

## Lecture 04: Punctuation

### 1. Capitalization

**Capitalization** is the writing of a word with its first letter in uppercase and the remaining letters in lowercase. Experienced writers are stingy with capitals. It is best not to use them if there is any doubt.

**Rule 1.** Capitalize the first word of a document and the first word after a period.

**Rule 2.** Capitalize proper nouns—and adjectives derived from proper nouns.

**Examples:** *the Golden Gate Bridge*  
*the Grand Canyon*

**Rule 3.** Capitalize titles when they are used before names

**Example:**

*Chairman of the Board William Bly will preside at the conference.*

**Rule 4.** Do not capitalize occupations before full names.

**Examples:** *director Steven Spielberg - coach Biff Sykes*

**Rule 5.** Capitalize a formal title when it is used as a direct address.

**Example:** *Will you take my temperature, Doctor?*

**Rule 6** Capitalize specific geographical regions. Do not capitalize points of the compass.

**Examples:** *We had three relatives visit from the West.*

### 2. Commas

**Commas** and **periods** are the most frequently used punctuation marks. Commas customarily indicate a brief pause; they're not as final as periods.

**Rule 1.** Use commas to separate words and word groups in a simple series of three or more items.

**Example:** We had coffee, cheese and crackers and grapes.

**Rule 2.** In sentences where two independent clauses are joined by connectors such as and, or, but, etc., put a comma at the end of the first clause.

**Rule 3.** Use a comma after certain words that introduce a sentence, such as *well, yes, why, hello, hey,* etc.

**Examples:** *Why, I can't believe this!*

*No, you can't have a dollar.*

**Rule 4.** Use commas to set off expressions that interrupt the sentence flow (*nevertheless, after all, by the way, on the other hand, however,* etc.).

**Example:** *I am, by the way, very nervous about this.*

**Rule 5.** Use commas to set off the name, nickname, term of endearment, or title of a person directly addressed.

**Examples:** *Will you, Aisha, do that assignment for me?*

**Rule 11.** Use commas to set off nonessential words, clauses, and phrases .

**Example:** *Jill, who is my sister, shut the door.*

**appositive comma.** Many writers forget to add this important comma. Following are two instances of the need for an appositive comma with one or more nouns.

**Example:** *My best friend, Joe, arrived.*

**Rule 6.** Use a comma to separate the day of the month from the year, and—what most people forget!—always put one after the year, also.

**Example:** *It was in the Sun's June 5, 2003, edition.*

**Rule 7.** Use a comma to separate a city from its state, and remember to put one after the state, also.

**Example:** *I'm from the Akron, Ohio, area.*

**Rule 8.** When starting a sentence with a dependent clause, use a comma after it.

**Example:** *If you are not sure about this, let me know now.*

**Rule 09.** Use commas to introduce or interrupt direct quotations.

**Examples:** *He said, "I don't care."*

*"Why," I asked, "don't you care?"*

**Rule 10.** Use a comma to separate a statement from a question.

**Example:** *I can go, can't I?*

**Rule 11.** Commas should precede the term *etc.* and enclose it if it is placed midsentence.

**Example:** *Sleeping bags, pans, warm clothing, etc., are in the tent.*

### 3.Semicolons

Like commas, semicolons indicate an audible pause—slightly longer than a comma's, but short of a period's full stop.

**Rule 1.** A semicolon can replace a period if the writer wishes to narrow the gap between two closely linked sentences.

**Example:** *Call me tomorrow; you can give me an answer then.*

**Rule 2.** Use a semicolon before such words and terms as *namely, however, therefore, that is, i.e., for example, e.g., for instance, etc.*, when they introduce a complete sentence. It is also preferable to use a comma after these words and terms.

**Example:** *Bring any two items; however, sleeping bags and tents are in short supply.*

**Rule 3.** Use a semicolon to separate units of a series when one or more of the units contain commas.

**Example:** *The conference has people who have come from Moscow, Idaho; Springfield, California; Alamo, Tennessee; and other places as well.*

**Rule 4.** A semicolon may be used between independent clauses joined by a connector, such as *and, but, or, nor, etc.*, when one or more commas appear in the first clause.

**Example:** *When I finish here, and I will soon, I'll be glad to help you; and that is a promise I will keep.*