

# Perfect Punctuation



## Rules to Remember

### Keep in mind...

- ☑ Punctuation marks are simply signals, pointing out how the written language should be spoken.
- ☑ Periods, question marks, and exclamation points end sentences.
- ☑ Commas signal a pause.
- ☑ Coordinating conjunctions join two independent clauses (sentences).
- ☑ Independent clause + coordinating conjunction + independent clause = a compound sentence.
- ☑ Dependent clauses cannot stand alone; independent clauses can stand alone.
- ☑ Appositives identify or rename nouns and pronouns.
- ☑ Non-restrictive phrases aren't necessary to make a sentence complete.
- ☑ Mild interjections include words like *well* and *oh*.
- ☑ Words that address people are treated like mild interjections.
- ☑ Transitional words and phrases are used to link thoughts between sentences.
- ☑ Semicolons ( ; ) mark a halfway point in strength between a comma and a period.
- ☑ A participle resembles a verb but is used as a modifier. Participles usually end in *-ing* or *-ed*.

## Punctuation Rules

### Commas

- ☑ A comma usually precedes a coordinating conjunction that separates two independent clauses.
- ☑ Commas separate items in a series.
- ☑ Commas set off appositives from the rest of a sentence.
- ☑ Commas set off non-restrictive phrases because they aren't necessary to make complete sentences.
- ☑ Commas separate mild interjections from the rest of the sentence.
- ☑ Commas separate titles or people's names used in direct address from the rest of the sentence.
- ☑ Commas set off transitional words and phrases from the rest of a sentence.
- ☑ A comma follows a dependent clause that comes before an independent clause.
- ☑ A comma follows a single participle or participial phrase that introduces a sentence.
- ☑ A comma always separates the name of a city from the name of a state (example: Chicago, Illinois).
- ☑ A comma follows a friendly salutation.

### Colons

- ☑ A colon (:) follows a formal salutation.
- ☑ A colon follows a sentence or phrase that introduces a list.

### Semicolons

- ☑ Use a semicolon (;) instead of a conjunction to separate two closely related independent clauses, or sentences.
- ☑ Use semicolons to separate items in a series when commas appear between the semicolons.

### Quotation Marks

- ☑ Quotation marks surround the exact words that someone is saying or has spoken.
- ☑ Commas are used to separate a direct quotation from the "he said/she said" part of the sentence.
- ☑ Commas used in a split quotation are "in and then out"—inside the first set of quotes and outside the second.
- ☑ Use quotation marks to indicate shorter works, or parts of works, such as articles, chapters, songs, poems, short stories, and parts of musical compositions.

### Italics and Underlining

- ☑ Use italic type or underlining to indicate longer works, such as book titles, magazine titles, and albums.