

Appendix

PUNCTUATION

While speaking, we use intonation, pauses and voice modulation to help the listener grasp exactly what we try to communicate. In writing, this is achieved with the help of punctuation.

Punctuation is the system of symbols that we use in order to communicate efficiently and effectively what we actually wish to convey. The purpose is to make the meaning of what we write, clear to the reader. Punctuation marks are tools that have set functions. They are not just an optional frill, but are indispensable to exchange written information accurately.

The correct usage of punctuation marks expresses the intended meaning of the sentence. At times, wrong punctuation marks can present just the opposite of what you try to say. At times, serious sentences without proper punctuation become jokes, leading to confusion and misunderstanding.

For e.g. Read these two sentences below:

- a) The hostel warden said, “Come on, let’s eat lovely ladies.”
- b) The hostel warden said, “Come on, let’s eat, lovely ladies.”

The meaning of these sentences depends on the presence or absence of a comma before ‘lovely ladies’. The

absence of comma in the first sentence portrays the hostel warden as a wicked cannibal. Therefore, it is imperative that the rudiments of punctuation are properly understood, precisely applied and sensibly positioned.

You have been introduced to the concept of punctuation right from the primary classes. Accurate and appropriate use of punctuation is an important aspect of language use. Let’s recall the salient features of some commonly used punctuation devices.

The following are the punctuation marks commonly used in English language.

1.	Full stop / period	.
2.	Comma	,
3.	Semicolon	;
4.	Colon	:
5.	Question mark	?
6.	Exclamatory mark	!
7.	Apostrophe	'
8.	Quotation marks	“....”
9.	Hyphen	-
10.	Dash	—
11.	Parentheses	()
12.	ellipsis	...
13.	slash	/
14.	asterisk	*