

## Appendix III: Rules for Punctuation

### CAPITAL LETTERS

A capital letter is used:

- to begin a sentence.  
e.g. *There's a great film playing at the cinema.*
  - for days of the week, months and public holidays.  
e.g. *This year, Christmas Day falls on the last Sunday of December.*
  - for names of people and places.  
e.g. My best friend's name is **C**laire and she's from **C**ardiff, **W**ales.
  - for people's titles.  
e.g. *Mr and Mrs Graham; Dr Stevens; Professor Brown; etc.*
  - for nationalities and languages.  
e.g. *They are French.*  
*We love Italian cuisine.*  
*He's fluent in Portuguese and German.*
  - for the first word and/or the most important words (e.g. nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) of titles of books, films, plays, TV programmes, etc.  
e.g. *The Sixth Sense*  
*Indiana Jones and the Lost Temple*  
*Alice in Wonderland*
- Note:** The personal pronoun **I** is always a capital letter.  
e.g. *George and I are going to the funfair.*

### FULL STOP (.)

A full stop is used:

- to end a sentence that is not a question or an exclamation.
- e.g. *I'm having a wonderful time. There's so much to do here.*

### ITALICS

Italics are used:

- to show the titles of books, plays, newspapers, films, etc.  
e.g. *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*  
*Romeo and Juliet*  
*The Daily Mail*  
*Braveheart*
- to show names of hotels, restaurants, etc.  
e.g. *The Majestic Hotel*  
*Cleo's Grill House*

### COMMA (,)

A comma is used:

- to separate words in a list.  
e.g. *We need eggs, milk, cheese and butter.*
- to separate phrases or clauses.  
e.g. *He stopped walking, looked down, and realised that he was still wearing his slippers.*
- to separate long sentences linked by *and*, *but*, *as*, *or*, etc.  
e.g. *Susan had a very bad cold, but she still went to the party.*  
*Ann brought some delicious egg sandwiches, and Tim brought his famous chocolate brownies.*
- to separate a non-identifying relative clause (i.e. a clause giving extra information which is not essential to the meaning of the main clause) from the main clause.  
e.g. *Maria, who is a ballerina, lives in Paris.*  
*The local market, where you can buy exotic spices, is located on the High Street.*
- after certain linking words/phrases (e.g. *in addition to this*, *for example*, *however*, *in conclusion*, etc).  
e.g. *In addition to this, Fred is a collector of antique watches.*
- when if-clauses begin sentences.  
e.g. *If we had taken her advice, we wouldn't have got lost.*  
**Note:** No comma is used, however, when the if-clause follows the main clause.
- before and/or after expressions such as: *he/she said*, *said Tom/Mary*, etc. when reporting someone's exact words.  
e.g. *Opening the door, he said, "Wake up children, it's time to get ready for your trip."*  
*but: "I am exhausted," said the firefighter.*
- to separate question tags from the rest of the sentence.  
e.g. *Ms Jones is your history teacher, isn't she?*

### QUESTION MARK (?)

A question mark is used:

- to end a direct question.  
e.g. *How old are you?*  
**Note:** A question mark is not used to end an indirect question.  
e.g. *He asked me how old I was.*

### EXCLAMATION MARK (!)

An exclamation mark is used:

- to end an exclamatory sentence, i.e. a sentence showing admiration, surprise, joy, anger, etc.  
e.g. *That's great news!*  
*What a beautiful baby!*

## QUOTATION MARK (' ' " ")

A quotation mark is used:

- in direct speech to report the exact words someone said.  
e.g. *'My flight is leaving at 9am,' said Pamela.*  
*'Where are you from?' he asked us.*
- for quotations (i.e. phrases taken from books, plays, etc), sayings and proverbs.  
e.g. *All in all, I believe that life would be boring without music. As Robert Fripp once said, "music is just a means of creating a magical state."*  
*My grandfather used to say that 'an apple a day, keeps the doctor away.'*

## COLON (:)

A colon is used:

- to introduce a list.  
e.g. *There were four of us on the boat : my mother, my father, my cousin Jane and me.*

## SEMICOLON (;)

A semicolon is used:

- instead of a full stop, sometimes to separate main sentences when their meaning is connected.  
Semicolons are not used as frequently as full stops or commas.  
e.g. *Some teenagers find it extremely hard to choose a career; others consider it a fairly easy choice.*

## DOTS (...)

- Three dots are used to show that words have been left out from a quotation, proverb, sentence, etc.  
e.g. *As Edward Guthman once said, 'Thirty seconds on the evening news is worth a front page headline ...'*

## BRACKETS ( )

Brackets are used:

- to separate extra information from the rest of the sentence.  
e.g. *These days, you can buy popular newspapers (i.e. The New York Times, Le Monde, etc) almost anywhere in the world.*

## APOSTROPHE (')

An apostrophe is used:

- in short forms to show that one or more letters or numbers have been left out.  
e.g. *I'm (= I am) writing because I've (= I have) got great news.*  
*I left for Canada in the summer of '95. (= 1995)*
- before or after the possessive -s to show ownership or the relationship between people.  
e.g. *Tom's bicycle, my sister's son (singular noun + 's)*  
*my parents' car (plural noun + ')*  
*women's shoes (Irregular plural + 's)*

**Study the examples:**

e.g. *Look at that peacock! Aren't its feathers beautiful?*  
(its = possessive adjective)

**but:** *It's (= it is) a beautiful day, isn't it?*

*Our school is very big. It's got (= it has got) three floors and a huge gymnasium.*

- to form the plurals of letters, numbers or abbreviations.  
e.g. *She often writes j's instead of g's.*  
*Package holidays became extremely popular in the 1980's.*  
*UNICEF's efforts to raise money for children living in developing countries have been extremely successful.*

## HYPHEN (-)

A hyphen is used:

- to form a compound word.  
e.g. *kind-hearted; ten-year-old boy; seventy-nine; tape-recording; well-dressed; water-ski; etc.*

## DASH (—)

A dash is used:

- in informal English, the same way as a colon or semicolon.  
e.g. *There are three things I couldn't imagine living without — my best friend, a good book and my dog.*
- to introduce something that you thought of or added later, or something surprising, unexpected, etc.  
e.g. *They're closing down the old library — at least that's what I've heard.*