

Punctuation is a system in which marks are used in writing to indicate pauses and division of sentences. The meaning of written communication is made clear to the readers by the use of these marks. In fact punctuation is the right use of putting in marks or stops in writing.

The following are the principal marks of punctuation.

1. Comma (,)
2. Apostrophe (')
3. Semi Colon (;)
4. Colon (:)
5. Dash and Parenthesis. (—)
6. Quotation marks (Inverted Commas) (" ")
7. Hyphen (-)
8. End marks —
  - (a) Full stop (.)
  - (b) Question Marks (?)
  - (c) Exclamatory marks (!)

Besides punctuation marks the students are required to know the use of :

- (a) Capital letters
- (b) How to write numerals?

## Use of Comma (,)

(a) The comma is used for a short or slight pause to separate words in a list but it is avoided before 'and' :

- (i) Everything they will give me, food, clothes and salary.
- (ii) We will need cake, candles, lights and all.

(b) Used to separate Adverb Clause when it is followed by main clause:

- (i) When the train arrives, we shall board it
- (ii) Unless you take exercise, you will not lose weight.

(c) Used to mark off non-restrictive adjective clause. In such cases Adjective clause acts as a co-ordinate clause :

- (i) He ate contaminated food, which (and this) made him sick.
- (ii) She went out with Arnav, who (and he) bought her a necklace.
- (iii) She said that she would help me, which (but which) was not true.

**Note :** Restrictive Adjective clause is restrictive in meaning.

Comma is not used to mark off restrictive clauses.

- (i) My brother who is working hard is bound to succeed.
- (ii) The boys who attended N.C.C. Camp will be awarded certificates.

**(d) Used to write Noun in appositions :**

- (i) I would like to meet Mr. Kabir, your manager.
- (ii) Mr. Kabir, the manager of our company, will call on you tomorrow.

**(e) Used for Parenthetical Expressions:**

- (i) We knew, of course, that he would not attend your marriage.
- (ii) They are, however, intelligent.
- (iii) Your friend, if I am correct, is dishonest.
- (iv) They, as you know, will visit us next Summer.
- (v) Therefore, I like her.
- (vi) Moreover, She is intelligent.
- (vii) In fact, I like him.
- (viii) Slowly, She entered the room.

**Note :** Students should take note of the following phrases carefully. after all—to say the least, is several ways, I know, I am sure, however, of course, therefore etc.

**(f) Used to separate nominative absolute:**

The sun having risen, we left for the town.  
The task having been done, They went to bed.

**(g) Used to separate initials and Titles :**

Please call on Prof. Sharma, M.A., Ph.D.

**(h) Used while writing address:**

Lt. General A.K. Chopra,  
50, Arun Apartments,  
Noida . (U.P.)

**(i) Used while writing dates :**

July 10, 2008  
10th July 2008 (No comma is required)  
Thursday, July 10th, 2008

**(j) Used while expressing Numerical expressions in group of three digits from right direction :**

7, 297, 789

**(k) Used after Solutions and Complimentary close :**

My dear son,  
Dear son,  
Yours sincerely,  
Yours truly,

**(l) Used to separate question tag from the sentence:**

She is honest, isn't she?  
It is a nice story, isn't it?

**(m) Used for omitted words:**

She is dull, her sister, clever.  
Reena is ten, Sheena, fourteen.

**(n) Used to write reported speech after/before :****(a) Reporting Verb:**

"I am not going tomorrow," said she.  
She said, "I am not going tomorrow."  
"I am not", she said, "going tomorrow."  
"I am not going tomorrow," said she, "I am ill".

**Note :** Comma is not used at the end when the reported speech is interrogative.

"Are you going tomorrow?" said she.  
"Are you", said she, "going tomorrow?"

**(o) Used After Words of Address :**

Priya, bring me some fruit.  
Bring me some fruit, Priya  
I know, Shreya, time has come now.

**(p) Used for separation of words:**

Sleep, sleep peacefully.  
Blow, blow fast  
What she is, is well known.

**(q) Used to indicate the omission of a verb :**

Richa got house. Esha, cash  
The bride was a Kaystha, the groom, a Brahmin.

**2. Apostrophe (')****(a) Used with 's' to indicate that a thing or a person belongs to somebody:**

Rohan's house  
Children's school  
Women's wardrobe  
My sister's husband.

**(b) Apostrophe is not used in case of non living things :**

The table's wood.	(wrong)
The wood of the table.	(correct)
The book's price.	(wrong)
The price of the book.	(correct)

**(c) In case of Plural Nouns and proper Nouns ending with 's' Apostrophe without**

**'s' is used at the end.**

The Girls' hostel.  
The Students' Club.  
Kalidas' poems  
Dickens' Novels

- (d) **Pronouns do not required the use of apostrophe. Only 's' is used with pronouns:**  
 Yours faithfully,  
 This house is hers  
 Ours is a large house.
- (e) **The letters that are omitted are represented by an apostrophe while writing contracted form :**  
 I'm, I've, Can't  
 I'll, They'd  
 It's  
 Won't
- (f) **Apostrophe with 's' is used with figures and letters to make plural:**  
 1. P's and Q's  
 2. 7's, 8's  
 But we say.  
 Fours, Sixes, Tens
- (g) **Apostrophe with 's' is used to make abbreviations Plural. However, in some cases Apostrophe can be omitted too :**  
 M.A.'s, in'89 (1989)  
 The 90s of the previous century.  
 M.P's, Ph.D's  
 (Correct)

### 3. Semicolon (;)

Semicolon is used almost as a period/full stop within a sentence. It is used at the end of a thought in place of 'and', 'but', because etc to indicate that the thought continues into another thought.

1. Please do it; I shall give you money.
2. Krishna is black; Radha is fair.
3. It is cloudy; it may rain.
4. Man proposes; God disposes.

### 4. Colon (:)

Colon is used when a list, quotation or a long speech is to follow after it. It is used to explain the words – Namely, as follows, following, for example etc.

- (i) Wordsworth wrote : Child is father of man.
- (ii) The meaning can be explained thus : Honesty does not always pay.
- (iii) They brought many charges against him namely. Murder, Rape and Theft.
- (iv) Please send us the following items of furniture : Chairs, Tables, Benches and Stools.

### 5. Dash (–) and Parentheses

- (a) Dash is used in a sentence to mark an abrupt end to indicate that the words within a dash do not belong there. They are treated as just after thought. Some times they are parenthetical expressions. Double dashes are also known as parenthesis.
- (i) They are – you know – crooks.
  - (ii) My friend – I am sure – is very sincere. (used for explanation)
  - (iii) The other players – Gambhir and Raina – are also part of India team.
  - (iv) Please send me the detail such as – your age, your income, nature of the job.
  - (v) Antony lost for love all – kingdom, glory, friends and honour.

- (b) **Used sometimes for colon :**  
 We have received the following articles  
 (i) Photo graphs  
 (ii) Identity cards  
 (iii) Medical certificates
- (c) **Used as a Pause :**  
 (i) I wrote her a message.....a message of peace and love.  
 (ii) He narrated a story.....a story that amused everyone.
- (d) **Used to indicate a missing word.**  
 (i) Mrs.....is a very shrewd lady.  
 (ii) Please refer to page 20-25.
- (e) **To resume a scattered subject : e.g.**  
 Honour, money, love.....all were lost.  
 Friends, relative, partners.....all are present.

## 6. Quotation Marks ( ' ' ), ( " " ) (Inverted Commas)

Quotation Marks are used to enclose words and punctuation in direct speech. They are also termed inverted commas when written as such ( " " ).

- (a) She shouted, "We have to win."
- (b) **Used to enclose the names of books, poems, eassays.**  
 (i) I have bought, "Tales from Shakespears."  
 (ii) Have you studied, "Ode to Nightingale."
- (c) **Used to enclose exact words spoken, written or quoted with a view to highlighting them.**  
 (i) 'Beware of Dogs' was written on the gate.  
 (ii) Political parties use 'secularism' as 'catch vote slogan'.

## 7. Hyphen (-)

Hyphen is used to indicate words or parts of words that belong together.

- (a) **Used to make compound adjective qualifying a noun :**

10 year-old-boy  
 well-known actress  
 A 5-day week  
 A hundred-rupee note  
 Mother-in-law

- (b) **Used after prefixes to separate two vowels and three consonants:**

Co-ordinate  
 Co-operation

- (c) **Used to make compound numbers : (21 to 99)**

Twenty-Six  
 Seventy-One



**(d) Used to separate constituents of compound words :**

Door-to-door campaign  
Double-storey apartments  
Man-to-man relations

**(e) Used to write prefixes :**

Ex-husband  
Vice - president  
Non-violence

**8. The End Marks****(a) The Full Stop (.)****(b) The Question Mark (?)****(c) The Exclamation Mark (!)****(a) Full Stop ( . )****(a) Also known as a longest period, is used :**

- (i) They have arrived.
- (ii) She will join our club.
- (iii) Pay now and get out.

**(b) Used after abbreviations and initials of the names. They may be omitted in current English :**

A.B. Vajpayee		A.K. Chopra
Feb.	U.S.A.	U.K.
Dr.	Prof.	Mr./Mrs.
e.g.	etc.	Feb.
U.N.O. (UNO)	M.L.A. (MLA)	

**(c) Used after fractions, amount, time and date :**

Fractions	Amount	Date
9.15 a.m.	₹ 50.75	5.9.05

**(d) Used at the end of the address:**

10, Rama Kutir, Chandigarh.

**(b) Question Mark ( ? )****Used after interrogative questions:**

- (i) Are you staying there?
- (ii) Could you please help me?
- (iii) When did you meet her last?
- (iv) How have you done?
- (v) I asked her how she had done it.

**Note :** In sentence (v) full stop instead of question mark is used because it is a question in Indirect speech.

**Question Tag :**

They can do it, can't they?

She will come, won't she?

Asking a question or expressing a doubt in a statement.

She was married in 1992?

She is honest (?) lady.

**(c) The exclamation mark ( ! )**

Used after interjections, the words and sentences expressing emotions such as joy, sorrow, surprise, pity, prayer, curse.

(i) What a pretty child!

(ii) How good of you!

(iii) Ah! we are ruined.

(iv) O! What you have done.

(v) O father! What you have done.

**Capital :**

(a) Capital letters are used

(i) To write God and Man in the widest sense.

God loves all

Man is mortal.

(ii) Pronouns used for God also begin with a Capital letter

(i) God is great.

(ii) We worship Him.

But gods and goddesses used as deities do not begin with a capital letter.

(b) To write proper nouns.

Pearl, Arnav, Suhani, Shaurya.

(c) To write 'First person of the pronoun.

She likes me but I don't like her.

(d) To write Interjection O, Oh

Oh! We are ruined.

(e) To write a reported speech.

She said, "I am a queen."

They said, "We have won the match."

**Numerals****How to write Numerals?**

1. When a sentence contains one series of numbers, all numbers of series should be written in figures. She has bought 4 chairs, 2 tables and 8 stools.
2. When a sentence contains two series of numbers, the number in one series should be written in words and the number in second series should be written in figures. Five students have secured 90 marks and two have secured 85 marks.

3. Write Compound Numbers between 21 and 99 in words:  
 Twenty-one      Thirty-seven  
 Seventy-four      Sixty-Four
4. Numerical expressions are set off in groups of three digits from right.  
 7, 897, 684  
 97, 684
5. When one number follows another number immediately, first number should be written in figures and the second, in words.  
 Four 5- feet long pipes  
 Two 15 by 12 feet rooms.
6. When a sentence begins with a number, the number should be written in words,  
 forty persons died in accident and twelve were wounded.

## Practice Exercise

**Punctuate the following sentences :**

1. reena said to the servant what have you been doing since morning the servant said madam i have been walking the dog said go at once to the kitchen what have to do there the servant asked.
2. alas said her mother you have eaten all that i had mother do not worry i can manage without food but what about you said shaurya you have not eaten too.
3. great god i would rather be a pagan than such a christian wrote wordsworth.
4. by god I have not done it.
5. good heavens I have lost my purse.
6. good morning suhani have you slept well said her mom you do not appear to have slept well asked suhani in turn you were awake when I got up to turn off the air conditioner.
7. i cannot go she said because rain has not stopped so far.
8. they are well now arnav said they can go but it is drizzling how can they go said my daughter pearl.
9. do not desire O my young friend to get what you cannot get said the fisherman.
10. the king said to the jester how dare you touch the magic thing meant for me be ready to face the consequences shedding tears the jester said I am sorry no use crying said the king I am crying for you my lord replied the jester why asked the king.
11. You expect every body the slave said to the master, to flatter you all the time why is it so.
12. the queen cried help help.
13. Advise me deep said how can i solve this problem.
14. No said malini i have not heard this news.
15. Young and old good and bad all must die.
16. the names of the students are rohit, meenakshi, rahul, sona and ankur.



17. Oh dear i am tired today.
18. O yes i like singing you like dancing.
19. some are born great some achieve greatness.
20. you fools how dare you enter my room without permission.
21. She wouldnt go there my son.
22. For god's sake please help me.
23. ah i am undone my friends have ruined me.
24. alas what a fool i am he has after all cheated me.
25. the words the prohibited area were written on the wall.

