

full stop (BrE) period (AmE)

at the end of a sentence that is not a question or an exclamation:

I knocked at the door. There was no reply.

I knocked again.

sometimes in abbreviations:

Jan. e.g. a.m.

in internet and e-mail addresses (said 'dot')

http://www.oup.co.uk

comma

to separate words in a list, though they are often omitted before *and*:

a bouquet of red, pink and white roses

tea, coffee, milk or hot chocolate

to separate phrases or clauses:

If you keep calm, take your time,

concentrate

and think ahead, then you're likely to pass

your test.

Worn out after all the excitement of the

party, the children soon fell asleep.

before and after a clause or phrase that gives additional, but not essential, information about the noun it follows:

The Pennine Hills, which are very popular

with walkers, are situated between Lancashire and Yorkshire.

(do not use commas before and after a clause that **defines** the noun it follows)

The hills that separate Lancashire from

Yorkshire are called the Pennines.

to separate main clauses, especially long

ones, linked by a conjunction such as *and*,

as, but, for, or:

We had been looking forward to our holiday

all year, but unfortunately it rained every day.

to separate an introductory word or phrase, or an adverb or adverbial phrase

that applies to the whole sentence, from the rest of the sentence:

Oh, so that's where it was.

As it happens, however, I never saw her

again.

By the way, did you hear about Sue's car?

to separate a tag question from the rest of the sentence:

It's quite expensive, isn't it?

You live in Bristol, right?

before or after 'he said', etc. when writing

down conversation:

'Come back soon,' she said.

before a short quotation:

Disraeli said, 'Little things affect little minds'.

colon

to introduce a list of items:

These are our options: we go by train

and

leave before the end of the show; or we take

the car and see it all.

in formal writing, before a clause or phrase that gives more information about

the main clause. (You can use a semicolon

or a full stop, but not a comma, instead of a colon here.)

The garden had been neglected for a long

time: it was overgrown and full of weeds.

to introduce a quotation, which may be indented:

As Kenneth Morgan writes:

The truth was, perhaps, that Britain in the years from 1914 to 1983 had not changed all that fundamentally.

Others, however, have challenged this view...

semicolon

instead of a comma to separate parts of a

sentence that already contain commas:

She was determined to succeed whatever the cost; she would achieve her aim, whoever might suffer on the way.

in formal writing, to separate two main clauses, especially those not joined by a

conjunction:

The sun was already low in the sky; it would soon be dark.

question mark

at the end of a direct question:

*Where's the car?
You're leaving already?*

Do not use a question mark at the end of an

indirect question:

He asked if I was leaving.

especially with a date, to express doubt:

*John Marston (?1575–1634)
1523*

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Appendix 4
Punctuation

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