HINTS ON
HOW TO PUNCTUATE

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BY

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PREFACE

The art of punctuation is not really a difficult one; but it is not made easier by bidding the student observe and follow the practice of the best writers, unless a clear statement is made of what that practice has been. The following hints have been collected to show as clearly and as concretely as possible what are the principles of punctuation by which the best writers have been guided. Rules with regard to the use of particular points are given, and their application is illustrated by examples from acknowledged classical writers. This combination of rule and example will, it is hoped, be found helpful, and will enable the student to avoid both over-close punctuation and under-punctuation.

In these hints the fact that there are few, if any, hard-and-fast rules, is insisted upon; and an attempt is made to show that, where the punctuation has been made with knowledge, it is to a great extent a matter of personality or temperament.

PREFACE

I have to acknowledge with most grateful thanks the help I have received, in drawing up these hints, from the criticisms and suggestions of the following gentlemen, who kindly consented to read the proofs:

W. H. Bridges, Esq., Ralph Darling, Esq., James A. Davidson, Esq., M.A., W. K. Holmes, Esq., Fred Humphries, Esq., F. H. King, Esq., W. J. M'Vicar, Esq., Headmaster, Hutchesons' Girls' Grammar School, Glasgow, Professor A. E. Morgan, Exeter, R. F. Patterson, Esq., M.A., D.Litt., W. E. Simkins, Esq., Reading.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of the writer, like that of the speaker, is the communication of thought; and in both cases its attainment has to be considered from two sides: (*a*) from that of the speaker or writer, (*b*) from that of the hearer or reader. The speaker or writer seeks to communicate the thought, as clearly as possible, and with as little effort as may be necessary. The important thing is that the hearer or reader may get the thought the speaker or writer wishes to convey, and not something different. But that is not enough. The speaker or writer wishes to communicate the thought in such a way that it may produce on the hearer or reader the exact impression he wishes it to produce.

In trying to attain these ends the speaker, besides the words he uses, can bring to his aid a number of important helps to complete expression. Among these may be mentioned: the pitch of the voice; the modulation of the voice; the stress or emphasis on words; and

the grouping of words. In addition to these aids the speaker has the help of facial expression and of gesture. He is often able, therefore, to convey his meaning more clearly and more emphatically than the words alone would convey it.

Of most of these aids to expression the writer cannot avail himself; but some aids and these of the very greatest importance he can use. By the points, or punctuation marks, the reader is shown how the writer wishes the words to be grouped; where he thinks pauses should be made; what he considers should be the duration of the pause in different cases. The points show also where the writer thinks the voice should be raised or lowered, and where the emphasis should be placed.

It is of the essence of the writer's art, to convey his meaning in such a way that the reader will not only apprehend it clearly but easily. The writer must be presumed to know what he wishes to say; and it is his business to make use of the recognized means for helping the reader to understand as clearly as possible, and with as little effort as may be, the thought he is trying to express.

The points help the writer to express himself more easily, more clearly, and more efficiently; and help the reader to grasp the meaning expressed, more easily, more surely, and more

completely than he otherwise would. That seems the sum of the matter. Much must be left to the feeling and to the taste of the writer; but the writer should familiarize himself with the generally accepted rules and principles of punctuation. The right punctuation is the punctuation that will leave the reader in least uncertainty as to the meaning of the sentence, and at the same time enable him most easily to grasp that meaning. By the meaning of the sentence we must understand the "meaning" the writer wishes the sentence to convey. If, from the words and the punctuation, the definite meaning is not evident to the reader, the writer has failed of his purpose. This fact must be always borne in mind.

Punctuation serves other useful purposes. The purpose of the sentence is to convey the thought; but, if the writer is anxious to have the thought accepted, he tries to convey it in the form that will make it be most readily received. Speaking of an English writer a critic writes: "As against the snip-snap shortness of some writers, the lawless length of others, and the formlessness of a third class, his best sentences are arranged with an almost mathematical precision of clause-building, while their rhythm, though musical, is rarely poetic." This grouping for variety, this "mathematical precision of clause-building", is clearly

indicated by the points used. The writer can see at a glance whether the word groups are of such length as will enable them to be realized with a single movement of the eye, or uttered between two breathings. He can see, also, whether the succession of groups are of the same or of different lengths; that is, whether the sentence is monotonous or is sufficiently varied.

Punctuation indeed is far more useful, and far more important, than the attention it usually receives would lead us to suppose. Two things must be kept constantly in mind: (*a*) the fact that the points are used to make the meaning the more clear; and (*b*) the important fact that the writer must be supposed to know what he means better than anybody else possibly can, and is therefore best fitted to show by the use of points what the meaning is. Of these he should, of course, use the smallest number needed to attain his purpose.

It is of almost equal importance to bear in mind that punctuation is not a mechanical process determined by hard and fast rules. There are rules; but their special application will depend to a great extent on the personality of the writer. Some writers will use the fewest number of stops needed to make their meaning clear; and this may be regarded as the best practice.

ON PUNCTUATION

Points are intended to help the reader to get more easily and more correctly the meaning of the passage read. Thus,

> "The rain still continued to fall incessantly: the pools it formed in the hollows of the ground began towards noon to overflow their banks and to become united."

In the original from which this is copied, there are commas after *began*, *noon*, and *banks*; but these, as they do not make the passage more easily and clearly understood, have been dropped.

The most important general rule with regard to punctuation is: Leave out every point that does not help to make the sense clearer.

> EXAMPLE: "Men who have passed all their time in low and vulgar life cannot have a suitable idea of the several beauties and blemishes in the actions of great men."

Note.—The carrying out of this general rule will depend largely on the character of the individual writer. In the example given we see the rule carried to its extreme. The writer would generally put commas after *men* and *life*.

The Comma

This is the point most frequently used in sentences. It is used to separate from the rest of the sentence a part which the writer wishes to mark as an adjunct clause or phrase, or even word, whose omission would leave the sentence different but still complete:

EXAMPLES: "Next year, a new election being necessary, he again presented himself to the electors of Honiton."

"Then, at length, tardy justice was done to the memory of Oliver."

(1) Commas are put at the beginning and end of clauses and phrases which are separated from the words they qualify.

EXAMPLES: "When it is fair weather with the client, out comes the gentleman partner to fawn like a spaniel."

"I trust everything, under God, to habits, upon which, in all ages, the lawgiver, as well as the schoolmaster, has mainly placed his reliance."

Note.—When the clause or phrase is not separated from the word it qualifies there is no need for a comma. Observe that in the second of the two examples "*upon which*" is equivalent to "*because on habits*", and does not therefore qualify habits.

EXAMPLE: "One of the final causes of our delight in anything *that is great* may be this."

(2) Explanatory phrases and clauses have a comma at the beginning and at the end.

EXAMPLES: "There is, properly speaking, no misfortune in the world."

"If the chief part of human happiness arises from the consciousness of being loved, as I believe

it does, those sudden changes of fortune seldom contribute much to happiness."

Note.—When, instead of being explanatory, the clause or phrase is parenthetical, it may have, instead of parentheses, a comma at the beginning and an appropriate point at the end.

EXAMPLES: "And when he claims for man exclusively the high privilege, *according to Christian doctrine*, of being the likeness and image of God, he is not to be understood as deriving this dignity purely from the high position of constituting the most glorious and most complex of all natural productions."

"He thought himself, *poor unfortunate man!* completely forgotten by his old friends."

(3) Adverbial clauses, phrases, or words at the beginning of a sentence are separated from the rest of the sentence by commas.

EXAMPLES: "On their meeting, the whole of nature seemed suddenly inspired with joy and beauty."

"Oftentimes, to win us to our harm, the instruments of darkness tell us truths."

Note.—Under this head we may include the absolute construction.

EXAMPLE: "And seeing that every nation affords not experience and tradition enough for all kinds of learning, therefore we are chiefly taught the language of those people who have at any time been most industrious after wisdom."

This example shows how difficult it is to give hard and fast rules with regard to the use of points. Clearly, the last three lines could not be uttered between two inhalations, save by extreme effort, nor could they be caught by a single movement of the eye. On this account most writers would have broken it up by putting commas after *people*, *have*, and *time*.

(4) Adverbs like *again*, *finally*, *namely*, *moreover*, &c., are separated from the rest of the sentence by commas.

EXAMPLE: "Moreover, they have spoken untruths."

(5) When in using direct speech the writer breaks off to state by whom the speech is made, commas are usually put before and after the explanation inserted.

EXAMPLES: "Oh, father," sobbed Maggie, "I ran away because I was so unhappy."

"My gracious liege," said the monk, "I entreated the Lord of Gilsland to stay the execution."

Note.—The right point should be used in each case and not always the comma.

EXAMPLES: "Now, by both sword and sceptre!" said Richard, "the world is leagued to drive me mad!"

"Now God be gracious to thee, Lord King!" said the hermit with much emotion; "thou art setting that mischief on foot which thou wilt hereafter wish thou hadst stopped, though it had cost thee a limb."

(6) A comma is often put after the subject when it is long, to mark its completion.

EXAMPLE: "The art in which the secret of human happiness in a great measure consists, is to set the habits in such a manner that every change may be a change for the better."

(7) When nouns, verbs, adjectives, or adverbs, &c., occur in a series, the members of the series are separated by commas.

EXAMPLES: "An indistinct, wild, gurgling sound of scorn and glee broke from Gawtrey's lips."

"At other times, when he is most bound to act, he remains puzzled, undecided, and sceptical."

Notes.—When there are only two parts of speech joined by a conjunction, no comma is used to separate them.

EXAMPLE: "Angelo would not leave her side until he had given money and directions to both the trembling fellows."

If the conjunction is left out, the comma must be inserted.

EXAMPLE: "He was a wicked, cruel man."

Where the last adjective is in closer relation to the noun than the preceding ones, omit the comma.

EXAMPLES: "A distinguished foreign author." "A brave young soldier."

(8) A comma is placed after each of the parts of which a subject consists, even after the last, unless it is meant to give the last special emphasis.

EXAMPLE: "Petrarch, Dante, the satirist Aretine, Machiavelli, Castiglione, and others, were familiar to our writers, and they make occasional mention of some few French authors, as Ronsard and Du Bartas."

Note.—The comma is not put after the last of the parts when it is intended that the last should be presented as the climax.

EXAMPLE: "Our lands, our liberties, our lives are at stake."

(9) The comma is used to separate the nominative of address from the rest of the sentence.

EXAMPLE: "Imagine with thyself, courteous reader, how often I then wished for the tongue of Demosthenes or Cicero."

Note.—With this we may include the complimentary address in beginning a letter or speech, &c.

EXAMPLES: "My dear sir,". "Ladies and gentlemen,". These seem the rational forms; but in practice it is usual to write, "My Dear Sir", "Ladies and Gentlemen"; or to write, "My dear Sir", the rule followed in this last case being that the first and last words of the complimentary address begin with capitals.

(10) The comma is used to separate a noun in apposition from the rest of the sentence.

EXAMPLES: "William, the eldest brother, was a man of considerable ability."

"Duncan, lying off the Texel with his own flagship, the *Venerable*, and only one other

vessel, heard that the whole Dutch fleet was putting to sea."

Note.—When the noun in apposition is qualifying, that is, forms part of the name, no comma is used.

EXAMPLE: "William the Lion was taken prisoner at Alnwick in 1174."

(11) Sometimes *or* is put before an alternative expression which is really synonymous or equivalent; and in that case the phrase is separated by commas.

EXAMPLE: "The Tsar, or Emperor of Russia, was the most autocratic of European rulers."

Note.—When *or* has *either* or *whether* before it, the point is not usually inserted.

EXAMPLE: "How should either men or angels be able perfectly to behold?"

In this case what follows *or* is clearly not synonymous but alternative.

(12) Words or phrases that break the continuity of the sentence have a comma before and after them.

EXAMPLE: "The literature of this age, then, I would say, was strongly influenced (among other causes), first, by the spirit of Christianity, and secondly, by the spirit of Protestantism."

(13) Words placed in an unusual position in the sentence, such as the object before the verb that governs it, are usually followed by a comma.

EXAMPLE:

"But me, yet striving to attain that rest,
Always from hope withheld, always distressed,
Me, howling winds drive devious, tempest tossed,
Sails rent, seams opening wide, and compass lost."

(14) A comma is used between the parts of a double, triple, or multiple sentence when the parts themselves are simple.

EXAMPLE: "Jonathan Wild was extremely ingenious in inventing designs, artful in contriving the means to accomplish his purposes, and resolute in executing them."

(15) A comma is often inserted to show that a word has been left out.

EXAMPLES: London is the capital of England, Paris, of France, and Rome, of Italy.

"To err is human; to forgive, divine."

"Revenge is an act of passion; vengeance, of justice."

(16) In writing numbers, counting from the right, a comma is put after each group of three consecutive figures.

EXAMPLE: 176,854,327.

Note.—The group farthest to the left may consist of one, two, or three figures.

EXAMPLES:

5,279,634.
49,127,385.
738,246,194.

EXCEPTION: In certain cases of four figures where the writer or reader thinks of the two figures to the left as hundreds no comma is used.

EXAMPLES: "1760 yd. make one mile." "This happened in 1922."

(17) The comma should not be used after the number of a house in a street, nor between the month and day of the month in dates.

EXAMPLES: 235 West Albion Street. 20th January, 1921.

(18) The comma should not be used before or after the dash.

EXAMPLES: "He has sentences for company—some scatterings of Seneca and Tacitus—which are good upon all occasions."

"We believe that the books which have been written in the languages of Western Europe during the last two hundred and fifty years—translations from the ancient languages of course included—are of greater value than all the books which at the beginning of that period were extant in the world."

Note.—Even by good writers this rule is not always observed, as the following quotation from Dr. John Brown's *Marjorie Fleming* shows: "The second was William Clerk,—the *Darsie Latimer* of 'Redgauntlet'; 'a man', as Scott says, 'of the most acute intellects and powerful apprehension,' but of more powerful indolence, so as to leave the world with little more than the report of what he might have been,—a humorist as genuine, though not quite so savagely Swiftian, as his brother Lord Eldin."

The Semicolon

(1) The semicolon is used chiefly to separate the co-ordinate parts of a double, triple, or multiple sentence each from the other.

EXAMPLES: "His Majesty, in another audience, was at the pains to recapitulate the sum of all I had spoken; compared the questions he made with the answers I had given; then, taking me into his hands and stroking me gently, delivered himself in these words."

"Speak the language of the company you are in; speak it purely, and unlarded with any other."

(2) The semicolon is always used between the parts

of a double, triple, or multiple sentence when the conjunction is left out.

EXAMPLE: "You have clearly proved that ignorance, idleness, and vice are the proper ingredients for qualifying a legislator; that laws are best explained, interpreted, and applied by those whose interests lie in perverting, confounding, and eluding them."

(3) The semicolon is invariably used between the contrastive or exceptive members of a double, triple, or multiple sentence.

EXAMPLES: "In the youth of a state arms do flourish; in the middle age of a state learning; and then both of them together for a time; in the declining age of a state mechanical arts and merchandise."

"I am particularly pleased to hear that she is a good arithmetician; it is the best proof of understanding; the knowledge of numbers is one of the chief distinctions between us and the brutes."

(4) Semicolons are usually put between clauses depending on a common clause.

EXAMPLE: "One man complains for want of children, but knows not whether they may prove comforts or crosses; another for want of health, but knows not whether the health of his body may not prove the disease of his soul."

(5) In double, triple, or multiple sentences, when some of the parts are themselves complex, a semicolon is used to separate the parts.

EXAMPLE: "It is manifest that those who are engrossed with the things that pertain to this life alone, who are devoted to worldly pleasure, to

worldly gain, honour, or power, are certainly not preparing themselves for the passage into another; while it is equally manifest that the change of heart, of desires, wishes, tastes, thoughts, dispositions, which constitute a meetness for entrance into a heavenly state, must take place here on earth; for, if not, it will not take place after death."

(6) As the comma is used to separate the words of a series, the semicolon is used to separate a series of statements or sentences.

EXAMPLE: "The poor earth, with her poor joys, was now my needy mother, not my cruel step-dame; man, with his so mad wants, and his so mean endeavours, had become the dearest to me; and even for his suffering and his sin, I now first named him brother."

The Colon

(1) The colon is placed between co-ordinate sentences when these are not connected by a conjunction, and when the first is complete in itself, and the second is a statement that naturally rises out of it and depends on it for its exact meaning.

EXAMPLES: "Of humblest friends, bright creature, scorn not one: the daisy, by the shadow that it casts, protects the lingering dewdrop from the sun."

"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."

(2) The colon is used before a direct quotation, before an argument, an example, or a narrative illustrating the point raised.

EXAMPLE: "'Come in!' the Mayor cried, look-

ing bigger: and in did come the strangest figure."

Note.—In certain cases the quotation may be preceded by a comma, especially if the quotation forms an integral part of the sentence.

EXAMPLE: "Her daily expressions were no longer, 'I wish we had some acquaintance in Bath'. They were changed into, 'How glad I am we have met with Mrs. Thorpe!'"

(3) The colon is used between a general statement and the enumerated particulars.

EXAMPLES: "Her aims were simple and obvious: to preserve her throne, to keep England out of war, to restore civil and religious order."

"An intrepid courage is at best but a holiday kind of virtue, to be seldom exercised, and never but in cases of necessity: affability, mildness, tenderness . . . are the bread of mankind and staff of life."

(4) The colon is used after such words or phrases as: *as follows*, *for example*, *namely*, *to sum up*, &c., and is used even where such words are only understood.

EXAMPLES: "He then desired to know what arts were practised in electing those whom I called commoners: whether a stranger, with a strong purse, might not influence the vulgar voters."

"And there was mounting in hot haste: the steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car
Went pouring forward with impetuous speed."

(5) It is usual to put on the title-page of a book a colon between the place of publication and the name of the publisher if these are arranged in one line.

EXAMPLE: London: Smith and Jones, Publishers.

Note.—It must always be remembered that with regard to form on title-page there is no fixed rule; only if the name of the place is given as shown the colon is used.

EXAMPLE: London: Published under the Authority of His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1921.

(6) When such contracted forms as viz, e.g., &c., are used, the colon is usually omitted and a comma substituted.

EXAMPLE: He insisted on one thing, viz, that they should apply to him when in doubt.

"To one holding this theory of life, crushing out any of the human faculties, capacities, and susceptibilities is no evil: man needs no capacity, but that of surrendering himself to the will of God; and if he uses any of his faculties for any other purpose but to do that supposed will more effectually, he is better without them. This is the theory of Calvinism; and it is held, in a mitigated form, by many who do not consider themselves Calvinists: the mitigation consisting in giving a less ascetic interpretation to the alleged will of God, asserting it to be His will that mankind should gratify some of their inclinations; of course not in the manner they themselves prefer, but in the way of obedience, that is, in a way prescribed to them by authority, and, therefore, by the necessary condition of the case, the same for all."

The Period

(1) The period, or full stop, is the punctuation mark which is put at the end of a sentence, when the sentence is neither exclamatory nor interrogative.

EXAMPLES: "The present war has so adul-

terated our tongue with strange words, that it would be impossible for one of our great-grandfathers to know what his posterity had been doing, were he to read their exploits in a modern newspaper."

"Every age might produce one or two true geniuses, if they were not sunk under the censure and obloquy of plodding, servile, imitating pedants."

"In the very best poetry there is often an undersong of sense which none but the poetic mind . . . can comprehend."

(2) The period is used after a letter or letters or a syllable to show that these are abbreviations or contractions.

EXAMPLES: Rt. Hon. for Right Honourable. H.R.H. for His (or Her) Royal Highness. B.Sc. for Bachelor of Science, &c.

Note.—Under this rule also comes the period after the initial used as a substitute for the Christian name, thus: Sir W. Raleigh is used for Sir Walter Raleigh.

(3) When a letter has been doubled to mark that the plural of the word for which it stands is to be used, no period is to be inserted between the doubled letters.

EXAMPLES:

MM. = Messrs.
LL.B. = Bachelor of Laws.
LL.M. = Master of Laws.
LL.D. = Doctor of Laws.

Notes.—MS. = manuscript, and its plural MSS., have only period at end.

With regard to contractions that retain the first and last letters of the word the practice varies; but it is usual to follow rule.

EXAMPLES: "Mrs. Campbell gave him very particular instructions."

"A patient of Dr. Poole was under orders to go to the doctor every morning."

(4) In technical treatises it is common to use forms like the following: F.P.S. system (Foot-Pound-Second system); C.G.S. system (Centimetre-Gramme-Second system); P.E. (Potential Energy); K.E. (Kinetic Energy); &c.

(5) When the numbers of the paragraphs are not in parentheses a period is placed after them.

EXAMPLES:

40. All living languages, in being handed down from one generation to another, undergo changes and modifications, &c.

41. Before the Norman conquest the English language showed a tendency to substitute an analytical for a synthetical structure.

(6) Though often written without, a period is sometimes put after Roman numerals indicating Sections or Chapters.

EXAMPLES: Section III. Section VIII.
Chapter IX. Chapter XII.

(7) The numbers in lists of documents are without parentheses and have a period after them.

EXAMPLES:

134. JOAN OF ARC'S PROCLAMATION.

135. THE TRIAL OF JOAN OF ARC.

(8) A period is put between the figures of pounds, shillings, and pence. Example: £5. 7*s*. 6*d*.

(9) A succession of three periods, separated by the necessary intervals, is used in the case of the previous

sentence being unfinished, and a succession of four in the case of the previous sentence being finished, to mark omissions.

EXAMPLE: "Nothing affords me greater delight than a solid hope that I partake of His favours, and rely on His never-failing support and protection. . . . He who has been so often my hope, my refuge, my confidence, when I stood on the brink of an abyss where I could not move one step forward."

The following extracts illustrate various uses of comma, semi-colon, colon, and dash:

"These bright accounts of travels; good-humoured and witty discussions of question; lively or pathetic story-telling in the form of novel; firm fact-telling, by the real agents concerned in the events of passing history;—all these books of the hour, multiplying among us as education becomes more general, are a peculiar possession of the present age: we ought to be entirely thankful for them, and entirely ashamed of ourselves if we make no good use of them."

"Ho! ho! Chevalier, let me inform you that your wife loves *me—me*, with unspeakable love: let me inform you that I am that Duvernet, the neighbour's son, who was brought up along with Angela, bound to her by ties of the most ardent affection—he whom you drove away by means of your diabolical devices. Ah! it was not until I had to go away to the wars that Angela became conscious to herself of what I was to her; I know all. It was too late. The Spirit of Evil suggested to me the idea that I might ruin you in play, and so I took to gambling,—followed you to Genoa,—and now I have succeeded. Away now to your wife."

The Asterisk

(1) When we wish to draw attention to a note in the margin or at the bottom of a page we use an asterisk (* little star).

Note.—In the case of notes, it is more usual to make the reference by means of a figure placed over the last letter of the passage explained, and to mark the explanation by putting the same figure before and above it.

(2) When we wish to show that words or letters have been left out, we insert an asterisk or a number of asterisks. Instead of asterisks it is common to mark the ellipses by periods.

EXAMPLE: "And whatever epithets of reproach or contempt this compassion may incur from those who confound cruelty with firmness, I know not whether any wise man would wish it less powerful, or less extensive. * * * This scheme of invigorating the laws by relaxation, and extirpating wickedness by lenity, is so remote from common practice that I might reasonably fear to expose it to the public, could I be supported only by my own observations."

(3) When we desire to mark that the word used is conjectural, that is, when we wish to show that we are not sure that it is the actual word used by the writer or speaker, we put an asterisk after and above the last letter.

The Note of Interrogation

(1) The note of interrogation is put after all sentences which ask direct questions.

EXAMPLE: "I asked him, terror-stricken, and leaning on the arm he held out to support me:

'Has a body come ashôre?' He said, 'Yes.' 'Do I know it?' I asked then."

(2) The question mark is not put after sentences asking indirect questions.

EXAMPLE: "He wishes you to find out what has happened."

(3) Instead of a note of interrogation, a note of exclamation is put after interrogative exclamations.

EXAMPLE:

"How long since I saw that fair pale face!
Ah! Mother dear! might I only place
My head on thy breast, a moment to rest,
While thy hand on my tearful cheek were prest!"

(4) As a rule the note of interrogation should follow each separate question, no matter how short; but if the separate questions need but a single answer it is placed only after the last.

EXAMPLES: "You will wait and see papa," said Agnes cheerfully, "and pass the day with us?"

"What then is the standard? Is it the same, two years together, in any country? Is it the same at any moment in any two countries?"

(5) When it is desired to cast doubt on the preceding statement, a note of interrogation enclosed in parentheses is put at the end of it.

EXAMPLE: A friend (?) you call him. Heaven save us from such friends!

(6) The note of interrogation should not be followed by any other punctuation mark save the marks of quotation.

EXAMPLE: "Come quickly," cried his friend. "Where have you been?"

(7) The place of the note of interrogation, when quotation marks also are used, must be determined by the sense.

EXAMPLE: "Cannot I admire," wrote Dryden about Milton, "the height of his invention and the strength of his expression, without defending his antiquated words, and the perpetual harshness of their sound?"

"They ask themselves, what is suitable to my position? what is usually done by persons of my station and pecuniary circumstances? or (worse still) what is usually done by persons of a station and circumstances superior to mine? I do not mean that they choose what is customary, in preference to what suits their own inclination. It does not occur to them to have any inclination, except for what is customary."

The Note of Exclamation

(1) The note of exclamation is put after words, phrases, and sentences that express strong emotion.

EXAMPLE: "But, alas! these delightful visions are fled, and what do we behold in their room but a palace in mourning, a nation in tears, and the shadow of death settled over both like a cloud! Oh! the unspeakable vanity of human hopes!"

(2) Sometimes a note of exclamation is used after repeated words for the purpose of giving them greater emphasis.

EXAMPLE:

"Stitch! stitch! stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt;

And still with a voice of dolorous pitch
She sang the song of the shirt."

Note.—Sometimes a dash is used for the same purpose after all but the last repetition.

EXAMPLE: "Work—work—work!
My labour never flags."

(3) Sometimes the mark of exclamation is used after a sentence which, though interrogative in form, is of the nature of an exclamation.

EXAMPLE: "What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god!"

(4) Sometimes the mark of exclamation is placed after a statement to indicate the astonishment of the writer that it has ever been made.

EXAMPLE: The Germans claimed to be civilized! and they surpassed all previous records of savagery.

(5) The note of exclamation should be placed immediately after the exclamatory word or phrase whether it occurs at the beginning, middle, or end of the sentence.

EXAMPLE:

"Adieu to thee, fair Rhine!
How long delighted
The stranger fain would linger on his way!"

(6) Where more than one independent exclamation occurs in a sentence, the note of exclamation is placed after each.

EXAMPLE:

"Away!—away!—my breath was gone—
I saw not where he hurried on:
'T was scarcely yet the break of day,
And on he foamed—away!—away!"

The Apostrophe

(1) The apostrophe is used before *s* to mark the genitive (possessive) case of a singular noun, and also to mark the genitive case of a plural noun whose nominative case ends in any letter but *s*, or a combination equivalent to it.

EXAMPLES: "Time's glory is to calm contending kings."

"Men's evil manners live in brass, their virtues we write in water."

(2) Singular nouns ending in *s* also make their genitive by adding *'s*; but plural nouns ending in *s* in the nominative case, make their genitive or possessive case by adding only an '.

EXAMPLES: Burns's poems. The ladies' opinions.

Note.—When the *s* should be silent in speech, it is commonly omitted in writing.

EXAMPLE: "For justice' sake."

(3) For the sound's sake such forms as *Moses' Law*, *Anchises' adventures*, *Ceres' rites*, are used.

(4) The plural of single letters is made by adding *'s*.

EXAMPLE: "Mind your p's and q's."

(5) The apostrophe is also used to mark the omission of one or more letters.

EXAMPLE: E'er is used for ever, thro' for through, &c.

(6) No apostrophe is used if the first and the last letters of the word are given, and if the word is pronounced as when it is fully written.

EXAMPLES: Dr. Swift. Mr. Thackeray.

(7) A period may be placed before an apostrophe, not after.

EXAMPLE: We write Co.'s, not Co's.

Inverted Commas

(1) When the very words of the speaker or writer are given, inverted commas are usually put at the beginning and double apostrophes at the end.

EXAMPLE: "Come, Craig," said Mr. Poyser jocosely, "you mun get married pretty quick, else you'll be set down for an old bachelor."

(2) When a quotation is given as a part of the whole quoted, a single inverted comma is put before it and a single apostrophe after it.

EXAMPLE: "Don't forget," said he, "the old proverb: 'He laughs best who laughs last.'"

(3) In the reports of conversations, &c., when a break occurs, each part of the quotation is put in inverted commas.

EXAMPLE: "The English muse," wrote Emerson, "loves the farmyard, the lane, and market."

(4) When an interrogative sentence ends with an interrogative quotation, the mark of interrogation is put after the inverted commas.

EXAMPLE: What did he mean by saying, "Where have you been"?

(5) The quotation has usually a colon before it;

and should there be yet another quotation within the second quotation, double marks are again used.

EXAMPLE: "When Selden was dying, he said to Archbishop Ussher: 'I cannot recollect any passage out of all my books and papers whereon I can rest my soul, save this from the sacred Scriptures: "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world."'"

Note.—The quotation may be the subject of the sentence or the object of the sentence, in which case it has no colon before it.

EXAMPLE: "Men do well," you say, "to keep women in ignorance."

(6) If the quotation consists of more than one paragraph, inverted commas are put at the beginning of each paragraph, and the double apostrophe marks the end of the quotation.

(7) In quotations, the double apostrophe is always placed after the punctuation mark which shows the end of the sentence.

EXAMPLE: "The witnessing of the truth was then so generally attended with this event [martyrdom] that martyrdom now signifieth not only to witness but to witness to death."

Brackets or Parentheses

(1) When a word, phrase, or clause is introduced into the body of a sentence as an explanation or as a comment, it is put in brackets or parentheses.

EXAMPLES: "'We have arranged to keep our wedding-day (as far as that goes) at home,' said John."

"History was in his [Johnson's] opinion, to use the fine expression of Lord Plunkett, an 'old almanac'."

Note.—It is usual to call the round brackets parentheses, and to restrict the name brackets to the square variety, such as those given in the last example.

(2) As was stated under comma, the explanatory clause may be separated from the rest of the sentence by commas instead of brackets or parentheses.

EXAMPLE: "We submit that Caxton's press in Westminster Abbey, rude as it is, ought to be looked at with quite as much respect as the best constructed machinery that ever, in our time, impressed the clearest type on the finest paper." —MACAULAY.

(3) An interpolation into the text, such as a word left out in the original or the correct spelling of a word misspelled, is put in brackets.

EXAMPLE: "On the whole, though this father of the English learning [Bede] seems to have been but a genius of the middle class, . . . it is impossible to refuse him the praise of an incredible industry."

(4) When into a paragraph a complete explanatory sentence is thrown, it is sometimes put in brackets.

EXAMPLE: "Bacon's own expressions about the state of public opinion in the time of Luther are clear and strong: '*Accedebat*,' says he, '*odium et contemptus, illis ipsis temporibus ortus erga scholasticos.*' And again, '*Scholasticorum doctrina dispectui prorsus haberi coepit tanquam aspera et barbara*'. [Both these passages are in the first book of the *De Augmentis*.] The part which Bacon played in this great change was the part, not of Robespierre, but of Bonaparte."

Note.—The full stop is put inside, not outside, the bracket.

(5) When in quoting a passage the writer wishes to show that a particular form of word used is wrong or at least doubtful, *sic* in parentheses is put after it.

EXAMPLE: "Neither reformers in the sixteenth century or (*sic*) Puritans in the seventeenth century strove in any sense for 'religious liberty'."

The Dash

(1) The dash is used to show that the orderly progress of the sentence is interrupted, and something needed for its complete understanding added.

EXAMPLES: "There was a ceaseless struggle for a counter revolution—a struggle carried on continually within, and stimulated from without."

"But to venture up again—it's a mere and a clear tempting of providence."

(2) The dash is frequently used to give greater vividness or emphasis than the ordinary points would.

EXAMPLES:

"Yet the wife—
When he was gone—the children—what to do?
Then Enoch lay long-pondering on his plans;
To sell the boat—and yet he loved her well—
How many a rough sea had he weathered in her!"

"Then they rode back, but not—
Not the six hundred."

(3) The period with dash following is used after paragraph headings.

EXAMPLE: *Boundaries and Extent.*—England is bounded on the north by the Solway Firth and Scotland; on the west, &c.

(4) The dash is placed sometimes before and after an explanatory clause instead of commas or brackets.

EXAMPLES: "Such are the two huts—for they are huts and no more—and you may see them still if you know how to discover the beautiful sights of nature from descriptions treasured in your heart."

"But the tragic aspect of the affair soon changed to a comic one; for when Agostino placed the first of the bodies in an upright position, it became apparent that it was only a sort of a scarecrow—a rude figure intended to frighten timid travellers—which being skilfully disposed at the edge of the grove, partly hidden among the trees, looked at a little distance exactly like a brigand—gun and all."

(5) The dash is put before a clause or word summing up or collecting for clearness the previously enumerated subject.

EXAMPLES:

"Young Obadias,
David, Josias—
All were pious."

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control—
These three alone lead life to sovereign power."

(6) The dash is placed sometimes after a quotation and before the name of the author.

EXAMPLE: "All men think all men mortal but themselves."—YOUNG.

(7) The dash is used sometimes after a colon, and before a direct quotation.

EXAMPLE: "Twenty-seven years ago I thus described him:—'In Goethe I beheld an elderly man of terrific dignity; a penetrating and insupportable eye—"An eye, like Mars, to threaten and command"—a somewhat aquiline nose and

most expressive lips, which, when closed, seemed to be making an effort to move, as if they could with difficulty keep their hidden treasures from bursting forth.'"

"We may range the several kinds of laughter under the following heads:—the dimplers, the smilers, the laughers, the grinners, the horse-laughers."

(8) The dash is generally used before a phrase or clause introduced to give greater point or vividness to the narrative.

EXAMPLE: "His discourse was addressed chiefly to Wordsworth on points of metaphysical criticism — Rogers occasionally interposing a remark."

(9) In the case of rhetorical repetitions, the dash is used to introduce the final term or climax.

EXAMPLE:

"And what are its wages? A bed of straw,
A crust of bread—and rags."

(10) The dash is sometimes used in repetitions where the comma or exclamation might be used.

EXAMPLE:

"Work—work—work—
As prisoners work for crime!"

(11) The dash is used to indicate a hesitating speech, and is used also before a summing-up clause.

EXAMPLES: "There is no need—at least—I—I should say—perhaps, there is little need of saying more."

"There is no general rule without exception that we know of but this—that the best evidence

shall be admitted which the nature of the case may afford."

The Hyphen

(1) A hyphen is put between the parts of a compound word to show that they are to be taken as a single word.

EXAMPLES: Street-lamp, labour-representative, iron-foundry, self-determination, sea-water, sand-storm, rain-fall, house-surgeon.

Note.—It is often hard to determine whether a hyphen should be used, or should not be used. Take such forms as catch basin, catch siding, catch phrase, catch-all, catch-drain, catch-ball, catchpenny, catchword, catchpole. These illustrate the three ways in which the two words may be combined: (1) as separate words, the first being used attributively; (2) as hyphened words, each with its own accent; (3) as single words, with only one principal accent.

(2) When a syllable of a word ends with a particular letter, and the next syllable of the word begins with the same letter, a hyphen is introduced to show that the final letter and the initial letter are to be pronounced separately.

EXAMPLES: Co-ordination, co-operation, pre-eminence, re-entrance, re-establish, book-keeping, sword-dance.

Note.—With two vowels the hyphen is better than the diæresis.

(3) A hyphen should not, as a rule, be put after a simple prefix.

EXAMPLES: Subterranean, supernatural, antipathy, composition, recreation, contradiction.

(4) The hyphen is always to be inserted if without it a wrong meaning could be attached.

EXAMPLES:

A neglected-children's welfare-association.
A neglected children's-welfare-association.

Note.—The position of the hyphen determines the meaning. The first example is equivalent to a welfare-association for neglected children; the second to a welfare-association for children that is neglected.

(5) When a proper name, or even a proper adjective, has a prefix put before it, a hyphen is inserted after the prefix.

EXAMPLES: pre-Adamite, post-Kantian, anti-Christian, pro-Boer, pro-German, philo-Slav.

(6) The hyphen is used to prevent the needless repetition in words of a common element.

EXAMPLE: The returns were increased two-, three-, or fourfold.

(7) Whether the number be cardinal or ordinal, the words that express it, if more than one, are separated by a hyphen.

EXAMPLES: fifty-seven, thirty-fourth, eighty-first, ninety-six.

(8) Unless the word 'part' or the word 'share' follows, words expressing fractional parts are separated by a hyphen.

EXAMPLES: three-fifths, five-sixths, seven-eighths.

(9) When a word has to be divided, a part coming in one line and part in the next, a hyphen is put after the part at the end of the line.

Note.—The hyphen must come at the end of a syllable, and the division of the word must be in accordance with the pronunciation.

(10) The hyphen is used to join words that together make up a single idea.

EXAMPLES: A never-to-be-forgotten incident in this great struggle. An up-to-date account of this struggle.

(11) In most cases a hyphen is put between the prefix *a* and the gerund which follows it.

EXAMPLE:

"All the birds of the air fell a-sighing and a-sobbin',
When they heard of the death of poor Cock-robin."

(12) A hyphen, or rather hyphens are put between words which it is intended should be taken as combined.

EXAMPLES: "Here is the devil-and-all to pay."

"Teach self-denial and make its practice pleasurable, and you create for the world a destiny more sublime than ever issued from the brain of the wildest dreamer."

"Mr. Southey declaims against public opinion, which is now, he tells us, usurping supreme power. Formerly, according to him, the laws governed; now public opinion governs. What are laws but the expressions of the opinion of some class which has power over the rest of the community? By what was the world ever governed but by the opinion of some person or persons? By what else can it ever be governed? What are all systems, religious, political, or scientific, but opinions resting on evidence more or less satisfactory? The question is not between human opinion and some higher and more certain mode of arriving at truth, but between opinion and opinion,