GRAMMAR 101

Instructor: Erin K. Brown

Punctuation II

Introduction

This lesson is part two of punctuation. By the time you finish this lesson, you will have reviewed all the punctuation marks you will encounter when proofreading/editing manuscripts.

Hyphen (*CMOS* 6.75–77 and 7.81–89)

The hyphen's use is dictated by grammar, spelling, and style. Its most familiar use is in a) compound words, b) word breaks from one line to the next, c) some numbers, and d) spelled-out numbers.

a. red-hatted women
b. The Continen-
   tal Divide runs through Montana.
c. 406-555-5555
d. twenty-one

Next is the troublesome spelling arena of determining whether to join two words with a hyphen, keep the words separate, or make them one word. Do prefixes need a hyphen? Is the decision to hyphenate based solely on a word's function within the sentence (noun, adjective, adverb)?

When deciding whether to hyphenate a word, first check *MW* (*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*). Make sure the word you are checking is being used in the same function as the definition. Some compound adjectives are hyphenated, while at other times they are not. Compound adjectives (unit modifiers) coming before the noun typically are hyphenated but left open when following the noun.

Apple computers use cutting-edge technology.
Apple computers are cutting edge.

Some are open as both adjectives and nouns.

African Americans comprise a large voting block.
The African American speaker received a standing ovation.

Some compounds are always closed.
>   I have another head*ache*.

Some compounds are always hyphenated.
>   The three-year-old child skinned her knee. (adjective before a noun)
>   All three-year-olds are adorable. (noun)

Besides *MW*, *CMOS* 7.89 is a great resource. Consult it—often. In fact, I suggest you bookmark it.

NOTE: If you're working with a publisher, it will likely have already made some of the to-hyphen-or-not-to-hyphen decisions for you. Consult each publisher's house style manual.

A hyphen is used
- with adjectives and a connection word, such as *ball-and-socket joint*;
- with compound numbers and letters that form modifiers, such as *fifty-dollar bill*;
- with prefixes that are normally closed if mispronunciation or ambiguity could result (*re-creation/recreation, re-search/research*);
- in suspended compounds, such as *I have a twelve- and a fifteen-year-old*, and *I am studying micro- and macroeconomics.*

Dash

The dash includes the en dash and em dash, which further breaks into the 2-em and 3-em dashes. (Did you ever realize the many nuances of punctuation marks?)

En Dash (*CMOS* 6.78–84)

The en dash is used with inclusive numbers. It can mean "up to and including" or "through." The en dash is created by using Alt+0150.

>   Read chapters 20–25.
>   **But:** Read the chapters from 20 to 25. (Don't use an en dash along with "from" and "to.")
>   The Ospreys won the baseball game, 5–4.

Em Dash (*CMOS* 6.85-92, 94)

An em dash, or a pair of em dashes, denotes a stronger break than a comma but a weaker break than a period. It sets off a parenthetical statement, yet not as strongly as parentheses. It can even replace the colon. Do not put a space before or after an em dash. To make an em dash, set MS Word in Options/Preferences to convert two consecutive hyphens to an em dash, or you can use Alt+0151.

An em dash is used to show a sudden break in thought or sentence structure. In dialogue, the em dash indicates a sudden break or interruption.

"You can no longer ignore it. You must settle it—" A crash of breaking dishes came from the dining room.

If the break does not belong to the dialogue, the em dash is outside the quotation marks.
"Get out of here"—she slapped his face—"before I call the police!"

The **2-em dash** (*CMOS* 6.93) replaces a missing word or part of a word.

The only instance that requires the **3-em dash** is in a bibliographic entry that follows an entry by the same author or editor. The 3-em dash is used in place of the author or editor's name.

Parentheses (*CMOS* 6.95–98)

Parentheses set off material that explains something in the text. Commas can perform this function, as well as colons and em dashes.
The Brown girls (Sarah, Trinity, and Deborah) will do the PowerPoint presentation.

Parentheses enclose citations, numerals, or letters that mark a division within the text.
When submitting your application, include (1) your résumé, (2) three references, and (3) a letter of recommendation.
In the book *Conspiracy Theories through the Ages*, author I. M. Scared said, "The Illuminati will eventually control all world governments" (see page 45).

Parentheses can also be used to add a short commentary on the preceding material.
Harold will once again host the association meeting. (Why is Harold always the host?)

If the material that immediately precedes a parenthetical element requires punctuation, it follows the closing parenthesis.
Unless your author's publisher uses different formatting (Calibri, 11-point, no indents, etc.), you won't have to format your documents again.
If the author used tabs rather than indents, here is a quick fix (how I wish I had known this when I first began editing electronically!).

Note that if the exclamation point or question mark belongs to the parenthetical statement, it is placed inside the parentheses.

Biblical references are enclosed within parentheses following the quoted verse.
"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16 NASB).

Note in this example that the Bible version is in caps (some publishers prefer small caps), and the sentence-ending period immediately follows the closing parenthesis. If the quotation ends with a question mark or exclamation point, it stays within the quoted text, but the sentence-ending period still follows the closing parenthesis.

Never use a comma preceding a closing parenthesis.

Brackets (*CMOS* 6.99–104)

Brackets enclose words added to quoted material that aren't in the original.

"He [Captain Kirk] ordered Mr. Spock to take the helm."

Stage directions in a play are enclosed within brackets.

John [weeping bitterly]: I can't go on like this.

Brackets are used for parentheses within parentheses.

(See the screenshot [2.1] on the next page.)

Virgule (*CMOS* 6.105–113)

Most people call the virgule a forward slash. This slim mark can mean the alternatives of "or" and "and." Do not put spaces before or after the virgule.

Dear Sir/Madam (*Sir or Madam*)
I will eat cake/fruit. (*I will eat cake and fruit.* Or *I will eat cake or fruit.*)

Although the use of *and/or* (the words with the slash) is widely practiced, it can create ambiguity. If I know what the author intends (sometimes I have to ask), I remove *and/or* and rewrite the phrase.

Ambiguous: I will eat cake and/or fruit. (Literally, it says: I will eat cake and and or or fruit because the virgule can be shorthand for *or* as well as a sense of *and*.)
Clear: I will eat cake.
Clear: I will eat fruit.
Clear: I will eat cake and fruit.
Clear: I will eat cake or fruit.

The virgule has other uses. Use the virgule for fractions.

1/2

Use the virgule to indicate "per" in measurements.

The speed limit is 55 m/h. (*miles per hour*)
The cost is $4/dozen. (*$4 per dozen*)

Virgules are used in certain abbreviations.

a/c (*account* or *air conditioner*)
c/o (*care of*)
w/o (*without*)

Virgules separate days, months, and years in dates.

12/25/16 (*December 25, 2016*)
07/17 (*expiration date on a credit card*)

Find other uses by the above sections in *CMOS*.

Apostrophe (*CMOS* 6.116–118)

An apostrophe is used in possessive nouns and *sometimes** for plural letters, figures, and signs. Following are some ways to use the apostrophe for possessives:

Singular nouns: Marvin's, car's, house's
Plural nouns: women's, cars', houses'

*Some fields use the apostrophe for plural letters, figures, signs: ABC's, 1990's, +'s,

Consult the style manual you are required to use. *CMOS* 7.15 says not to use the apostrophe when the plural letter, number, or sign is used as a noun; however, if the plural letter is lowercased, an apostrophe may be added.

Contractions use apostrophes to mark omitted letter(s) and number(s):

don't, isn't, who's, 'tis, etc.
 rock 'n' roll
runnin', fightin' (g-dropping to indicate nonstandard speech)
'90, '60s

The apostrophe is considered part of the word, even if it comes at the end, so if the last word of the sentence ends with an apostrophe, the sentence-ending punctuation immediately follows the apostrophe.

The last stop is the Browns'.

Remember to make sure you've used an apostrophe (') and not an opening single quotation mark (').

Ellipsis Points (*CMOS* 13.50–58)

Ellipsis points (. . .) indicate the omission of one or more words. They are used when irrelevant material is left out of quoted material.

"To thine own self be true, and it must follow . . . thou canst not then be false to any man."

They are also used in trailing speech.

They are forming a co-op with a year's worth of activities, which includes weekly classes, a science fair, a holiday production of *It's a Wonderful Life*, standardized testing in the spring, and . . . well, so much for *your* plans.

Use ellipsis points to indicate a pause, particularly in speech, or to show faltering speech.

I shrug my shoulders and utter a highly erudite answer. "Uh . . . I really don't know."

If ellipsis points are used to cut irrelevant material within a quotation, a period goes before the ellipses if the cut comes after a sentence that ends in a period. (See *CMOS* 13.53.) Other punctuation within the quoted material either follows or comes before the insertion of ellipses. (See 13.54.)

Quotation Marks (*CMOS* 6.114–115)

Double Quotation Marks

A speaker's words are contained within double quotation marks.
"Let's go to the beach!" Julie said.

If the speaker's words or the quoted material carries over into a second paragraph, do not use a closing quotation mark at the end of the first paragraph, but do use an opening quotation mark before the new paragraph. The closing quotation mark goes at the end of the last spoken or quoted word.

"Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, ad corrumpit adversarium his, eu pro aliquip salutatus consequuntur, quaerendum eloquentiam deterruisset ne his.

"Usu copiosae lobortis concludaturque ei, audire postulant scripserit eum ne. Sea praesent dissentiunt an, qui id putant praesent conclusionemque, porro salutatus qui ut."

(If this selection were quoted material rather than dialogue, I would omit the quotation marks and convert it into a block quotation. We cover block quotations in Nonfiction Editing 101.)

Other uses of quotation marks include book chapter titles, article titles, TV and radio episodes, and conference and speech titles.

- Please read the chapter "Meet the Key Players" in *Mastering Your Metabolism*.
- *Prevention* magazine included a great article titled "An End to Pain."
- My favorite *Star Trek* episode is "A Piece of the Action," in which Captain Kirk teaches the bad guys how to play fizzbin. (Note the comma comes before the closing quotation mark.)
- This year's conference theme is "Writing into the Future."
- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his "I Have a Dream" speech in 1963.

The translation of foreign words is enclosed within quotation marks.
Guten Morgen is the German greeting that means "Good morning."

Single Quotation Marks

Single quotation marks are used with quoted words, phrases, etc., within quoted material.
"Mom, did you say 'We're going to Disneyland'?"

If you're putting quoted material into a block quotation, you do not use opening and closing double quotation marks. Blocking the material indicates it is a quoted piece. Therefore, if the

quoted material includes any words or sentences within single quotation marks, you'll use double quotation marks.

Summary of Lessons 1 and 2

Every punctuation mark has a purpose, and as an editor, you must know that purpose and how to correctly apply all marks of punctuation.

You studied several sections in *CMOS* as you reviewed the most problematic uses of punctuation:

- period
- comma
- semicolon
- colon
- question mark
- exclamation point
- hyphen
- dash
- parenthesis
- bracket
- virgule
- apostrophe
- ellipsis points
- double quotation marks
- single quotation marks

<div align="center">

❋ ❋ ❋

</div>

LESSON #2 ASSIGNMENTS

Access the Lesson 2 Assignment file.