

## Revise your punctuation! - 1

Many students are good at reading articles in English but when it comes to **punctuation** in **dictation** (a listening, writing and spelling exercise) they sometimes run into problems. While we use **punctuation marks** in written form we don't often say them aloud. It is of course just a question of remembering them after learning them. The question is though how good are you at remembering them? Even native English people forget their **punctuation**! So where should we start? We all hopefully know where a **full stop (point, dot or period)** (i.e. .) goes - at the end of a sentence! Probably a **comma** (i.e. ,), but let's double-check everything.

**Colons** (i.e. :) are used, for example, before a list e.g. *She could only find three ingredients: sugar, flour, milk.* They are also used before a summary. *To summarise: we set up camp before nightfall and then the wolves attacked.* We also use them before a quote e.g. *As J.K. Rowling wrote: Harry was a clever wizard.* **Colons** are also used to complete a statement of fact e.g. *there are only three types of cowboy: the good, the bad and the ugly.*

**Semi-colons** (i.e. ;) are used to link two separate sentences that are closely related e.g. *the children came home today; they had been away a week.* **Semi-colons** are also used in a sentence when there are already commas e.g. *Dr Who, created for the BBC; Star Trek, created by Gene Roddenberry; and Star Wars, shown at cinemas worldwide are all science fiction movies.* Another example of a **semi-colon**: *I think she's right; however, it's difficult to know.*

A **question mark** (i.e. ?) is required for all questions regardless of whether a response is required. Rhetorical questions have **question marks**; don't they? An **exclamation mark** (or **exclamation point**) (i.e. !) is used to add emphasis to the statement e.g. *I loved the film!*

When you start a new sentence you need to leave a **space** (i.e. end of sentence. **space** Start new sentence...) of one letter between sentences. Before computers in the days of the typewriter two spaces were left.

**Category: English Language / Grammar / Punctuation**  
**Level: Intermediate / Upper intermediate**

**Commas** (i.e. , ) are used to allow the giving of additional information within a sentence – like to indicate contrast e.g. *The car was brown, not white, and it was quite big.* We also use **commas** instead of putting the phrase in brackets e.g. *The French recipe, which we hadn't tried before, is easy to follow.* **Commas** are also used where the phrase adds relevant information e.g. *Mr Smith, 64, ran his first marathon six years ago.*

**Commas** are used when the addition is not necessary to the meaning of the sentence e.g. *Mr Smith, who enjoys watching football, ran his first marathon six years ago.* **Commas** are added when the main clause of the sentence is dependant on the preceding clause e.g. *Though the baby alligator was small, I still feared for my life.* Another example: *If at first you don't succeed, give up.* **Commas** are also used where a pause is required. For example, to make the reading more natural e.g. *Whatever happens, don't panic.* They are also used to avoid confusion e.g. *To Karen, Kate left her favourite book.*

**Commas** are also used in address or quotation, for example, when addressing someone by name e.g. *So Simon, I'm sending you to Asia.* **Commas** are also used when quoting direct speech e.g. *...and then the boss said, "I'm sending you to Asia."* **Commas** are used to indicate the omission of a word or phrase e.g. *Use too little sugar and the mixture will be sweet, {use} too little and it will be too sour.*

**Commas** are used for opening phrases or introductory phrases e.g. *In general, sixty-four is quite old to run a marathon.* Another example: *On the whole, baby alligators only attack when hungry.* You should use **commas**, for example, around 'for example' (or, that is, etc...) There are exceptions to this, for example, when using abbreviations. We also use **commas** when using conjunctive adverbs e.g. *Unfortunately, the baby alligator was already in a bad mood and, furthermore, yellow wasn't its favourite colour.*

**'Punctuation 2' follows this lesson.**

## EXERCISES

**1. Punctuation:** What is punctuation? Give three examples of different forms of punctuation. How good is your punctuation? Go round the room swapping details.

**2. Dictation:** The teacher will read four to six lines of the article slowly and clearly. Students will write down what they hear. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again. Self correct your work from page two - filling in spaces and correcting mistakes. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total number of errors. Less than five is very good. Ten is acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than twenty - we need to do some work!

**3. Reading:** The students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

**4. Vocabulary:** Students now look through the article and underline any vocabulary they do not know. Look in dictionaries. Discuss and help each other out. The teacher will go through and explain any unknown words or phrases.

**5. The article:** Students look through the article with the teacher.

- a) What is the article about?
- b) What do you think about the article?

**6. Let's chat!** In pairs: One of you is speaking on your mobile **or** computer to your friend on Skype in another country. You are telling them all about the English grammar lesson you did today in class! Tell them about the punctuation revision you did! The other then chats about the punctuation marks used in their country. How do they compare?

**7. Let's do 'The Article Quiz':** Have the students quiz each other in pairs. They score one point for each correct answer, and half a point each time they have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

### **Student A**

- 1) When are semi-colons used?
- 2) Who was a clever wizard?
- 3) When do we use a full stop?
- 4) What was created by Gene Roddenberry?
- 5) When do we use a comma?

### **Student B**

- 1) How big was the car and what colour was it?
- 2) Who enjoys watching football?
- 3) When do we use an exclamation mark?
- 4) Who was in a bad mood?
- 5) When do we use a question mark?

**8. Let's write! An e-mail:** Write and send a 200 word e-mail to your teacher about: **Punctuation**. Try to use as many forms of punctuation as you can! Your e-mail can be read out in class.

## LET'S PRACTISE

**1. Colons:** Write two sentences using a **colon** in each sentence. Correct your mistakes. Compare with what other students have written.

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Semi-colons:** Write two sentences using a **semi-colon** in each sentence. Correct your mistakes. Compare with what other students have written.

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Question & exclamation marks:** Write a sentence using a **question mark** in it then do another with an **exclamation mark**. Correct your mistakes. Compare with what other students have written.

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Commas:** Write two sentences using **commas** in each sentence. Try to use as many ways of using commas as you can! Correct your mistakes. Compare with what other students have written.

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

## SPELLING TEST

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards, check your answers with your teacher, using the following ratings: **Pass = 12, Good = 15, Very good = 18, Excellent = 20**

1	regardless	11	summarise
2	already	12	probably
3	however	13	ingredients
4	another	14	statement
5	hopefully	15	nightfall
6	sometimes	16	wolves
7	dictation	17	phrases
8	abbreviations	18	emphasis
9	alligator	19	punctuation
10	rhetorical	20	quotation

## GAP FILL: READING

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

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Many students are good at reading articles in English but when it comes to \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ (a listening, writing and spelling exercise) they sometimes run into problems. While we use **punctuation marks** in written form we don't often say them aloud. It is of course just a question of remembering them after learning them. The question is though how good are you at remembering them? Even \_\_\_\_\_ English people forget their **punctuation**! So where should we start? We all \_\_\_\_\_ know where a **full stop (point, dot or period)** (i.e. .) goes - at the end of a sentence! \_\_\_\_\_ a **comma** (i.e. ,), but let's double-check everything.

**Colons** (i.e. :) are used, for example, before a list e.g. *She could only find three \_\_\_\_\_: sugar, flour, milk.* They are also used before a \_\_\_\_\_. *To \_\_\_\_\_: we set up camp before nightfall and then the wolves attacked.* We also use them before a quote e.g. *As J.K. Rowling wrote: Harry was a clever wizard.* **Colons** are also used to complete a statement of fact e.g. *there are only three types of cowboy: the good, the bad and the ugly.*

**Semi-colons** (i.e. ;) are used to link two separate sentences that are closely related e.g. *the children came home today; they had been away a week.* **Semi-colons** are also used in a sentence when there are already commas e.g. *Dr Who, created for the BBC; Star Trek, created by Gene Roddenberry; and Star Wars, shown at \_\_\_\_\_ worldwide are all science fiction movies.* Another example of a **semi-colon**: *I think she's right; however, it's difficult to know.* A **question mark** (i.e. ?) is required for all questions \_\_\_\_\_ of whether a response is required. \_\_\_\_\_ questions have **question marks**; don't they? An \_\_\_\_\_ **mark** (or **exclamation point**) (i.e. !) is used to add \_\_\_\_\_ to the statement e.g. *I loved the film!*

When you start a new sentence you need to leave a **space** (i.e. end of \_\_\_\_\_). **space** Start new sentence...) of one letter between sentences. Before \_\_\_\_\_ in the days of the \_\_\_\_\_ two spaces were left.

summarise

ingredients

hopefully

summary

probably

dictation

native

punctuation

regardless

emphasis

sentence

cinemas

typewriter

exclamation

computers

rhetorical

## GAP FILL: LISTENING

*Listen and fill in the spaces.*

### Revise your punctuation! - 1

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**Semi-colons** (i.e. ;) are used to link two \_\_\_\_\_ that are closely related e.g. *the children came home today; \_\_\_\_\_ week.* **Semi-colons** are also used in a sentence when there are already commas e.g. *Dr Who, created for the BBC; Star Trek, created by Gene Roddenberry; and Star Wars, shown \_\_\_\_\_ are all science fiction movies.* Another example of a **semi-colon**: *I think she's right; however, it's difficult to know.*

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## GRAMMAR

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

### Revise your punctuation! - 1

(1)\_\_\_ students are good at reading articles in English but when it comes to **punctuation** in **dictation** (a listening, writing and spelling exercise) they sometimes run into problems. (2)\_\_\_ we use **punctuation marks** in written form we don't often say them aloud. It is of course (3)\_\_\_ a question of remembering them after learning them. The question is (4)\_\_\_ how good are you at remembering them? (5)\_\_\_ native English people forget their **punctuation**! So where (6)\_\_\_ we start? We all hopefully know where a **full stop (point, dot or period)** (i.e. .) goes - at the end of a sentence! Probably a **comma** (i.e. ,), but let's double-check everything.

**Colons** (i.e. :) are used, for example, before a list e.g. *She could only find three ingredients: sugar, flour, milk.* They are also used before a summary. *To summarise: we set up camp before nightfall and then the wolves attacked.* We also use (7)\_\_\_ before a quote e.g. *As J.K. Rowling wrote: Harry was a clever wizard.* **Colons** are also used to complete a statement of fact e.g. (8)\_\_\_ *are only three types of cowboy: the good, the bad and the ugly.*

**Semi-colons** (i.e. ;) are used to link two separate sentences that are closely related e.g. (1)\_\_\_ *children came home today; they had been away (2)\_\_\_ week.* **Semi-colons** are also used in a sentence when there are already commas e.g. *Dr Who, created for the BBC; Star Trek, created by Gene Roddenberry; and Star Wars, shown (3)\_\_\_ cinemas worldwide are all science fiction movies.* Another example of a **semi-colon**: *I think she's right; however, (4)\_\_\_ difficult to know.* A **question mark** (i.e. ?) is required (5)\_\_\_ all questions regardless (6)\_\_\_ whether a response is required. Rhetorical questions have **question marks**; don't they? (7)\_\_\_ **exclamation mark** (or **exclamation point**) (i.e. !) is used to add emphasis to the statement e.g. (8)\_\_\_ *loved the film!* When you start a new sentence you need to leave a **space** (i.e. end of sentence. **space** Start new sentence...) of one letter between sentences. Before computers in the days of the typewriter two spaces were left.

**them**

**should**

**many**

**just**

**though**

**there**

**while**

**even**

**it's**

**an**

**I**

**a**

**the**

**at**

**of**

**for**

## DISCUSSION

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS

- 1) Should you practise English punctuation more often?
- 2) Do you manage to write the correct punctuation marks when doing a dictation exercise in your language?
- 3) Do you manage to write the correct punctuation marks when doing a dictation exercise in English?
- 4) When was the last time you did dictation in your language?
- 5) When was the last time you did dictation in English?
- 6) Do you like dictation? Why? Why not?!
- 7) Would another lesson like this be useful to you?
- 8) What three bits of advice would you give anyone revising punctuation?
- 9) Are you going to remember what you learnt in today's lesson?

### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS

- 1) What do you think about what you read?
- 2) How important is punctuation?
- 3) Are you good at punctuation?
- 4) How often do you practise punctuation (in your language)?
- 5) What bits of punctuation do you need to brush up on?
- 6) How often do you practise 'English punctuation'?
- 7) Do you find English punctuation difficult?
- 8) Has this lesson been tough for you?
- 9) Has this lesson been of any benefit to you? If yes, how?

### ANSWERS

**GAP FILL: Revise your punctuation! – 1:** Many students are good at reading articles in English but when it comes to **punctuation** in **dictation** (a listening, writing and spelling exercise) they sometimes run into problems. While we use **punctuation marks** in written form we don't often say them aloud. It is of course just a question of remembering them after learning them. The question is though how good are you at remembering them? Even **native** English people forget their **punctuation**! So where should we start? We all **hopefully** know where a **full stop (point, dot or period)** (i.e. .) goes - at the end of a sentence! **Probably** a **comma** (i.e. ,), but let's double-check everything. **Colons** (i.e. :) are used, for example, before a list e.g. *She could only find three ingredients: sugar, flour, milk.* They are also used before a **summary**. To **summarise**: *we set up camp before nightfall and then the wolves attacked.* We also use them before a quote e.g. *As J.K. Rowling wrote: Harry was a clever wizard.* **Colons** are also used to complete a statement of fact e.g. *there are only three types of cowboy: the good, the bad and the ugly.* **Semi-colons** (i.e. ;) are used to link two separate sentences that are closely related e.g. *the children came home today; they had been away a week.* **Semi-colons** are also used in a sentence when there are already commas e.g. *Dr Who, created for the BBC; Star Trek, created by Gene Roddenberry; and Star Wars, shown at cinemas worldwide are all science fiction movies.* Another example of a **semi-colon**: *I think she's right; however, it's difficult to know.* A **question mark** (i.e. ?) is required for all questions **regardless** of whether a response is required. **Rhetorical** questions have **question marks**; don't they? An **exclamation mark** (or **exclamation point**) (i.e. !) is used to add **emphasis** to the statement e.g. *I loved the film!* When you start a new sentence you need to leave a **space** (i.e. end of sentence. **space** Start new sentence...) of one letter between sentences. Before **computers** in the days of the **typewriter** two spaces were left.

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