

Punctuation

Do not attempt to work through this unit in one session. You may not need to do all the exercises. It depends on whether or not you have problems with punctuation.

Introduction

In this unit, you will get *general* guidance only in the use of the most common features of punctuation. In Units 6–16, there are exercises to help you with punctuation in specific writing contexts.

Here are a few points to think about before you begin the exercises.

- Punctuation helps your reader understand what you mean.
- Punctuation helps you keep track of what you've written and of what you are going to write.
- Some punctuation is simply convention. We do it now because it has always been done that way (e.g. capital letters, apostrophes).
- *Revising* is the right time to look closely at your punctuation. Don't worry about it too much while *drafting*. (See Units 2 and 3.)
- Looking at the punctuation used by other writers will help you more than learning rules.
- Like everything else in writing, punctuation depends on your reader, purpose, content and situation.

In some kinds of writing you have more freedom than in others. Look at these two pieces of writing for example.

- Discuss the differences between the two pieces (in reader, purpose, content and situation).
- Discuss the differences in the type of punctuation used.

Dear Anna,

See what you missed! Not quite as much snow as this however. Just went up the mountain - too cold for me and impossible to ski - blizzard conditions - exciting!

Accommodation & food are fantastic. Sun's always out in the village (while the blizzard continues up above!)

See you soon.

Love Tania X



Miss Anna Barnado

16/12 Slade St,

Annandale, 2038

N.S.W.



Reunion Dinner & Bush Dance:

Tickets available from the school, phone 416050 to book. Numbers are limited so please book early.

Cost: \$21 per head.

Time: 7.00 for 7.30 start.

Table bookings optional.

Dress casual. Refreshments available.

DINE to a musical background
DANCE to RANG TANG BLOCK BAND

This is a once in 21 years celebration. Anyone associated with the school over the past 21 years is most welcome.

Book now. Phone 416050

Common features of punctuation

CAPITAL LETTERS

Use capital letters:

- to begin sentences
e.g. We are happy to inform you that your application has been successful.
Please contact us immediately about a suitable starting date.
- to begin proper names of people, places and things such as companies, government bodies, titles of books or films and important periods in history
e.g. Mr Jackson
Prime Minister
River Nile
Globe Insurance Company
Department of Social Security
'The Day of the Jackal' (capitals for important words only)
World War II
- to begin days of the week and months of the year
e.g. Friday, March
- to abbreviate groups of words which would have capitals if written out fully
e.g. USA - United States of America
ANU - Australian National University
FCA - Finance Corporation of Australia
- *I* by itself or in a contracted form - *I'm, I've, I'd, I'll* - is always written as a capital.

Exercise 1

In this extract from a job application letter, the capital letters are left out. Insert them where necessary.

i wish to apply for the clerical position advertised in the canberra times, saturday, 31st january. at present i am working for the department of finance. although i have only been there since november, i have gained a wide variety of experience in clerical duties. in addition, i worked for the abc for one year as a pay clerk in 1984.

FULL STOPS

Use a full stop:

– at the end of a sentence

e.g. Thank you for your letter dated 12/6/87. I am sorry that I have not responded before this.

– after an abbreviation (short form) *which does not end* with the last letter of the full form of the word

e.g. Nov. 1986

Prof. Jones

\$10 encl. (enclosed)

It's *not* necessary to use full stops in abbreviations like:

Dr (Doctor)

Mr (Mister)

St (Street)

Exercise 2

Put full stops and capital letters where needed into this short extract from a brochure on 'Summer Safety'.



What would you do if you saw a snake?

the safest thing to do is avoid it
snakes are naturally shy of humans
who are a threat to them their first
form of defence is to move away
from danger they will not

deliberately chase humans but if
provoked or cornered they may
attempt to bite snakes are
protected in all states and
territories of australia and may not
be killed unless they threaten life.

QUESTION MARKS

Use a question mark at the end of a sentence which is a question.
e.g.

Aping the young

Q: Why do older people like my brother, 56, try to ape young people in things like clothes, hair styles, music and speech?

I know that he isn't Robinson Crusoe by any means. But what is the reason for this sort of behaviour?

- Younger Sister (only 54)

Exercise 3

Put question marks where needed into this advertisement from a student newspaper.

W.I.R.E.



For Example:

How can I stop my boss from annoying me.
Why am I finding it hard to get social security.
Where do I go for legal help.
What do I do if my ex-husband won't leave me alone.
Who can help me if my landlord threatens to evict me and my children.

Do I have to speak English to be understood on the telephone.

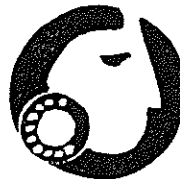
NO ! W.I.R.E has interpreters in your language.

What is W.I.R.E.

It's a service by women for women. It's funded (given money) by the State Government.

Who needs W.I.R.E.

Any woman living in Victoria who needs help and advice.



In Melbourne
Ring 63 6841

In the Country
Ring (03) 637 838

Address
3rd Floor
238 Flinders Lane
Melbourne 3000

EXCLAMATION MARKS

Use an exclamation mark instead of a full stop:

- to emphasize your thoughts
- to express strong feelings (surprise, excitement, amusement, etc.).

You will use them most often in informal writing (letters to friends, postcards, notes, etc.).

e.g.

Right now I'm working at the Metropolitan Museum of Art as a curator's assistant. I'm loving it!

I got your note. I am very upset!!

I hear that you just had your 40th (!!!) birthday.

Exercise 4

Rewrite this message from a greeting card, replacing some full stops with exclamation marks.

Get well soon

Lex

So sorry I haven't written sooner. I heard about your accident from Ben. What an amazing injury. Hope you are following doctor's orders and staying in bed. I won't be able to visit you for a while. Business is booming. Thank goodness. We've had so many bills to pay. Hope the book cheers you up. I absolutely loved it.

Love Julia

COMMAS

The comma has many uses. These examples will help you understand how to use it.

Barbara, please come back!

Other sources of Vitamin C are berry fruits, green vegetables, mangos, pawpaws, red and green peppers, parsley, oranges, lemons and grapefruit.

Jack, the fellow I told you about, has finally moved out.

A fourth concert, on February 2, has been added to those on January 28, 29 and 30.

In the end she told him off, and we all felt a lot better instantly.

For information about the programme, please phone 621035.

Exercise 5

Put commas where needed into this letter from the editor of a residents' newspaper.

Message from the Editor

This is the last issue of the Post before Christmas so I would like to take the opportunity of wishing readers a happy Christmas.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank all those people who have helped the Post this year. These people give their time voluntarily to organise distribution letterbox write articles chase up information and advertisements take photographs and prepare the paper for the printer. I think you will agree they do a great job.

That's all for this year. See you in 1989.

The Editor

APOSTROPHE OF POSSESSION

The apostrophe of possession (') tells us that somebody or something 'owns' or 'possesses' something or somebody.

The underlined parts in the examples below are the 'owners'. Studying these examples will help you understand where to put the apostrophe.

Examples:

the flat of John – John's flat
the boyfriend of my sister – my sister's boyfriend
the car of my boss – my boss's car
the friend of Mr Jones – Mr Jones's friend
the school of my nephews – my nephews' school
the rights of the workers – the workers' rights
the centre of/for the children – the children's centre
the liberation of women – women's liberation

Can you see the rule?

The apostrophe (') comes immediately after the word that names the owner or owners (John, sister, boss, Mr Jones, nephews, workers, children, women). This is so for singular and plural nouns.

So:

- You add 's to singular nouns (John's, sister's, boss's, Mr Jones's).
- You add an ' to regular plural nouns (nephews', workers').
- You add an 's to irregular plural nouns (children's, women's).

Note: Some singular nouns end in an 's' sound (boss, Mr Jones). It is usual to treat these as other singular nouns and add 's. Some writers, however, add an apostrophe *only* to some of these nouns, especially if the word will have too many 's' sounds (e.g. the car of Mr Janssens – Mr Janssens' car) and if it is a biblical or classical name (the journey of Moses – Moses' journey, the poems of Keats – Keats' poems).

Exercise 6

Change these examples so that you use the apostrophe of possession.

- a) the father of my boyfriend
- b) the brother of Peter
- c) the house of my friends
- d) the association of students
- e) the office of the foreman
- f) the changing room of the men
- g) the office of Ross
- h) the club of the sportswomen

APOSTROPHE OF OMISSION

The apostrophe of omission tells us that letters are missing. Look at the examples below. The underlined letters can be replaced with an apostrophe. (What is unusual about the last example?)

Examples:

what is – what's

let us – let's

are not – aren't

she is/she has – she's

I would/I had – I'd

cannot – can't

will not – won't

Most people use short forms, with the apostrophe, in informal writing (notes, postcards, personal letters, etc.).

Exercise 7

Use short forms for all the underlined words in the note below.

Hi,
Just writing to say I might not go to Geelong for the long weekend so maybe I will get to see you after all. I have tried to contact Jack about your staying there but he is never there. If I cannot get him, you will have to spend money on a long distance phone call. (I know how that will hurt!)

Hope all is well with you.
Bye Lien

INVERTED COMMAS OR QUOTATION MARKS

Use double quotation marks (" "):

– When you write down the exact words someone says (direct speech).

e.g.

I finally got the chance to say "Follow that cab!"

It was just like the movies!

- When you write the name of a book, a play, a film, etc.
e.g.

*John just loved "The History of Rock and Roll".
He sends his thanks.*

Use single quotation marks (' ') if you use titles or direct speech within direct speech.

e.g.

*His exact words were "I am going to write a book.
I'm calling it 'How to Manage your Parents'."*

(You sometimes see the reverse situation, but in handwriting this still seems to be the rule.)

Exercise 8

Use quotation marks where needed in this draft of a story.

I couldn't let her go without a word. Will you return?
I asked. Never, was the short reply. She saw the
distress on my face. Look, she said, I don't mean to
hurt you. I just can't see any other way. It seems
hopeless. I knew she was right.

BRACKETS

Use brackets:

- *within a sentence* to separate a thought that is extra to the main idea of a sentence
- *within a longer piece of writing* to separate a sentence or sentences that are extra to the main idea.
e.g.

I'm really interested in setting up a community craft shop (like the one we saw that weekend).

I went into hospital on Xmas Eve, had Meredith on Xmas morning, and was home on Boxing Day. (A three-day stay in hospital is considered a long time here.)

We have been asked (told) to do 3 nights a week overtime!

Jumble Sale

SATURDAY, 8th OCTOBER, 1988

9.00a.m. to 2.00p.m.

AT HENRY LAWSON HOUSE
(OLD REVESBY WORKERS' CLUB PREMISES)
BRETT STREET, REVESBY

Exercise 9

Use brackets where appropriate in the writing below.

TERESA

Boss wants to see
you when you come
in it sounds urgent.

Ingrid

Dear Jan,

We've been in
Canberra now for 3 months.
It's freezing at the
moment -6° this morning
but we like it a lot.

DASHES

Use dashes:

- in informal writing instead of full stops, commas, brackets
e.g.

Fran

This is THE place for a
holiday - sun, surf, good food,
etc etc. I'm not really sure
when I'll be back - maybe
never - do you want to join
me? Write c/- Poste Restante
- same as before - oh well -
back to the beach (yawn!)
Phil x

F. Marco

6 Reid Place

Braddon A.C.T.

AUSTRALIA

- in formal writing, to separate items listed.
e.g.

Things you can do to lose fat:

- increase level of exercise
- decrease calorie intake, but avoid crash diets
- eat larger meals at the start of the day, smaller meals at the end
- record your eating habits.

Exercise 10

Rewrite this extract from a brochure on 'Summer Safety'. Use dashes and other punctuation to make it clearer.

Are you planning to go into the bush this summer remember to take a safety kit which contains a map and compass waterproof matches in a waterproof container solid fuel firelighter or candle a	whistle a mirror for emergency signalling a small notebook and pencil a knife or other sharp instrument a cup or container water sterilization tablets a first aid kit a torch
---	--

COLONS(:) AND SEMI-COLONS (;)

These features of punctuation are often used incorrectly. It is probably best to avoid them. Here are examples of their correct usage.

Better Photography

Here are some important points to remember when taking a photo:

- avoid having your subjects look at the camera
- avoid group photos where everyone has the same smile
- learn to take photos without being seen.

Going on holidays? Before you set off, check your camera carefully. Make certain everything is in good working order; shoot a trial film to be sure. Estimate how many films you will need; nothing is more irritating than being out of film in the midst of perfect scenery. Also, don't forget your lens cap; you'll need it to keep unwanted light out of your camera.

Exercise 11

Imagine you are on the editorial committee of a student magazine. Your job is to edit the front page below for punctuation.

The Times

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

Editorial

On the last sunday of october the clocks are changed in most of australia.

In all states except for queensland and western australia clocks and watches are put forward by one hour. For example 9 in the morning becomes 10. we call this daylight saving because we make better use of the increased daylight hours in the longer summer days. People can enjoy sporting and outdoor activities until quite late each evening.

Enjoy the extra daylight while it lasts because on the first sunday of march, everyone will have to put the hands of their watches and clocks back again, and get up in the dark

See you next edition

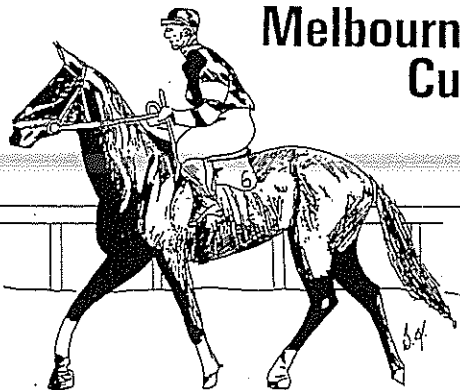
Lygon Street Festa



The lygon street festa takes place on Saturday the 11th and Sunday the 12th of November in Carlton. There are many Italian shops and cafes in lygon street so the festa has an Italian flavour. However many other ethnic groups take part in the two days of celebrations. There is music dancing and all kinds of food as well as fun and games for the kids. You can get free programs on the day.

But one warning. If you want a quiet weekend then stay at home! You'll find almost as many people in this one street as at the Melbourne Cup

Melbourne Cup



Australia's greatest horse racing event is held on the first Tuesday in november at flemington race course and the distance is 3200m. 2 miles Melbourne is the only place in the world that has a public holiday for a horse race.

The first Cup was run in 1861. That year there were 17 horses in the race and 4,000 people attended. These days there are about 25 horses running and often more than 100,000 people at the Melbourne Cup many more thousands of people stay home and watch it on television or listen to it on the radio.

Working in pairs where possible, correct the punctuation where you think necessary. (You may need to add punctuation, omit it or change it from one form to another.)

Compare your results with those of other students.

Punctuation

ANSWERS

Exercise 1

I wish to apply for the clerical position advertised in "The Canberra Times", Saturday, 31st January. At present I am working for the Department of Finance.

Although I have only been there since November, I have gained a wide variety of experience in clerical duties. In addition, I worked for the ABC for one year as a pay clerk in 1984.

Exercise 2

What would you do if you saw a snake?

The safest thing to do is avoid it. Snakes are naturally shy of humans who are a threat to them. Their first form of defence is to move away from danger. They will not deliberately chase humans but if provoked or cornered they may attempt to bite. Snakes are protected in all states and territories of Australia and may not be killed unless they threaten life.

Exercise 3

What is W.I.R.E.?

Who needs W.I.R.E.?

How can I stop my boss from annoying me?

Why am I finding it hard to get social security?

Where do I go for legal help?

What do I do if my ex-husband won't leave me alone?

Who can help me if my landlord threatens to evict me and my children?

Do I have to speak English to be understood on the telephone?

Exercise 4

Exclamation marks could go after:

... injury!

... booming!

... goodness!

... to pay!

... loved it!

Exercise 5

Message from the Editor

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The Editor

Answers

Exercise 6

- a) my boyfriend's father
- b) Peter's brother
- c) my friends' house
- d) the students' association
- e) the foreman's office
- f) the men's changing room
- g) Ross's office
- h) the sportswomen's club

Exercise 7

mightn't, I'll, I've, can't, you'll, that'll, all's

Exercise 8

I couldn't let her go without a word. "Will you return?" I asked. "Never," was the short reply. She saw the distress on my face. "Look," she said, "I don't mean to hurt you. I just can't see any other way. It seems hopeless." I knew she was right.

Exercise 9

... (it sounds urgent).
... (-6° this morning) ...

Exercise 10

Are you planning to go into the bush this summer? Remember to take a safety kit which contains:

- a map and compass
- waterproof matches in a waterproof container
- solid fuel firelighter or candle
- a whistle
- a mirror for emergency signalling
- a small notebook and pencil
- a knife or other sharp instrument
- a cup or container
- water sterilization tablets
- a first aid kit
- a torch.

Exercise 11

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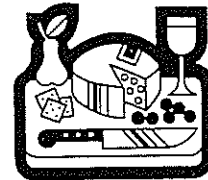
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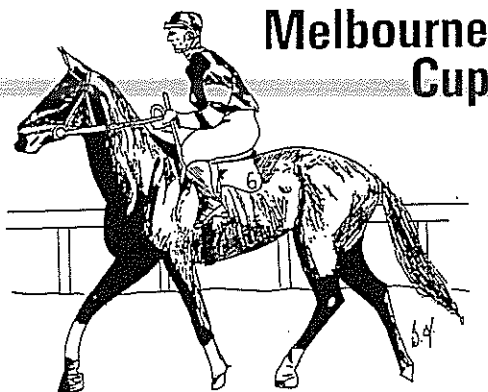
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