





*Speech* conveys meaning through words, phrases, gestures, voice modulation, and pauses. *Writing* conveys meaning through words, phrases, and punctuation alone. Punctuation, accordingly, must be versatile and flexible.

## Punctuation

(1st draft)

(In *speech*) meaning is conveyed (through words, phrases, gestures, voice modulation, and pauses). (In *writing*) meaning is conveyed (through words, phrases, and punctuation) alone. Punctuation, accordingly, must be versatile and flexible.

What is the voice of the first two sentences?

## Punctuation

(revised)

Speech conveys meaning (through words, phrases, gestures, voice modulation, and pauses). Writing conveys meaning (through words, phrases, and punctuation) alone. Punctuation, accordingly, must be versatile and flexible.

How is the voice now?



The Comma



With adjectives

Between independent clauses

Restrictive and non-restrictive use

With introductory material

With concluding material

Parenthetical material

Agreement of implied and real subjects

Don'ts



The Comma

Use a comma between consecutive coordinate adjectives. Don't use a comma between cumulative adjectives.

Coordinate adjectives modify a noun equally and separately:

Literature students favor long, difficult, page-turning books.



When coordinate, each adjective modifies the same noun separately and equally. The word “and” could join each adjective. They also make sense if rearranged.

Literature students favor page-turning, difficult, long books.

It was a playful, colorful noise.

She smiled at the thought of the desperate, dark acts ahead.

Some adjectives are cumulative and should not be separated with commas.

Janey smelled the earthy Brazilian coffee.

She then plunged fork into sweet cherry pie.

Did you see the five small brown rats  
taking a swim?

The room had that pungent old  
book smell.

*not:* The room had that pungent  
book old smell.

*possibly:* The room had that old  
pungent book smell.

When joining independent clauses with a coordinating conjunction -- *and, but, or, nor, yet, for, so* -- place a comma before the conjunction.

Wild April winds blew hard, and spring seemed stuck somewhere in the Carolinas.

The journey to the cafeteria took time, but time was a luxury [that Janey could ill afford].

The street was quiet as she walked that evening, yet through a curtained window she could hear Dylan sing the blues.

It seemed a perfect morning for a canoe ride, so he chose his favorite paddle and walked toward the dock.

The aurors would not surrender, nor would the dementors surrender.

Short independent clauses joined by coordinating conjunctions often drop the comma.

It was cold but it felt swell.

Janey ran and Dylan followed.

Go home and read books!

*The final sentence:*  
two indep. clauses or a double verb?

Restrictive phrases & clauses are not set off by commas; nonrestrictive are.

To emphasize or to de-emphasize -- that is the question.

Shakespeare's tragedy Hamlet is often revived in London and New York.

Macbeth, a tragedy by Shakespeare, is often dramatized on All-Hallows Eve.

Any reader, who reads too quickly, will miss the major points of the work.

George Eliot's, *Middlemarch*, is a long and perturbing book.

The Mill and the Floss by George Eliot is a work that should be read slowly.

[Which way do you want to go with the third sentence?]



The marble, that the cat hid away, was round.

Which reminds me  
of Which Hunts.



## Which Hunt?

The coffee, which was old, sat in the pot.

The coffee which was old sat in the pot.

The coffee that was old sat in the pot.

*We might reword the last example.*

The old coffee sat in the pot.

The snap peas, which were planted a week ago, are sprouting with vigor.

The heirloom variety of lettuce that cost a bundle per seed has not grown much at all.

Use a comma after introductory phrases and clauses.

Whenever I make it back home, I drive to the lake and remember.

Near the cut through the rock face, they found an old Model-T wreck.

Realizing that the end was near, she turned her head and quietly wept.

Commas are often omitted after short introductory phrases. Be sure the meaning is clear.

After dinner the children returned to the yard.

Before long the bell had rung.

In the end they made the right choice.

If concluding phrases and clauses  
are restrictive, punctuate accordingly.

I saw the garage door, unhinged and ajar.

I saw the garage door unhinged and ajar.

He has found many books, in the attic.

They all wanted to see her, on the show.

The elf took the branch, from the river.

He had a brokedown engine that  
wasn't going anywhere.

Lightening strikes surrounded the  
house, during the height of the storm.

Add sugar to the water that Delia  
asked for.

Cutty was in the jailhouse drinking  
from an old tin cup.

*It's your decision on this last sentence*

Wording that is clearly parenthetical – an aside, explanation, or afterthought – should be treated as though non-

restrictive.

The train, as far as I saw, was not moving.

The number of the house, he thought he

remembered, was 2846.

He usually arrived on time, give or take a few minutes.



The implied subject of introductory phrases needs to match the actual subject of the sentence.

Hatching a nefarious plan, the papers were plagiarized by the bad man.

A bread of moist and tasty texture, they devoured the loaf in seconds.

Do not use a comma to separate a verb from its subject or object.



Did you catch the mistake on the last slide?

It's = It is



Do not use a comma to separate a verb from its subject or object.

Looking through the text for imagery, would be a useful thing to do.

Josephine shouted loudly, [that she could not go on without Napoleon].

Don't use a comma before the first or after the last item in a series.

Members of the finny tribe, glistened, swerved, and flashed as they swam under the walking bridge.

The response by the administration was rapid, swift, and just, by some accounts.

Don't use a comma after a coordinating conjunction, after *such as* or *like*, after *although*, or before *than*.

Eowyn was a beautiful woman of Rohan and, a hard handed swordsman in battle.

Dwarves and elves have disagreed in the past such as, when both claimed the gold of Kazadhum.

Don't use a comma after a coordinating conjunction, after *such as* or *like*, after *although*, or before *than*.

Life in the middle earth was changing rapidly although, not all cared.

Frodo supposed it would be safer to travel with Sam Gamgee, than with the Gaffer.

They resigned themselves to an evening, like the evening before.

If parentheses are situated within a sentence, punctuation comes after not before.

There are many difficult questions, (and a few easy ones) on any comprehensive examination.

The orange juice was splendid, (as it so often is) but the milk had gone sour.

Take your seats, (if you please), and we will commence with the examination.





the semicolon



Semicolon  
Man and his  
sidekick  
Apostrophe.



Semicolons show grammatical equivalence. Most often they join two independent clauses without a coordinating conjunction.

Queen Elizabeth was strong willed and shrewd; her half-sister Mary boasted neither trait.

Queen Elizabeth was strong willed and shrewd; her half-sister Mary boasted neither trait.

Queen Elizabeth was strong willed and shrewd, but her half-sister Mary boasted neither trait

Use a semicolon between independent clauses joined by a conjunctive adverb or a transitional phrase.

Spelling bees were her specialty; nevertheless, she failed to spell “urbiculture” correctly.

J. M. Barrie is most famous as the author of *Peter Pan*; however, I prefer his ghost story *Farewell Miss Julie Logan*.

They browsed carefully through reference, however, no clear answer appeared.

Heroes have fallen on hard times; for instance, the men of Dale.

Life is long; the work of a scholar, however, is never done.

Use semicolons between items in a series that contain internal punctuation.

The voyagers sat contentedly: JB had swum the length of the lake; Jimmy Craig, stuck in the swamp, had extricated himself; Cappy, our leader, had caught three Pike; and Cueball, always looking for fun, had had his head shaved.



Colon







Mrs. Williams said a colon introduces a list: dogs, cats, and lizards.

Mrs. Williams had a room full of unruly children. She was going for a quick, relatively truthful, constant.

In fact, a colon introduces information that expands upon or further explains information stated before the colon.

The day was strange: flowers drooped in healthy sunshine and paint buckets would not empty.

The party came to a halt: Janey had swung for the pinata but mistakenly shattered the chandelier.

Consider the stop power of colons,  
semicolons and periods.

The party came to a halt: Janey had swung  
for the pinata but mistakenly shattered the  
chandelier.

The party came to a halt; Janey had swung for  
the pinata but mistakenly shattered the  
chandelier.

The party came to a halt. Janey had swung for  
the pinata but mistakenly shattered the  
chandelier.

Wild April winds blew hard: spring seemed stuck somewhere in the Carolinas.

Wild April winds blew hard; spring seemed stuck somewhere in the Carolinas.

Wild April winds blew hard. Spring seemed stuck somewhere in the Carolinas.



# Apostrophes

Use apostrophes to show possession.

Why the works  
of Dickens are  
read today, but  
Alexander Popes  
are not is a  
mystery to few.

Ones best  
effort  
needs to be  
put into  
revision.

Here “one’s” is  
an indefinite  
pronoun and  
needs an  
apostrophe.

# Possessive Pronouns

Beware possessive pronouns; they do not use apostrophes to show possession.

His

Hers

Theirs

Its

It's = it is

And while we are at it

# Than vs. Then

Than is a conjunction used in comparisons; then is an adverb denoting time.

## *Punctuation around Quotation marks and Proper MLA Citation*

Asked what short story she had read most frequently, she chose "A Rose for Emily".

I'd like to rework the spelling of the word "squirrel".

Don't ask "What your nation can do for you".



The song “Blind Willie McTell” begins with the following words: “Seen the arrow on the door post / sayin’ this land is condemned, / all the way from New Orleans / to Jerusalem” (Dylan 1-4).

Miss Julie Logan, near the climax of J. M. Barrie's ghost story, speaks to Adam, “Kiss me first, Adam, in case you have to drop me” (Barrie 89). Soon after that she lands in the burn.



The poem opens inauspiciously with the following lines:

My verses in Your path I lay,  
And do not deem me indiscreet,  
If I should say that surely they  
Could find no haven half so sweet  
As at Your feet.

(Graham, "Dedication" 1-5)

Not all scholars agree that the nineteenth century was the zenith of English bookbinding:

The forty years following the Restoration of King Charles II to his throne in 1660 were the golden age of English Bookbinding. The binders of London, Oxford and Cambridge were not content – as so often at other times – to imitate the latest Paris models, but were prepared to develop their own styles with newly designed tools. (Nixon 7)

## *Formal introduction to quotations*

Richard Tottel opens his *Miscellany* with a positive assertion: “That to haue wel written in verse, yea and in small parcelles, deserueth great praise, the workes of diuers Latines, Italians, and other, doe proue sufficiently.”

The introduction is an independent clause; a colon is appropriate punctuation.

*Introduction to quotations with  
“she said,” “they remarked,” etc.*

Shirley said, “Please pass the toast.”

Samuel Johnson once stated, “No man but a blockhead ever wrote, except for money.”

Shirley spoke to Sam, “Go home to your mother, mama’s boy.”

*Some quotations merge within the sentence itself. Punctuate*

The earth day organizers *accordingly* thought that the day was “a success beyond all measure.”

Let not people wonder at John, but join him in asking “not what your country can do for you,” but “what you can do for your country.”

# finally,

Please avoid incomplete sentences (aka sentence fragments).

If you were to ask me tomorrow, couldn't tell you my answer.

The water clear and chilling as I swam stroke after stroke underwater.

"In the Lenin Barracks in Barcelona, the day before I joined the militia, saw an Italian militiaman standing in front of the officers' table."

“!,:.”

G,U

Punctuation marks  
are the road signs  
to writing.

IDE

Post Well.

w/.”



[here's your free extra slide]

“I can't be good no more, once like I did  
before.

I can't be good, Baby,

Honey, because the world's gone wrong.”