

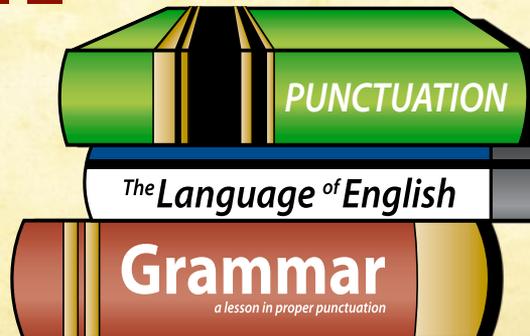
The WRITING CENTER

**Elftmann Student
Success Center**

**A Guide On
How To:**

**Use General
Punctuation**

- Why do we need it?
- Punctuation Rules



General Punctuation Marks

When you hold a conversation with someone, your words grab more meaning from the pauses you take and the inflection you use. Effective writers use punctuation to transfer that meaning to their writing.



Why do we need punctuation?

Readers don't read words one-by-one, but rather in meaningful chunks. Punctuation marks help break up words into **meaningful chunks**, and make your message **clear**. Effective use of punctuation marks makes sure that your message is not lost on the reader.

What are the rules for using basic punctuation marks?

Mark (symbol)	Purpose	Examples:
Period (.)	At the end of a general statement, command, or indirect question.	<i>The water bottle is on the table.</i> <i>Please bring your textbook with you every day.</i> <i>The student asked if he could have an extension.</i>
	After each letter of an abbreviation of a phrase.	<i>Every citizen should travel somewhere outside the U.S.A.</i> <i>Have you ever been anywhere outside the U.S.A.?</i> <i>U.N.I.C.E.F.</i>
	Acronyms that are pronounced as words, not individual letters, do not need periods after each letter.	<i>SCUBA, LASER, MIG, TIG, HVAC</i>

Comma (,)	To separate a date from the year or city from state.	<i>July 4, 1776 Minneapolis, MN</i>
	When written in the middle of a sentence, another comma is placed after the year or state.	<i>The student moved from Nashville, TN, to come to Dunwoody.</i>
	To group numbers.	<i>250,000 1,750,000</i>
	To separate items in a series of three or more.	<i>Students will need a notebook, textbook, and laptop every day.</i>
	If the beginning phrase can be taken out and the sentence is still a complete thought, use a comma.	<i>Every day, students will complete a job sheet.</i>
	If the middle thought can be taken out and the sentence is still a complete thought, use a comma.	<i>Students, especially in the Automotive Program, should take notes.</i>
	With a conjunction to connect two related thoughts in one sentence.	<i>Automotive students need to have good communication skills, for they will deal with customers.</i> <i>Students must be able to follow directions, but also think critically.</i>
Exclamation Point (!)	To show that a statement is a shock, surprise, or command.	<i>Wear safety glasses!</i>
Question Mark (?)	To designate a direct question.	<i>Is campus closed on Friday?</i>
	A polite request does not use a question mark.	<i>Would you please turn in your schedules by Thursday.</i>

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