



PUNCTUATION



PERIOD

A period marks the end of a sentence.

Roy pushed his bicycle all the way home. One of the tires had a puncture.



QUESTION MARK

A question mark indicates the end of a question.

What is your name?

Do you need a period if you have used a question mark? No.



EXCLAMATION POINT

An exclamation point is used to end a dramatic sentence or statement.

Don't put your hand in the fire!

Halt!



QUOTATION MARKS

Quotation marks indicate direct speech, i.e. the exact words spoken.

"I like football," said Jimmy.



COMMA

A comma indicates a natural pause in a sentence and separates items in a list.

John, stopping for a moment, considered the junk on his bedroom floor: a football cleat, a computer magazine, his model helicopter, a dirty tracksuit, rollerblades and his missing homework.



COLON

A colon precedes an explanation or an example of what has gone before, a list, or a quotation.

John thought it was his mother's fault: she should have tidied up and found his missing homework.



SEMI-COLON

A semi-colon is used to separate two sentences that are related, lists of items which have several words, or the clauses in a sentence.

The expedition may be on or off; it all depends on the weather.



PARENTHESES

Parentheses are used to separate extra information from the main sentence or statement.

Dashes (see below) can also be used to separate extra information.



DASHES

Dashes are also used to separate extra information from the main sentence or statement.

Emma adjusted the microscope carefully - the controls were delicate - before focusing once more on the tiny leaf.