

USING A KEYBOARD: COMMON PROBLEMS

Definitions

Sentence: a set of words complete in itself as the expression of a thought, and conveying a statement, question, exclamation, or command. A capital letter is used to mark the beginning of all sentences. In writing the single most important rule is that a sentence is a complete thought. Anyone can understand the sentence, whether he or she read what went before or after it. It makes sense by itself. When writing, learn where to pause. Read your writing back to yourself to find out where to pause and where to stop.

Paragraph: a distinct part of a piece of writing, or a collection of sentences covering a similar topic.

Punctuation Marks

These are used to tell the reader how to read the words. By using these marks, you know when to pause, when an idea is finished, or whether the sentence is a question. Poor punctuation makes for a difficult read and you may find yourself out of breath after reading a long sentence which has no punctuation marks it also shows that the writer is not that good a writer or you may just give up reading the words or have to take a couple of goes at it. Just like that!

Full Stop

The full stop is used to mark the end of a sentence.

Example: This is a sentence.

Rules: the full stop comes after the last word, and is followed by two spaces. Like that.

Location: bottom row, right hand side.



Question Mark

This is used to indicate that the sentence is a question.

Example: Is this is a question?

Rules: the question mark comes after the last word, and is followed by two spaces. Are you following this? See what I mean?

Location: bottom row, right hand side. Use the shift key.



Exclamation Mark

This indicates surprise or anger, anything that causes the voice to change

Example: Be quiet!

Rules: the exclamation mark comes after the last word, and is followed by two spaces. You must know this by now! This is taking forever!

Location: top row, left hand side. Use the shift key.



Comma

In general, a comma marks a pause or slight break in a sentence; it is a less complete separation than one indicated by a semicolon, a full stop, or brackets.

Example: You use a comma, unlike a full stop, to break up a sentence.

Rules: the comma comes after the last word before the pause, and is followed by one space.

Location: bottom row, right hand side.



Colon

A colon is correctly used in a sentence when the statement that follows the colon explains, or completes it, as in "This is an excellent play: the characters are believable, and the ending unexpected." A colon is also used to mark the beginning of a list of items as in "The following apparatus was required: a volt meter, a power supply and an oscilloscope."

Example: The use of the colon: break up a sentence or start a list.

Rules: the colon comes after the last word before the break or list, and is followed by one space.

Location: lower middle row, right hand side. Use the shift key.



Semicolon

It marks a longer pause, a more definite break in the sense, than the comma; at the same time it says 'Here is a clause or sentence too closely related to what has gone before to cut off by a full stop'. The semicolon is a stronger version of the comma.

Example: Do not be afraid of the semicolon; it can be most useful.

Rules: the semicolon comes after the last word before the break, and is followed by one space.

Location: lower middle row, right hand side.



Hyphen

The prime function of the hyphen is to prevent ambiguity. Its main function is to link the parts of compound words: bench-mark, cross-section, frying-pan, wing-span. The hyphen is used to form compound adjectives: high-rise flats, a water-cooled engine.

Example: A hyphen can break a word like party-goer.

Rules: the hyphen comes between the letters of the word, and have no spaces on either side.

Location: top row, right hand side.



Dash

A dash can be used for emphasis, to indicate an abrupt change, or with explanatory phrases or words (in place of commas or brackets).

Example: It takes two to speak the truth - one to speak - and another to hear.

Rules: the dash comes after the last word before the explanation, and has one space before and after the dash. The spaces are important, as the dash and the hyphen use the same symbol, only the spaces show the difference.

Location: top row, right hand side.



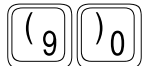
Brackets

Brackets can be used to mark off a word, clause, or sentence inserted as an explanation or afterthought into a passage. The work would be complete without the bracketed words, but they may be helpful to the reader.

Example: The CD was recorded in 1996 (in London).

Rules: the round bracket has an opening side and a closing side. The opening bracket is does not have a space after it, and the closing space is typed in right after the last word.

Location: top row, right hand side. Use the shift key.



Quotation Marks

Used to mark the beginning and end of a quoted passage, a book title, etc., or words regarded as slang or jargon. Quotation marks come as a pair, starting and finishing the text. You can use a set of single (' ') or double (" ") quotation marks.

Example: Andrew asked, "Can we surf the Internet?"

Rules: the opening quotation mark does not have a space after it, and the closing quotation mark is typed in right after the last word, or other punctuation mark of the quote (like the question mark in the example).

Location of double quotation mark: top row, left hand side. Use the shift key.

Location of single quotation mark: lower middle row, right hand side.



Apostrophe

Used to indicate the omission of letters or numbers or when something belongs to someone.

Example: Can't you remember the Summer of '95? We lost Mikey's bike.

Rules: the apostrophe takes the place of the missing characters. There are no spaces before or after it, except when it replaces numbers, or in other special cases. Please note that this is the same key as the single quotation mark.

Location: lower middle row, right hand side.

