

Teaching Punctuation

Teacher's Guide



Punctuation marks are symbols that indicate the structure and organisation of written language, as well as intonation and pauses to be observed when reading aloud. Below is a description of the most common punctuation marks and their proper usage. Also included, is a list of resources which support the development and enhancement of student's literacy skills. These resources are from the Curriculum and Learning Innovation Centre, which can be accessed by visiting www.tale.edu.au. Once in TaLe, search by title or number for the tutorial.

TEACHING PUNCTUATION

Punctuation marks are symbols that indicate the structure and organisation of written language, as well as intonation and pauses to be observed when reading aloud. Below is a description of the most common punctuation marks and their proper usage. Also included, is a list of resources which support the development and enhancement of student's literacy skills. These resources are from the **Curriculum and Learning Innovation Centre**, which can be accessed by visiting www.tale.edu.au. Once in *TaLe*, search by title or number for the tutorial.

The Question Mark (?)

A question mark is used to mark the end of a question.

When did you come to Australia?

The Full Stop (.)

A full stop is used to mark the end of a sentence.

I have been living in Australia for twenty -two years.

Capital Letters: We use capital letters to:

- Begin sentences e.g. *Yesterday was a hot day.*
- Begin proper names of people, places, days of the week and months of the year e.g. *Mr Smith, Miller High School, Wednesday, March.*

The Apostrophe (')

There are two uses for the apostrophe:

- **Contractions.** A contraction is a shortened version of a word. An apostrophe is used to show that something has been left out, and where it has been left out.
 - *don't (do not)*
- **Possessives.** An apostrophe is used to indicate ownership / possession with nouns. To show ownership by a single individual, insert the apostrophe between the noun and the 's'.
 - *The teacher's table*

The Comma (,)

A comma has several uses in a sentence.

- Commas can be used to separate lists of three or more.
 - *Gabrielle ate chicken, fish, and berries for lunch.*
- Commas separate multiple adjectives that are describing the same thing.
 - *Gabrielle ran her fingers through her long, soft hair.*
- Commas set off dependant clauses that qualify the main clause.
 - *If you love chocolate, you should try Oreos.*
- Commas serve to separate two ideas in a sentence. Especially look for words like "and", "but", "or", etc
 - *Gabrielle was tired, but she kept walking.*
- Commas come after exclamations or other one-word interjections.
 - *No, I'm not hungry.*
 - *Oops, I broke the dish.*
- Commas come after "he said," "she said," and other speaking verbs when they are in the middle of spoken quotation.
 - *"Xena," said Gabrielle, "what are you doing?"*

The Colon (:)

The colon appears at the end of a clause and can do one of three things.

- A colon can introduce a list. Be sure that what comes before the colon could stand as a complete sentence on its own.
 - Correct:
 - *Gabrielle has many skills: running, jumping and sewing.*
 - Incorrect:
 - *Gabrielle's skills include: running, jumping and sewing.*
- A colon can introduce a restatement of the previous clause.
 - *Xena is a warrior: she spends a lot of time fighting battles.*
- A colon can introduce an elaboration on the previous clause.
 - *Gabrielle was in pain: she had just sprained her ankle.*

The Semicolon (;)

The semicolon separates items in a list when the items themselves have internal punctuation.

- *Gabrielle likes oranges; cherries; and red, yellow, and green apples.*

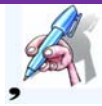





The Exclamation Mark (!)

The exclamation mark is used to show strong feeling about anger, happiness or surprise.

- *What a fantastic day!*
- *"Gabrielle, look out!" yelled Xena.*
- *Come quickly!*



TaLe Resources

	Putting the comma in its place – learn how to use commas correctly in sentences and direct speech. TaLe search by title or by number: 8832
	When do I use a colon? - learn how to use colons correctly to introduce lists, to link two sentences, to introduce a quote and to separate a title and a subtitle. TaLe search by title or by number: 8833
	When do I use a semicolon? - learn how to use semicolons correctly to link sentences. TaLe search by title or by number: 8835
	Putting speech marks in their place - learn how to use speech marks correctly in direct speech, quotes and titles. TaLe search by title or by number: 8836
	How to use indirect speech - learn how to use indirect speech correctly to report what has been said. TaLe search by title or by number: 8837
	Putting the apostrophe in its place - learn how to use contraction and possessive apostrophes correctly. TaLe search by title or by number: 8840

