

Punctuation

Comma

The *comma* is a punctuation mark used to separate information within a sentence. Commas are used to separate the following:

- Three or more items in a list
 - The recipe called for flour, eggs, and butter.
- Complete thoughts joined by a coordinating conjunction
 - I went to the park, but John stayed home.
- A dependent clause from an independent clause
 - Because it was raining, I decided not to go to the beach.
- A complete thought from its introduction
 - Without proper guidance, children are likely to misbehave.
- Non-essential information
 - The Citadel, a Halifax military landmark, has never been attacked.

Colon

A *colon* is a punctuation mark that is used after an independent clause to introduce information. It is most commonly used to introduce the following:

- Lists
 - The recipe called for the following ingredients: flour, eggs, and butter.
- Quotations
 - The academic calendar is clear on what constitutes plagiarism: “The presentation of words, ideas or techniques of another as one's own.”
- Appositives
 - I know just how to pass this test: study hard.

Semicolon

A *semicolon* is a punctuation mark used for the following purposes (and only these purposes):

- To emphasize the relationship between closely related independent clauses
 - Public transportation is vital to city life; many people take the bus to work or school.
- To separate items in complex lists
 - The family business team consists of Fred Harvey, president and father; Ruth Harvey, treasurer and mother; and Jack and John Harvey, salespeople and sons.

Semicolons should not be used in the following situations:

- To separate an independent clause from a dependent clause
- To separate introductory information in a sentence
- To start a list

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Apostrophe

The *apostrophe* is a punctuation mark used for the following purposes:

- To show possession
 - Chocolate is Sam's favorite ice cream flavor.
- To indicate letters left out of contractions
 - Sam doesn't mind vanilla ice cream.

Single Quotation Marks

Single Quotation Marks are used to do indicate following:

- Key terms or concepts
 - A 'gerund' is a verb ending with *-ing* that acts as a noun.
- A quotation within a quotation
 - "When I asked the professor how much this assignment was worth he just said 'Check the syllabus' and walked away", Jill explained.

Double Quotation Marks:

Double quotation marks are used to indicate the following:

- Speech or a quotation from a source
 - Einstein said "Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new."
- As *scare quotes* to indicate an alternate meaning than the word would normally imply
 - Politicians say that they "care" about post-secondary student debt.
- The title of a poem or a journal article, for example
 - "Ode on a Grecian Urn" is a poem by John Keats.
- In academic writing to indicate information that is from another source
 - Rosemarie Morgan argues that "Hardy does appear to have had some faith in aesthetic distance" (Morgan 297).