

Tip Sheet 21. English Punctuation*

Example	Sentence structure with proper punctuation
Period	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Independent clause</div> .
Semicolon	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Independent clause 1</div> ; <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">independent clause 2</div> .
Semicolon Comma	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Independent clause 1</div> ; conjunctive adverb, <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">independent clause 2</div> . ; therefore, ; however, ; nonetheless, ; consequently, ; furthermore, ; moreover,
Comma	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Independent clause 1</div> , coordinating conjunction <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">independent clause 2</div> , and , but , or , nor , yet , so , for , then
Commas	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Independent . . .</div> , appositive (nonrestrictive clause), <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">. . .clause</div> . , of course, , on the other hand,
Comma	<div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Introductory dependent clause</div> , <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">independent clause</div> . If . . . , Because . . . , Since . . . , As . . . , When . . . , While . . . , After . . . , Until . . . , Although . . . ,
Colon with commas	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Independent clause</div> : clause a, clause b, word, and word . ← a series**



Example	Sentence structure with proper punctuation						
<p>NO punctuation between clauses</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="347 149 667 212" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">Independent clause</td> <td data-bbox="667 149 1040 470" style="padding: 5px;"> subordinating conjunction if because (reason or cause) since (time) as (at the same time) when while (at the time) after until although </td> <td data-bbox="1040 138 1341 212" style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px;">dependent clause</td> </tr> </table>	Independent clause	subordinating conjunction if because (reason or cause) since (time) as (at the same time) when while (at the time) after until although	dependent clause			
Independent clause	subordinating conjunction if because (reason or cause) since (time) as (at the same time) when while (at the time) after until although	dependent clause					
<p>Quotation marks Commas Periods Question mark</p>	<p>Place quotation marks and commas as follows:</p> <p>“The Martians are coming,” he said .</p> <p>He said, “The Martians are coming.”</p> <p>“The Martians,” he said, “are coming.”</p> <p>“The Martians are coming,” he said, “Let’s go meet them.”</p> <p>Who asked if the Martians are coming?</p> <p>Who said, “The Martians are coming”?</p>						
<p>Dashes</p>	<p>In scientific writing, three types of dashes are used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - hyphen, used to connect words (black-and-white photography) (“compounding”) - en dash, used for ranges (outlets specify whether to insert spaces either side or not) 5–9 or 5 – 9. Typically the width of the font’s capital “N”. — 3-en or “em” dash, used to designate repetition of author field in bibliographic citation lists; also used in places of commas to set off the appositive—like this—clause. Typically the width of the font’s capital “M”. 						
<p>Apostrophe</p>	<p>An apostrophe denotes the possessive form of singular and plural nouns. An apostrophe in a contracted word indicates the omission of a letter or letters.</p> <p>Can’ t means can not. Ev’ ry means every. I’ m means I am. He’ s means he is.</p> <p>It’ s means it is. Its means of it as the possessive form of the pronoun it (an exception).</p> <p>Edison’ s discovery means the discovery of Edison.</p> <p>Children’ s or men’ s clothing means the clothing of children or of men.</p> <p>Cows’ horns means the horns of many cows.</p> <p>The Joneses’ mailbox means the mailbox of the many Joneses</p> <p>Jones’ mailbox means the mailbox of one Jones.</p>						
<p>Parentheses &</p>	<p>Parentheses enclose emphatic remarks or additional (relevant [but not redundant]) information.</p>						
<p>Brackets</p>	<p>“Brackets add information within a quotation [like this]” or within parentheses as above.</p>						
<p>* Adapted from “Teaching Mechanics Theory.” Oregon One: The Writing Conference. NCTE, 10/1989: 207.</p> <p>** The last comma before the coordinating conjunction in a series is very important in scientific writing; without it, an error in clarity may occur, for example:</p> <table border="0" style="margin-left: 40px;"> <tr> <td>1 and 2</td> <td>means two results</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1, 2 and 3</td> <td>means two results</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1, 2, and 3</td> <td>means three results</td> </tr> </table>		1 and 2	means two results	1, 2 and 3	means two results	1, 2, and 3	means three results
1 and 2	means two results						
1, 2 and 3	means two results						
1, 2, and 3	means three results						

