**I. CAPITALISATION**

* Capitalize the first word of every sentence.

EXAMPLES: Reading the article, I learned a lot of scientific facts.

What is the formula for converting degrees Celsius to degrees Fahrenheit?

* Capitalize the first word of a sentence following a colon.

EXAMPLE: We have one important recommendation: In light of the statistics, four-way stop signs should be installed.

* Capitalize the first word of a quoted sentence.

The first word of a quoted sentence should begin with a capital letter, whether or not the quotation comes at the beginning of your sentence.

EXAMPLE: In one of his essays, Sir Francis Bacon wrote, “Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.”

When quoting only part of a sentence, capitalize the first word of the quotation if the person you are quoting capitalized it or it is the first word of your sentence.

EXAMPLES: To which books do you think Bacon was referring when he wrote “some few [are] to be chewed and digested”?

“Some few to be chewed and digested” refers to books that should be read carefully and studied.

* Capitalize the first word of a sentence fragment used in dialogue.

EXAMPLE: When I asked Julia how many of Sir Francis Bacon’s essays she had read, she replied, “Four of them.”

* Capitalize the first word of a statement or question inserted without quotation marks into a sentence.

EXAMPLE: My question is, Will this action solve the problem?

* Capitalize the pronoun I and the interjection O. The interjection O is usually used only for invocations and is followed by the name of the person or thing being addressed. Do not confuse O with the common interjection oh, which is generally not capitalized and which is usually set off with punctuation.

EXAMPLES: Where could I have put my book report?

Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous!

* **Capitalize proper nouns and proper adjectives.**

A proper noun names a particular person, place, thing, or idea. A proper adjective is formed from a proper noun.

EXAMLES: King Arthur -Arthurian legend

Thailand- Thai restaurant

Moscow- Muscovite voters

**Note:** In proper nouns made up of two or more words, do not capitalize

- articles (a, an, the)

- prepositions

• coordinating conjunctions (and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet)

EXAMPLES International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources

Gulf of Oman

Alfred the Great

* Capitalize the names of organizations, teams, institutions, and government bodies.
* Do not capitalize the name of a season unless the season is being personified or is being used as part of a proper noun.

EXAMPLES an early winter

“O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn’s being, . . .”

the Suncoast Summer Festival

* Capitalize the names of nationalities, races, and peoples.

EXAMPLES Asian - Hispanic- Ojibwa

Zulu - Norse- African American

Caucasian - Aztec - Swedish

* Capitalize the names of religions and their followers, holy days and celebrations, holy writings, and specific deities.

**Note:** The words god and goddess are not capitalized when they refer to deities of ancient mythology. However, the names of specific mythological gods and goddesses are capitalized.

EXAMPLE: Cassandra could foretell the future but was condemned by the god Apollo never to be believed.

* Do not capitalize the names of school subjects, except course names that include a number and the names of language classes.

EXAMPLES: art - algebra - chemistry

Art 102 - Algebra I- Chemistry II- English- Spanish

* Generally, a singular noun identified by a number or letter is capitalized.

EXAMPLES: Room 31- Figure B- School District 18- Chapter 4

However, the word page is usually not capitalized when followed by a number or letter, nor is a plural noun followed by two or more numbers or letters capitalized.

EXAMPLE: Look at figures A and B on page 327.

Do not capitalize the class name senior, junior, sophomore, or freshman unless it is part of a proper noun.

EXAMPLES: The juniors and the seniors will hold their talent show on May 4.

The Junior-Senior Revue will be held on May 4.

* **Capitalize titles**.
* Capitalize a person’s title when the title comes before the person’s name.

EXAMPLES: Captain Valdés- Senator Inouye- President White Feather

* Generally, do not capitalize a title used alone or following a person’s name.

EXAMPLES: the captain of the ship

Daniel Inouye, a senator from Hawaii

Uta White Feather, the class president

* Generally, capitalize a title when using it alone in direct address.

EXAMPLE: Goodbye, Professor.

* Capitalize a word showing a family relationship when the word is used before or in place of a person’s name, unless the word is preceded by a possessive.

EXAMPLES Uncle Juan- Cousin Denisa- Grandpa- my aunt Eunice- Jay’s cousin Ramón- your mother

* Capitalize the first and last words and all important words in titles and subtitles.

1. **PUNCTUATION**

**II.1. End Marks**

**An end mark—a period, a question mark, or an exclamation point — is used to indicate the purpose of a sentence. A period is also used at the end of many abbreviations.**

**Sentences**

a. A statement (or declarative sentence) is followed by a **period.**

EXAMPLE: My words are like the stars that never change.

b. A question (or interrogative sentence) is followed by a **question mark.**

EXAMPLE: Have you read Patrick Rothfuss’ s The name of the Wind?

**Note:** Do not use a question mark after a declarative sentence containing an indirect question.

INDIRECT QUESTION My mother wants to know when you will come for dinner.

c. An exclamation (or exclamatory sentence) is followed by an **exclamation point.**

EXAMPLES What a talented artist Picasso was!

**Note:** An interjection at the beginning of a sentence is generally followed by a comma or an exclamation point.

EXAMPLES: Ah, there you are!

Ah! There you are!

A request or a command (or imperative sentence) is followed by either a period or an exclamation point.

A request or a mild command is generally followed by a period. A strong command is generally followed by an exclamation point.

EXAMPLES: Please write me a letter.

Turn to page 126.

Hold that line!

**Abbreviations**

Many abbreviations are followed by a period. An abbreviation is a shortened form of a word or phrase. Notice how periods are used with abbreviations in the following examples.

**Personal Names:** Abbreviate given names only if the person is most commonly known by the abbreviated form of the name.

EXAMPLES: F. Scott Fitzgerald- Harry S. Truman- M.F.K. Fisher

Leave a space between two such initials, but not between three or more.

**Titles:** Abbreviate social titles whether used before the full name or before the last name alone.

EXAMPLES: Mr. John Kelley -Mrs. Rachel Draper - Ms. Young- Dr. Jefferson

You may abbreviate civil and military titles used before full names or before initials and last names. Spell them out before last names used alone.

EXAMPLES: Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf - General Schwarzkopf

Sen. Daniel K. Akaka -Senator Akaka

Prof. Samuel Issacharoff- Professor Issacharoff

Abbreviate titles and academic degrees that follow proper names.

EXAMPLES: Marco Lopez, Jr. - Jeremy Stone, M.D.

Do not include the titles Mr., Mrs., Ms., or Dr. when you use a title or degree after a name.

EXAMPLE: Dr. Jeremy Stone or Jeremy Stone, M.D. [not Dr. Jeremy Stone, M.D.]

**II.2. Comma**

**Items in a Series**

* Use commas to separate items in a series.

EXAMPLES: She had been a correspondent for the wire service in London, Paris, Rome, and Madrid. [words in a series]

I studied for the test on the way to school, during homeroom, and in study hall. [phrases in a series]

The reporter wanted to know who I was, where I went to school, and how I felt about getting my driver’s license. [clauses in a series]

**Note:** Do not use a comma before the first item or after the final item in a series.

INCORRECT: The students in auto mechanics class learned, to replace the spark plugs, to check the fluid levels, and to change the oil, in several makes of cars.

CORRECT: The students in auto mechanics class learned to replace the spark plugs, to check the fluid levels, and to change the oil in several makes of cars.

When and, or, or nor joins the last two items in a series, writers sometimes omit the comma before the conjunction if the comma is not needed to make the meaning of the sentence clear.

CLEAR: Soccer, basketball and lacrosse are my favourite sports. [The meaning of the sentence is clear without a comma before the conjunction and.]

UNCLEAR: Joe, Lucia and Ben are rehearsing a scene from the musical Grease. [The meaning of the sentence is unclear: Are three people rehearsing a scene, or is Joe being addressed?]

**Note:** Short independent clauses in a series may be separated by commas.

EXAMPLE I came, I saw, I conquered.

**Note:** Long independent clauses separated by commas can be difficult to read. To make the break between clauses more distinct, use semicolons instead of commas.

* Use a comma to separate two or more adjectives preceding a noun.

EXAMPLES: Katherine Dunham is a creative, talented dancer and choreographer.

Did you see that boring, silly, worthless movie?

**Note:** Do not use a comma before the final adjective in a series if the adjective is thought of as part of the noun.

EXAMPLE: It was a crisp, clear fall day. [Fall day is considered one item.]

**Note:** A word that modifies one of the adjectives in a series is an adverb, not another adjective. Do not separate the adverb from the adjective with a comma.

EXAMPLE: Why did he wear a bright red cap?

**Independent Clauses**

* Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction (and, but, for, nor, or, so, or yet) when it joins independent clauses.

EXAMPLES: The sky looks clear, yet rain has been forecast.

I saw a performance of August Wilson’s Fences, and now I am eager to read his other plays.

**Note:** Always use a comma before **for, so,** or **yet** joining independent clauses. The comma is sometimes omitted before **and, but,** or, **or nor** when the meaning of the sentence is clear without the comma.

CLEAR We didn’t enjoy the film but you might.

UNCLEAR I will work with Emma and Josh will help Madison.

CLEAR I will work with Emma, and Josh will help Madison.

**Note:** Do not confuse a compound sentence with a simple sentence that contains a compound verb.

COMPOUND SENTENCE: Ashley and I looked everywhere for the sheet music, but we couldn’t find it. [two independent clauses]

SIMPLE SENTENCE: Ashley and I looked everywhere for the sheet music but couldn’t find it. [one independent clause with a compound verb]

Also, keep in mind that compound subjects and compound objects are not separated by commas unless they are made up of three or more items.

EXAMPLES When you begin a project and when you finish it are closely related. [two subordinate clauses serving as a compound subject]

Dave planned to watch both the Super Bowl and the Pro Bowl. [two compound nouns serving as a compound object]

My Three Sons, I Love Lucy, and The Dick Van Dyke Show are all considered television classics. [compound subject made up of three items]

**Nonessential Elements**

Use commas to set off nonessential subordinate clauses and nonessential participial phrases.

A nonessential (or nonrestrictive) clause or participial phrase contains information that is not necessary to the meaning of the sentence.

NONESSENTIAL CLAUSES Carla Harris, who was offered scholarships to three different colleges, will go to Vassar in the fall.

The word telethon, which is a combination of the words television and marathon, is an example of a portmanteau word.

NONESSENTIAL PHRASES Antonio, following his grandmother’s recipe, prepared arroz con pollo for his cooking class.

Frightened by the thunder, both of the kittens jumped into my lap.

* Each nonessential clause or phrase in the examples above can be omitted without changing the main idea expressed in the rest of the sentence.

EXAMPLES: Carla Harris will go to Vassar in the fall.

The word telethon is an example of a portmanteau word.

Antonio prepared arroz con pollo for his cooking class.

Both of the kittens jumped into my lap.

* An essential (or restrictive) subordinate clause or participial phrase is not set off by commas because it contains information that is necessary to the meaning of the sentence.

ESSENTIAL CLAUSE: Mercury is the planet that is closest to the sun.

ESSENTIAL PHRASES Any student wanting to learn about the new reference database should sign up in the library by Friday.

The lines cited at the beginning and the end of the speech are from Omar Khayyám’s Rubáiyát.

* Some subordinate clauses and participial phrases may be either essential or nonessential. The presence or absence of commas tells the reader how the clause or phrase relates to the main idea of the sentence.

ESSENTIAL The squirrel with its bushy tail twitching was nibbling on an acorn. [More than one squirrel was visible, but only one had its tail twitching.]

NONESSENTIAL The squirrel, with its bushy tail twitching, was nibbling on an acorn. [Only one squirrel was in view.]

**Introductory Elements**

* Use a comma after certain introductory elements.
* Use a comma after yes, no, or any mild exclamation such as well or why at the beginning of a sentence.

EXAMPLES Yes, you are welcome to join us.

Well, what do you think?

Why, the whole story sounds suspicious!

* Use a comma after an introductory participle or participial phrase.

EXAMPLES Beaten, I shook hands with my opponent and walked off the court.

Proofreading my report, I saw that I had written gorilla, instead of guerrilla, before the word warfare.

Almost hidden by the dense brush, the tiny rabbit sat absolutely still.

* Do not confuse a gerund phrase used as the subject of a sentence with an introductory participial phrase.

GERUND PHRASE Planting the Japanese quinces along the fence took several hours.

PARTICIPIAL PHRASE Planting the Japanese quinces along the fence, I stepped on a mound of fire ants.

* Use a comma after two or more introductory prepositional phrases or after one long introductory prepositional phrase.

EXAMPLES In the park near my house, a music festival will take place this weekend.

Near the beginning of the trail, the scout leader found an overturned canoe.

On the day when the last autumn leaf finally fell, I packed my bags.

* A single short introductory prepositional phrase does not require

a comma unless the phrase is parenthetical or unless the sentence is confusing or awkward without the comma.

EXAMPLES During spring break we’re going camping in the mountains. [clear without comma]

By the way, you’re late. [The comma is needed because the phrase is parenthetical.]

From Laura, Lee had borrowed a sleeping bag and a flashlight. [The comma is needed to avoid reading “Laura Lee.”]

(4) Use a comma after an introductory adverb clause.

* An introductory adverb clause may appear at the beginning of a sentence or before any independent clause in the sentence.

EXAMPLES While the orchestra tuned their instruments, the stagehands checked the curtain.

My friends came over, and as soon as we finished eating, we cleared the table for a game of mah-jongg.

**Interrupters**

* Use commas to set off an expression that interrupts a sentence.
* Use commas to set off nonessential appositives and appositive phrases.

EXAMPLES: An interview with Florence Cohen, the well-known landscape architect, will appear in the Herald.

James Baldwin wrote the novel Go Tell It on the Mountain.

* Words used in direct address are set off by commas.

A noun of direct address is a word that names the person or persons being spoken to.

EXAMPLES: Will you explain to the class, Lena, how you solved the last problem?

Dexter, please help your brother set the table.

You seem upset, my friend.

* Parenthetical expressions are set off by commas.

A parenthetical expression is a side remark that adds information or shows a relationship between ideas.

EXAMPLES: The train heading toward Edinburgh will, I am sure, be on time today.

On the contrary, exercise is relaxing.

Jameson was the first of the senior students to solve the puzzle, naturally.

Frank Robinson, not Jackie Robinson, was the first African American to manage a major-league baseball team.

**Conventional Uses**

* Use commas to separate items in dates and addresses.

EXAMPLES: Hawaii achieved statehood on August 21, 1959, and became the fiftieth state. [Notice that a comma separates the final item in a date (1959) from the words that follow it.]

Write to me at 423 Twentieth Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84101-0423, after the first of May. [Notice that a comma separates the final item in an address (84101-0423) from the words that follow it.]

* Do not use a comma to separate
* the month from the date

EXAMPLE We began rehearsals on June 20.

* the date from the month when the date is given before the month

EXAMPLE After many years of foreign rule, the Philippines became an independent nation on 4 July 1946.

* the month from the year when no date is given

EXAMPLE Did a severe storm hit Luzon in October 1999?

* a house number from a street name

EXAMPLE Their address is 531 Belmont Avenue, St. Louis, MO 53308-3150.

* a state abbreviation from a ZIP Code

EXAMPLE Is 1208 Elmhurst Drive, Seattle, WA 43211-8614, the correct

address?

* items joined by prepositions

EXAMPLE Joanna lives at 301 Green Street in San Diego.

**Unnecessary Commas**

* Do not use unnecessary commas.

Too many commas can be as confusing as too few. Use a comma only when a rule requires one or when the meaning of the sentence would be unclear without one.

CONFUSING Amy, and I put a videocassette, and a fashion catalogue in the time capsule.

CLEAR Amy and I put a videocassette and a fashion catalogue in the time capsule.

**II.3. Semicolons**

* Use a semicolon between independent clauses that are closely related in thought and are not joined by a coordinating conjunction (and, but, for, nor, or, so, or yet).

EXAMPLES: “No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.”

Three candidates have filed for the new commission seat; all of them have experience in public office.

* Do not use a semicolon to join independent clauses unless there is a close relationship between the main ideas of the clauses.

INCORRECT Madagascar is a small nation made up of several islands; for many years, scientists have studied this country because of its unusual wildlife.

CORRECT Madagascar is a small nation made up of several islands. For many years, scientists have studied this country because of its unusual wildlife.

* Use a semicolon between independent clauses joined by a conjunctive adverb or a transitional expression.

A conjunctive adverb or a transitional expression indicates the relationship between the independent clauses that it joins.

EXAMPLES The speech was long and repetitious; consequently, people in the audience began fidgeting.

“To excel the past we must not allow ourselves to lose contact with it; on the contrary, we must feel it under our feet because we raised ourselves upon it.”

**Commonly Used Conjunctive Adverbs:** accordingly- however- moreover- besides- indeed- nevertheless- consequently- instead- otherwise- furthermore- meanwhile- therefore.

**Commonly Used Transitional Expressions:** as a result- for instance- on the contrary- for example- in fact- that is.

**Note:** When a conjunctive adverb or a transitional expression is used between independent clauses, it is preceded by a semicolon and followed by a comma.

EXAMPLE: The leaders of the two nations saw no hope for a settlement; **however**, they were willing to meet again.

When used within a clause, a conjunctive adverb or a transitional expression is set off by commas.

EXAMPLE: The leaders of the two nations saw no hope for a settlement; they were willing, **however**, to meet again.

* You may need to use a semicolon (rather than a comma) before a coordinating conjunction to join independent clauses that contain commas.

EXAMPLE: Stephen Foster wrote many songs, including “Oh! Susanna,” “Camptown Races,” and “Beautiful Dreamer”; but, as I recall, he is best remembered for “My Old Kentucky Home.”

* Use a semicolon between items in a series if the items contain commas.

EXAMPLES Winners in the competition were Alina Murphy, first place; Jeff Bates, second place; and Eduardo Davis, third place.

On our trip to South America, we visited Santiago, Chile; Bogotá, Colombia; and Lima, Peru.

**II.4. Colons**

* Use a colon to mean “note what follows.” (1) Use a colon before a list of items, especially after expressions like as follows and the following.

EXAMPLES The volumes in Edward Brathwaite’s autobiographical trilogy are as follows: Rights of Passage, Masks, and Islands.

Central America comprises seven countries: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama.

* Do not use a colon before a list that serves as a complement or an object of a preposition.

INCORRECT We collected: blankets, canned goods, and clothing.

CORRECT We collected blankets, canned goods, and clothing.

INCORRECT The concert included performances by: Placido Domingo, Luciano Pavarotti, and José Carreras.

CORRECT The concert included performances by Placido Domingo, Luciano Pavarotti, and José Carreras.

* Use a colon before a long, formal statement or quotation.

EXAMPLE The Gettysburg Address, delivered by President Lincoln during the American Civil War, begins with these words: “Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.”

* Use a colon between independent clauses when the second clause explains or restates the idea of the first.

EXAMPLES Those hanging lamps are the most popular kind: They are inexpensive, available in many colours, and easy to install.

* Use a colon between the hour and the minute.

EXAMPLES 8:00 A.M. 9:30 in the evening

* Use a colon between a title and subtitle.

EXAMPLES “Ghosts and Voices: Writing from Obsession” [article]

Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life [novel]

Billie Holiday: The Golden Years [recording]

* Use a colon after the salutation of a business letter.

EXAMPLES Dear Ms. Ayala: To Whom It May Concern:

Dear Sir or Madam: Dear Editor:

**Note:** Use a comma after the salutation of a personal letter.

EXAMPLE Dear Grandma and Grandpa,

**II. 5. Quotation Marks**

* Use quotation marks to enclose a direct quotation—a person’s exact words.

Be sure to place quotation marks both before and after a person’s exact words.

EXAMPLES Eleanor Roosevelt said, “No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.”

“People are trapped in history and history is trapped in them,” wrote the author James Baldwin in Notes of a Native Son.

* Do not use quotation marks to enclose an indirect quotation—a rewording of a direct quotation.

DIRECT Natalie said, “My favourite singer is Whitney Houston.” QUOTATION

INDIRECT QUOTATION Natalie said that her favourite singer is Whitney Houston.

**Note:** When a quoted sentence is interrupted by an expression that identifies the speaker, the second part of the quotation begins with a lowercase letter.

EXAMPLE “When we do the best that we can,” explained Helen Keller, “we never know what miracle is wrought in our life, or in the life of another.”

**Note:** A direct quotation is set off from the rest of the sentence by a comma, a question mark, or an exclamation point, but not by a period.

EXAMPLES: “For tomorrow, please read the article about the Sherpas of Nepal,” requested Ms. Estevan.

“Who do you think is the current president of the Philippines?” asked Nathan.

“The Wildcats have upset the Rockets!” exclaimed the sports caster.

**Note:** Do not set off a quotation that is clearly an integral part of the sentence you are writing. Generally, such a quotation is a word or phrase that would require no pause before or after it.

EXAMPLE In his speech, Enrique said that “one for all and all for one” is the key to a successful club.

**Note:** When used with quotation marks, other marks of punctuation are placed according to the following rules:

• Commas and periods are placed inside closing quotation marks.

EXAMPLE: “Generosity,” said Nathaniel Hawthorne, “is the flower of justice.”

• Semicolons and colons are placed outside closing quotation marks.

EXAMPLES: “Eva,” my grandmother said, “you should keep up with your chores”; then she reminded me to vacuum.

Gail Sloan described the following as “deserted-island reading”: An Encyclopedia of World History, the complete works of Shakespeare, and Robinson Crusoe.

• Question marks and exclamation points are placed inside closing quotation marks if the quotation is a question or an exclamation. Otherwise, they are placed outside.

EXAMPLES: The teacher asked me, “Where did you find this information about José Rizal?”

Someone behind me shouted, “Watch out!”

* Use single quotation marks to enclose a quotation within a quotation.

EXAMPLE: Mrs. Winters said, “Cristina, please tell us what you think Alexander Pope meant when he said, ‘To err is human, to forgive divine.’”

* Use quotation marks to enclose titles (including subtitles) of short works, such as short stories, short poems, essays, articles and other parts of periodicals, songs, episodes of radio and television series, and chapters and other parts of books.
* Use quotation marks to enclose slang words, invented words, technical terms, dictionary definitions of words, and any expressions that are unusual in standard English.

**II. 6. Ellipsis Points**

* Use ellipsis points to mark omissions from quoted material and pauses in a written passage.

EXAMPLE: In his autobiography, Galarza recalls, “It was easy for me to feel that becoming a proud American **. . .** did not mean feeling ashamed of being a Mexican.”

* Use three spaced ellipsis points ( ... ) to indicate a pause in written dialogue.

EXAMPLE: “Well, ... I don’t know what to say,” Sarah answered.

**II. 7. Apostrophes**

**Possessive Case**

* To form the possessive of most singular nouns, add an apostrophe and an s.

EXAMPLES: Alice Walker’s poetry- Crowfoot’s family- the students’ suggestions- five dollars’ worth.

**Note:** When forming the possessive of a singular noun ending in an s sound, add only an apostrophe if the noun has two or more syllables and if the addition of an apostrophe and an s would make the noun awkward to pronounce. Otherwise, add an apostrophe and an s.

EXAMPLES: for goodness’ sake- Achilles’ battles- the Netherlands’ exports

**Note:** To form the possessive of a plural noun ending in s, add only an apostrophe.

EXAMPLE: the girls’ team- the winners’ trophy - the governors’ conference.

**Note:** The few plural nouns that do not end in s form the possessive by adding an apostrophe and an s.

EXAMPLES: those sheep’s wool children’s playground.

**Note:** To form the possessive of an indefinite pronoun, add an apostrophe and an s.

EXAMPLES: No one’s contribution was overlooked.

She consented to everybody’s request for a class meeting.

**Note:** Generally, in compound words, in names of organizations and businesses, and in word groups showing joint possession, only the last word is possessive in form.

EXAMPLE: father-in-law’s house

**Note:** Form the possessive of each noun in a word group showing individual possession of similar items.

EXAMPLE: Maria Bethania’s and Aster Aweke’s albums.

**Contractions**

* Use an apostrophe to show where letters, numerals, or words have been omitted in a contraction.

A contraction is a shortened form of a word, word group, or numeral in which an apostrophe takes the place of all the letters, words, or numerals that are omitted.

EXAMPLES: I am. . . . . . . . . . . . I’m- they had . . . . . . . . .they’d- is not. . . . . . . . . . . isn’t

**II. 8. Hyphens**

* Use a hyphen to divide a word at the end of a line.
* When dividing a word at the end of a line, remember the following rules:

1. Do not divide a one-syllable word.

INCORRECT Alicia chose to write her report about the pli-

ght of the homeless.

1. Divide a word only between syllables.

INCORRECT Isn’t Ethan running for student council presid-ent this year?

CORRECT Isn’t Ethan running for student council presi-dent this year?

1. Generally, if a word of more than one syllable contains double consonants, you may divide the word between those consonants.

EXAMPLES: swim-ming -- syl-lable

1. Similarly, as a rule, you may divide a word with an affix (prefix or suffix) between the affix and the base word or root.

EXAMPLES pre-heat [prefix] allow-ance [suffix]

1. Divide an already hyphenated word at the hyphen.

INCORRECT Hirohito was the emperor of Japan for six-

ty-three years.

* Use a hyphen with compound numbers from twenty-one to ninety-nine and with fractions used as modifiers.

EXAMPLES: **forty-two** applicants

about three-fourths empty [Three-fourths is an adverb modifying empty.]

a two-thirds majority [Here, two-thirds is an adjective modifying majority.]

two thirds of the voters [Here, two thirds is not a modifier. Thirds is a noun modified by the adjective two and the prepositional phrase of the voters.

* Use a hyphen with the prefixes ex–, self–, all–, and great–; with the suffixes –elect and –free; and with all prefixes before a proper noun or proper adjective.

**II. 9. Dashes**

Sometimes a word, phrase, or sentence is used parenthetically; that

is, it breaks into the main thought of a sentence. Most parenthetical

elements are set off by commas or by parentheses.

EXAMPLES Jorge, however, had already finished his work.

Karina’s idea (that we each work on a separate part of

the project) made sense to all of us.

Sometimes, though, such elements call for a sharper separation

from the rest of the sentence. In such cases, dashes are used.

14v. Use a dash to indicate an abrupt break in thought or speech.

EXAMPLES The director of the film—I can’t recall his name—said that

there would be a sequel.

The truth is—and you probably already know this—we

can’t finish the project on time.

14w. Use a dash to mean namely, in other words, or that is before

an explanation.

EXAMPLES It was a close call—the sudden gust of wind pushed the

helicopter to within inches of the power line.

Early Native American civilizations—the Mayan, the Incan,

and the Aztec—relied on farming for their livelihood.

**II. 10. Parentheses**

* Use parentheses to enclose informative or explanatory material of minor importance.

EXAMPLES The late Representative Barbara Jordan (Texas) was on that committee.

The length of the Mekong River is 4,186 kilometers (about 2,600 miles).

* Be sure that the material within parentheses can be omitted without losing important information or changing the basic meaning or structure of the sentence.

INCORRECT Tina had been shopping (in that store) most of her life.

CORRECT Tina had been shopping in that store (Mr. Dan’s) most of her life.

* A sentence enclosed in parentheses may fall within another sentence or may stand by itself.

A parenthetical sentence that falls within another sentence

* should not begin with a capital letter unless it begins with a word that should be capitalized
* should not end with a period but may end with a question mark or an exclamation point.

EXAMPLES The largest island of the Solomon Islands (see the map on page 453) is Guadalcanal.

I hope I persuaded Alex (is he a senior?) to help us.

A parenthetical sentence that stands by itself

* should begin with a capital letter
* should end with a period, a question mark, or an exclamation point before the closing parenthesis

EXAMPLES The largest island of the Solomon Islands is Guadalcanal. (See the map on page 453.)

Alex asked me if he could help us. (What do you think I said?)

**II. 11. Brackets**

* Use brackets to enclose an explanation within quoted or parenthetical material.

EXAMPLES Ms. Grayson was quoted as saying in her acceptance speech: “I am honored by this [the award], and I would like to share the recognition with those who made my work possible.”

By a vote of 5 to 4, the Supreme Court overturned the lower court’s ruling. (See page 149 [Diagram A] for a chronology of the case.)