

# "Punctuation.



## Captain CAPITAL

Capital vs. lower-case punctuation, it matters! Here are a few tips:

1. Capitalise the first word in a sentence.
2. Capitalise proper nouns – names, dates, countries, religions, places, titles.
3. Capitalise the pronoun "I".



## "The Wandering Quotation"

Where do quotation marks go?

- Semicolons, colons and dashes always go outside quotation marks.
- Commas and full stops are always placed inside quotation marks.
- Depending on the sentence, question marks and exclamation points will either go inside or outside the quotation marks.

*"Do you understand?"*

*When did she say "I understand"?*

Single or double?

- Use 'single quotation' marks for quotes within quotes, or for titles of books, songs, TV programs, films and magazines.
- Use "double quotation" marks to show speech in written text.



## The Critical Comma

It is important that commas are used appropriately and carefully. Here are the main uses:

1. To indicate a short pause when reading, helping to ensure the sentence makes sense.
2. To divide items in a list or to separate a series of adjectives.
3. To join two sentences, through adding a conjunction and a comma. Example:

*We investigated the cost of tickets, and then we decided to go to the concert.*

4. To separate spoken words:

*"Don't walk in the puddle," instructed the teacher.*

*"Oops! I never saw it," replied the student.*



## The Possessive Apostrophe

- Apostrophes are used to show ownership or possession (e.g. *Fred's books; the school's plan*).
- With a singular possessor, the apostrophe goes before the s.
- With a plural possessor, the apostrophe goes after the s.

\*Exceptions: plural nouns not ending in s; singular nouns ending in s.

Apostrophes can also signal omitted letters (who is = who's, can not = can't).



## The Semicolon Story;

The semicolon is stronger than a comma but not as complete as a full stop.

It is most commonly used to connect two independent clauses.

*"The children had never seen Mrs. Baker so mad; everyone thought she was going to have a heart attack."*



## The Chronicles of the Colon:

Use a colon before a list, or before an explanation that elaborates on what precedes it.

Think of the colon as a gate, inviting you to go on.

*"For the excursion to the museum please bring the following: a raincoat, sunhat, recess and lunch, and a notebook and pen."*



### Homophones. They're a confusing bunch, or are they?

#### They're vs. their vs. there

- "They're" is a contraction for "they are". *They're your shoes.*
- "Their" is a possessive adjective. *I love their puppy.*
- "There" is the opposite of here. *There is my school bag.*

#### Your vs. you're

- "Your" is a pronoun. *I like your haircut.*
- "You're" is a contraction for "you are". *You're my friend.*

#### To vs. too vs. two

- "To" indicates direction. *I am going to school.*
- "Too" means as well. *My brother is coming along too.*
- "Two" is the number 2. *I have two teachers this year.*

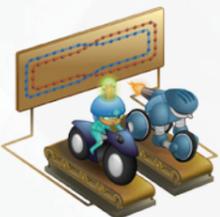


### Me, myself and I.

- Use the pronoun "me" when you are the direct object of the sentence. *"If you need help, please contact me or Natalie."*
- Use the pronoun "I" only when you are the subject of your own sentence. i.e. when the sentence is about you or you are taking action. *"I did my homework."*
- Use the pronoun "myself" when you are the direct object of your own action or you've referred to yourself earlier in the sentence. It's called a reflexive pronoun. For example: *"I made myself breakfast"* not *"My friend and myself made breakfast."*

**HINT:** In "someone else and me/I" situations, think about how you would write the sentence if you were the only one in it.

*"My co-worker and I went to lunch."* Is *"I went to lunch"* correct? Indeed! Then you know you have the correct pronoun!

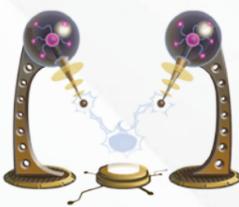


### Double Trouble!

Don't know nothing about double negatives? All the more reason to learn!

Avoid using two negatives in one sentence, or you will end up saying the opposite of what you mean. A double negative is usually produced by combining the negative form of a verb with a pronoun, adverb or conjunction.

Example: *I didn't do nothing to nobody.* The correct way is: *I didn't do anything to anybody* or *I did nothing to nobody.*



### The Importance of Editing

Editing your work makes a big difference. It is important that you always check your spelling, punctuation and word usage. Here are a few reminders:

- Check for full stops at the end of sentences.
- Only use capital letters for the start of sentences or proper nouns.
- Consider your audience. Don't be too formal or casual.

Some common errors:

- "Alot" is not a word. Correct use is "a lot", two separate words.
- Don't confuse **then** with **than**. Example: *Eat your dinner and then you can play outside. Angus is taller than Jaiden.*
- Check **brought** and **bought**. Example: *I brought my racquet for the game. I bought lunch at the shops.*
- Check **affect** and **effect**. **Affect** is a verb, **effect** is a noun.
- Check commonly misspelt words such as **weird**, **lose**, **until**, **friends**, **because**, **definitely**, **tomorrow**, **embarrass**, **which**, **were**, **who**, **already**, **off**, **of**.