UNIT ONE
WRITING EFFECTIVE SENTENCES
The main parts of a sentence

1. Subject

- In general, the subject refers to the part of the sentence which tells whom or what the sentence is addressing. Or it is the part which is spoken of.

  Example: -Kebede walked down the street.

  -The lion was killed by Alemu

*Kebede is the subject, because he is the doer/actor, or subject, in the sentence. Similarly, the **lion** is the one spoken of.*

Types of subjects

The underlined words are types of subjects.

- **Simple subject**: Ketema is an old man.
- **Full subject**: Jemal's proposal is feasible.
- **Compound subject**: Martha and Tigist joined the team at the same time.

In addition, a subject may be:

A. A noun: ***The sun is rising.***

B. A pronoun: ***He is writing.***

C. An infinitive or gerund:

-***To read improves the mind***

-***Reading improves the mind***

*D. An adjective****: The rich and the poor rejoiced.***

E. A group of words: ***Early to bed, early to rise makes a man healthy.***

F. A whole clause: ***Whoever knows him well respects him.***

2. Predicate

- A predicate is the verb that tells us what the subject is doing.
- A sentence can have just a subject and a predicate.

Example: ***Ketema came.***

Here are the types of predicates.

- Simple predicate: **Hailu drank the milk.**
- Full predicate: ***The boy slowly walked to his mother.***
- Compound predicate: ***They both sang and danced at the party.***

What is a sentence?

A sentence is an expression of thought or feeling by means of a word or words that include a subject and/or a predicate used to convey the intended meaning.

Example: -Alemu speaks French.

-Come.

Kinds of Sentences

- **Declarative** - A declarative sentence makes a statement, and ends with a period.

Example: The eggs will be cooked in a pot.

- **Interrogative** - An interrogative sentence asks a question, and ends with a question mark.

Example: How did you find the card?

- **Exclamatory** - An exclamatory sentence shows strong feeling, a sudden emotion, and ends with an exclamation mark.

Example: The monster is attacking!

- **Imperative** - An imperative sentence gives a command, order or request.

Example: Kebede, try the other door.

- Sometimes the subject of an imperative sentence (you) is understood.

Example: Look in the closet. (You, look in the closet.)

Exercise I

Tell what kind of sentence each of the following is.

1. When will you do that?

2. The house is on fire.

3.She wants to know why you did that.

4. Would you please accept my invitation?

5. Her behavior is disturbing the boy!

Phrases

- A phrase is a group of words without both a subject and predicate.

There are different types of phrases:

- A noun phrase acts as a noun.

Example, "the hungry cat".

- An adjective phrase

Example: ***The boy <u>playing the guitar</u> was happy.***

- *A verb phrase*

Example: *She **<u>must have jumped</u>** across the stream.*

- An adverb phrase

Example**: The cake **with nuts** fell **onto the floor

- A prepositional phrase

Example:** The house **on the corner** was old**.

- *Appositive phrase*

***Example:** Abebech, **my sister with dark hair,** sang a song.*

- Gerund phrase

***Example:** I like **swimming in lakes**.*

- Infinitive phrase

Example: I will not forget ***to bring*** the book.

Clauses

- **A clause is essentially a phrase, but with both the subject and predicate coming together.**
- **Clauses are either dependent or independent.**
- **An independent clause can exist by itself as a complete sentence while a dependent clause cannot.**
- **Example: I like people(IC) who smile(DC).**

Dependent or Subordinate Clauses

- A dependent or subordinate clause depends on an independent clause to express its full meaning
- Dependent clauses can function as nouns, adjectives, and adverbs:

1. **Noun clause** - The boy wondered *if his parents bought him what he wanted for Christmas*.

2. Adjective clause (or relative clause)

- I listened to the song *that you told me about.*

- **relative clauses are** either restrictive or nonrestrictive (also called defining and non-defining, essential and nonessential, or integrated and supplementary):
  - ***Restrictive clause***

  Example: The building *that they built at Bole* sold for a lot of money

  Non-restrictive clause

  Example: The building, *which they built at Bole*, sold for a lot of money

- **A nonrestrictive clause adds extra information about an already-specific noun, and it is separated off by commas**

- **In the example above , there's only one building to talk about,**

- **whereas the example for the restrictive clause implies that there could be several buildings.**

- Adverb clause

Example: She will call you **when she gets time.**

- Adverb clauses express when, where, why, and how something occurs.
- A dependent clause is an adverb clause if you can replace it with an adverb.

Example: She will call you ***later***.

Types of Sentences According to Structure

- A sentence may consist of one clause **(independent clause)** or more clauses (**independent and dependent clauses).**

On the basis of numbers of clause and types of clauses present in a sentence, sentences are divided in to four types:

- ***Simple, compound, complex, and compound- complex***

- **Simple Sentence**

A simple sentence consists of **only one independent clause** containing a subject and a verb.
An independent clause (also called main clause) is called a simple sentence.
Examples:

They laughed.
They are singing.
Kebede bought a pen.
She ate an orange.

- **Compound Sentence**

A compound sentence consists of **at least two independent clauses** joined by coordinating conjunctions.

The coordinating conjunctions used to join independent clauses are "***for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so***". ***(FANBOYS)***

Independent clauses can also be joined by a semicolon (;).

A comma may or may not be used before the conjunction in compound sentence.

Examples

I like apples but **my brother likes mangoes**.

He failed two times yet **he is not disappointed**.

I asked him a question; **he replied correctly**.

NOTE:

- ***Coordinating conjunctions sometimes do not indicate much of a relationship.***
- ***The word "and," for example, only adds one independent clause to another, without indicating how the two parts of a sentence are logically related.***
- ***Too many compound sentences that use "and" can weaken writing.***
- **Clearer and more specific relationships can be established through the use of complex sentences**

- **Complex Sentence**

A complex sentence consists of one **independent clause and at least one dependent clause** joined by a subordinating conjunction:

(because, although, since, when, unless etc) or relative pronoun (that, who, which etc).

Examples:

He saw the girl who had helped him.

He is wearing a coat which looks nice.

She can't pass the exam unless she studies for it.

- **If a complex sentence begins with an independent clause, a comma is not used between the clauses.**
- **If a complex sentence begins with dependent clause then a comma is used after the dependent clause.**
- **See the following examples:**

He is playing well although he is ill.

Although he is ill, he is playing well.

- Dependent clauses begin with **subordinating conjunctions**. Below are some of the most common subordinating conjunctions:
- ***After, although, as, because***
- ***Before, even though, if, since***
- ***Though, unless, until, when***
- ***Whenever, whereas, wherever, while***

- **Compound-Complex Sentence**

A compound-complex sentence consists of **at least two independent and one or more dependent clauses**.

Examples:

1. **He went to college** and **I went to market** ***where I bought a book.***
2. **I like Mathematics** but **my bother likes Biology** ***because he wants to be a doctor.***

- In the above sentences, there are two independent clauses and one dependent clause

Identifying and Correcting Faulty Sentences in Writing

- **Sentence Fragments**

A sentence fragment (or incomplete sentence) is almost a sentence but lacks a subject, a finite verb, or a completed thought.

Sentence fragments are one of the three serious errors.

Often, but not always, sentence fragments begin with "That," "Because," or an "–ing" verb,

Examples of a sentence fragment

- ***Because she was new in town and had not met any of her neighbors.****
- ***That the dog would have to be put outside while the house was fumigated.****

- ***You can correct a sentence fragment by supplying one or more of the missing elements: the subject, the finite verb, or the completed thoughts.***

- ***Also, a sentence fragment often can be corrected by using a comma instead of a period to separate the incomplete sentence from the sentence that comes before it or after it***.

  - ***Because she was new in town and had not met any of her neighbors, she had nothing to do on Saturday night.***

- ***The dog would have to be put outside while the house was fumigated***.

- **Run-on Sentences**

  A run-on sentence occurs when two or more sentences are brought together with no punctuation between the sentences.

Examples:

- ***We listened to music all night my favorite song was " Forever."****
- ***I took English 1011 last year it was a great class!****
- ***He used to work at CBE now he works at AbayBank.****

- ***To Correct run-on sentences separate the complete sentences with:***

  (1) a period, (2) a semicolon, (3) or a comma followed by a conjunction (such as "but," "and," or "so").

Examples:

- ***We listened to music all night. My favorite song was “Forever."***
- ***I took English 1011 last spring, and it was a great class!***
- ***He used to work at CBE, but now he works at Abay Bank.***

- **Comma Splices**

  A comma splice occurs when a comma separates two complete sentences.

  Comma splices are one of the three serious "sentence-boundary" errors.

  Examples:

- ***He could not stand the long hours, he quitted his job.****
- ***We all watched Titanic, it was a great movie!****
- ***Susan was overwhelmed with work, however she was able to complete her work before she left the office.****

- ***Comma splices can be corrected in several different ways, including:***
- ***using a period instead of the comma,***
- ***using a semicolon instead of the comma, and***
- ***adding a conjunction (such as "or," "but," "and," "if") immediately after the comma.***

Examples:

- ***He could not stand the long hours, so he quitted his job.***
- ***We all watched Titanic. It was a great movie!***
- ***Susan was overwhelmed with work; however, she was able to complete her work before she left the office.***

- **Mixed Construction**

  Mixed construction occurs when one part of a sentence does not logically or grammatically follow another part of the sentence.

  Examples:

  - ***In Alice Walker's "To Hell with Dying" is about the love the narrator shares with Mr. Sweet.****
- ***Because of pollution is one reason so many animals are endangered.****

Most often, mixed construction can be corrected if you consider the subject and the verb of the sentence in which mixed construction occurs.

Mixed construction can often be corrected simply with the deletion of a word or two.

Examples:

- ***Alice Walker's "To Hell with Dying" is about the love the narrator shares with Mr. Sweet.***
- ***Pollution is one reason so many animals are endangered.***

- ***Faulty Parallelism***

  Faulty parallelism occurs when parts of a sentence that are either in balance or part of a series are not presented with the same (or parallel) grammatical structure.

Examples:

- ***He likes to listen to music, to watch movies, and going swimming.****
- ***She understood how to change the oil and replacing the air filter.****
- ***The assignment required students to identify an important character in the novel, to describe this character's actions, and explaining how the character's actions influence the plot.****

To correct faulty parallelism, you first must recognize that you are balancing items in your sentence or presenting two or more items in a series.

Separating the different parts of your sentence should help.

Examples:

- ***He likes to listen to music, to watch movies, and to swim.***
- ***She understood how to change the oil and how to replace the air filter.***
- ***The assignment required students to identify an important character in the novel, to describe this character's actions, and to explain how the character's actions influence the plot.***

- **SUBJECT-VERB DISAGREEMENT**

  In standard written English, singular subject takes a singular verb, and a plural subject requires a plural verb.

- **Disagreement**

Military advisors has been sent to Central Africa.

Fast, effective medical service are one of the major goals of an Area Health Center.

- Do not confuse the **plural ‘s’** ending of a noun with the **singular's’** ending of a verb.
- An **‘s’** at the end of a **noun** almost always signals that the word is **plural,** whereas an **‘s’** at the end of a **verb** indicates that it is **singular.**Therefore,if you have written a sentence in which the subject and verb both end in **‘s’,**they probably disagree in number.

- **Disagreement**

  In the latest air disaster film, two planes flying over a large city collides.

Exceptions

1.A few nouns(news, economics,etc.)are plural in form but singular in meaning.When one of these singular nouns functions as a subject,its verb should also be singular.

- **Example**

The news from Middle East is all bad.

Economics attracts many students on this campus.

2.When a title is the subject of a sentence,the verb should also be singular-even if the title includes a plural noun or pronoun.

- **Example**

Jaws Fennimore Cooper's **The Pioneers** takes place in the west.

Jaws has made some people afraid to go in the water.

- **Note that in both of these sentences the subject is the title itself, not the words comprising it.**

- **When the subject of a sentence is a collective noun,use a singular verb if the noun refers to a group as a unit and a plural verb if the noun refers to the individuals comprising a group**.
- Collective noun referring to members as a unit

  The negotiating **team disagrees** with the ambassador’s policy statement.

- Collective noun referring to individual members

  The negotiating **team disagree** about how to respond to the ambassador’s policy statement.

In the first sentence above,the verb is singular because the negotiating team is unified in its disagreement with the ambassador’s policy statement.

In the second sentence, the verb is plural because the members of the negotiating team respond differently to the ambassador’s statement.

When using an indefinite pronoun as subject, choose a verb form that tells the reader whether the pronoun is singular or plural in meaning.

- **Some** of the liquid in the beaker **has spilled** on the floor**.(Some** is a singular quantity and therefore needs a singular verb.**)**
- **Some** of the skateboard artists **were doing** flips as they glided along the sidewalk **.(some** refers to more than one skateboard artists and therefore needs a plural verb**.)**

Besure to make a distinction between these two indefinite pronouns and the two other classes of indefinite pronouns:those which are always plural and(several,few,any)

- And those which are always singular(each, everyone,everybody,somebody,anybody,either,neither,etc.)

Many speak ,but **few listen**

Everyone has the same problem**.**

***Make a verb in a relative clause agree in number with the antecedent of the relative pronoun.**

- Because a relative pronoun **who,which,that**) does not have distinictive singular and plural forms,you must locate the antecedent inorder to determine the number of the pronoun.

Example

The **person who has** the most experience will receive first consideration.(singular antecedent-singular verb)

The **people who have** the most experience will receive first consideration.(plural antecedent-plural verb).

*To determine the number of a verb with the compound antecedent,note the type of conjunction(s)used to unite the elements of the compounds.

If you form a compound subject with **and,**make the verb plural;if you join the subjects with **or,nor,either,or neither,**make the verb singular.

But,if you join subjects with ‘**either…or,’’neither…nor’or’not only…but also’,**make the verb agree with the part of the compound closest to it.

Example

The highway patrol **and** the national guard **were** available for emergency duty.

*Use a sigular verb with such constructions only on the rare occasion when you want to indicate that the elements joined by **and** function as one.

Example

The famous **pirate and smuggler was** capable of evading even the swiftest of his pursuers.

Neither of the students **is** attending classes.

John **or** David **takes** the first rank.

Neither reason **nor intuitions are** infallible.

Either thunderstorms **or** heavy fog **makes** driving difficult.

Exercise 1

Correct the errors in subject-verb agreement.

1.Neither the chief airport official nor the president of the airline were certain that the strike could be averted.

2.If either of the rescue teams get through in time,it will be a miracle.

3.Star Wars were a picture that spawned numerous inferior imitations.

4. The source of the ruler’s problems were the apathy and mistrust of his subjects.
5. Reducing the inefficiencies in production lines were the main concern of the newly hired consultants.
6. There is several ivory chess sets in the wall safe.
7. The dancers and their director gives a benefit performance yearly for the community.

Exercise 2

Correct the errors in subject-verb agreement in the following passage.

Two of the biggest problems a college freshman face are homesickness and lonliness.Freshmen on their own for the first time often experiences feelings of anxiety and insecurity until they adjust to their new independence. However,once the newest members of the campus community makes the necessary adjustments,solitude and new found freedom becomes enjoyable rather than frightening.

- **Pronoun-Antecedent Disagreement**

A pronoun and its antecedent(the word or words that the pronoun refers to)should always agree in number.A singular pronoun requires a singular antecedent,and a plural pronoun requires a plural antecedent.

Example

The antique **collector** placed **her** bid.

The antique **collectors** placed **their** bids.

With collective nouns such as committee,team,jury,and the like,use either a singular or a plural pronoun depending on whether you want the reader to think of the members of the group as a unit or as individuals.

The **committee** submitted **its** report to the boss.

The **committee** disagreed about whether **they** should submit their report to the boss

When using an indefinite pronoun as an antecedent,note whether it is singular or plural and make any pronoun that refers to it agree in number.

- Like collective nouns,some indefinite pronouns (**any,all,some)** may be singular or plural.

Some of the baggage was damaged when it fell out of the trunk.

(some of the baggage is conceived as a single amount).

The graduating seniors gathered in the auditorium.**Some** wore their robes ,and **some** wore their school clothes.(**some** refers to several individuals).

Few remained in **their** homes during the earthquake.

Most indefinite pronouns ,however,are always singular.These include such as words as **each,every,either,neither,everyone,someone,anyone**,etc.Confusion can arise when words intervene between an indefinite pronoun and its antecedent.

Disagreement

Each of the members of women's association had their own motives.

Agreement

Each of the members of the women's association had her own motives.

Somebody left a car in the middle of the street.

Students have different theories about how to prepare for tests.

Everyone has **his/her** own theory about how to prepare tests.

In general,a pronoun should be plural if its antecedent is a compound consisting of two or more words joined by **and**.

My brother and his wife like cold weather,but they are having second thoughts about moving to Alaska.

Exception:

If the elements joined by and refer to the same person or thing,treat the entire compound as

A singular antecedent and use the singular form for any pronouns that refer to it.

The **famous actor and director** recently completed **his** new film.

If the anecedent is a compound in which the elements are linked by **or,nor,either,or neither,**use a singular pronoun,but if the compound is linked by elements like **‘either…or’,’neither… nor,or’not only…but also**’,

The pronoun should agree with the part of the antecedent that is closest to it.

Example:

Neither the life jacket nor the **flashlight** was in its place.

Neither the life jacket nor the **flashlights** were in their proper place.

Neither the life jackets nor the **flashlight** was in its proper place.

Pronoun-Antecedent Disagreement

Execicise 1

Revise each of the following sentences to eliminate pronoun-antecedent disagreements.

1. Each instructors has a philosophy of teaching that they follow.
2. The encounter group meet every Tuesday in their room on the third floor.

3. Neither of the campers was very happy with the weather they encountered during the backwoods trip.
4. The committee makes their recommendations for new bylaws after their last meeting of the year.
5. The entire coin collection was stolen from their hiding places.

6. Everyone who has finished their warm-up can begin their floor exercise.
7. The great doctor and scientist will take a vacation only after the completion of their research.
8. Some of the logs spilled from its bin on the back of the truck.

Exercise 2

Correct the pronoun-disagreement error in the following passage.

Everyone has their favourite kind of music,but few can tell specifically what makes it appealing.Like the kids on American Bandsand,the average music lover can describe their reactions to the music only in general terms,such as”I like the beat”or

“It’s easy to dance to.”These people fail to realize that each of the songs they admire has their distinctive features.By analyzing the appeal of a song,both the enthusiast and the average listener derive greater enjoyment and appreciation.

- **Lack of Subject/Verb Agreement(Revision)**

  Lack of subject/verb agreement occurs when a verb does not agree in number with its subject.

  Examples:

  - ***One of my teachers are in the office.****

-
  - ***Neither Frank nor Elizabeth are here today.****
  - ***No one in the crowd of 10,000 spectators watching the football game seem to understand why the player was penalized.****

- ***To correct a lack of subject/verb agreement, you must identify the subject of the verb and then change the verb to agree with that subject.***

- ***Do not be fooled by words that may come between the subject and the verb.***

  Examples:

  - **One of my teachers is in the office.**
  - **Neither Frank nor Elizabeth is here today.**
  - **No one in the crowd of 10,000 spectators watching the football game seems to understand why the player was penalized.**

- **Pronoun Errors**

  Pronouns must agree in number and person with the noun they are replacing (the words that pronouns replace are called "antecedents").

- **Lack of pronoun agreement occurs when the pronoun does not agree in number or person with its antecedent.**

- **Pronoun errors also occur when the writer uses a pronoun whose antecedent is missing, is ambiguous, or is too far removed from its antecedent.**

  Examples:

  - ***When a student gets behind in the course, they have a difficult time completing all of the assignments.****
  - ***Jemal asked Martha if the instructor wanted to see her.****
  - ***When one debates an issue, he must have thorough knowledge of both sides of the issue.****

To correct a problem with pronoun agreement, you must identify the antecedent of the pronoun, and then you must change the pronoun or the antecedent so that each agrees in number and person with the other.

If the antecedent may be unclear to readers, you can replace the pronoun with its antecedent, or you might have to rewrite the sentence to clarify your meaning

Examples:

- ***When a student gets behind in the course, he or she has a difficult time completing all of the assignments, <u>or</u> When students get behind in the course, they have a difficult time completing all of the assignments.***
- ***Jemal asked Martha if the instructor wanted to see Martha.***
- ***When one debates an issue, one must have thorough knowledge of both sides of the issue***

- **Apostrophe/Possessive Errors**
  There are different kinds of possessive and apostrophe errors:
- ***use of a possessive form where one is not needed,***
- ***lack of a possessive form where one is needed,***
- ***a misplaced apostrophe, and***
- ***confusion over "its" and "it's."***

  Examples:

  - ***All of the student's were prepared for the exam.****
  - ***I waited an hour in the doctors office!****
  - ***Marthas' dream is to begin a new life with Frew.****
  - ***Its not that I dislike the story; I just do not understand it's meaning.****

- ***Correcting possessive and apostrophe errors is largely a matter of understanding when you are and are not showing "possession.“***

- ***If you are unsure, try reversing the words in question and then place the word "of" between them; if it makes sense, you need an apostrophe to show possession.***

- ***For example, do I need an apostrophe for "doctors office"? Is my meaning "[the] office [of] the doctor"? Yes, so I need to write "doctor’s office."***

- ***Also, remember not to use an apostrophe if you are not showing possession but are simply using a plural form of a word, as in "The doctors arrived at noon."***
- ***Finally, where you place the apostrophe for a possessive is important:***

Examples:

  - ***"doctor's office" means the office of one doctor;***
  - ***"doctors' office" means that more than one doctor share the same office ("[the] office [of] the doctors").***

- ***Therefore, the above errors can be corrected in the following ways:***
  - ***All of the students were prepared for the exam.***
  - ***I waited an hour in the doctor's office!***
  - ***Mary's dream is to begin a new life with Frank.***
  - ***It's not that I dislike the story; I just do not understand its meaning.***

- **Misplaced/Dangling Modifiers**

  A "modifier" is a word or phrase that "modifies" or changes another word or phrase.

  A modifier is misplaced if it modifies the wrong word or phrase.

  A modifier is "dangling" if the word or phrase that is supposed to be modified does not appear in the sentence.

  Examples:

  - ***Looking out the window, the snow continued to fall.****
  - ***After biting two children, the police took away our German Shepherd.****
  - ***Although expensive and well planned, she was disappointed by her vacation to Hawaii.****

- ***If a sentence begins with a modifier followed by a comma, whatever word or phrase is being modified must immediately follow the comma.***
- ***If the modifier is "dangling," the writer needs to supply the word or phrase that is being modified.***

  Examples:

  - ***Looking out the window, he saw that the snow continued to fall.***
  - ***After biting two children, our German Shepherd was taken away by the police.***
  - ***Although expensive and well planned, her vacation to Hawaii was disappointing***

- **Inaccurate Word Choice**

  "Inaccurate Word Choice" indicates errors in word choice, usually errors involving words in English that are commonly confused.

  A few of these commonly confusingwords are listed below.

  If you have problems with inaccurate word choice, you should use a dictionary to figure out the meanings of the words that are giving you trouble.

Commonly confusing words

accept/except

advice/advise

allude/elude

among/between

are/our

affect/effect

eminent/imminent

fewer/less

further/farther

illusion/allusion

infer/imply

in turn/intern

it's/its

lay/lie

- *led/lead*
- *lose/loose*
- *past/passed*
- *precede/proceed*
- *sight/site/cite*
- *their/there/they're*
- *then/than*
- *to/too/two*
- *weather/whether*
- *were/where*
- *who/whom*
- *who's/whose*
- *your, you're*

Punctuation

- ***Punctuation is used to create sense, clarity and stress in sentences.***
- ***You use punctuation marks to structure and organize your writing.***

- ***You can quickly see why punctuation is important if you try and read the following sentence which has no punctuation at all:***

- ***perhaps you dont always need to use commas periods colons etc to make sentences clear when i am in a hurry tired cold lazy or angry i sometimes leave out punctuation marks grammar is stupid i can write without it and dont need it my uncle Harry once said he was not very clever and i never understood a word he wrote to me i think ill learn some punctuation not too much enough to write to Uncle Harry he needs some help***

- Now let's see if punctuating it makes a difference!

Perhaps you don't always need to use commas, periods, colons etc. to make sentences clear. When I am in a hurry, tired, cold, lazy, or angry I sometimes leave out punctuation marks. "Grammar is stupid! I can write without it and don't need it," my uncle Harry once said. He was not very clever, and I never understood a word he wrote to me. I think I'll learn some punctuation - not too much, enough to write to Uncle Harry. He needs some help!

***There are ten punctuation marks in English*.**

- ***The period (or full stop in British English)***
- ***The comma***
- ***The exclamation mark***
- ***The question mark***
- ***The colon***
- ***The semicolon***
- ***The quotation mark***
- ***The apostrophe***
- ***The hyphen and the dash***
- ***The parentheses and brackets***

The Period, Full Stop or Point

- The period (known as a full stop in British English) is probably the simplest of the punctuation marks to use.
- You use it like a knife to cut the sentences to the required length.
- Generally, you can break up the sentences using the full stop at the end of a logical and complete thought that looks and sounds right to you.

Examples

- **Rome is the capital of Italy.**
- **I was born in Australia and now live in Indonesia.**
- **The Dalai Lama is the spiritual leader of the Tibetan people.**

- **Indicate an abbreviation**

  Many abbreviations require a period.

But, Dr, Mr, Mrs, Ms, MA, Phd, or CIA. do not take a period in British English,

In American English, some of these do require periods or both usages are correct (with and without periods).

Examples

- I will arrive between 6 a.m. and 7 a.m.
- We are coming on Fri., Jan. 4.

- **Ellipsis**

  Often you will see a sentence concluding with three dots.

  This indicates that only part of the sentence or text has been quoted or that it is being left up to the reader to complete the thought.

  Examples

  - ***The Lord's Prayer begins, "Our Father which art in Heaven...'"***
  - ***He is always late, but you know how I feel about that...***

- **Period after a single word**

  Sometimes a single word can form the sentence.

  In this case you place a full stop after the word as you would in any other sentence.

  This is often the case when the subject is understood as in a greeting or a command.

  Examples

  - "***Goodbye.***"
  - "***Stop.***"

- **Periods in numbers**

  Numbers use periods in English to separate the whole number from the decimal.

  A period used in a number is also called a "decimal point" and it is read "point" unless it refers to money.

  Examples

  - ***$10.43 = ten dollars and 43 cents***
  - ***14.17 = fourteen point one seven***

- **The Comma**
- ***There are some general rules which you can apply when using the comma.***
- ***However, you will find that in English there are many other ways to use the comma to add to the meaning of a sentence or to emphasize an item, point, or meaning***.

- ***Although we are often taught that commas are used to help us add 'breathing spaces' to sentences they are, in fact, more accurately used to organize blocks of thought or logical groupings.***

- ***Most people use commas to ensure that meaning is clear and, despite grammatical rules, will drop a comma if their meaning is retained without it.***

- ***When making a list, commas are the most common way to separate one list item from the next.***
- ***The final two items in the list are usually separated by "and" or "or", which should be preceded by a comma.***
- ***Amongst editors this final comma in a list is known as the "Oxford Comma".***

- ***A series of independent clauses (sentences)***

  Examples

  - ***I met Harry, we went for a swim together, and afterwards Harry went home.***
  - ***I like your son, I might even love him, but he is not a very good soccer player.***

- **a series of nouns**

  Examples

  - For dinner I had soup, fish, chicken, dessert, and coffee.
  - This afternoon I went to Oxford Circus, Picadilly, Hamstead, and Gatwick Airport.

- **a series of adjectives**
- ***A list of adjectives usually requires commas.***

- ***However, if an adjective is modifying another adjective you do not separate them with a comma (sentence 3).***

  Examples

  - ***She was young, beautiful, kind, and intelligent.***
  - ***The house we visited was dark, dreary, and run-down.***
  - ***She was wearing a bright red shirt.***

- **a series of verbs**

  Examples

  - ***Tony ran towards me, fell, yelled, and fainted.***
  - ***The boy leapt, spun, twisted, and dove into the water.***
- **a series of phrases**

  Examples

  - **The car smashed into the wall, flipped onto its roof, slid along the road, and finally stopped against a tree.**
  - **The dog leapt into the air, snatched the Frisbee in its mouth, landed, and ran off into the forest.**

- ***Enclosing details***
- ***Use a comma to enclose non-defining relative clauses and other non-essential details and comments. The comma is placed on either side of the insertion.***

Examples

- ***China, one of the most powerful nations on Earth, has a huge population.***
- ***Jakson's grandmother, who was born in 1930, lived through the Second World War.***
- ***Cats, unlike dogs, do not respect their masters.***
- ***My friend, Jim, likes to go scuba div****ing.*

- **Participial phrases**

  Examples

  - ***Hearing that her father was in hospital, Jane left work immediately.***
  - ***Walking to the bus stop that morning, Sam knew it was going to be a special day.***
- **Tag questions**

  Examples

  - ***She lives in Paris, doesn't she?***
  - ***We haven't met, have we?***

- **Interjections**

  Examples

  - ***Yes, I will stay a little longer, thank you.***
  - ***No, he isn't like other boys.***
  - ***Wait, I didn't mean to scare you.***

- **A final warning**
- ***Putting a comma in the wrong place can lead to a sentence with a completely different meaning, look at these two sentences:***

- ***I detest liars like you; I believe that honesty is the best policy. = I detest you because you are a liar.***

- ***I detest liars, like you; I believe that honesty is the best policy. = You and I both detest liars***.

- **The Exclamation Mark**
- ***The exclamation mark is used to express exasperation, astonishment, or surprise, or to emphasize a comment or short, sharp phrase.***
- ***In professional or everyday writing, exclamation marks are used sparingly if at all***.

  Examples

  - ***Help! Help!***
  - ***That's unbelievable!***
  - ***Get out!***

- **The Question Mark**

  Use the question mark at the end of all direct questions.

  Examples

  - ***What is your name?***
  - ***Do you speak Italian?***
  - ***You're Spanish, aren't you?***
  - ***Do not use a question mark for reported questions***

  Examples

  - ***He asked me what my name was.***
  - ***She asked if I was Spanish.***
  - ***Ask them where they are going.***

- **The Colon**

  The colon expands on the sentence that precedes it, often introducing a list that demonstrates or elaborates whatever was previously stated.

  Examples

  - **There are many reasons for poor written communication: lack of planning, poor grammar, misuse of punctuation marks, and insufficient vocabulary.**
  - **He collected a strange assortment of items: bird's eggs, stamps, bottle tops, string, and buttons.**

The colon is also used to divide the hour from the minutes in writing a time in English.

Examples

- **4:15 = "four fifteen“**

- ***The Semicolon***

  The semicolon is somewhere between a full stop and a comma. Semicolons can be used in English to join phrases and sentences that are thematically linked without having to use a conjunction (example 1 below).

  Semicolons can also be used instead of commas to separate the items in a list when the items themselves already contain commas (example 2 below).

  Examples

  – ***I like your brother; he's a good friend.***

- ***Quotation Marks***

  Use quotation marks to cite something someone said exactly. When rephrasing what someone told you, no quotation marks are needed.

  Examples

  - ***"I'm going to the store now," she said.***
  - ***Harry told me, "Don't forget your soccer jersey."***
  - ***Harry told me not to forget my soccer jersey.***

- ***If quoting others within a quote, both single and double quotation marks are used to set the two separate quotations off from each other.***

  Example

  - ***'I haven't spoken to Peter for months,' Dianne said. 'The last time I spoke to him he said, "I'm going to Bahrain and won't be back for about three years", I've heard nothing since then'.***

- ***You may see single or double quotation marks used to mark out idiomatic or unfamiliar expressions***

  Examples

  - ***I've always thought that he was very annoying, a bit of a 'pain in the neck.‘***

  - ***I'm not sure what you mean by "custodial care", but I'm sure you will explain it to me.***

- ***Quotation marks both single and double are also used for specific purposes in bibliographic references or when citing sources in academic writing.***
- ***There are a number of ways of organising bibliographies which set out standard formats.***
- ***Most organisations and academic institutions will prefer one of these or have their own format published in a 'style guide'.***

  Example

  - ***"The Migration Flight of the Lesser Tweazle", by Jeremey Adams, <u>The Bird Spotter Magazine</u>, July 2009.***

- **The Apostrophe**
- ***The apostrophe probably causes more grief than all of the other punctuation marks put together!***
- ***The problem nearly always seems to stem from not understanding that the apostrophe has two very different (and very important) uses in English: possession and contractions.***

- ***The apostrophe in contractions***
- ***The most common use of apostrophes in English is for contractions, where a noun or pronoun and a verb combine.***

- ***Remember that the apostrophe is often replacing a letter that has been dropped. It is placed where the missing letter would be in that case***
  - ***Contractions***
  - ***isn't, hasn't, hadn't, didn't, wouldn't, can't***
  - ***she's, there's, he's, it's, Mary's, Jim's, Germany's, who's***

- *you're* and *your*, *who's* and *whose*, and *they're*, *their* and *there*. See below for the difference.

  Examples

  - ***It's a nice day outside. (contraction)***
  - ***The cat is dirty. Its fur is matted. (possession)***
  - ***You're not supposed to be here. (contraction)***
  - ***This is your book. (possession)***
  - ***Who's at the door? (contraction)***
  - ***Whose shoes are these? (possession)***
  - ***They're not here yet. (contraction)***
  - ***Their car is red. (possession)***
  - ***His car is over there. (location***

- ***The possessive apostrophe***

In most cases you simply need to add 's to a noun to show possession

Examples

- ***a ship's captain***
- ***a doctor's patient***
- ***a car's engine***
- ***Ibrahim's coat***
- ***Mirianna's book***

- ***Plural nouns that do not end in s also follow this rule:***

  Examples

  - ***the children's room***
  - ***the men's work***
  - ***the women's club***
- ***Ordinary (or common) nouns that end in s, both singular and plural, show possession simply by adding an apostrophe after the s.***

  Examples

  - ***the bus' wheel***
  - ***the babies' crying***
  - ***the ladies' tennis club***
  - ***the teachers' journal***

- ***Proper nouns (names of people, cities, countries) that end in s can form the possessive either by adding the apostrophe + s or simply adding the apostrophe.***
- ***Today both forms are considered correct (Jones's or Jones'), and many large organizations now drop the apostrophe completely (e.g. Barclays Bank, Missing Persons Bureau) when publishing their name.***

  Examples

  - ***The Hughes' home (or the Hughes's home)***
  - ***Mr Jones's shop (or Mr Jones' shop)***
  - ***Charles' book (or Charles's book)***

- ***Hyphens***

  Generally, hyphens are used to join two words or parts of words together while avoiding confusion or ambiguity.

  Examples

  - ***run-down***
  - ***up-to-date***
- ***There are some cases where hyphens preserve written clarity such as where there are letter collisions, where a prefix is added, or in family relations***

  Examples

  - ***co-operate***
  - ***bell-like***
  - ***anti-nuclear***

- ***In some cases though, a hyphen does change the meaning of a sentence.***

  Example

  - ***I am thinking of re-covering my sofa (= to put a new cover on it)***
  - ***I would like to recover my sofa. (= from someone who has borrowed or stolen it)***

- ***Hyphens in numbers***

  Use a hyphen with compound numbers from twenty-one to ninety-nine.

  Examples

  - ***fifty-one***
  - ***eighty-nine***

- ***In written fractions place a hyphen between the numerator and denominator except if there is already a hyphen in either the numerator or the denominator.***

  Examples

  - ***two-fifths***
  - ***one-third***
- ***Use a hyphen when a number forms part of an adjectival compound***

  Examples

  - ***France has a 35-hour working week.***
  - ***He won the 100-metre sprint.***

- **Dashes**

  Dashes can be used to add parenthetical statements or comments in much the same way as you would use brackets.

  In formal writing you should use the bracket rather than the dash as a dash is considered less formal.

  Dashes can be used to create emphasis in a sentence.

  Examples

  - ***You may think she is a liar - she isn't.***
  - ***She might come to the party - you never know***

- ***Brackets and Parentheses***
- ***The difference between a 'bracket' and a 'parentheses' can be a bit confusing.***
- ***Generally, 'parentheses' refers to round brackets ( ) and 'brackets' to square brackets [ ].***
- ***However, we are more and more used to hearing these referred to simply as 'round brackets' or 'square brackets'.***

- ***Usually we use square brackets - [ ] - for special purposes such as in technical manuals.***

- ***Round brackets - ( ) - are used in a similar way to commas when we want to add further explanation, an afterthought, or comment that is to do with our main line of thought but distinct from it.***
- ***Many grammarians feel that the parentheses can, in fact, be replaced by commas in nearly all cases***

- ***Examples***
  - ***The government's education report (April 2005) shows that the level of literacy is rising in nearly all areas.***
  - ***I visited Kathmandu (which was full of tourists) on my way to the Himalayas for a trekking expedition.***
  - ***You can eat almost anything while travelling in Asia if you are careful to observe simple rules (avoiding unboiled or unbottled water is one of the main rules to be aware of.)***