

- As a class, create a punctuation poster that will help students remember punctuation rules to use as reference when they are writing.
- As a class, students can make a Punctuation Book as one volume in a class Grammar Library. This book can include definitions, examples and illustrations for key concepts like punctuation and letter writing.

Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at www.LibraryVideo.com

- esd.iu5.org/LessonPlans/LetterWriting/lettermain.htm
This web site showcases Mitchell the dinosaur, who teaches students about writing a friendly letter. The five parts of a friendly letter are presented, in addition to addressing how to appropriately use commas and capitals in letter writing.
- library.thinkquest.org/J001156/writing/punctuation.htm
This page, created by and for kids, is a quick summary of important and useful punctuation and capitalization rules.
- www.mape.org.uk/startower/starpunc/index.htm
This engaging game enables students to replace the missing punctuation in several stories.

Suggested Print Resources

- Leedy, Loreen. *Messages in the Mailbox: How to Write a Letter*. Holiday House, New York, NY; 1991.
- McKerns, Dorothy and Leslie Motchkavitz. *The Kid's Guide to Good Grammar: What You Need to Know About Punctuation, Sentence Structure, Spelling and More*. NTC/Contemporary Pub. Group, Lincolnwood, IL; 1998.
- Terban, Marvin. *Punctuation Power! Punctuation and How to Use It*. Scholastic, New York, NY; 2000.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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TITLES

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| • DESCRIPTIVE WORDS & PHRASES | • PUNCTUATION |
| • NOUNS | • VERBS |
| | • SENTENCES |

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Executive Producers: Andrew Schlessinger & Tracy Mitchell
Programs produced and directed by First Light Pictures, Inc.

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V2708



Punctuation

Grades K-4

Grammar consists of a set of rules of language that can be clearly defined and applied to everyday speech and writing. In the classroom, grammar instruction can often be didactic and static, presenting grammar rules as absolute truth and diminishing the knowledge students already possess about language. In order to maximize the usefulness of teaching grammar, students need to be encouraged to discover the rules themselves, based on their own language experiences in real world contexts. Students already instinctively know a great deal about how language works, and as teachers, we need to bring this information to the surface in a dynamic and useful way.



Introduction

Punctuation is the use of special marks to help make our writing more clear. The ends of sentences often have punctuation like periods, exclamation points and question marks. Punctuation like commas and quotation marks are often found in the middle of sentences. Letters we write to our friends and family have special punctuation rules, too. It's important to proofread our writing to make sure that we've included all the proper punctuation!

Vocabulary

grammar — The set of rules that explains how we use language.

punctuation — The use of special marks to help make our writing more clear. Some examples of punctuation are periods, question marks and commas.

statement — A kind of sentence that tells something and ends with a period. A statement is also called a telling sentence or a declarative sentence.

question — A kind of sentence that asks something and ends with a question mark. A question is also called an interrogative sentence.

command — A kind of sentence that tells someone to do something and can end with a period or an exclamation point. A command is also called an imperative sentence.

exclamation — A kind of sentence that shows strong feeling and ends with an exclamation point. An exclamation is also called an exclamatory sentence.

quotation — What someone actually says. A quotation starts and ends with quotation marks.

heading — The part of a letter that contains the address and the date.

abbreviations — The shortened forms of words.

greeting — The part of a letter that includes the name of the person receiving the letter. The greeting often starts with the word "dear."

body — The main part of a letter that gives information to the person receiving the letter.

closing — The ending of a letter.

signature — How a letter is signed.

proofreading — Rereading to look for correct capitalization and punctuation.

Grammar Rules

- Using quotation marks:
 - Quotation marks come at the beginning and end of a person's exact words (e.g., "I walked the dog," said Kim.).
 - Quotations usually start with a capital letter.
 - A comma usually separates the quotation from the words that tell who is speaking.
 - End punctuation marks are usually placed inside the last quotation mark (e.g., Kim said, "He walked very quickly:").
- Using commas:
 - Use commas to separate a series of three or more words (e.g., "She made a sandwich with peanut butter, jelly, and bread."). Sometimes the comma before the conjunction is not used (e.g., "She made a sandwich with peanut butter, jelly and bread.").

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- Use commas after words like *yes*, *no* and *well* when they begin a sentence (e.g., "Yes, I ate my sandwich:").
- Use commas to set off the names of people who are spoken to directly (e.g., "Kim, that was a good sandwich!").
- Use a comma to separate the month and day from the year (e.g., September 1, 2002).
- Use a comma between the names of a city and a state (e.g., Dallas, Texas).

Focus Questions

1. What is punctuation? Why is punctuation important?
2. Give examples of the kinds of punctuation that end sentences.
3. Give some examples of when you use capital letters.
4. What is a quotation mark? When is it used?
5. What does a comma do? Give examples of when you use a comma.
6. What is an abbreviation? Provide examples.
7. What are the main parts of a letter?

Follow-up Activities

- Write a paragraph on chart paper from a favorite chapter book. Leave out all of the capital letters at the beginning of sentences and the punctuation at the end of sentences. Encourage students to use their proofreading skills to figure out where the missing capitals and punctuation belong to create sentences.
- Students can write letters to their favorite authors, making sure to include a heading, greeting, body, closing and signature. Share the authors' responses with the rest of the class!
- Students can make maps of their neighborhoods and label all streets, making sure to use appropriate abbreviations.
- Encourage students to interview family members or friends about exciting vacations that they once took. Students can write stories in newspaper article format, including actual quotations from the people interviewed.
- Make a wall of sentences in your classroom! Take sentences from favorite picture books and poems and write them on a piece of butcher paper hanging on the wall. Students can challenge themselves by identifying the kinds of sentences. Make sure that the proper punctuation is clearly identified.
- Students can write thank you notes to the comma. Make sure to include all the things that the comma helps us to do.
- Create sets of cards, each card containing a word or punctuation mark that, when put together with other cards, creates an entire sentence. Mix up the cards, and ask students to make sentences with them.
- Students can take inventories of their bedrooms. They can make lists of their favorite items in their rooms, making sure to use commas properly.
- Students can have fun pantomiming punctuation marks! They can assign a sound or movement to each punctuation mark. As you read a paragraph aloud, students should act out the individual marks. Alternatively, kids can hold up cards with the right punctuation as you read a passage aloud.
- Students can select their favorite punctuation marks and write poems or songs that extol their virtues.

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