2 Quick Guides

CORRECT PUNCTUATION
CORRECT WORD USAGE

QUICK GUIDE TO CORRECT PUNCTUATION

Punctuation	Usage
Apostrophe (')	• Apostrophe indicates possession, e.g. "The child's toy is on the dresser." • It can also be used to create contractions, e.g. "The toy isn't on the dresser." • It is also used with capital letters and numbers when the meaning is not clear, e.g., "Please dot your i's" "Ted couldn't distinguish between his 6's and 0's." • The apostrophe is also used with the plural of individual numbers, e.g., "I think you have missed a few 6's here."
Colon (;)	• Introduce an explanation, example, series, list. • Salutation in formal correspondence: Dear Mr. Thomas: Dear Ms. Moran: • Use with numbers indicating hours, minutes, seconds, ratios, biblical chapters and verses, titles and subtitles, and bibliographic entries.

Capitalization	• Some of the different situations that require capitalization of the first letter of the specific words include the following:
	   o Proper nouns and proper adjectives
	   o Titles before a proper name
	   o Titles of works, except for articles, prepositions, and conjunctions
	   o Compass directions (when referring to a specific location), e.g., North, South, South-East.
	   o Family relationships (only if the word is used as part of a name or as a substitute for the name), e.g., Aunt Jane, Cousin Albert, my Mother.
	   o The word "Federal" should always be capitalized
	   o The word "federally" should never be capitalized
	   o Capitalize titles that include state name, e.g., New York State is also called the Empire State; The state of Alaska is the largest in the Union

Comma (,)	• Commas are used to separate items in a series of different items, e.g., "The sandwich is made of ham, cheese, and lettuce." • It is also used to separate adverbs or adjectives that modify a single item, e.g., "Use the red, white, black, and blue tablecloth." • Independent clauses can also be separated using commas, e.g., "The light went out, and someone screamed." • Commas are also used to set off introductory phrases and clauses, e.g., "As I get older, I think more about the past." • Commas are also used for highlighting contrasting expressions, e.g., "You should use a pie chart, not a bar chart." • It is also used for salutation in informal correspondence, e.g., "Dear John, thank you for your response; Dear Mary, I hope you are in good health."
Ellipses (…)	Three dots (…) are used when some text is omitted from between the sentence. Four dots (….) are used to show you have omitted something from a quote and are ending your sentence.

Italics	• The italic fonts are used to indicate specific names or titles of books, films, works of art, vehicles, newspapers, magazines, foreign words, legal citations, scientific names for plants, non-English words, aircraft, spacecraft, trains, etc. • It is also used to emphasize ~~any~~ words or phrases, e.g. "She wanted this book, not that one."
Numbers	• Numbers ranging from one to ten are spelled, e.g., "We will have four new employees reporting next week." • If numbers are greater than ten, numbers are represented numerically, e.g~~.,~~ "There are 25 buildings within County government." • A period of time is also mentioned in numerical terms, e.g., "I have lived here for 5 years" • Express 0 numerically when it is part of a number. Spell out zero when it is used as a noun or adjective, e.g., "They adopted a zero-tolerance policy."
Parentheses ()	• Parentheses are used to enclose material that is of minor or secondary importance to the sentence. • It is also used to enclose textual citations and numbers or letters in a list.
Period (.)	• Use one space after a period. • Period is used to end a declarative sentence or indirect question, e.g., "Please close the door as you leave the room." • Periods are also used after an abbreviation, e.g., Dr., Prof. • It is also used after initials in a name, e.g., George W. Bush.
Quotation marks ("")	• It signals direct word-to-word quotations from an original source. • It can also enclose titles of short works and definitions. • Periods and commas are placed inside closing quotation marks, e.g., "The period is inside the end quote." • Question marks, exclamation points, and dashes are placed outside the quotation marks. These markers are placed outside the quotation marks if they are not part of the original quoted material.
Semi-colon (;)	• Use between two independent clauses that are not joined by a conjunction: The light went out; someone screamed. • Use before conjunctive adverbs, such as however, therefore, etc. • Clarify a long, complex series of items and separate items when multiple punctuation is used within one or more of the items in the series.

CORRECT WORD USAGE

Accept vs. Except	Accept = To receive, e.g. "Adam went to the stage to **accept** his award." Except = To exclude, e.g. "Everything was delicious **except** tomato soup."
Affect vs. Effect	Affect = to influence (verb), e.g. "My health has been affected by the increased air pollution." Effect = result (noun), e.g. "Increase in crime rate is one of the effects of unemployment."
All together vs. Altogether	All together = everyone Altogether = completely
Among vs. Between	Among = Compared to many, e.g. "The cake was distributed among the 12 students." Between = Compared to two, e.g. "The cake was shared between the 2 students."
Amount vs. Number	Amount = non-discrete quantities, e.g. "the amount of water in the ocean". Number = discrete quantities, e.g. "the number of ounces in the cup."
Continual vs. Continuous	Continual = close recurrence, e.g. "It is rare to get continual sunshine here." Continuous = constant, e.g. "The flow of this river is continuous."
Ensure vs. Insure vs. Assure	Ensure = to guarantee, e.g. "You must ensure that you fulfill this obligation on time." Insure = to protect against loss, e.g. "I hope that you are able to insure your house by the end of today." Assure = to promise, e.g. "You need to assure me that you will not steal again."
Fewer vs. Less	Fewer = countable number, e.g. "fewer than a dozen pages" Less = uncountable quantity, e.g. "less water in the vase"
i.e. vs. e.g.	i.e. = that is e.g. = for example,
It's vs. Its	It's = a contraction for **"it is"** Its = a possessive form of "**it**"
Principle vs. Principal	Principle = code or standard, e.g. "The first principle is the most important." Principal = primary person, e.g. "Go and talk to the principal."
Stationary vs. Stationery	Stationary = fixed in position, e.g. "Nothing is stationary in this galaxy." Stationery = paper and envelopes, e.g. "I need to buy more stationery."
That vs. Which	That = introduces essential information, e.g. "The mystery book that is on the third shelf is mine." Which = introduces nonessential information, e.g. "The mystery book, which is on the third shelf, is mine."
Their vs. There vs. They're	Their = possessive form of they. "Their books…" There = expletive, e.g. "There is a need to perform this task today" They're = a contraction of they are. "They're all boys."
Your vs. You're	Your = possessive form of you You're = a contraction for you are

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Bio

Patricia Haddock has been a successful entrepreneur for more than 25 years. A professional writer, editor, trainer, and consultant, Patricia uses a multi-disciplinary approach to help her clients develop a success mindset and overcome obstacles to achieve unstoppable success. Visit her website at www.theunstoppableprofessional.com.

How to Communicate like a Pro

By Patricia Haddock

The ability to write and speak clearly and accurately is the mark of a professional whether you are in a career or are an entrepreneur. Good communication skills help others understand you and help you understand them. This leads to fewer mistakes, better relationships, and increased productivity. In this course, you will discover strategies, tactics, and tools to help improve your communication skills, increase your confidence when presenting your ideas, and improve your written communication.

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