

“The Quotation Situation”

- The comma goes *inside* the quotation marks in this first example.

Example:

“I enjoy writing poetry,” said June.

- The comma comes *before* the quotation marks in the second.

Example:

Christy said, “I like short fiction.”

- However, the comma is not used at all in this *parenthetical* example.

Example:

“I enjoy writing of all kinds” (Shakespeare).

Placing Punctuation with Quotation Marks Can Be Confusing...

•ALWAYS•

1. Put the **period** *inside* the quotation marks.

She said, “It is important that we get volunteers.”

•SOMETIMES•

2. Put the **exclamation mark** *inside* the quotation marks.

She yelled, “Happy Birthday!”

Put the **exclamation mark** *outside* the quotation marks.

The IU Southeast Review published my story “Women Generals”!

Put the **question mark** *inside* the quotation marks.

He asked, “Does that symbol work in my story?”

Put the **question mark** *outside* the quotation marks.

How can she be so “tried and true”?

•NEVER•

3. Put the **colon** inside of quotation marks; put it *outside*.

The following item in my bag is an “enemy”: the cell phone.

Put the **semicolon** inside of quotation marks; put it *outside*.

She said, “We have to shop”; however, I went shopping yesterday.

Punctuation! Complications?



Choosing the appropriate punctuation...

There are many punctuation marks, but only a few are used in common writing.

Ending a Sentence...

There are three marks to end sentences: period, exclamation, and question.

1. Period.

- Periods signal the end of a statement, an indirect question, and a mild command or polite request.
- Periods also appear in most abbreviations. If an abbreviation ends a sentence, do not add another period.
- If the abbreviation appears within a sentence, use normal punctuation after the period.

2. Exclamation Point!

- An exclamation point signals the end of an emotional statement.

Example:

Give me liberty, or give me death!

- Do *not* use multiple exclamation points.

Example:

Don't leave!!!

3. Question Mark?

- Use a question mark only to signal the end of a *direct* question.

Example:

Who was that masked man?

- Do not use a question mark for an *indirect* question.

Example:

I meant to ask you who that masked man was in the shop.

Comma Drama: How and When to Use Them

1. Use a comma after an *introductory* phrase or clause.

Examples:

To stay in shape, Regina became a personal trainer.
After he mastered mathematics, Rodney decided to become an accountant.

[Do *not* use a comma if phrase or clause is at the end.]
Rodney decided to become an accountant *after he mastered mathematics*.

2. Use a comma to separate independent clauses that are joined by the *fanboys* conjunctions—*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*.

Example:

I went to the bookstore, *but* my books were not there.

3. Use a comma before “and” with *three* words in a series.

Example:

Harvard, Oxford, and Indiana universities use the series comma.

4. Use commas on either side of additional information.

Examples:

On June 24, *2007*, the temperature was high.
Life in New Albany, *Indiana*, is often exciting.

5. Use a comma to set off a group of words that is *not essential* to the meaning of the sentence.

Example:

I’ve had the yellow cat, *in the window*, for two years.

6. Do not use commas if the word grouping is *essential* to the sentence’s meaning.

Example:

The cat that I’ve had for two years is *in the window*.

Semicolons; Semicolons

1. Use a semicolon between closely-related independent clauses that convey either similar or contrasting information but are not joined by a coordinating conjunction.

Example:

Paul Revere’s *The Boston Massacre* is an example of traditional American protest art; Edward Hick’s paintings are socially conscious art with a religious point of view.

2. Use semicolons between items in a series when one or more of these items include commas.

Example:

There are many organizations at IU Southeast that offer students activities such as the Student Government Association, an elected group; Student Program Council, an appointed group; and the Non-traditional Student Union, a voluntary group.

3. Use semicolons between two independent clauses separated by transitional words such as *therefore, however, or furthermore*.

Examples:

A bath was completely out of the question, *however*; there was only enough time to take a shower.

I didn’t have enough time for a bath; *however*, there was enough time for a shower.

[Note—whether a semicolon is on the left or the right of the transitional word depends on the meaning of the sentence’s two independent thoughts.]

A bath, *however*, is much more relaxing than a shower.

[Note—no semicolon is used here since the sentence is one independent clause.]