

## ONE WORD SUBSTITUTIONS, SPELLING, PUNCTUATION AND JUMBLED WORD

### ONE WORD SUBSTITUTION

'One Word Substitution' as the phrase indicates itself is the word that replaces group of words or a full sentence effectively without creating any kind of ambiguity in the meaning of the sentences. Like the word- Autobiography, can be used in place of the sentence 'The life story of a man written by himself. It is very important to write precisely and speak in a single word.

Generally, we speak or write in a garrulous way. But, it is seen that precise words are always understood easily by all. At times we become verbose which is not required and we are required to talk or speak precisely. This not only makes the language easily comprehensible but also makes it beautiful. The other way, we can say that these words are used to bring an effect of compression in any kind of writing. In English language there are a lot of single words for a group of words that can be used effectively to make the writing to the point, that too without losing the meaning of the context.

### SPELLING

There are some tricky English words, like necessary, Mediterranean, or rhythm whose spelling you just have to learn. But plenty of others do follow special rules. Here are some straightforward guidelines to help you with the spelling of everyday words:

### PLURALS OF NOUNS

Most nouns make their plurals by simply adding -s to the end (e.g., cat/cats, book/books, journey/journeys). Some do change their endings, though.

Nouns ending in -y

If the noun ends with a consonant plus -y, make the plural by changing -y to -ies:

Singular	Plural
berry	berries
activity	activities
da is y	da is ies

If the noun ends with -ch, -s, -sh, -x, or -z, adds -es to form the plural.

Singular	Plural
church	churches
bus	buses
fox	foxes

There's one exception to this rule. If the -ch ending is pronounced with a 'k' sound, you add -s rather than -es:

Singular	Plural
stomach	stomachs
epoch	epochs

Nouns ending in -for – fe

With nouns that end in a consonant or a single vowel plus -/or -fe, change the -/or -fe to -ves:

Singular	Plural
Knife	knives
Half	halves
Scarf	scarves

Nouns which end in two vowels plus -/usually form plurals in the normal way, with

<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
chief	chiefs
spoof	spoofs

Nouns ending in – o

Nouns ending in -o can add either -s or -es in the plural, and some can be spelled either way. As a general rule, most nouns ending in -o add -s to make the plural:

<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
Solo	solos
Zero	zeros
Avocado	avocados

Those which have a vowel before the final -o always just add -s:

<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
studio	studios
Zoo	zoos
embryo	embryos

Here's a list of the most common nouns ending in -o that are always spelled with –es in the plural:

<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
buffalo	buffaloes
domino	dominoes
Echo	echoes
embargo	embargoes
Hero	heroes
mosquito	mosquitoes
potato	potatoes
tomato	tomatoes
torpedo	torpedoes
Veto	veto

Here are some of the common nouns ending in -o that can be spelled with either -s or –es in the plural:

<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
banjo	banjos or bajoes
cargo	cargos or cargoes
flamingo	flamingos or flamingoes
fresco	frescos or frescoes
ghetto	ghettos or ghettoes
Halo	halos or haloes
mango	mangos or mangoes
memento	mementos or mementoes
motto	mottos or mottoes
tornado	tornados or tornadoes
tuxedo	tuxedos or tuxadoes
volcano	volcanos or volcanoes

## PLURALS OF FOREIGN NOUNS

The plurals of words which have come into English from a foreign language such as Latin or Greek often have two possible spellings: the foreign plural spelling and an English one. For example, you can spell the plural of aquarium (from Latin) as either aquaria (the Latin plural) or aquariums (the English plural).

### Words of Latin Origin

Here's a list of some words that came into English from Latin which can form their plurals in two ways:

Word	Latin Plural	English Plural
antenna	antennae	antennas
appendix	appendices	appendixes
cactus	cacti	cactuses
curriculum	curricula	curriculum
formula	formulae	formulas
index	indices	indexes
millennium	millennia	millenniums
referendum	referenda	referendums
stadium	stadia	stadiums
terminus	termini	terminuses
thesaurus	thesauri	thesauruses
vortex	vortices	vortexes

Note that there are a few nouns which have come into English from Latin which should always form their plural in the Latin way. Most of these are scientific or technical terms. The most common ones are:

Singular	Plural
Alga	algae
Alumnus	alumni
Larva	larvae

Remember, that the plural form of octopus should always be octopuses and never octopi. This is because the word came into English from Greek, not Latin, and so the usual rules for Latin plurals don't apply.

### Words of Greek Origin

Nouns which end in -is usually come from Greek. Their plurals are made by changing the -is to -es:

Singular	Plural
crisis	crises
analysis	analyses
Neurosis	neuroses

### Words of French Origin

Certain words which have come into English from French have two possible plural forms: the original French plural and an English one. These words end in the letters -eau, for example:

Word	French Plural	English Plural
bureau	bureaux	Bureaus
chateau	chateaux	Chateaus
gateau	gateaux	Gateaus
trousseau	trousseaux	Trousseaus

### Words of Italian Origin

Most words which have come into English from Italian form their plurals with an -s, as if they were English words. For example, the Italian plural of cappuccino is cappuccino, but when the word is used in English, its plural form is cappuccinos. Here are some more examples:

Word	Italian Plural	English Plural
espresso	espressi	espressos
pizza	pizze	pizzas
risotto	risotti	risottos
fresco	freschi	frescos or frescoes

Most people know the spelling rule about i before e except after c, as in the following words:

-ie-	-ei-
achieve	ceiling
belief	conceit
believe	deceit
chief	deceive
piece	perceive
Thief	Receipt
yield	receive

The rule only applies when the sound represented is 'ee', though. It doesn't apply to words like science or efficient, in which the -ie- combination does follow the letter c but isn't pronounced 'ee'.

Neither does the rule apply to any word without the ee sound, even when there is no c involved. For example:

-ei- (not pronounced ee)

Beige

Feign

Foreign

Forfeit

Height

Neighbour

Vein

Weight

There are a few exceptions to the general i before e rule, even when the sound is 'ee'. Examples include seize, weird, and caffeine. There's nothing for it but to learn how to spell these words, checking in a dictionary until you are sure about them.

### Words Containing the Letter q

In the spelling of English words, the letter q is always followed by the vowel u, for example:

- queue
- quiz
- acquaintance
- squash
- frequent
- tranquil

Forming comparative and superlative adjectives

The comparative form of an adjective is used for comparing two people or things (e.g., he is taller than me), while the superlative is used for comparing one person or thing with every other member of their group (e.g., he was the tallest boy in the class).

Adjectives make their comparative and superlative forms in different ways, depending on the base adjective itself. Here's a quick reference guide to the spelling of comparative and superlative adjectives:

Adjectives with One Syllable

In general, if the adjective has one syllable, then the letters -er or -est are added:

warm	warmer	warmest
quick	quicker	quickest
Tall	taller	tallest

**Adjectives with one syllable ending in e**

If the adjective has one syllable and ends in a silent e, drop the e and add -er or -est:

Late	later	latest
Nice	nicer	nicest
large	larger	largest

**Adjectives with two syllables**

Adjectives with two syllables vary. Some add -er /-est'.

feeble	feebler	feeblest
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Some use the words 'more' for the comparative and 'most' for the superlative:

famous	more famous	most famous
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Many can do either, like clever.

clever	cleverer/more clever	cleverest/most clever
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**Adjectives with three syllables or more**

If the adjective has three syllables or more, then the words 'more' and 'most' are used:

interesting	more interesting	most interesting
attractive	more attractive	most attractive

**Adjectives that change their spelling**

Some adjectives change their spelling when forming the comparative and superlative:

Some one-syllable adjectives that end with a single consonant (e.g., big, wet, sad, fat) double this consonant before adding -er or -est:

Big	bigger	Biggest
Wet	wetter	Wettest
Sad	sadder	saddest

If the adjective ends in y (e.g., happy, greedy, or tidy), change the y to an i and add -er or - est:

happy	happier	happiest
greedy	greedier	greediest
Tidy	tidier	tidiest

Some common adjectives have irregular comparative and superlative forms that you just have to learn (most dictionaries also give these spellings if you're not sure):

Bad	worse	worst
Good	better	best
little(of a quantity)	less	least
much	more	most

**Forming Adverbs**

Many adverbs are formed from adjectives and end in -ly. Here are some tips to help you form adverbs and spell them correctly:

The basic rule is that -ly is added to the end of the adjective:

Adjective	Adverb
Quick	quickly
Sudden	suddenly
straightforward	straightforwardly

If the adjective has two syllables and ends in -y, then you need to replace the final -y with -ily:

Adjective	Adverb
happy	happily
hungry	hungrily
Lazy	Lazily

If the adjective ends with a consonant followed by -le, replace the final -e with -y on its own:

Adjective	Adverb
Terrible	Terribly
Comfortable	comfortably
Incredible	Incredibly

Adjectives that end in -ly, such as friendly or lively, can't be made into adverbs by adding -ly. You have to use a different form of words, e.g., 'in a friendly way' or 'in a lively way' instead.

### Adding -ful or -fully

The suffix -ml can form nouns or adjectives, like plateful or cheerful. People sometimes make the mistake of spelling this type of word with a double / at the end. Note that it's always spelled with just one -/:

dreadful, faithful, skilful, powerful, cupful, mouthful, spoonfuls

The related ending -fully forms adverbs. Remember that this suffix is always spelled with two l's:

dreadfully, faithfully, skilfully, and powerfully

### -ize, -ise, or -yse?

Many verbs that end in -ize can also end in -ise: both endings are correct in British English, though you should stick to one or the other within a piece of writing. For example: finalize/finalise; organize/organise, realize/realise.

But there is a small set of verbs that must always be spelled with -ise at the end and never with -ize. The main reason for this is that, in these words, -ise is part of a longer word element rather than being a separate ending in its own right. For example: -cise (meaning 'cutting') in the word excise; -prise (meaning 'taking') as in surprise; or -mise (meaning 'sending') as in promise. Here are the most common ones:

advertise	compromise	exercise	revise
advise	despise	improvise	supervise
apprise	devise	incise	Surmise
chastise	disguise	Prise (meaning 'open')	surprise
comprise	excise	Promise	televise

There are also a few verbs which always end in -yse in British English.

Analyse	Catalyse	electrolyse	Paralyse
breathalyse	Dialyse	hydrolyse	psychoanalyse

### Adding endings to words that end in -our

In British English, when you add the endings -ous, -ious, -ary, -ation, -ific, -ize, or -ise to a noun that ends in -our, you need to change the -our to -or. For example:

humour	Humorous
Glamour	Glamorous

labour	Laborious
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But when you add other endings, the -our spelling stays the same:

colour	colourful
favour	favourite
odour	odourless

### Adding endings to words that end in -y

When adding endings to words that end with a consonant plus -y, change the final y to i (unless the ending in question, such as -ish, already begins with an i).

**For example:**

pretty: prettier, prettiest

ready: readily

beauty: beautiful

dry: dryish

This rule also applies when adding the -s, -ed, and -ing endings to verbs ending in -y:

- defy: defies, defying, defied
- apply: applies, applying, applied

Adding endings to words that end in a double 'l'

You need to drop the final l from words that end with a double l before adding endings that begin with a consonant (e.g. -ment, -ful, and -ly):

install	instalment
Skill	Skilful
Chill	chilly

The ending -ness is an exception to this rule:

small	smallness
Ill	illness

### Verb tenses: adding -ed and -ing

The basic form of a verb is called the infinitive. It normally occurs with the word to as in 'I was to ask you a question.' verbs may change their spelling according to which tense is being used.

The past tense refers to things that happened in the past. To make the past tense of regular verbs, the ending -ed is added to the infinitive ('I asked her a question'). The present participle refers to things that are still happening. To make the present participle, the ending -ing is added to the infinitive ('I am asking her a question'). Often there's no need to make any other spelling changes when you add -ed and -ing to the infinitive but there are some cases when it's necessary to do so. Here are some rules to help you get it right:

### Verbs ending with a silent e

If the verb ends with an e that isn't pronounced (as in bake or smile), then you need to drop this final -e before adding -ed and -ing:

Verb	Past Tense	Present Participle
Bake	Baked	baking
smile	smiled	smiling

Verbs ending in -ee, -ye and -oe (such as free, dye, and tiptoe) do not drop the final -e when adding -ing:

Verb	Past Time	Present Participle
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Free	Freed	freeing
Dye	Dyed	dyeing
tiptoe	tiptoed	tiptoeing

A few verbs keep the final –e when adding –ing to distinguish them from similar words. For example, singe becomes singeing rather than singing (which is the present participle of sing).

If the verb ends with a vowel plus-l (as in travel or equal), then you need to double the l before adding –ed and –ing in British English:

Verb	Past Tense	Present Participle
travel	travelled	travelling
distil	distilled	distilling
equal	equalled	equalling

Verbs ending with a single vowel plus a consonant

If the verb ends with a single vowel plus a consonant, and the stress is at the end of the word (e.g., refer), then you need to double the final consonant before adding -ed and -ing:

Verb	Past Tense	Present Participle
admit	admitted	admitting
commit	committed	committing
refer	referred	referring

If the verb ends with a vowel plus a consonant and the stress is not at the end of the word, you don't need to double the final consonant when adding -ed and -ing'.

Verb	Past Tense	Present Participle
inherit	inherited	inheriting
Target	targeted	targeting
Visit	visited	visiting

If the verb has only one syllable and ends with a single vowel plus a consonant (e.g., stop), then y final consonant before adding -ed and -ing:

Verb	Past Tense	Present Participle
Stop	stopped	Stopping
Tap	tapped	tapping
Sob	sobbed	Sobbing

Verbs ending with two vowels plus a consonant

If the verb ends in –c (e.g. panic), you need to add a-k before adding –ed and –ing, and also –er.

Verb	Past Tense	Present Participle	Related Noun
picnic	picnicked	picnicking	picnicker
mimic	mimicked	mimicking	mimicker
traffic	trafficked	trafficking	trafficker

### Words ending in –able or –ible

These are ending are found in adjectives that usually mean ‘able to be....’

**available:** able to be used or obtained

**audible:** able to be heard  
**breakable:** able to be broken  
**visible:** able to be seen

### Words ending in -able

As a general rule, there are lots more adjectives ending in -able, but here are some tips to help you make the right choice:

When a word ends in -able, the main part of the word (i.e., the bit that comes before the -able ending) is usually a complete word in itself. For example: bearable (from bear), readable, (from read), and acceptable (from accept). This is also true when the base word ends in an e that's dropped before the -able ending is added (e.g., advise; advisable or inflate', inflatable) or where it ends in a consonant that's doubled when the ending is added (e.g., forget; forgettable or regret; regrettable).

If the main part of the word ends with a 'hard' c (pronounced like the c in cab) or a 'hard' g (pronounced like the g in game) then the ending is always -able. For example, navigable or amicable. Here are some common words that end in -able:

likeable; peaceable; debatable; pleasurable; adaptable; inimitable; capable; adorable; desirable; justifiable; preferable; disposable; knowledgeable; amiable; durable; laughable; fashionable; reliable; excitable; lovable; believable; excusable; manageable; serviceable; measurable; sizeable; noticeable; suitable; changeable; tolerable; objectionable; comfortable; payable; impressionable; conceivable; operable; transferable.

### Words ending in -ible

When a word ends in -ible, it's less likely that the part before the ending will be a recognizable English word. Take permissible or audible, for example: 'permiss' and 'aud' are not English words.

This is only a guideline and there are exceptions to the general principle. For example, accessible and collapsible both end in -ible even though they are formed from the recognizable words access and collapse.

Here are some common words ending in -ible: illegible; responsible; eligible; incredible; reversible; invincible; suggestible; contemptible; feasible; negligible; susceptible; convertible; flexible; ostensible; tangible; gullible; terrible; horrible; plausible.

### Nouns ending in -acy and -asy

The ending -acy is much more common than -asy. Here are some of the most familiar nouns ending in -acy: accuracy; conspiracy; intimacy; piracy; legacy; intricacy; primacy; adequacy; delicacy; legitimacy; aristocracy; pharmacy; privacy; democracy; lunacy; bureaucracy; literacy; supremacy; fallacy; numeracy; obstinacy; immediacy.

There are only four nouns in Standard English which end in -asy. It's best just to remember these: apostasy; ecstasy; fantasy; idiosyncrasy.

### Words ending in -ance and -ence

These two endings are both used to make nouns from verbs (e.g., performance from perform) or nouns from adjectives (e.g., intelligence from intelligent).

### Words ending in -ance

If the word is formed from a verb that ends in -y, -ure, or -ear, then the ending will be spelled -ance. For example, alliance (from ally), endurance (from endure), or appearance (from appear)

If the main part of the word (i.e., the bit before the ending) ends in a 'hard' c (pronounced like the c in cab) or a 'hard' g (pronounced like the g in game), then the ending will be spelled -ance. For example: elegance or significance. If the noun is related to a verb ending in -ate, then the ending is likely to be -ance, e.g. tolerance (from tolerate)

Here are some common nouns ending in -ance:

clearance; guidance; acceptance; relevance; ignorance; importance; resemblance; instance; allowance; insurance; distance; substance; maintenance; appliance; disturbance; assistance; nuisance; balance; fragrance; circumstance; grievance; dominance; attendance.

### Words ending in -ence

If the word is formed from a verb ending in -ere, then the ending will be spelled -ence. For example: reverence (from revere), adherence (from adhere), or coherence (from cohere).

Note that the word perseverance is an exception to this rule!

If the main part of the word ends in a soft c (pronounced like the c in cell) or a soft g (pronounced like the g in gin), then the ending will be -ence.

**For example:** adolescence or emergence.

Note that the word vengeance is an exception to this rule!

Here are some common nouns ending in -ence'.

consequence; absence; convenience; preference; influence; presence; innocence; difference; recurrence; audience; reference; essence; evidence; affluence; insistence; sentence; coincidence; sequence; existence; silence; conference; experience; patience; confidence.

### Words ending in -ant and -ent

These endings are used to form nouns (such as deodorant or adolescent) or adjectives (such as arrogant and convenient). Similar rules apply to these words as to words ending in -ance and -ence, or -ancy and -ency.

Here are some common nouns and adjectives ending in -ant'.

abundant; contestant; defiant; ignorant; relevant; radiant; assistant; consultant; fragrant; pleasant; hesitant; observant; important; distant; attendant; instant; dominant; redundant; brilliant; elegant; tolerant; expectant; significant; reluctant; vigilant; applicant.

These are some common words ending in -ent'.

different; present; innocent; prominent; efficient; eloquent; insolent; recent; lenient; prudent; intelligent; eminent; resident; evident; confident; silent; consistent; sufficient; continent; patient; imminent; competent; recurrent; transient; permanent; persistent; incident.

### Words to watch

One or two words can end in both -ant or -ent. They are both nouns and adjectives and the spelling depends on their part of speech. The main examples are:

Noun	Adjective
dependant or dependent	dependent
pendant	Pendant or pendent

Remember that independent is always spelled with -ent at the end, whether it is being used as an adjective or a noun.

### Words ending in -ary, -ory, and -ery

It can be difficult to know which of these endings is correct. Here are a few general tips:

#### Words ending in -ary

Words ending in -ary can be nouns (e.g. boundary, anniversary), adjectives (e.g. ordinary, customary), or both (e.g., contemporary, subsidiary).

If the part of the word before the ending isn't a recognizable English word in itself, then it's often (but not always!) the case that the ending will be -ary (e.g., vocabulary, library).

Here are some common words that end in -ary:

disciplinary; dictionary; solitary; extraordinary; adversary; secretary; stationary; necessary; beneficiary; summary; temporary; commentary; voluntary; imaginary; honorary; visionary, complimentary; secondary.

#### Words ending in -ory

Words ending in -ory can be nouns (e.g., category, lavatory) or adjectives (e.g., derogatory, satisfactory).

They're sometimes related to nouns ending in -or.

**For example:** contributory (from contributor) and rectory (from rector).

Many words ending in -ory are related to English words ending in -ion.

For example: introductory (from introduction) and preparatory (from preparation).

Here are some common words that end in -ory:

accessory; advisory; inventory; laboratory; directory; mandatory; sensory; contradictory; explanatory; memory; factory; territory; history; victory; predatory; theory.

### Words ending in -ery

Words ending in -ery are nearly always nouns and they're often related to words ending in -er. For example: brewery (from brewer) and machinery (from machine).

There are some adjectives that end in -ery, and they are also mostly based on words that end in -er (e.g. blustery, shivery).

If the part of the word before the ending is a recognizable English word in itself, then it's often (but not always!) the case that the ending will be -ery.

**For example:** mockery (from mock) and trickery (from trick). This is also true when the base word ends in an e that's dropped before the -ery ending is added (e.g., brave, bravery or forge; forgery) or where it ends in a consonant that's doubled when the ending is added (e.g., distil', distillery or rob', robbery).

Here are some common words ending in -ery:

gallery; nursery; slippery; jewellery; crockery; lottery; pottery; recovery; cutlery; bakery; delivery; discovery; scenery; battery; misery; flattery; stationery; surgery; monastery.

### Words ending in -efy and -ify

Most verbs of this type end with -ify. Some of the most familiar are listed here:

rectify; intensify; justify; beautify; certify; modify; signify; clarify; simplify; classify; falsify; notify; specify; pacify; glorify; purify; qualify; identify; terrify; verify.

There are only four common verbs that end in -efy:

liquefy; putrefy; rarefy; stupefy.

fore- or for-?

If you're wondering whether to spell a word with for- or fore-, it's helpful to think about the meaning of the word you have in mind.

### Words beginning with for

for- is generally added to words to convey the meaning of banning', 'neglecting', 'doing without', or 'giving up'.

**For example:**

forbid = 'refuse to allow'

forbear = 'stop yourself from doing something'

forfeit = 'give something up'

for- is much less common than fore-.

Here are some common words that begin with for:

forgive; forgiveness; forlorn; forget; forgetful; forsake; forgo.

### Words beginning with fore

fore- is used when the meaning is 'before', 'in advance', or 'in front of'. It's used to form words such as forecourt (= an open area in front of a building) or forecast (= say what will or might happen in the future).

There are far more words beginning with fore- than those beginning with/or-.

Here are some of the most common:

forefront; foresight; forearm; foreman; foregone; forestall; forerunner; forehead; foretell; foresee; forefather; forewarn; forefinger.

There are some words beginning with for- and fore- that sound identical when they're spoken and this can understandably cause confusion.

For example, to forbear means to 'stop yourself from doing something' while a forebear is an ancestor. If you're in any doubt about which spelling to use, always check in a dictionary.

### Words ending in -ious and -eous

Both of these endings are used to form adjectives (e.g., cautious or hideous). Words ending with -ious are far more common than those ending in -eous, but unfortunately there are no set rules which can help you choose the correct one.

Here are some common adjectives ending in -ious: ambitious; previous; curious; anxious; delicious; rebellious; religious; serious; envious; superstitious; notorious; glorious; conscious; various; obvious; victorious.

And here are some of the most important ones that end in -eous'.

gorgeous; nauseous; courteous; erroneous; courteous; simultaneous; miscellaneous; spontaneous.

There is also a small group of adjectives that take the spelling -eous when the ending -ous is added. This is because the word they are formed from ends in -ge and keeps the final -eso as to be pronounced with a soft 'ge' sound.

The most important of these are:

- advantageous, from advantage
- courageous, from courage
- outrageous, from outrage

### **Words ending in -sion, -tion, and -don**

These endings are part of many everyday English nouns but people often have problems with their spelling. Here are some guidelines to help you choose the right one:

#### **Words ending in -sion**

- If the ending is pronounced as in confusion, then it should be spelled -sion. Here are some examples:
- collision; division; revision; persuasion; explosion; decision.
- When the ending comes after an -/, it's always spelled -sion'.
- compulsion; revulsion; expulsion; propulsion.
- When the ending follows an -n or -r, it's often spelled -sion, especially if the word is related to one that ends in -d or -se.
- For example: immersion (from immerse), comprehension (from comprehend).
- Here are some more examples: conversion, apprehension, diversion, extension, version.
- Nouns based on words that end in -ss or -mil always end in -sion: permission comes from permit and discussion comes from discuss
- Here are some more examples: commission; expression; aggression; admission; succession; impressions- emission.

#### **Words ending in -tion**

- If the ending is pronounced as in station, then it's spelled -tion.
- For example: addition; duration; nation; solution; ambition; edition; caution; position.
- If the noun is related to a word ending in -ate, then the ending will be -ation, e.g. donation (from donate) or vacation (from vacate).
- Here are some more examples: accommodation; location; creation; rotation; education; mediation.
- If the ending comes after any consonant apart from -, -n, or -r, then the ending is spelled -tion:
- action; connection; reception; affection; interruption; description; collection; infection; deception.
- After -n and -r, the ending can be -tion or -sion. It's more likely to be -tion if the word's related to another one that ends in -t or -tain, e.g. assertion (from assert) or retention (from retain).
- Here are some more examples: exertion; distortion; abstention; invention.

#### **Words ending in -cion**

There are just two common nouns that end in -cion', suspicion and coercion.

### **Using Capital Letters**

You should always use a capital letter in the following situations:

- In the names of people, places, or related words
- Use a capital letter when you are writing the names of people, places, and words relating to them:
- Africa            African
- Buddha            Buddhism
- Shakespeare    Shakespearean
- At the beginning of a sentence
- Use a capital letter at the beginning of a sentence:

The museum has huge potential. It will be a great boost to the area and we are really excited about it.

In the titles of books, films, organizations, etc. Use a capital letter in the titles of books and other publications, films, organizations, special days, etc. In such cases, you need a capital letter for all the main words but not for the connecting words such as —a, an, the, or, and, etc.:

Pride and Prejudice

Christmas Day  
the Houses of Parliament.

In abbreviations

If you're using the first letter of the abbreviated words, every letter should be a capital, e.g.:

BBC (**B**ritish **B**roadcasting **C**orporation)

USA (**U**nited **S**tates of **A**merica)

MP (**M**ember of **P**arliament)

People often don't use capital letters when they're writing emails or other informal messages, but it's important to use them in formal writing.

## PUNCTUATION RULES PERIODS

**Rule 1.** Use a period at the end of a complete sentence that is a statement.

Example: I know him well.

**Rule 2.** If the last item in the sentence is an abbreviation that ends in a period, do not follow it with another period.

Incorrect: This is Vikram Raj, M.D.

Correct: This is Vikram, M.D.

Correct: Please shop, cook, etc. We will do the laundry.

**Rule 3.** Question marks and exclamation points replace and eliminate periods at the end of a sentence.

### COMMAS

Commas and periods are the most frequently used punctuation marks. Commas customarily indicate a brief pause; they're not as final as periods.

**Rule 1.** Use commas to separate words and word groups in a simple series of three or more items.

Example: My estate goes to my husband, son, daughter-in-law, and nephew.

**Rule 2.** Use a comma to separate two adjectives when the adjectives are interchangeable.

Example: He is a strong, healthy man.

We could also say healthy, strong man.

Example: We stayed at an expensive summer resort.

We would not say summer expensive resort, so no comma.

**Rule 3a.** Many inexperienced writers run two independent clauses together by using a comma instead of a period. This results in the dreaded run-on sentence or, more technically, a comma splice.

Incorrect: He walked all the way home, he shut the door.

There are several simple remedies:

Correct: He walked all the way home. He shut the door.

Correct: After he walked all the way home, he shut the door.

Correct: He walked all the way home, and he shut the door.

**Rule 3b.** In sentences where two independent clauses are joined by connectors such as and, or, but, etc., put a comma at the end of the first clause.

Incorrect: He walked all the way home and he shut the door.

Correct: He walked all the way home, and he shut the door.

Some writers omit the comma if the clauses are both quite short:

Example: I paint and he writes.

**Rule 3c.** If the subject does not appear in front of the second verb, a comma is generally unnecessary.

Example: He thought quickly but still did not answer correctly.

**Rule 4a.** Use a comma after certain words that introduce a sentence, such as well, yes, why, hello, hey, etc.

Examples: Why, I can't believe this!

No, you can't have a dollar.

**Rule 4b.** Use commas to set off expressions that interrupt the sentence flow (nevertheless, after all, by the way, on the other hand, however, etc.).

Example: I am, by the way, very nervous about this.

**Rule 5.** Use commas to set off the name, nickname, term of endearment, or title of a person directly addressed.

Examples: Will you, Aisha, do that assignment for me?

Yes, old friend, I will.

Good day. Captain.

**Rule 6.** Use a comma to separate the day of the month from the year, and-what most people forget!-always put one after the year, also.

Example: It was in the Sun's June 5, 2003, edition.

No comma is necessary for just the month and year.

Example: It was in a June 2003 article.

**Rule 7.** Use a comma to separate a city from its state, and remember to put one after the state, also.

Example: I'm from the Akron, Ohio, area.

**Rule 8.** Traditionally, if a person's name is followed by Sr. or Jr., a comma follows the last name: Martin Luther King, Jr. This comma is no longer considered mandatory. However, if a comma does precede Sr. or Jr., another comma must follow the entire name when it appears midsentence.

Correct: Al Mooney Sr. is here.

Correct: Al Mooney, Sr., is here.

Incorrect: Al Mooney, Sr. is here.

**Rule 9.** Similarly, use commas to enclose degrees or titles used with names.

Example: Al Mooney, M.D., is here.

**Rule 10.** When starting a sentence with a dependent clause, use a comma after it.

Example: If you are not sure about this, let me know now.

But often a comma is unnecessary when the sentence starts with an independent clause followed by a dependent clause.

Example: Let me know now if you are not sure about this.

**Rule 11.** Use commas to set off nonessential words, clauses, and phrases.

Incorrect: Sangeeta who is my sister shut the door.

Correct: Sangeeta, who is my sister, shut the door.

Incorrect: The man knowing it was late hurried home.

Correct: The man, knowing it was late, hurried home.

In the preceding examples, note the comma after sister and late. Nonessential words, clauses, and phrases that occur midsentence must be enclosed by commas. The closing comma is called an appositive comma. Many writers forget to add this important comma. Following are two instances of the need for an appositive comma with one or more nouns.

Incorrect: My best friend, Joe arrived.

Correct: My best friend, Joe, arrived.

Incorrect: The three items, a book, a pen, and paper were on the table.

Correct: The three items, a book, a pen, and paper, were on the table.

**Rule 12.** If something or someone is sufficiently identified, the description that follows is considered nonessential and should be surrounded by commas.

Examples: Adity, who has a limp, met with an auto accident.

If we already know which Adity is meant, the description is not essential.

The boy who has a limp met with an auto accident.

We do not know which boy is meant without further description; therefore, no commas are used. This leads to a persistent problem. Look at the following sentence:

Example: My brother Raj is here.

Now, see how adding two commas changes that sentence's meaning:

Example: My brother, Raj, is here.

Students will understand that the first sentence means I have more than one brother. The commas in the second sentence mean that Bill is my only brother.

Why? In the first sentence, Raj is essential information: it identifies which of my two (or more) brothers I'm speaking of. This is why no commas enclose Raj.

In the second sentence, Raj is nonessential information-whom else but Raj could I mean?-hence the commas. Comma misuse is nothing to take lightly. It can lead to an error like this:

Example: Mark Twain's book, Tom Sawyer, is a delight.

Because of the commas, that sentence states that Twain wrote only one book. In fact, he wrote more than two dozen of them.

**Rule 13a.** Use commas to introduce or interrupt direct quotations.

Examples: He said, "I don't care."

"Why," I asked, "don't you care?"

This rule is optional with one-word quotations.

Example: He said "Stop."

**Rule 13b.** If the quotation comes before he said, she wrote, they reported, Dana insisted, or a similar attribution, end the quoted material with a comma, even if it is only one word.

Examples: "I don't care," he said.

"Stop," he said.

**Rule 14.** Use a comma to separate a statement from a question.

Example: I can go, can't I?

**Rule 15.** Use a comma to separate contrasting parts of a sentence.

Example: That is my money, not yours.

**Rule 16a.** Use a comma before and after certain introductory words or terms, such as namely, that is, i.e., e.g., and for instance, when they are followed by a series of items.

Example: You may be required to bring many items, e.g., sleeping bags, pans, and warm clothing.

**Rule 16a.** Commas should precede the term etc. and enclose it if it is placed midsentence.

Example: Sleeping bags, pans, warm clothing, etc., are in the tent.

## SEMICOLONS

It's no accident that a semicolon is a period atop a comma. Like commas, semicolons indicate an audible pause—slightly longer than a comma's, but short of a period's full stop.

Semicolons have other functions, too. But first, a caveat: avoid the common mistake of using a semicolon to replace a colon.

Incorrect: I have one goal; to find her.

Correct: I have one goal: to find her.

**Rule 1.** A semicolon can replace a period if the writer wishes to narrow the gap between two closely linked sentences.

Examples: Call me tomorrow; you can give me an answer then.

We have paid our dues; we expect all the privileges listed in the contract.

**Rule 2.** Use a semicolon before such words and terms as namely, however, therefore, that is, i.e., for example, e.g., for instance, etc., when they introduce a complete sentence. It is also preferable to use a comma after these words and terms.

Example: Bring any two items; however, sleeping bags and tents are in short supply.

**Rule 3.** Use a semicolon to separate units of a series when one or more of the units contain commas.  
Incorrect: The conference has people who have come from Moscow, Idaho, Springfield, California, Alamo, Tennessee, and other places as well.  
Note that with only commas, that sentence is hopeless.  
Correct: The conference has people who have come from Moscow, Idaho; Springfield, California; Alamo, Tennessee; and other places as well.

**Rule 4.** A semicolon may be used between independent clauses joined by a connector, such as and, but, or, nor, etc., when one or more commas appear in the first clause.  
Example: When I finish here, and I will soon, I'll be glad to help you; and that is a promise I will keep.

## COLONS

A colon means "that is to say" or "here's what I mean." Colons and semicolons should never be used interchangeably.

**Rule 1.** Use a colon to introduce a series of items. Do not capitalize the first item after the colon (unless it's a proper noun).  
Examples: You may be required to bring many things: sleeping bags, pans, utensils, and warm clothing.  
I want the following items: butter, sugar, and flour.  
I need an assistant who can do the following: input data, write reports, and complete tax forms.

**Rule 2.** Avoid using a colon before a list when it directly follows a verb or preposition.  
Incorrect: I want: butter, sugar, and flour.  
Correct: I want the following: butter, sugar, and flour.  
or  
I want butter, sugar, and flour.  
Incorrect: I've seen the greats, including: Barrymore, Guinness, and Streep.  
Correct: I've seen the greats, including Barrymore, Guinness, and Streep.

**Rule 3.** When listing items one by one, one per line, following a colon, capitalization and ending punctuation are optional when using single words or phrases preceded by letters, numbers, or bullet points. If each point is a complete sentence, capitalize the first word and end the sentence with appropriate ending punctuation. Otherwise, there are no hard and fast rules, except be consistent.  
Examples: I want an assistant who can do the following:  
(a) input data  
(b) write reports  
(c) complete tax forms

The following are requested:

- Wool sweaters for possible cold weather.
- Wet suits for snorkeling.
- Introductions to the local dignitaries.

These are the pool rules:

1. Do not run.
2. If you see unsafe behaviour, report it to the lifeguard.
3. Did you remember your towel?
4. Have fun!

**Rule 4.** A colon instead of a semicolon may be used between independent clauses when the second sentence explains, illustrates, paraphrases, or expands on the first sentence.  
Example: He got what he worked for: he really earned that promotion.  
If a complete sentence follows a colon, as in the previous example, it is up to the writer to decide whether to capitalize the first word. Capitalizing a sentence after a colon is generally a judgment call; if what follows a colon is closely related to what precedes it, there is no need for a capital.  
Note: A capital letter generally does not introduce a simple phrase following a colon.  
Example: He got what he worked for: a promotion.

**Rule 5.** A colon may be used to introduce a long quotation. Some style manuals say to indent one-half inch on both the left and right margins; others say to indent only on the left margin. Quotation marks are not used.

Example: The author of *Touched*, Jane Straus, wrote in the first chapter:

Georgia went back to her bed and stared at the intricate patterns of burned moth wings in the translucent glass of the overhead light. Her father was in "hyper mode" again where nothing could calm him down.

**Rule 6.** Use a colon rather than a comma to follow the salutation in a business letter, even when addressing someone by his or her first name. (Never use a semicolon after a salutation.) A comma is used after the salutation in more informal correspondence.

Formal: Dear Ms. Biwas:

Informal: Dear Biwas,

## QUOTATION MARKS

**Rule 1.** Use double quotation marks to set off a direct (word-for-word) quotation.

Correct: "When will you be here?" he asked.

Incorrect: He asked "when I would be there."

**Rule 2.** Either quotation marks or italics are customary for titles: magazines, books, plays, films, songs, poems, article titles, chapter titles, etc.

**Rule 3a.** Periods and commas always go inside quotation marks.

Examples: The sign said, "Walk." Then it said, "Don't Walk," then, "Walk," all within thirty seconds. He yelled, "Hurry up."

**Rule 3b.** Use single quotation marks for quotations within quotations.

Example: He said, "Dan cried, 'Do not treat me that way'"

Note that the period goes inside both the single and double quotation marks.

**Rule 4.** As a courtesy, make sure there is visible space at the start or end of a quotation between adjacent single and double quotation marks. (Your word processing programme may do this automatically.)

Not ample space: He said, "Dan cried, 'Do not treat me that way.'" "

Ample space: He said, "Dan cried, 'Do not treat me that way'" "

**Rule 5a.** Quotation marks are often used with technical terms, terms used in an unusual way, or other expressions that vary from standard usage.

Examples: It's an oil-extraction method known as "tracking."

He did some "experimenting" in his college days.

I had a visit from my "friend" the taxman.

**Rule 5b.** Never use single quotation marks in sentences like the previous three.

Incorrect: I had a visit from my 'friend' the taxman.

The single quotation marks in the above sentence are intended to send a message to the reader that friend is being used in a special way: in this case, sarcastically. Avoid this invalid usage. Single quotation marks are valid only within a quotation, as per Rule 3b, above.

**Rule 6.** When quoted material runs more than one paragraph, start each new paragraph with opening quotation marks, but do not use closing quotation marks until the end of the passage.

Example: She wrote: "I don't paint anymore. For a while I thought it was just a phase that I'd get over.

"Now, I don't even try."

## PARENTHESES AND BRACKETS

Parentheses and brackets must never be used interchangeably.

**Rule 1.** Use parentheses to enclose information that clarifies or is used as an aside.  
Example: He finally answered (after taking five minutes to think) that he did not understand the question.  
If material in parentheses ends a sentence, the period goes after the parentheses.  
Example: He gave me a nice bonus (Rs. 50000).  
Commas could have been used in the first example; a colon could have been used in the second example.  
The use of parentheses indicates that the writer considered the information less important-almost an afterthought.

**Rule 2.** Periods go inside parentheses only if an entire sentence is inside the parentheses.  
Example: Please read the analysis. (You'll be amazed.)  
This is a rule with a lot of wiggle room. An entire sentence in parentheses is often acceptable without an enclosed period:  
Example: Please read the analysis (you'll be amazed).

**Rule 3.** Parentheses, despite appearances, are not part of the subject.  
Example: Joe (and his trusty mutt) was always welcome.  
If this seems awkward, try rewriting the sentence:  
Example: Joe (accompanied by his trusty mutt) was always welcome.

**Rule 4.** Commas are more likely to follow parentheses than precede them.  
Incorrect: When he got home, (it was already dark outside) he fixed dinner.  
Correct: When he got home (it was already dark outside), he fixed dinner.

## BRACKETS

Brackets are far less common than parentheses, and they are only used in special cases. Brackets (like single quotation marks) are used exclusively within quoted material.

**Rule 1.** Brackets are interruptions. When we see them, we know they've been added by someone else. They are used to explain or comment on the quotation.  
Examples: "Four score and seven [today we'd say eighty-seven] years ago..."  
"Bill shook hands with [his son] Al."

**Rule 2.** When quoting something that has a spelling or grammar mistake or presents material in a confusing way, insert the term *sic* in italics and enclose it in non-italic (unless the surrounding text is italic) brackets.  
*Sic* ("thus" in Latin) is shorthand for, "This is exactly what the original material says."  
Example: She wrote, "I would rather die than [sic] be seen wearing the same outfit as my sister."  
The [sic] indicates that then was mistakenly used instead of than.

**Rule 3.** In formal writing, brackets are often used to maintain the integrity of both a quotation and the sentences others use it in.  
Example: "[T]he better angels of our nature" gave a powerful ending to Lincoln's first inaugural address.  
Lincoln's memorable phrase came midsentence, so the word was not originally capitalized.

## APOSTROPHES

**Rule 1a.** Use the apostrophe to show possession. To show possession with a singular noun, add an apostrophe plus the letters.  
Examples: a woman's hat  
the boss's wife  
Mrs. Chang's house

**Rule 1b.** Many common nouns end in the letter *s* (lens, cactus, bus, etc.). So do a lot of proper nouns (Mr. Joy, Delhi, Diwali). There are conflicting policies and theories about how to show possession when writing such nouns. There is no right answer; the best advice is to choose a formula and stay consistent.

**Rule 1c.** Some people add only an apostrophe to all nouns ending in *s*. And some add an apostrophe + *s* to every proper noun, be it Roy's or Shobha's.

One method, common in newspapers and magazines, is to add an apostrophe + s ('s) to common nouns ending in s, but only a stand-alone apostrophe to proper nouns ending in s.

Examples: the class's hours

Mr. Dhoni's cricket clubs

the canvas's size

Delhi's weather

Care must be taken to place the apostrophe outside the word in question. For instance, if talking about a pen belonging to Mr. Rajat, many people would wrongly write Mr. Rajat's pen (his name is not Mr. Rajat).

Correct: Mr. Rajat' pen

Another widely used technique is to write the word as we would speak it. For example, since most people saying, "Mr. Rajat's pen" would not pronounce an added s, we would write Mr. Rajat' pen with no added s. But most people would pronounce an added s in "Dhoni's," so we'd write it as we say it: Mr. Dhoni's golf clubs. This method explains the punctuation of for goodness' sake.

**Rule 2a.** Regular nouns are nouns that form their plurals by adding either the letter s or -es (guy, guys; letter, letters; actress, actresses; etc.). To show plural possession, simply put an apostrophe after the s.

Correct: guys' night out (guy + s + apostrophe)

Incorrect: guy's night out (implies only one guy)

Correct: two actresses' roles (actress + es + apostrophe)

Incorrect: two actress's roles

**Rule 2b.** Do not use an apostrophe + s to make a regular noun plural.

Incorrect: Apostrophe's are confusing.

Correct: Apostrophes are confusing.

Incorrect: We've had many happy Christmas's.

Correct: We've had many happy Christmases.

In special cases, such as when forming a plural of a word that is not normally a noun, some writers add an apostrophe for clarity.

Example: Here are some do's and don'ts.

In that sentence, the verb do is used as a plural noun, and the apostrophe was added because the writer felt that dos was confusing. Not all writers agree; some see no problem with dos and don'ts.

**Rule 2c.** English also has many irregular nouns (child, nucleus, tooth, etc.). These nouns become plural by changing their spelling, sometimes becoming quite different words. You may find it helpful to write out the entire irregular plural noun before adding an apostrophe or an apostrophe + s.

Incorrect: two childrens' hats

The plural is children, not childrens.

Correct: two children's hats (children + apostrophe + s)

Incorrect: the teeths' roots

Correct: the teeth's roots

**Rule 2d.** Things can get really confusing with the possessive plurals of proper names ending in s, such as Dhoni's and Sharma's.

**Rule 2e.** Never use an apostrophe to make a name plural.

Incorrect: The Aggarwal's are here.

Correct: The Aggarwals are here.

Incorrect: We visited the Mishra's.

Correct: We visited the Mishras.

**Rule 3.** With a singular compound noun (for example, mother-in-law), show possession with an apostrophe + s at the end of the word.

Example: my mother-in-law's hat

If the compound noun (e.g., brother-in-law) is to be made plural, form the plural first (brothers-in-law), and then use the apostrophe + s.

Example: my two brothers-in-law's hats

**Rule 4.** If two people possess the same item, put the apostrophe + s after the second name only.

Example: Cesar and Maribel's home is constructed of redwood.

However, if one of the joint owners is written as a pronoun, use the possessive form for both.

Incorrect: Maribel and my home

Correct: Maribel's and my home

Incorrect: he and Maribel's home

Incorrect: him and Maribel's home

Correct: his and Maribel's home

In cases of separate rather than joint possession, use the possessive form for both.

Examples: Cesar's and Maribel's homes are both lovely.

They don't own the homes jointly.

Cesar and Maribel's homes are both lovely.

The homes belong to both of them.

**Rule 5.** Use an apostrophe with contractions. The apostrophe is placed where a letter or letters have been removed.

Examples: doesn't, wouldn't, it's, can't, you've, etc.

Incorrect: does'nt

**Rule 6.** There are various approaches to plurals for initials, capital letters, and numbers used as nouns.

Examples: She consulted with three M.D.s.

She consulted with three M.D.'s.

Some write M.D.'s to give the s separation from the second period.

Some prefer an apostrophe after single capital letters only:

Examples: I made straight As.

He learned his ABCs

There are different schools of thought about years and decades. The following examples are all in widespread use:

Examples: the 1990s

he 1990's

the '90s

the 90's

Awkward: the '90's

**Rule 7.** Amounts of time or money are sometimes used as possessive adjectives that require apostrophes.

Incorrect: three days leave

Correct: three days' leave

Incorrect: my two cents worth

Correct: my two cents' worth

**Rule 8.** The personal pronouns hers, ours, yours, theirs, its, whose, and oneself never take an apostrophe.

Example: Feed a horse grain. It's better for its health.

**Rule 9.** When an apostrophe comes before a word or number, take care that it's truly an apostrophe (') rather than a single quotation mark (').

Incorrect: T was the night before Christmas.

Correct: 'T was the night before Christmas.

Incorrect: I voted in '08.

Correct: I voted in '08.

**Rule 10.** Beware of false possessives, which often occur with nouns ending in s. don't add apostrophes to noun-derived adjectives ending in s. Close analysis is the best guide.

Incorrect: We enjoyed the New Orleans' cuisine.

In the preceding sentence, the word the makes no sense unless New Orleans is being used as an adjective to describe cuisine. In English, nouns frequently become adjectives. Adjectives rarely if ever take apostrophes.

Incorrect: I like that Beatles' song.  
Correct: I like that Beatles song.  
Again, Beatles is an adjective, modifying song.  
Incorrect: He's a United States' citizen.  
Correct: He's a United States citizen.

**Rule 11.** Beware of nouns ending in y; do not show possession by changing the y to -ies.

Correct: the company's policy  
Incorrect: the companies policy  
Correct: three companies' policies

## HYPHENS

There are two commandments about this misunderstood punctuation mark. First, hyphens must never be used interchangeably with dashes (see the "Dashes" section), which are noticeably longer. Second, there should never be spaces around hyphens.

Incorrect: 300-325 people  
Incorrect: 300 - 325 people  
Correct: 300-325 people

Hyphens' main purpose is to glue words together. They notify the reader that two or more elements in a sentence are linked. Although there are rules and customs governing hyphens, there are also situations when writers must decide whether to add them for clarity.

### Hyphens between Words

**Rule 1.** Generally, hyphenate two or more words when they come before a noun they modify and act as a single idea. This is called a compound adjective.

Examples: an off-campus apartment  
state-of-the-art design

When a compound adjective follows a noun, a hyphen may or may not be necessary.

Example: The apartment is off campus.

However, some established compound adjectives are always hyphenated. Double-check with a dictionary or online.

Example: The design is state-of-the-art.

**Rule 2a.** A hyphen is frequently required when forming original compound verbs for vivid writing, humour, or special situations.

Examples: The slacker video-gamed his way through life.

Queen Victoria throne-sat for six decades.

**Rule 2b.** When writing out new, original, or unusual compound nouns, writers should hyphenate whenever doing so avoids confusion.

Examples: I changed my diet and became a no-meater.

No-meater is too confusing without the hyphen.

The slacker was a video gamer.

Video gamer is clear without a hyphen, although some writers might prefer to hyphenate it.

Writers using familiar compound verbs and nouns should consult a dictionary or look online to decide if these verbs and nouns should be hyphenated.

**Rule 3.** An often overlooked rule for hyphens: The adverb very and adverbs ending in -ly are not hyphenated.

Incorrect: the very-elegant watch

Incorrect: the finely-tuned watch

This rule applies only to adverbs. The following two sentences are correct because the -ly words are adjectives rather than adverbs:

Correct: the friendly-looking dog

Correct: a family-owned café

**Rule 4.** Hyphens are often used to tell the ages of people and things. A handy rule, whether writing about years, months, or any other period of time, is to use hyphens unless the period of time (years, months, weeks, days) is written in plural form:

With hyphens: We have a two-year-old child.

We have a two-year-old.

No hyphens: The child is two years old. (Because years is plural.)

Exception: The child is one year old. (Or day, week, month, etc.)

Note that when hyphens are involved in expressing ages, two hyphens are required. Many writers forget the second hyphen:

Incorrect: We have a two-year old child.

Without the second hyphen, the sentence is about an "old child."

**Rule 5.** Never hesitate to add a hyphen if it solves a possible problem. Following are two examples of well- advised hyphens:

Confusing: I have a few more important things to do.

With hyphen: I have a few more-important things to do.

Without the hyphen, it's impossible to tell whether the sentence is about a few things that are more important or a few more things that are all equally important.

Confusing: He returned the stolen vehicle report.

With hyphen: He returned the stolen-vehicle report.

With no hyphen, we could only guess: Was the vehicle report stolen, or was it a report on stolen vehicles?

**Rule 6.** When using numbers, hyphenate spans or estimates of time, distance, or other quantities. Remember not to use spaces around hyphens.

Examples: 3:15-3:45 p.m.

1999-2016

300-325 people

**Rule 7.** Hyphenate all compound numbers from twenty-one through ninety-nine.

Examples: thirty-two children one thousand two hundred twenty-one dollars

**Rule 8.** Hyphenate all spelled-out fractions.

Example: more than two-thirds of registered voters

**Rule 9.** Hyphenate most double last names.

Example: Sir Winthrop Heinz-Eakins will attend.

**Rule 10.** As important as hyphens are to clear writing, they can become an annoyance if overused. Avoid adding hyphens when the meaning is clear. Many phrases are so familiar (e.g., high school, twentieth century, one hundred percent) that they can go before a noun without risk of confusing the reader.

Examples: a high school senior a twentieth century throwback one hundred percent correct

**Rule 11.** When in doubt, look it up. Some familiar phrases may require hyphens. For instance, is a book up to date or up-to-date? Don't guess; have a dictionary close by, or look it up online.

### **Hyphens with Prefixes and Suffixes**

A prefix (a-, un-, de-, ab-, sub-, post-, anti-, etc.) is a letter or set of letters placed before a **root** word. The word prefix itself contains the prefix pre-. Prefixes expand or change a word's meaning, sometimes radically: the prefixes a-, un-, and dis-, for example, change words into their opposites (e.g., political, apolitical; friendly, unfriendly, honor, dishonor).

**Rule 1.** Hyphenate prefixes when they come before proper nouns or proper adjectives.

Examples: trans-American

mid-July

**Rule 2.** For clarity, many writers hyphenate prefixes ending in a vowel when the root word begins with the same letter.

Example: ultra-ambitious  
semi-invalid  
re-elect

**Rule 3.** Hyphenate all words beginning with the prefixes self-, ex- (i.e., former), and all-.  
Examples: self-assured  
ex-mayor  
all-knowing

**Rule 4.** Use a hyphen with the prefix re- when omitting the hyphen would cause confusion with another word.  
Examples: Will she recover from her illness?  
I have re-covered the sofa twice.  
Omitting the hyphen would cause confusion with recover.  
I must re-press the shirt.  
Omitting the hyphen would cause confusion with repress.  
The stamps have been reissued.  
A hyphen after re- is not needed because there is no confusion with another word.

**Rule 5.** Writers often hyphenate prefixes when they feel a word might be distracting or confusing without the hyphen.  
Examples: de-ice  
With no hyphen we get deice, which might stump readers.  
co-worker  
With no hyphen we get co-worker, which could be distracting because it starts with cow.  
A suffix (-y, -er, -ism, -able, etc.) is a letter or set of letters that follows a root word. Suffixes form new words or alter the original word to perform a different task. For example, the noun scandal can be made into the adjective scandalous by adding the suffix -ous. It becomes the verb scandalize by adding the suffix -ize.

**Rule 1.** Suffixes are not usually hyphenated. Some exceptions: -style, -elect, -free, -based.  
Examples: Modernist-style paintings  
Mayor-elect Smith  
sugar-free soda  
oil-based sludge

**Rule 2.** For clarity, writers often hyphenate when the last letter in the root word is the same as the first letter in the suffix.  
Examples: graffiti-ism  
wiretap-proof

**Rule 3.** Use discretion-and sometimes a dictionary-before deciding to place a hyphen before a suffix. But do not hesitate to hyphenate a rare usage if it avoids confusion.  
Examples: the annual dance-athon  
an eel-esque sea creature  
Although the preceding hyphens help clarify unusual terms, they are optional and might not be every writer's choice. Still, many readers would scratch their heads for a moment overdanceathon and eelesque.

## DASHES

Dashes, like commas, semicolons, colons, ellipses, and parentheses, indicate added emphasis, an interruption, or an abrupt change of thought. Experienced writers know that these marks are not interchangeable. Note how dashes subtly change the tone of the following sentences:

Examples: You are the friend, the only friend, who offered to help me.

You are the friend-the only friend-who offered to help me.

I pay the bills; she has all the fun.

I pay the bills-she has all the fun.

I wish you would... oh, never mind.

I wish you would-oh, never mind.

**Rule 1.** Words and phrases between dashes are not generally part of the subject.

Example: Joe-and his trusty mutt-was always welcome.

**Rule 2.** Dashes replace otherwise mandatory punctuation, such as the commas after Iowa and 2013 in the following examples:

**Without dash:** The man from Ames, Iowa, arrived.

**With dash:** The man-he was from Ames, Iowa-arrived.

**Without dash:** The May 1, 2013, edition of the Ames Sentinel arrived in June.

**With dash:** The Ames Sentinel-dated May 1, 2013-arrived in June.

**Rule 3.** Some writers and publishers prefer spaces around dashes.

Example: Joe — and his trusty mutt — was always welcome.

## ELLIPSES

An ellipsis (plural: ellipses) is a punctuation mark consisting of three dots.

Use an ellipsis when omitting a word, phrase, line, paragraph, or more from a quoted passage. Ellipses save space or remove material that is less relevant. They are useful in getting right to the point without delay or distraction:

**Full quotation:** "Today, after hours of careful thought, we vetoed the bill."

**With ellipsis:** "Today..we vetoed the bill."

Although ellipses are used in many ways, the three-dot method is the simplest. Newspapers, magazines, and books of fiction and nonfiction use various approaches that they find suitable.

Some writers and editors feel that no spaces are necessary.

Example: I don't know... I'm not sure.

Others enclose the ellipsis with a space on each side.

Example: I don't know ... I'm not sure.

Still others put a space either directly before or directly after the ellipsis.

Examples: I don't know .. I'm not sure.

I don't know... I'm not sure.

A four-dot method and an even more rigorous method used in legal works require fuller explanations that can be found in other reference books.

**Rule 1.** Many writers use an ellipsis whether the omission occurs at the beginning of a sentence, in the middle of a sentence, or between sentences.

A common way to delete the beginning of a sentence is to follow the opening quotation mark with an ellipsis, plus a bracketed capital letter:

Example: "...After hours of careful thought, we vetoed the bill."

Other writers omit the ellipsis in such cases, feeling the bracketed capital letter gets the point across.

For more on brackets, see "Parentheses and Brackets."

**Rule 2.** Ellipses can express hesitation, changes of mood, suspense, or thoughts trailing off. Writers also use ellipses to indicate a pause or wavering in an otherwise straightforward sentence.

Examples: I don't know.. I'm not sure.

Pride is one thing, but what happens if she...?

He said, "I.. really don't.. understand this."

## QUESTION MARKS

**Rule 1.** Use a question mark only after a direct question.

Correct: Will you go with me?

Incorrect: I'm asking if you will go with me?

**Rule 2a.** A question mark replaces a period at the end of a sentence.

Incorrect: Will you go with me?

**Rule 2b.** Because of Rule 2a, capitalize the word that follows a question mark.

Some writers choose to overlook this rule in special cases.

Example: Will you go with me? with Joe? with anyone?

**Rule 3a.** Avoid the common trap of using question marks with indirect questions, which are statements that contain questions. Use a period after an indirect question.

Incorrect: I wonder if he would go with me?

Correct: I wonder if he would go with me.

OR

I wonder: Would he go with me?

**Rule 3b.** Some sentences are statements-or demands-in the form of a question. They are called rhetorical questions because they don't require or expect an answer. Many should be written without question marks.

Examples: Why don't you take a break.

Would you kids knock it off.

What wouldn't I do for you!

**Rule 4.** Use a question mark when a sentence is half statement and half question.

Example : You do care, don't you?

**Rule 5.** The placement of question marks with quotation marks follows logic. If a question is within the quoted material, a question mark should be placed inside the quotation marks.

Examples: She asked, "Will you still be my friend?"

The question is part of the quotation.

Do you agree with the saying, "All's fair in love and war"?

The question is outside the quotation.

## EXCLAMATION POINTS

**Rule 1.** Use an exclamation point to show emotion, emphasis, or surprise.

Examples: I'm truly shocked by your behaviour!

Yay! We won!

**Rule 2.** An exclamation point replaces a period at the end of a sentence.

Incorrect: I'm truly shocked by your behaviour!.

**Rule 3.** Do not use an exclamation point in formal business writing.

**Rule 4.** Overuse of exclamation points is a sign of undisciplined writing. Do not use even one of these marks unless you're convinced it is justified.

## JUMBLED WORD

A word jumble is a word puzzle that gives you a group of scrambled letters and requires you to unscramble them to make a real word. For example, if you were given the letters "m-o-c-t-e-r-u-p" you could unscramble, or unjumble if you will, those letters to reveal the word computer.

### Tips on Solving a Word Jumble

There are many hints, tips, and tricks that can help you to solve a jumbled word.

The first trick is to look for any letters that appear frequently together. These include consonants such as "ch," "sh," or "ph." They can also include vowel consonant combinations like "qu."

Another trick is to separate the consonants from the vowels and look at them separately sometimes looking at them away from one another makes the word become more obvious.

You can also write the letters down like the numbers on the face of a clock. For some, displaying the letters in this way can help them to see the word clearly.

Lastly do a great deal of reading. Reading will help to improve your vocabulary Therefore, make sure you read anytime you can.

### **Rearrangement of Jumbled Words**

When solving jumbled sentences or "Sequence of Words" type questions, first determine the "Subject" and the "Predicate".

SUBJECT - The part which names the person or thing we are speaking about.

PREDICATE - The part that tells something about the subject.

After identifying the subject and predicate, identify the tense used and the verbs

After identifying the subject and predicate, identify the tense used and the verbs

It's always a good idea to read the answer options to figure out the most correct sentence, than to try solving the jumbled sentence yourself