

Punctuation and Grammar Guide

This punctuation and grammar guide is designed to help with your written work in college.

Punctuation

Full Stop

.

- To mark the end of a sentence.

Example

Punctuation is quite simple.

- To signify an abbreviation.

Example

B.B.C. stands for British Broadcasting Corporation.

Comma

,

- To show a slight pause in a sentence.

Example

She's not in, is she?

- To mark different items on a list.

Example

I need to buy bread, milk, eggs and butter.

- To separate clauses ('parts') of a sentence.

Example

Next Friday, which happens to be my birthday, is the only day I am available.

Apostrophe

’

- To indicate possession.

Example

The boy's coat fits well. (If there is one boy.)

The boys' coats fit well. (If there are lots of boys.)

- To indicate a contraction when one or more letters are omitted.

Example

There aren't enough hours in the day to finish my homework.

Question Mark

?

- To show a direct question.

Example

Do you understand the rules of punctuation?

- To show something is uncertain.

Example

This assignment is due next term?

Exclamation Mark

!

- To show surprise, shock or dismay.

Example

What a wonderful surprise!

- To show strong emotion.

Example

I love that!

Semi Colon

;

- To join two complete sentences into a single one when the two are closely related.

Example

I wanted to make my speech short; however, there was so much to cover.

- To separate items on a list when one or more items contain a comma.

Example

I have been to Newcastle and York in the north; Cardiff and Bristol in the South; and Lincoln in the East.

Colon

:

- To introduce a list.

Example

There are four nations in the UK: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

- To indicate that what follows is an explanation or elaboration of what precedes it.

Example

The aeroplane landed safely on the runway before the big sign: Welcome to Cyprus.

Dash

—

- To use in pairs to separate interruption from the rest of the sentence.

Example

All students want to pass their course — some achieve it — some don't.

- To add emphasis or drama.

Example

I passed the test — even though I didn't revise enough — but I passed!

Hyphen

—

- To indicate that a long word has been broken off at the end of a line.

Example

The course definit-
ely involves writing.

- To join words that are ambiguous or excessively long.

Example

There are black_cabs everywhere in London.

Quotation Marks

“ ”

- To enclose a direct quotation.

Example

Hamlet's most famous speech begins: “To be or not to be.”

Grammar

The term word class refers to the category a word fits into. Words are categorised partially according to what functions they perform, changes they can undergo, and places they can occupy within sentences.

There are EIGHT word classes into which words can be placed:
Noun, Verb, Adjective, Adverb, Pronoun, Preposition, Conjunction and Determiner.

Nouns

- Nouns are words which are the name of a person, place or object.

There are four types of noun:

1. **Proper nouns:** Names of people or places that begin with capital letters.

Examples

Cardiff, John, Tesco.

2. **Common nouns:** Everyday objects that don't begin with capital letters.

Examples

table, pen, book.

3. **Collective nouns:** Single words that express plural concepts.

Examples

team, gaggle, herd.

4. **Abstract nouns:** words for intangible concepts and feelings.

Examples

love, pride, guilt.

Verbs (V)

- Verbs express an action or state of being.

Examples

Go, eat, walk, swim.

Verbs change according to tense, person, and number:

1. **Tense** means that the verb 'to go', changes from 'I go' to 'I went' when the tense changes from present to past.
2. **Person** means it also changes from 'you go' to 'she goes' when changed from the second to the third person.
3. **Number** means it changes from 'he goes' to 'they go' when the number changes from singular to plural.

Adjectives (Aj)

- Adjectives are 'describing words' or modify nouns and pronouns.

Examples

hot, beautiful, happy.

Sentence Examples

The weather was **hot** last week.

The scenery was **beautiful**.

I feel **happy** studying this course.

Adverbs (Av)

- Adverbs are used to modify verbs, adjectives and other adverbs and are often formed by adding 'ly' onto adjectives:

Examples

- Sad+ly = sadly
- Legal+ly = legally
- Safe +ly = safely

Pronouns (Pn)

- Pronouns are words which stand for nouns, nouns phrases, or an aspect of a situation. There are several types of pronoun:

1. Personal - I, her, them
2. Possessive - my, hers, theirs
3. Reflexive - himself, yourself
4. Relative - which, who, that
5. Demonstrative - this, that

Prepositions (P)

- Prepositions show the special relationship between things or people.

Example

She was in a stupor under the table at the far side of the room.

Conjunctions (Conj)

- Conjunctions join single words, phrases or sentences. There are two types of conjunction:

1. **Coordinating:** Linking words

Examples

- And, but.
- *My class was cancelled **but** I stayed in college anyway.*

2. **Subordinating:** Show some relationship between words or phrases and can show time, place, reason or condition:

Examples

- So, after, because.
- *It rained **so** I went home.*

Determiners (Det)

- Determiners express the definiteness and number of nouns and noun phrases.

Examples

- A, some, those, each, that, which.
- **The** 'Big Apple.'
- **An** apple.

For further information and assistance with punctuation and grammar, please visit the Campus L&N support sessions (See notices/website for locations and times).