**Example:** “Two years earlier, I had walked of into the sunset – cured! It’s a miracle She can walk! And now I.”

Nora Ephron, Heartburn.

## **6.2. The Use of Exclamation Mark in Rhetorical Questions.**

- A rhetorical question is a question for which no answer is expected or for which the answer is self-evident. A rhetorical question can end in either a question mark, or an exclamation point or a period, depending on content and the writer’s purpose.

### **Examples:**

- I did everything I could for that company; do you think they thanked me?  
(apparently not)

- How could I have known that those documents I had sent were top secret.  
(You couldn’t have)

- An exclamation point at the end of a sentence can create the following effects:

### **Examples:**

- Do you really believe I can read all these books about elephants by tomorrow!  
(disgruntlement)

- Aren’t the twins adorable! (wonder and awe)

- Is there any way on this earth I can ever get my father’s approval! (despair)

- Rhetorical questions in a dialog are better ended with a period, as this impacts a more realistic tone.

### **Examples:**

- “Look, why don’t we forget about this deal. ”

- “Well, isn’t that what I expected to hear.”

- You can use an exclamation point with italics to show shock or incredulity.

**Example:** She said what!

### **6.3. The Use of Exclamation Mark For Drawing Attention to unlikely points.**

- Writers sometimes like to sparingly use an exclamation point enclosed in parenthesis to draw the reader's attention to unlikely, ironic or unexpected sentences. However, it may be more elegant to choose different wordings to express irony and such.

**Examples:** - After his 98th (!) hot dog, Abner Manishewitz won first place in the L.A. County eat-offs.

(Exclamation point expresses amazement and maybe also disgust)

- After his hard to believe and visually disturbing 98th hot dog, Abner Manishewitz won first in the L.A. County eat-offs.

(his hard to believe and visually disturbing expresses amazement and maybe also disgust).

## CHAPTER 3: THE IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

### I. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES ON COMMON PUNCTUATION MISTAKES MADE BY VIETNAMESE LEARNERS.

#### 1. Participants

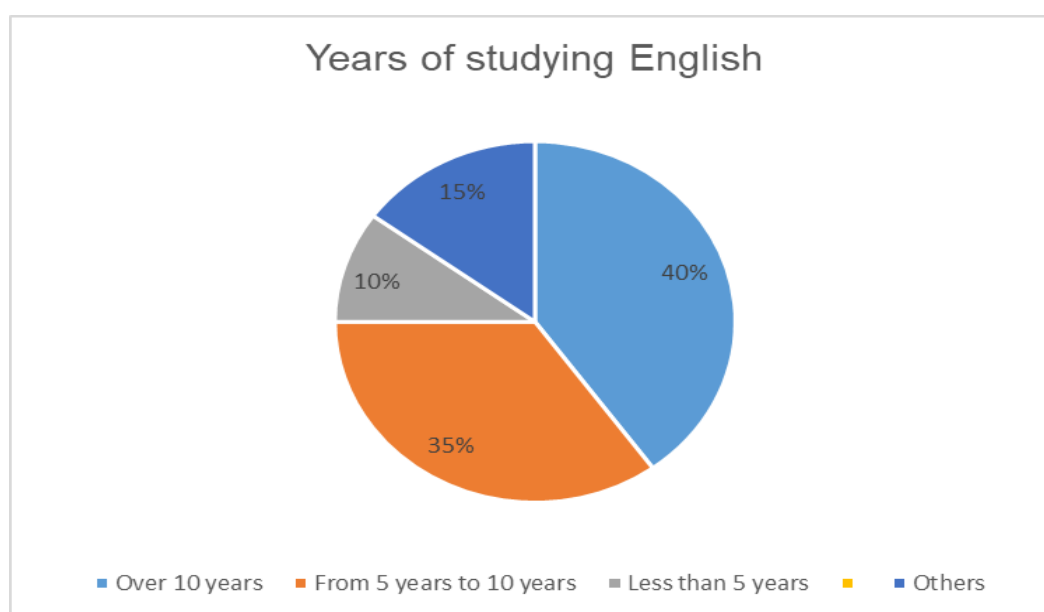
- Students studies at Hai Phong Private University. They are sophomores in Foreign Languages of Hai Phong Private University.

#### 2. Purpose of survey questionnaires on common punctuation mistakes made by Vietnamese learners.

- Finding the reasons about common punctuation mistakes made by Vietnamese.
- Helping students who improve and prevent from the common punctuation mistakes in writing English.
- Having the writing in English fluently and understandably to readers.

#### 3. **Data analysis.**

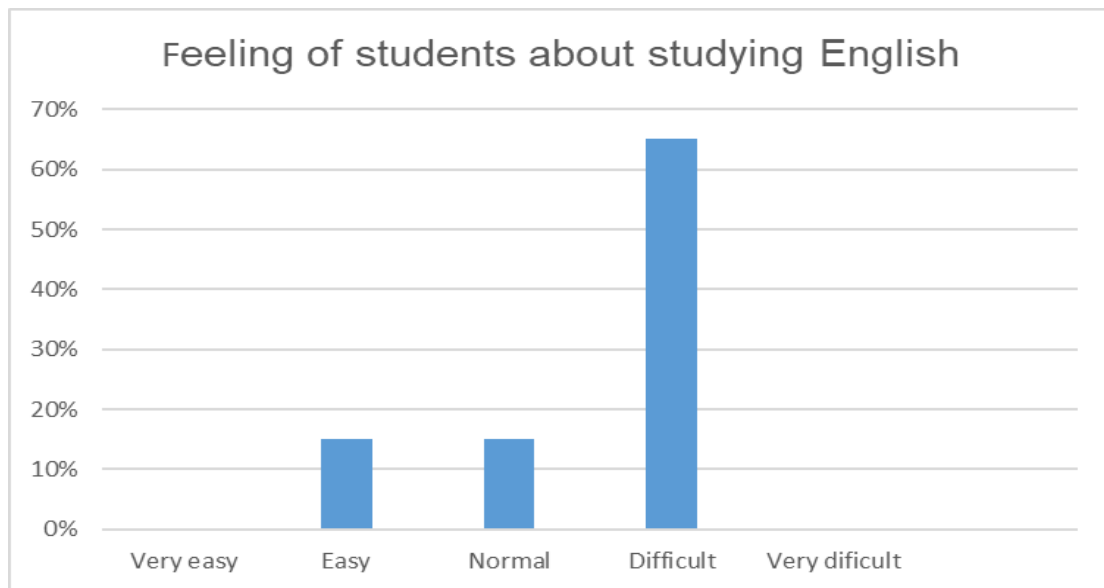
##### 3.1. Students' years of studying English



**Figure 1: Students' years of studying English**

It is shown in the pie chart all of the students who took part in the survey got used to English as a second language for a long time. In comparison with other universities, students of Hai Phong Private University had more time exploring English.

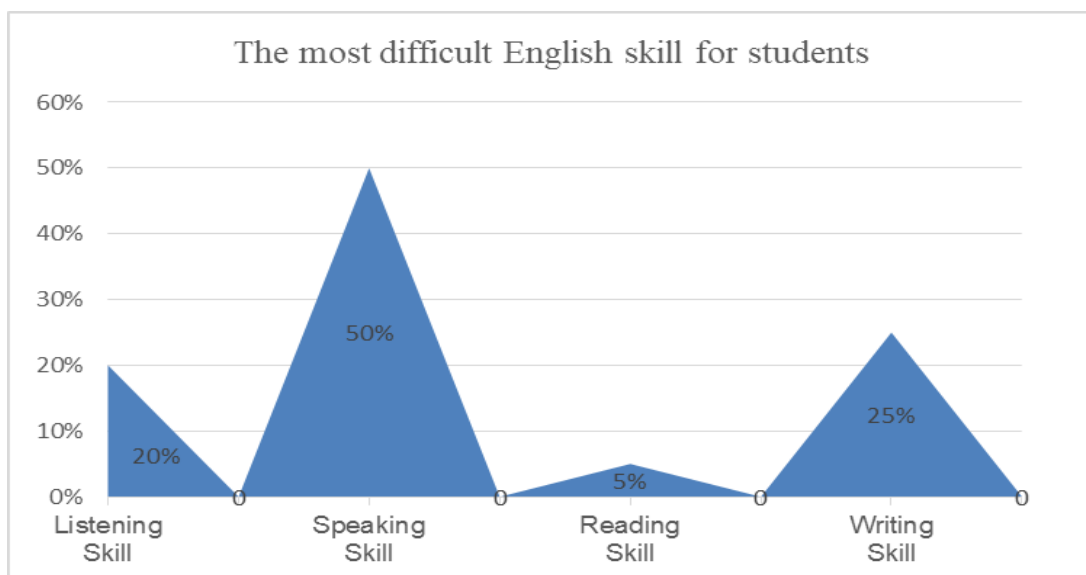
### 3.2. Feeling of students about studying English.



**Figure 2: Feeling of students about studying English**

As can be seen, most of the students (65%) thought that English is difficult while only about 0% of them thought that English is very easy. About 15% of them chose English is easy and normal. This percentage is balanced.

### 3.3. Students feedback about the most difficult skills.



**Figure 3: Students feedback about the most difficult skills.**

The above chart shows the most difficult English skill for students. It is Speaking skill (50%). While only about 5% of them, they chose Reading skill is the most difficult. Equally, most of them agreed thought that Writing and

Listening skill are the most difficult (25% and 20%).

### 3.4. Students' English favorite skill.

Like Writing skill	Not like Writing skill
5%	95%

**Figure 4: Students' English favorite skill.**

As can be seen, students like English Writing skill only about 5%, but it is about 95% when they don't like English writing skill.

### 3.5. Students common mistakes in writing skills.

Sentences	Paragraphs	Essays
40%	20%	40%

**Figure 5: Students common mistakes in writing skills.**

The above table shows that in the English writing skill, students recognize that common punctuation mistakes in sentences and essays are about 40%. They are balanced. But in paragraphs, it is only about 20%. It has less common punctuation mistakes than in sentences and essays.

### 3.6. Students' common mistakes.

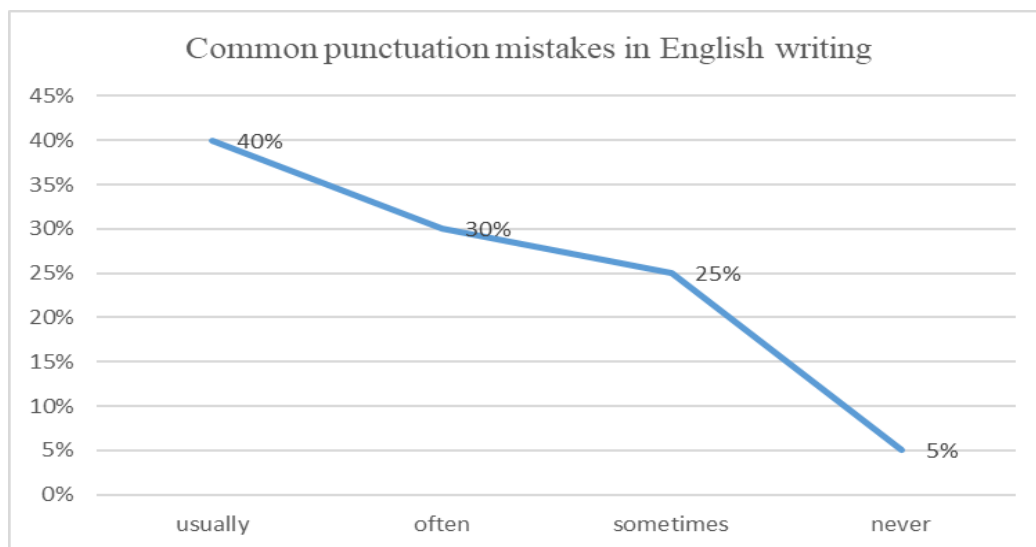
Comma	Semicolon	Colon	Period
50%	30%	5%	15%

**Figure 6: Students' common mistakes.**

As can be seen, The comma's mistakes is about 50% in all mistakes of common punctuation. It is the highest . About the semicolon and period are 30% and 15%. Only the mistakes in colon is 5%.



### 3.7. Students' frequency of making mistakes.



**Figure 7: Students' frequency of making mistakes.**

The above lines chart, you can see that students usually make common punctuation mistakes, it is about 40%. For 30% and 25% in students often and sometimes make these mistakes. Only is 5% that they never make them.

## PART III. CONCLUSION

### 1. Suggested solutions for some common punctuation mistakes.

#### 1.1. Comma Splice.

- Definition of Comma Splice: Is the attempt to join two independent clauses with a comma, but without a coordinator.

- Solutions for Comma Slice:

- When two independent clauses are next to each other, you have only two choices: You can either join them, or you can separate them.

(1) To join two independent clauses, you must use a coordinator. The coordinators are the correlatives and the coordinating conjunctions. (and, but, or, nor, yet and so).

(2) To separate two independent clauses, you must use some form of end-stop punctuation. Here are all of your possible choices: the period [.] , the exclamation point [!] , the question mark [?] , and the semicolon [;].

**Comma Splice:** I got up late this morning, I didn't have time for breakfast.

#### **Corrections:**

1. I got up late this morning. I didn't have time for breakfast.
2. I got up late this morning; I didn't have time for breakfast.
3. I got up late this morning, I didn't have time for breakfast.
4. I got up late this morning, and I didn't have time for breakfast.

#### 1.2. Semicolon for colon.

- The problem: Semi-colons are often misused, particularly where a colon should be used.

- Example to avoid: I am glad to be going on vacation; I need the rest from work.

- How to Avoid: Use a colon if you want to set a list of items. If you want to separate two related but distinct thoughts, use a semi-colon. Or, in the case of semi-colons, consider a period instead to break the thought into two separate sentences.

### **1.3. Colon after such as, including, to be.**

- This violates the rule that the material preceding the colon must be a complete thought.

**Example** (incorrect): There are many different types of paper, including: college ruled, wide ruled, and plain copy paper.

- You can see that “There are many different types of paper, including” is not a complete sentence. The colon should simply be removed.

## **2. Conclusion**

It can be said that this study is an answer to any reader who is interested in the English writing skill, specially, it is common punctuation mistakes in English writings. In the first chapter, reader will get the basic information why this study is fulfilled, how it is conducted and what it is conducted for. The second chapter will provide readers overview of the theoretical background on which this study bases on. They include the definition of writing English. Types of written English, the definition of punctuation and classification of punctuation such as: Grammatical points, the Grammatical and Rhetorical points, Miscellaneous points. The next chapter introduces the typical types and the use of punctuation marks in written English. The third chapter, the most important chapter of this study in which provides data collection and data analysis, evidence that was analyzed to help the writer to fulfil the task. The data from questionnaire was analyzed and discussed; in addition, suggested solution for some common punctuation mistakes. The last chapter is the summary of the previous chapters.

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## APPENDICES IN SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

### 1. Design of survey questionnaires

1.1. How long has you learned English?

- A. Over 10 years
- B. From 5 years to 10 years
- C. Less than 5 years
- D. Others

1.2. How do you feel when you study it?

- A. Very easy
- B. Easy
- C. Normal
- D. Difficult
- E. Very difficult

1.3. If it is difficult, which skills do you feel the most difficult?

- A. Listening Skill
- B. Speaking Skill
- C. Reading Skill
- D. Writing Skill

1.4. Do you like Writing Skill?

- A. Yes
- B. No

Why?

1.5. Do you usually have common punctuation mistakes in your writings ?

- A. Sentences
- B. Paragraphs
- C. Essays

1.6. Which mistakes do you often meet in your writings?

- A. Comma [,]
- B. Semicolon [;]
- C. Colon [:]
- D. Period [.]

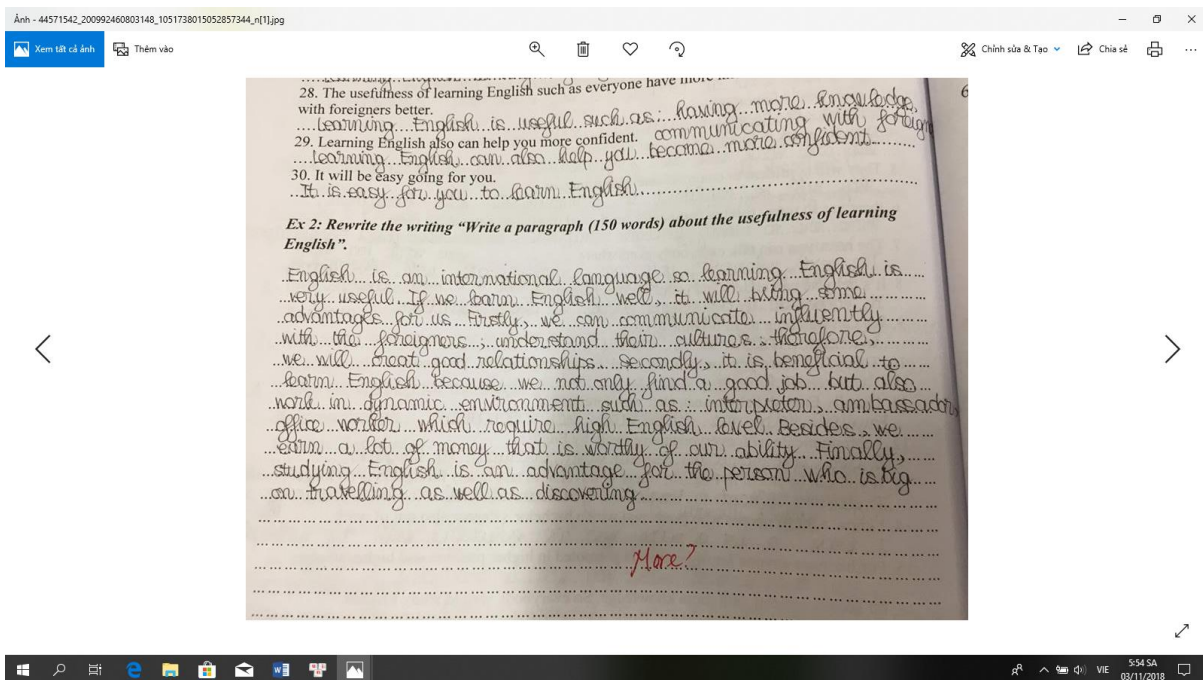
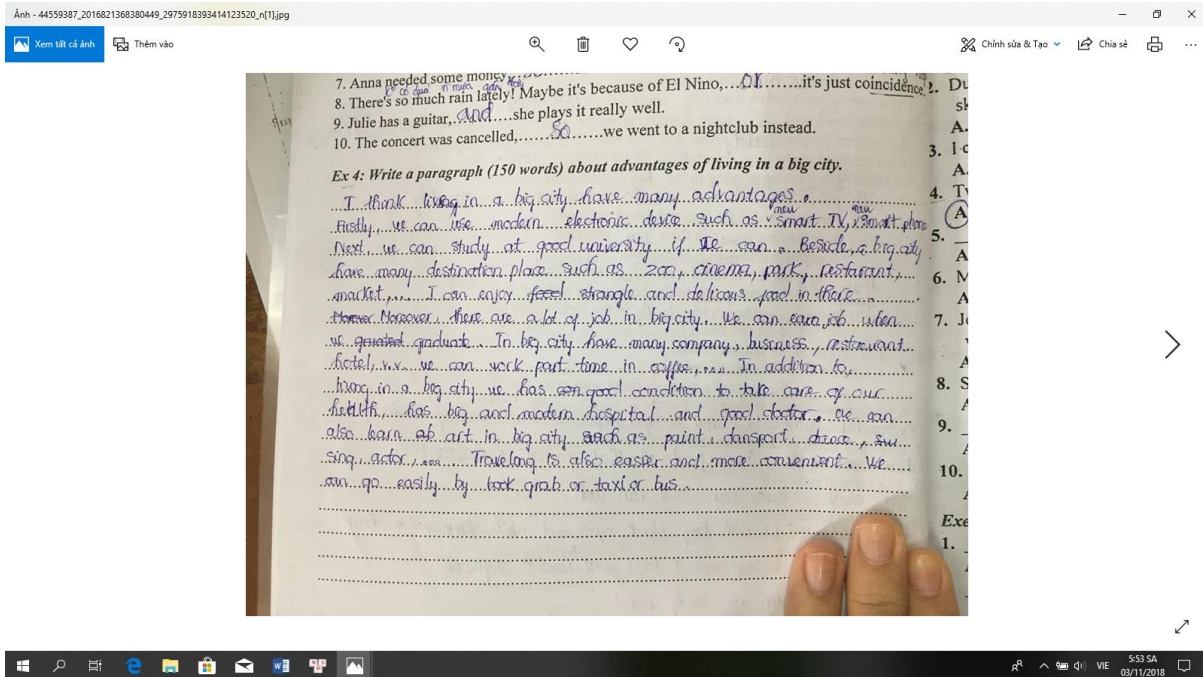
1.7. How often do you make these mistakes ?

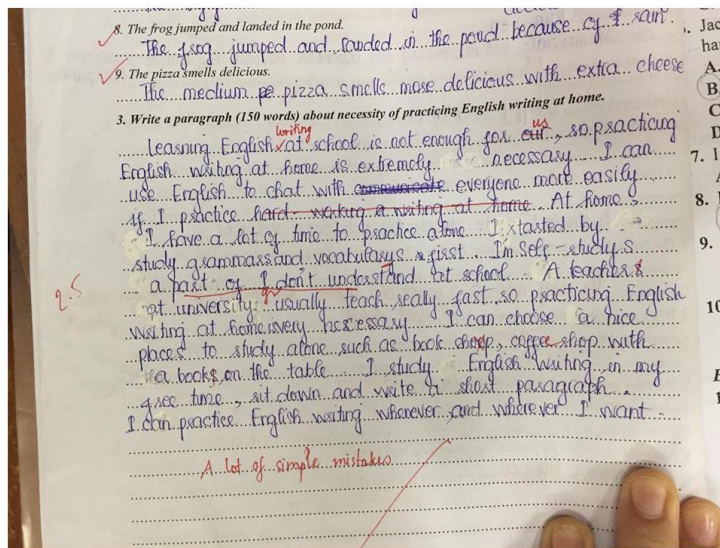
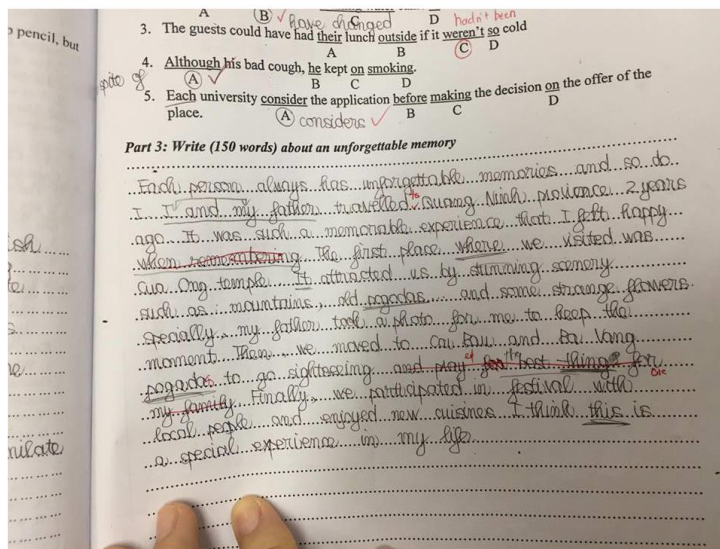
- A. Usually
- B. Often

C. Sometimes

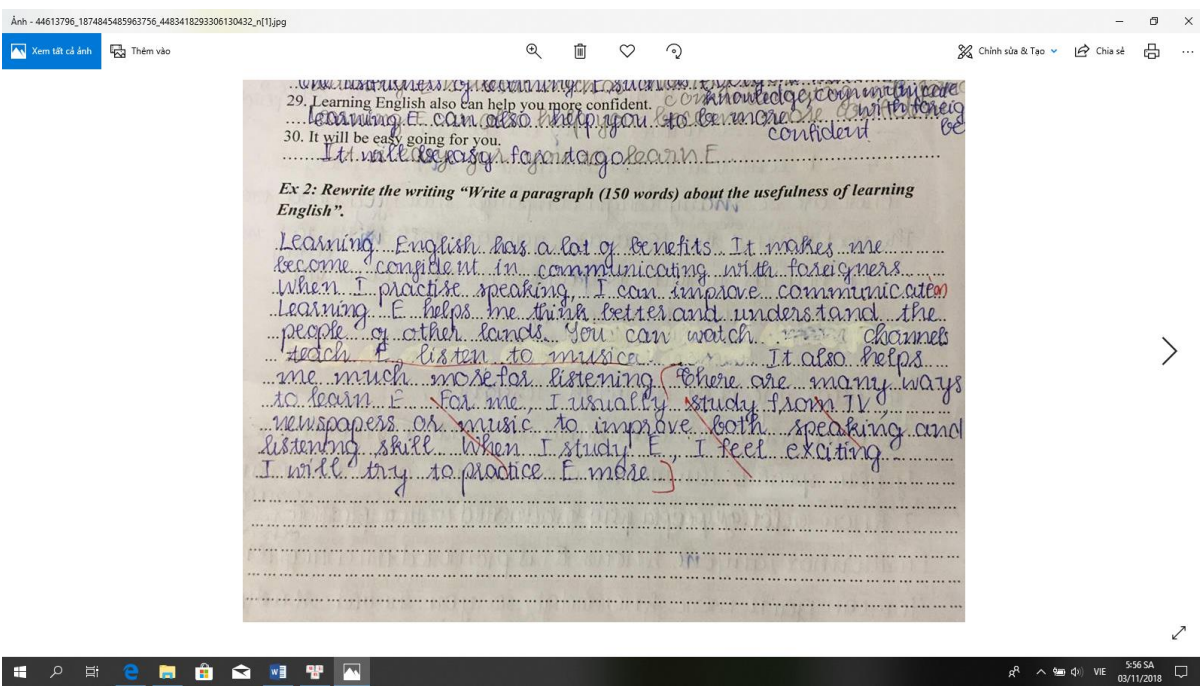
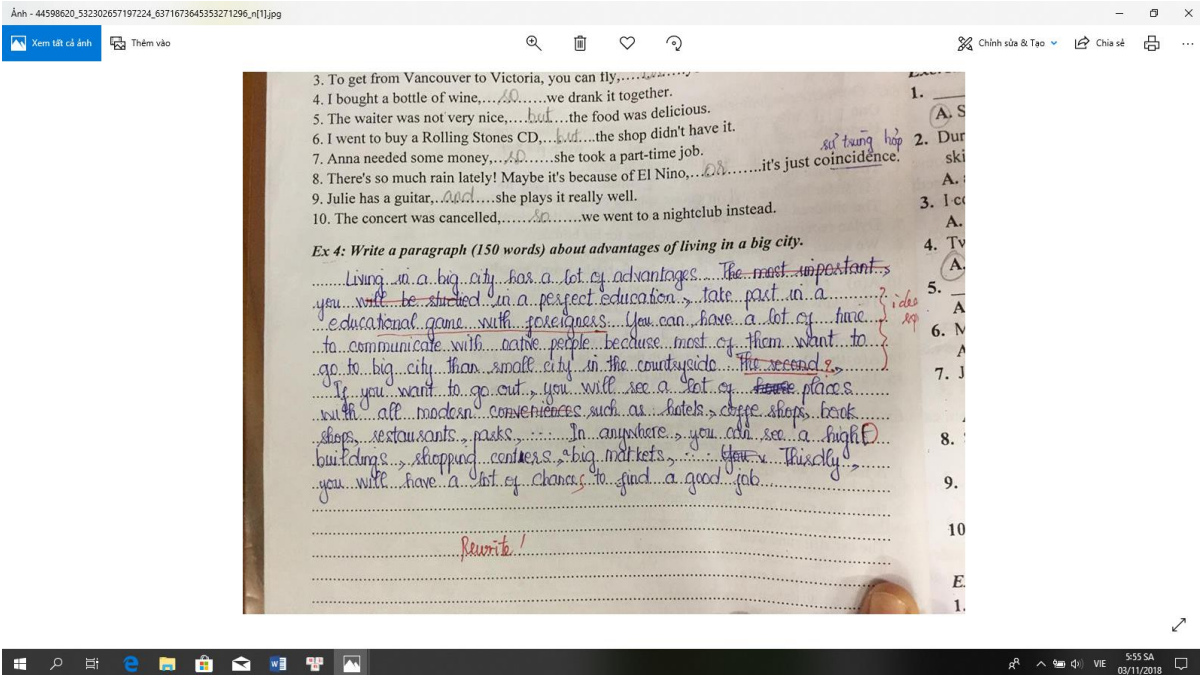
D. Never

2. The writings of students are studying in Hai Phong Private University.











4. The waiter was not very nice.  
5. I went to buy a Rolling Stones CD, but she took a part-time job.  
6. Anna needed some money, so she took a part-time job.  
7. There's so much rain lately! Maybe it's because of El Nino.  
8. Julie has a guitar, so she plays it really well.  
9. The concert was cancelled, so we went to a nightclub instead.

**Ex 4: Write a paragraph (150 words) about advantages of living in a big city.**

...living in urban areas has some advantages. First of all, people who live in big cities are so convenient. First of all, what convinces me most is that the infrastructure is always is. Hospitals in big cities have not only advanced equipments but also professional doctors, so the people can feel secure about health care problem. (Secondly), big cities are the places where there are many prestigious universities. As a result, we will have opportunity to choose studying environment well. Finally, living in urban areas helps us find the suitable jobs which corresponds with our abilities. For instance, if we always do well the tasks in working, we can be promoted to sum up. When living in urban areas, we will have chances to develop ourselves as well as career.

*Write "summary"*

Ng Hoàng Mỹ

1. The lively employee assisted us. He was tall. He was smiling.  
The tall, smiling, lively employee assisted us.

2. My favorite bistro is new to the area. It serves a scrumptious salad. My friends love the salad too.  
My favorite bistro which is new to the area serves a scrumptious salad that my friends love.

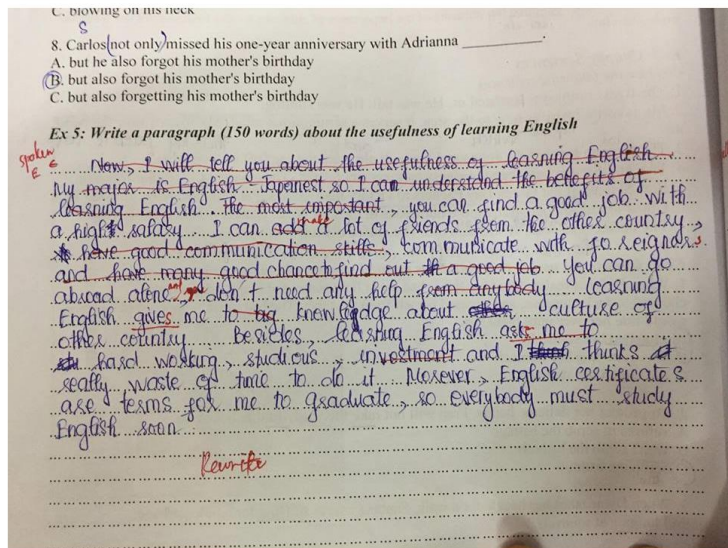
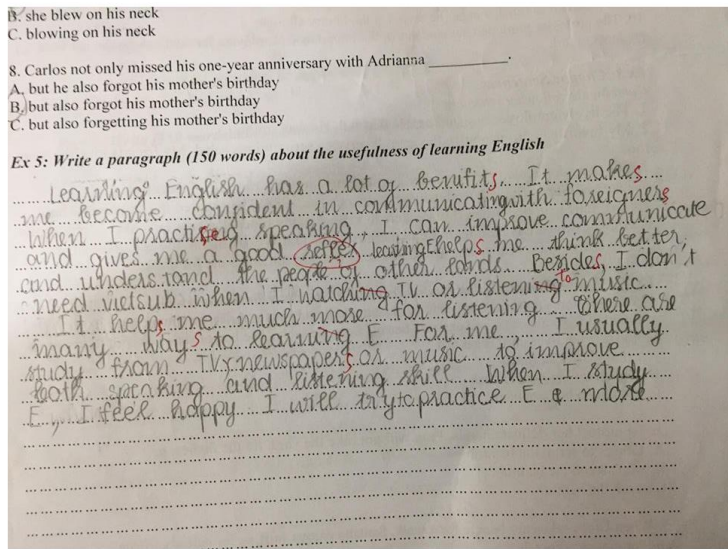
3. The tornado leveled the Johnson's home. It also rose the roof of their barn.  
The tornado leveled the Johnson's home and rose the roof of their barn.

4. Jake and Steven have been business partners since 1988. They started the restaurant chain.  
Jake and Steven have been business partners since 1988, when they started the restaurant chain.

5. Both stars lead the Green Bay Packers to victory many times. Packers fans have idolized them.  
Both stars, whom Packers fans have idolized, lead the Green Bay Packers to victory many times.

6. Ghost towns are becoming more numerous in the Old West. Carsonville is a ghost town. Other towns, like Carsonville, are becoming more numerous in the Old West.

7. The coffee was cold. I did not wake me for class.  
The old, cold coffee did not wake me for class.



depend on ner. 5. As a result, she used to go to the gym. → are used to  
fore

g sentences.

Part 2: Choose the underlined part (A, B, C or D) that needs correcting. Then correct it.

1. Raw materials used to make cars include iron ore, rubber and petroleum. → are used to  
A B C D
2. Our lifestyle changed since running water came to our village. → has changed  
A B C D
3. The guests could have had their lunch outside if it weren't so cold. → hadn't been  
A B C D
4. Although his bad cough, he kept on smoking. → In spite of  
A B C D
5. Each university consider the application before making the decision on the offer of the  
place. → considers  
A B C D

Part 3: Write (150 words) about an unforgettable memory

*An unforgettable memory... I never forget is the travelling to the countryside with my best friend. We travelled by bus and train. Although it's slow and small, but I can see the perfect view of my country. We choose to go to countryside instead of go abroad because we must take a lot of luggage, passports and personal effects. In countryside, I can hear the sound of some animals living there. The air is very fresh and clean for the people who have some problems about noise like me. The water is long, blue and don't clean. I have my river pollution. The atmosphere is really clean because most of people go for a walk. The people are friendly, honest and very cute. They willing to direct for us if we lost a map. We rented 2 cycles to go around our hotel. It's a long time since we have on a bicycle. Suddenly we have problem with our cycle but it was fixed by the local people. I will come there more time if I have time.*

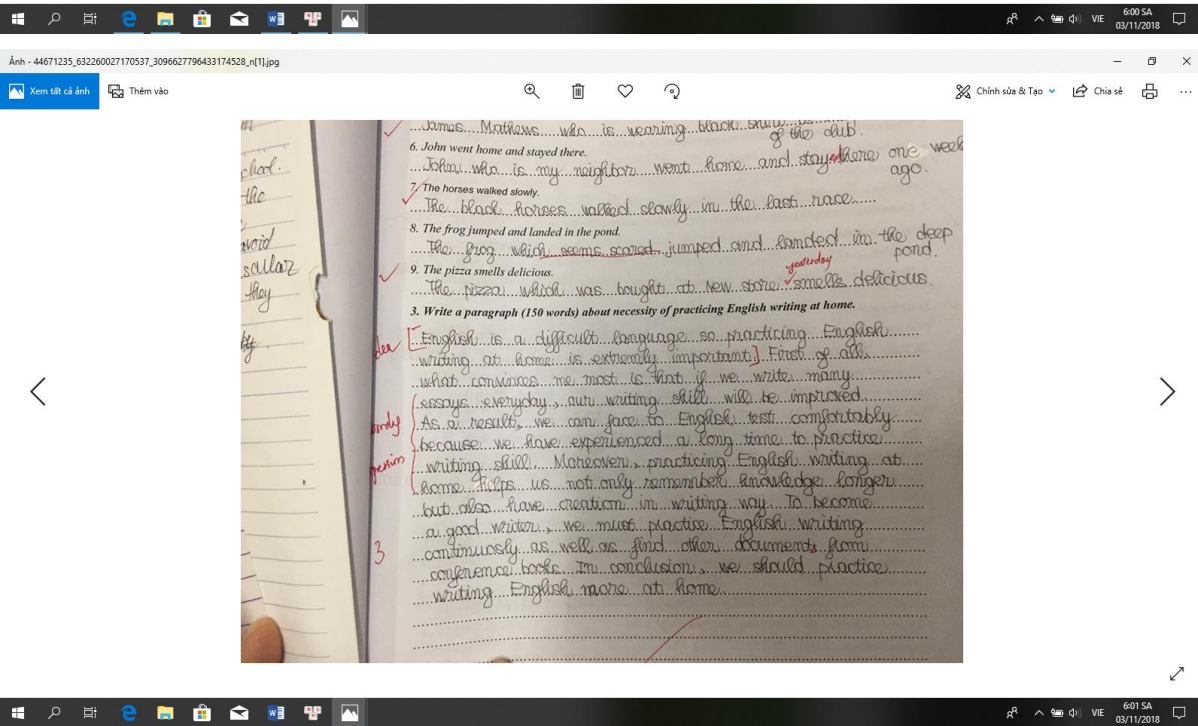
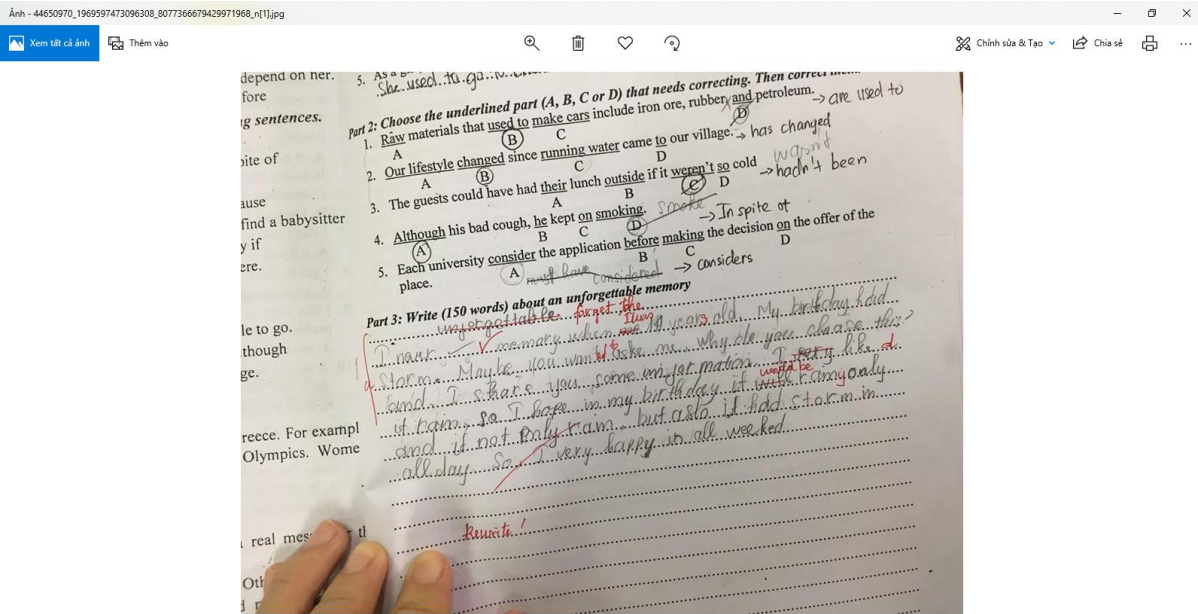
place. A B C D

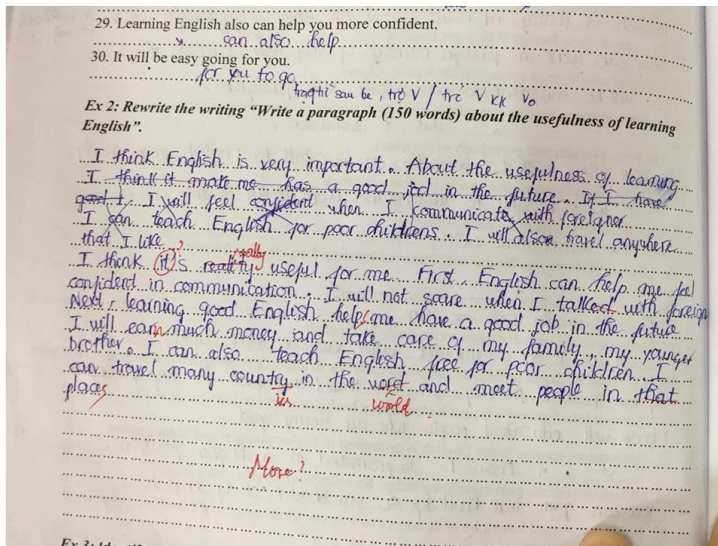
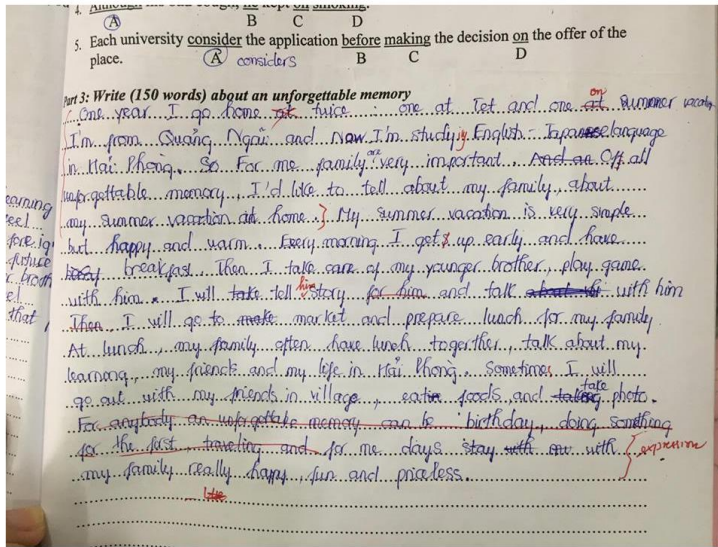
Part 3: Write (150 words) about an unforgettable memory

*An unforgettable memory I never forget is the travelling to the countryside with my best friend. We travelled by bus and train. Although it's slow and small, but I can see the perfect view of my country. We choose to go to countryside instead of go abroad because we must take a lot of luggage, passports and personal effects. In countryside, I can hear the sound of some animals living there. The air is very fresh and clean for the people who have some problems about noise like me. The water is long, blue and don't clean. I have my river pollution. The atmosphere is really clean because most of people go for a walk. The people are friendly, honest and very cute. They willing to direct for us if we lost a map. We rented 2 cycles to go around our hotel. It's a long time since we have on a bicycle. Suddenly we have problem with our cycle but it was fixed by the local people. I will come there more time if I have time.*

*Use past tense - choose to V - Problems with expressions*







30. It will be easy going for you.

**Ex 2: Rewrite the writing "Write a paragraph (150 words) about the usefulness of learning English".**

Nowadays everybody realizes that English is very important for our future. They ~~are~~ work in foreign countries. If they are good at English, they will be confident to communicate with people. They can read a lot of money in other life. And they will be a good teacher in their home and they don't need to go any more. They learn a new language. It is a difficult process to learn about people as well as their habits. If they have the dream of travelling all over the world, make sure language will not a big trouble.

*Confusing*  
*Rewrite*

**Ex 3: Identify whether each group of words is a complete sentence, fraament, o**

with foreigners better.

29. Learning English also can help you more confident.

30. It will be easy ~~going~~ for you. *to go*

**Ex 2: Rewrite the writing "Write a paragraph (150 words) about the usefulness of learning English".**

Learning English ~~have~~ has a lot of usefulness for myself. You can find a good job with a high salary. You can make a lot of friends from the other countries. You can communicate with foreigners. You can go abroad alone and you don't need any help. Learning English gives me knowlege about culture of other country. Besides, learning English asks me to hard working, studious and I think really waste of time to do it. Moreover, English certifies a se teams for me to graduate. so everybody must study English soon.

*More?*



...the horses walked slowly because it was old and wasn't strong  
8. The frog jumped and landed in the pond  
The frog jumped from the late and landed in the pond  
9. The pizza smells delicious.  
The apple pizza smells delicious and I want to eat share it for my friend  
3. Write a paragraph (150 words) about necessity of practicing English writing at home.  
I think practice English writing at home is very necessary  
Firstly, I can have good write skill when I practice English writing  
work hard. Next, My teacher will be more happy if I correct homework  
about writing sentences or paragraph, and she can teach me I write  
many good writing skills. Furthermore, I will feel confident  
when I write anything I like such as a book about traveling  
I really do it. Besides, I can also help my friend about some  
sentence if they don't know

7. Tonia kicked the back of Vincent's desk, \_\_\_\_\_, and poked his arm with her sharp pencil, but he would not bend to the side so that she could get a glimpse of his quiz answers.  
A. blew on his neck  
B. she blew on his neck  
C. blowing on his neck  
8. Carlos not only missed his one-year anniversary with Adrianna \_\_\_\_\_, but he also forgot his mother's birthday  
A. but also forgot his mother's birthday  
B. but also forgot his mother's birthday  
C. but also forgetting his mother's birthday  
Ex 5: Write a paragraph (150 words) about the usefulness of learning English  
For me, English is important and about the usefulness of learning  
I think it is useful for me first English can help me feel  
confident in communication. I will not scare when I talked to foreign  
Second, learning English help me have a good job in the future  
I will ear much money and take care of my family my younger brother  
I can also teach English free for poor children I can travel  
many country in the world and meet everybody in there that place  
that place

B. she blew on his neck  
C. blowing on his neck

8. Carlos not only missed his one-year anniversary with Adrianna \_\_\_\_\_  
A. but he also forgot his mother's birthday  
B. but also forgot his mother's birthday  
C. but also forgetting his mother's birthday

**Ex 5: Write a paragraph (150 words) about the usefulness of learning English**

English is an international language so learning English is very useful. If we learn English well, it will bring some disadvantages for us. Firstly, we can communicate influentially with the foreigners and understand about their cultures, therefore we will create good relationships in society. In addition, it is beneficial to learn English because we can find a good job in the future such as interpreter, ambassador, office worker which requires high level of English and large professional knowledge. Besides, we can earn a lot of money to spend on our cost living cost. Finally, we will assimilate into a new culture easily.

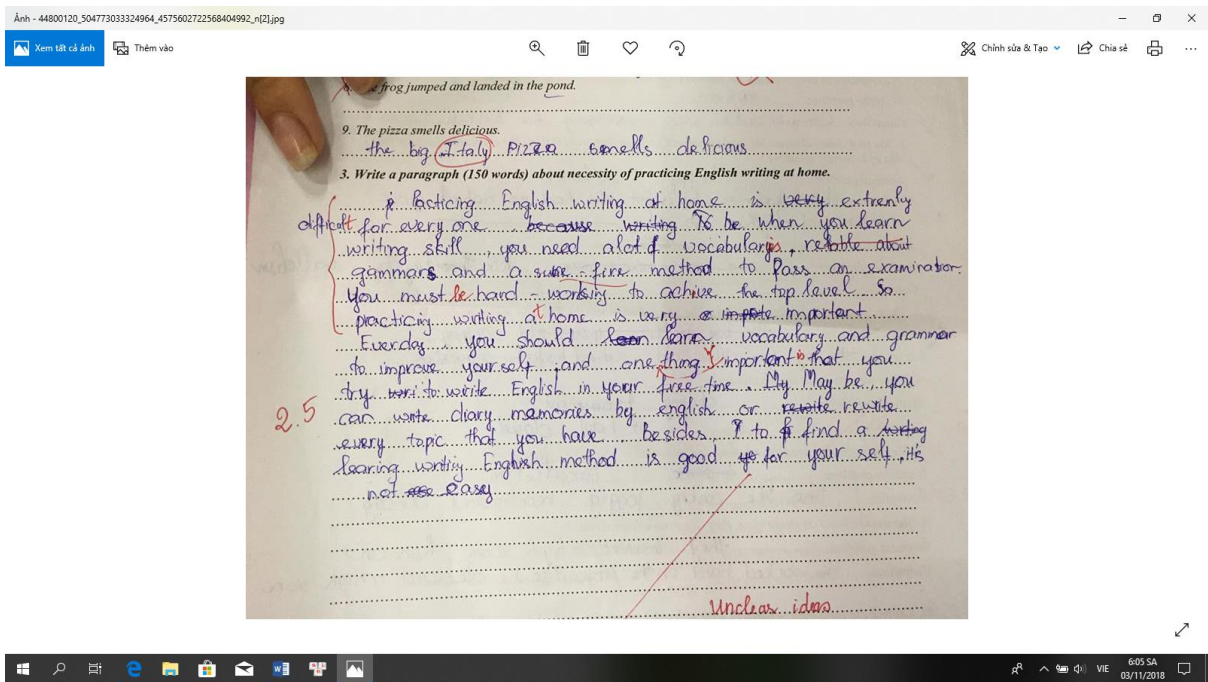
*clear ideas but some problems with expression*

5. Each university consider the application before making the decision on the offer of the place. A B C D

**Part 3: Write (150 words) about an unforgettable memory**

My unforgettable memory is <sup>the</sup> trip from Hai Phong to Cua Lo beach <sup>with my family</sup>. We went there by car. Cua Lo beach is <sup>very</sup> really beautiful. The beach is large flat and it had a lot of sand. The seafood are <sup>so</sup> delicious and fresh. In the morning, I woke up early to see sunshine. The weather <sup>there</sup> was hot and sunny all day. The sea was cool and clear, you can open eyes when you was <sup>there</sup> during. In the afternoon, we went sightseeing and took a lot of <sup>photos</sup> photographs. I bought a lot of seafood souvenirs for my relatives. If I have chance, I want come back Cua Lo beach ~~in the next time~~.





### 3. Students' mistakes collected from their writings.

#### 3.1. Students' understanding of comma and comma errors.

Times	Reason
15 mistakes	Two independent clauses are joined by connectors: and, but, so,...
6 mistakes	Don't use comma to separate the day/ the year with clauses.
3 mistakes	Don't use comma in Adverbial Phrases.

Students's understanding of comma is not good. Having a lot of mistakes about comma in their writings:

5 mistakes: Join by connectors with two independent clauses.

6 mistakes: Use comma incorrectly in separating the day/the year with clause.

3 mistakes: In Adverbial Phrases, students don't use comma.

### 3.2 Students' understanding of colon and colon errors.

Times	Reason
2 mistakes	Don't use colon in Quotations.
1 mistake	Use colon after phrase "such as".

Students still don't understand the use of colon in English writings. They don't use colon in Quotations (2 mistakes). They use colon after phrase "such as", it is not necessary in this situation (1 mistake).

### 3.3. Students' understanding of period and period errors.

Times	Reason
2 mistakes	Don't use period in statement, sentences are not completed in thought.

Students' understanding of period still use it incorrectly, when after statement sentences ( uncompleted thought), they used period in their writings (2 mistakes).