



P05 - 013

# CHAPTER 13

*the art of language | punctuation*

When you walk into class, you see this on the board:

*A woman without her man is nothing.*

The Professor asks two students to come to the board to punctuate this sentence. The first student punctuates the sentence so it reads:

*A woman, without her man, is nothing.*

The Professor erases those punctuation marks and asks the second student to punctuate the sentence. The second student does it like this:

*A woman: without her, man is nothing.*

What is **PUNCTUATION?** How do we use **PUNCTUATION** in a sentence?

We can see from what's on the board: **PUNCTUATION** makes a difference!

When it rains cats and dogs run inside.

confusing

When it rains, cats and dogs run inside.

clear, with one meaning

When it rains cats and dogs, run inside.

clear, with a different meaning



**PUNCTUATION** helps us to understand the sentence. Language is alive. As the sentence moves along, we want to use every tool—grammar, punctuation, etc.—to make sure our readers understand us.

Our English language has many, **many** rules for **PUNCTUATION**. We'll give you the rules, along with some examples, for the *most common* **PUNCTUATION**. We'll give you some more detailed rules in an **Index** on page 257. But here's a good general rule that often works well with **PUNCTUATION**.

### **A GENERAL RULE THAT *OFTEN* WORKS WELL WITH PUNCTUATION:**

Read your work aloud to yourself or to a friend. When you hear it aloud, you might hear where the **PUNCTUATION** goes and which **PUNCTUATION MARK** to use.

Sometimes, **PUNCTUATION** marks indicate the **breath** in a sentence. They tell you where you pause for a breath and for how long you pause. In our chart below, we'll let you know how long of a **breath stop/breath pause** each mark indicates.

Of course, you always want your work to **sound** right and to **read well** when you hear it. That's a good general test for your work. It helps to read aloud, to hear what your work sounds like.



## The Most Common Punctuation Marks (and the Most Common Comma Rules)

### Period

- a. **Full stop** at the end of a sentence

#### Example:

I stopped at the Corner Café this morning to get a coffee and pastry for breakfast.

For **Exercises**, fill in the missing punctuation

#### Exercise:

When we went to the zoo, we discovered a lion had escaped its dwelling

- b. In abbreviations

#### Example:

Mr. Billingsly had coffee with Ms. Sharp. The Rev. Montgomery, Prof. Fernandez, and Sgt. Lee sat in the far corner talking about something in the morning paper, the N. Y. Times.

#### Exercise:

Mr Billingsly, the Zoo Manager, asked if we would join him, Sgt Battle, and Col Worth in searching for the lion.

### Exclamation mark

- ! **Full stop** at the end of a sentence, used to add emphasis

#### Example:

I quit drinking coffee, and I quit eating sweets, but, unable to help myself, I stopped at the Corner Café this morning to get a coffee and pastry for breakfast! It was delicious!

#### Exercise:

We spent at least 6 hours scouring the zoo and the surrounding neighborhood looking for the escaped lion

### Question mark

- ? **Full stop** at the end of a sentence to indicate the sentence is a question

#### Example:

Did you stop at the Corner Café this morning for breakfast? Didn't I see you there having coffee and a pastry?

#### Exercise:

As we searched the neighborhood, we asked everyone we saw the same question: Have you seen a lion? Of course, everyone looked at us in amazement.

Comma

- **General Rule: Short Pause** in the sentence to separate parts of the sentence and to make the meaning clear. Whenever the meaning is unclear, you can add a comma if it will help.

**Example:**

At the Corner Café this morning, when I was eating a pastry, and my notebook fell on the floor, the man sitting next to me fainted!

**Exercise:**

When it got dark, and we had not yet found the lion and the flashlights were all back at the zoo, we ran back for flashlights to keep searching.

**Specific Comma Rules:**

- a. *Before* a **coordinating conjunction** (see Chapter 4) joining **independent clauses** (see Chapter 7)

**Example:**

I looked for you at the Corner Café this morning, but you weren't there.

**Exercise:**

When we went out again, with flashlights, we split up into two teams and we took two different directions.

- b. *After* a prepositional phrase (see Chapter 4, page 52)

**Example:**

At the Corner Café, they had a lot of new pastries on display. On my way out, I ran into Joey, Suzanne, and Paul.

**Exercise:**

After another hour Sgt. Battle and I grew tired, and we were ready to give it up.

- c. Between all items in a series

**Example:**

On my way out of the Corner Café this morning, I ran into Joey, Suzanne, Rachel, Richard, Lujean, and Paul.

**Exercise:**

Although it was the lion who escaped the zoo, the zoo has a lot of other big animals, including tigers elephants jaguars zebras bears leopards camels and kangaroos.

- d. Between adjectives **not** joined by “and.”

**Example:**

The pastry I had this morning at the Corner Café was a warm, fresh, delicious, reasonably priced Italian kind.

**Exercise:**

The escaped lion could be perfectly tame, but if it became hungry disoriented tired or confused, it could turn violent. Sgt. Battle and I agreed that we had to keep looking on all the big long dark occupied or empty streets alleyways backyards and open lots in the neighborhood.

**Semi-colon**

- ;
- Longer pause** than a comma; used between two **independent clauses** you want to join together.

**Example:**

I had the best breakfast this morning at the corner café; I go there often, mostly for breakfast.

**Exercise:**

We turned the corner from Round Street to Turner Street, and I sensed something nearby it felt like a lion. Do I have ancestors way back in the jungles of India or on the savannas of Africa or in the mountains of America from whom I inherited an intuitive sense for lions?

**Colon**

- :
- A full **pause**. Use it to introduce a list of items:

**Example:**

I have used the Corner Café for meetings for different purposes: social, business, dating, studying, and creative collaborations on screenplays, poems, and stories.

**Exercise:**

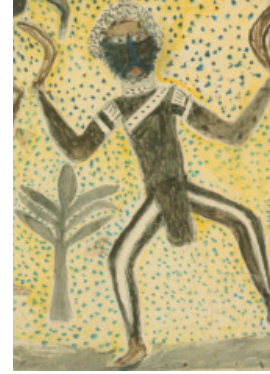
I saw the lion peacefully asleep on someone’s lawn. I knelt down to pet it. Suddenly, animals came from everywhere to play with the lion dogs, cats, birds, chipmunks, and squirrels. They all rolled around on the lawn with the lion until the zoo truck showed up, along with a lot of other vehicles police cars, an ambulance, a fire truck, an animal control van, and the rescue truck from the zoo. I’d had my fun. I went home. My family had been looking for me. They didn’t believe my story at all, but it’s true.

## Chapter Review: Punctuation

**PUNCTUATION** helps us to understand the sentence.

### Types of Punctuation Marks

- Period (.)
- Exclamation point (!)
- Question Mark (?)
- Comma (,)
- Semi-colon (;)
- Colon (:)



A Tip to follow when using **PUNCTUATION**:

**Read your work aloud** to yourself or to a friend. When you hear it aloud, you might hear where the **PUNCTUATION** mark goes and which **PUNCTUATION** mark to use.

Some **PUNCTUATION** marks indicate the **breath** in a sentence, where you pause for a breath, and for how long you pause.

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