

Capital Letters:

We must use Capital letters in the following situations:

1. **The first word of every sentence**
2. **The first word of every direct quotation**

He said, "We've jogged two miles."

"We've jogged two miles," he said, "and I feel great." (The *and* is not capitalized because it does not begin a new sentence.)

"We've jogged two miles," he said. "It makes me feel great."
(*It* is capitalized because it begins a new sentence.)

3. **The first, last, and very important word/s in a title**

I've been reading Bulfinch's The Age of Fable.

4. **Proper names of people, places, languages, races and nationalities**

Grandfather Brown	Japan	Oriental
Uganda	English	Indian

5. **A title of relationship if it takes the place of the person's name, but not otherwise**
If **my** (or similar word) is in front of the word, a capital is not used.

I think Mother wrote to her.
I think my mother wrote to her.

6. **Names of particular people or things, but not general ones**

I spoke to Professor Smith.
I spoke to the professor.

7. **Names of months, days of the week, and special days, but not the seasons**

February	First of July	but	spring
Wednesday	Thanksgiving		summer

Now it's your turn. Add capital letters where necessary.

Exercise 1

1. I discussed the matter with my professor.
2. We were studying Robert Frost's poem "The death of the hired man".
3. All grade 12 students take history and english.
4. Usually college classes begin the day after labour day.
5. You know, dad, I haven't had the car all week.
6. He shouted, "what's happening?"
7. The doctor sent her to the hospital last wednesday.
8. After graduating from high school, he went to Vancouver island university.
9. My aunt is president of her club this fall.
10. My cousin plays hockey for simon fraser university.

Exercise 2

1. The sugar maple and the hemlock are both native to canada.
2. She graduated from vancouver island university and now is attending ubc
3. My mother likes plane travel, but dad would rather drive.
4. Last spring we took a trip through the rocky mountains.
5. His mother bakes the best cookies, but aunt angela makes the best pies.
6. We're studying about world war II in history now.
7. I've always liked literature and have decided to make it my major.
8. Next semester I'm going to take psychology 112, history 112, and English 200; then the following semester I'll take math and physics.
9. The team from pearson college was on our campus last weekend.
10. "I'd rather be a big duck in a little pond," she said, "than a little duck in a big pond.

Answers:

Exercise 1

1. Correct
2. “The Death of the Hired Man”
3. English
4. Labour Day
5. Dad
6. What’s
7. Wednesday
8. Vancouver Island University
9. Correct
10. Simon Fraser University

Exercise 2

1. Canada
2. Vancouver Island University, UBC
3. Dad
4. Rocky Mountains
5. Aunt Angela
6. World War
7. Correct
8. Psychology, History
9. Pearson College
10. Correct

Commas

1. Use a comma before these joining words when you are constructing a compound sentence.
(Hint: Remember the word formed downward by the first letters of each joining word.)

F o r
A n d
N o r
B u t
O r
Y e t
S o

In the examples following, underlined spaces indicate that a comma is needed.

e.g. I want to go , but you want to stay.
He died before she was born , so she never knew him.

2. Put a comma between items in a series.
 - a The sting of a bee , wasp , or hornet can cause a severe reaction.
 - b Soon the students will return , the halls will be buzzing , and the studying will begin.
3. A comma goes after an introductory expression or before an expression that follows the sentence but is somewhat separated from the rest of the sentence (doesn't flow easily into the sentence).
 - a Well , I haven't seen anyone yet.
 - b When the time comes , we will be ready.
 - c It's tiring to go to school all day , isn't it?
4. Put commas around the name of a person spoken to or addressed.
 - a Rick , bring that into the classroom.
 - b I know , Jan , that you are missing your family.
5. Put commas around an expression that interrupts the flow of the sentence.
 - a The facts , therefore , do not support your argument.

b I wish , however , that I could go south for the weekend.

6. Put commas around non-essential material.

a The students , who passed with flying colours , headed to La Cantina.

b Cannery Row , a novel by John Steinbeck , is a favourite among English instructors.

Practice:

Insert commas where they belong:

1. Although I liked what you wrote about caring for your pet rat I have a suggestion you might want to consider.
2. Ever since you asked my opinion about the soccer field battle I've been mulling the situation over trying to determine a logical consequence.
3. I don't usually give unsolicited advice but this seems to me to be a special case.
4. I wouldn't ordinarily presume to tell you how to behave but I'm concerned.
5. Check for accuracy spelling and punctuation before sending your e-mail.
6. It was Coach Tom who came up with the idea of recruiting players from other schools.
7. When returning items that don't fit please remember to return them within 20 days of your purchase.
8. My teacher who was talking to all of us said, "If everyone passes this test we'll all get a free period."
9. "I didn't see the falling star" Jane said "but I sure wish I had."
10. Melissa bought a new graduation dress and she wore it to the graduation ceremony.

Answers:

1. Although I liked what you wrote about caring for your pet rat, I have a suggestion you might want to consider.
2. Ever since you asked my opinion about the soccer field battle, I've been mulling the situation over, trying to determine a logical consequence.
3. I don't usually give unsolicited advice, but this seems to me to be a special case.
4. I wouldn't ordinarily presume to tell you how to behave, but I'm concerned.
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9. "I didn't see the falling star," Jane said, "but I sure wish I had."
10. Melissa bought a new graduation dress, and she wore it to the graduation ceremony.

Quotation Marks:

Quotation Marks are used:

- A. to identify the exact words of the speaker
- B. to set off the titles of short works of writing

Punctuation Rules for using Quotation Marks:

A. To identify the exact words of the speaker:

1. **Start** the quotation **with a capital letter**. He screamed, “**G**et lost!”
2. If the quotation is **split into 2 parts**, the 2nd part does not begin with a capital letter unless it begins a 2nd sentence.

“Would you please,” he said, “just get lost!”

“Get lost,” he said. “I’ve had enough.”

Note: *A comma follows the end of the 1st part of the quotation.
A comma precedes the 2nd part of the quotation, unless a new sentence is begun.*

3. Use quotation marks (“ ”) **to start and end the quoted part** of the sentence.

As the wise one always says, “Love heals all problems.”

4. Commas, periods, question marks, exclamation points that come at the end of a quotation should go **inside** the quotation marks.

Carol questioned, “Aren’t you coming?”

5. If the words are **not the speaker’s exact words**, do not use quotation marks.

*He said **that he was willing to go**. He said, “I am willing to go.”*

*Bill told them **he could do it**. Bill told them, “I can do it.”*

B. To set off the titles of short works of writing:

Use Quotation Marks

- the song, “*Isn’t it a Pity?*”
- the episode of Cheers, “*Diane’s Worst Day*”
- the article, “*Does Money Really Count?*”

Use Underlines

- on the album(longer work), All Things Must Pass
- the television show, Cheers
- the magazine, Lifestyles

Note: Usually the quotation marks within other quotation marks are reduced to 1 (‘) instead of 2 (“) to distinguish them from one another.

Practice:

Insert the quotation marks where needed. Correct any punctuation that may need to be altered.

1. He read an article called Finding Answers on the Internet to the group, and then he turned to the class and said do you believe that.
2. You must listen to her the lawyer shouted. She wrote an article called Legal Practice in B.C. about courts. She knows her stuff.
3. Did you really believe that another day of waiting would make it easier to give that speech, asked her friend. It is still called the hazards of not preparing for public speaking and it is still the most popular speech in the text called speeches for notoriety.

Answers:

1. He read an article called "Finding Answers on the Internet" to the group, and then he turned to the class and said, *"Do you believe that?"*
2. *"You must listen to her!"* the lawyer shouted. *"She wrote an article called 'Legal Practice in B.C.' about courts. She knows her stuff."*
3. *"Did you really believe that another day of waiting would make it easier to give that speech?"* asked her friend. *"It is still called 'The Hazards of Not Preparing for Public Speaking', and it is still the most popular speech in the text called Speeches for Notoriety."*

Semicolons:

There are three situations where a semicolon is the best punctuation choice:

1. Use a semicolon to join two independent (stand-alone) statements which are **closely related**. The statements should be closely related enough that you **could** use a FANBOYS word (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) instead of a semicolon.
 - My daughter was quite sick; I called the doctor right away.
2. Use between independent statements linked with a transitional phrase or word. Put a comma after the transition word or phrase.
 - I am nervous about the test; however, I know I have prepared as well as possible.
 - Gary did not want to leave the party; nevertheless, it was getting very late.

Note: If a FANBOYS word (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) connects the two statements, use a comma instead of a semicolon.

- Gary did not want to leave the party, **but** it was getting very late.
3. Use between items in a series that contains internal punctuation:
 - Strategies for staying healthy include eating well, to ensure proper nutrition; exercising regularly, to maintain heart health; and living a balanced lifestyle, to reduce stress.

In the above, the three different examples contain commas as internal punctuation. Without the semicolons, the reader could have difficulty sorting out the idea groups.

Practice:

Put in the appropriate semicolons:

1. Eating healthy helps you lose weight staying fit keeps you healthy.
2. I'll need to do the following today: take out the trash pay my hydro bill water my plants and shop for groceries.
3. My dog hates dog food he loves eating my dinner.
4. I hate doing math homework I love doing art homework.
5. This summer I'm: going hiking taking a cruise and relaxing!
6. I don't like orange soda I much prefer a cola.
7. I got an A on my English assignment I really studied hard.
8. I don't like going to the gym in fact, I cancelled my membership.
9. I had to use my brother's golf clubs I forgot my clubs at home.
10. Neither of us can speak French we had to get a translator.
11. I live in the city I'm not a rural person.
12. The weather forecaster was right it rained all day.

Answers:

1. Eating healthy helps you lose weight; staying fit keeps you healthy.
2. I'll need to do the following today: take out the trash; pay my hydro bill; water my plants; and shop for groceries.
3. My dog hates dog food; he loves eating my dinner.
4. I hate doing math homework; I love doing art homework.
5. This summer I'm: going hiking; taking a cruise; and relaxing!
6. I don't like orange soda; I much prefer a cola.
7. I got an A on my English assignment; I really studied hard.
8. I don't like going to the gym; in fact, I cancelled my membership.
9. I had to use my brother's golf clubs; I forgot my clubs at home.
10. Neither of us can speak French; we had to get a translator.
11. I live in the city; I'm not a rural person.
12. The weather forecaster was right; it rained all day.

Colons:

1. Use a colon after an independent statement to signal a list:

- He had several chores to do on Saturday: washing the car, picking up groceries, and paying the bills.

Note: If you introduce the list with “including”, “such as”, or “for example”, do **not** use a colon.

- He had several jobs to do on Saturday, including washing the car, picking up groceries, and paying the bills.

2. Use a colon to start a quotation that has been formally introduced with a **full statement**.

- Consider my father’s advice: “If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem.”

If the quotation begins with a **short** expression such as “he said”, then use a comma.

- My friend said, “You should listen to your father’s advice.”

3. Use a colon between independent statements if the second one **summarizes** or **explains** the first.

- The children were whining and fussing: it was well past their bedtime.

4. Use a colon after the greeting in a formal letter, to indicate hours and minutes, to show a ratio, or between the title and subtitle of a book:

- Dear Sir:
- 8:30 a.m.
- The ratio of adults to children was 3:1.
- Student Success: How to Thrive at University

Practice:

Circle the correct answer:

1. Which one of these is correct?
 - a) The potion contained: fruit, biscuits and glue.
 - b) The potion contained fruit, biscuits and glue.
 - c) The potion: contained fruit, biscuits and glue.

2. Which one of these is correct?
 - a) You have only one choice: leave now while you can.
 - b) You have only one choice leave now while you can.
 - c) You have only one choice. Leave now while you can.

3. Which one of these is correct?
 - a) I can see only one thing: the old lighthouse.
 - b) I can see only one thing the old lighthouse.
 - c) I can see: only one thing the old lighthouse.

4. Which of these is correct?
 - a) In the bag were: scissors, a hairbrush and her address book.
 - b) In the bag were the following: scissors, a hairbrush and her address book.
 - c) In the bag there were: scissors, a hairbrush and her address book.

5. Which of these is correct?
 - a) Mankind has only one choice left stop burning fossil fuel.
 - b) Mankind has only one choice left, stop burning fossil fuel.
 - c) Mankind has only one choice left: stop burning fossil fuel.

6. Which of these is correct?
 - a) My favorite breakfast cereals are: corn flakes, frosties and golden nuggets.
 - b) These are my favorite breakfast cereals: corn flakes, frosties and golden nuggets.
 - c) My favorite breakfast cereals: corn flakes, frosties and golden nuggets.

7. Circle the correctly punctuated sentences.
 - a) I have only one thing to say to you: 'Get off my land.'
 - b) The pot contained: sausages, mushrooms and beans.
 - c) My favorite books are: 'On the Road' and 'The Naked Lunch'.
 - d) My teacher used to say this: 'Always work hard but not too hard.'

8. Circle the correctly punctuated sentences.
 - a) These are a few of my favorite things: sausages, beans and more sausages.
 - b) For breakfast I would like: sausages, beans and more sausages.
 - c) This would be my favorite breakfast: sausages, beans and more sausages.
 - d) Could you bring me: sausages, beans and more sausages.

9. Circle the correctly punctuated sentences.
- a) We have to stop: polluting the rivers, burning fossil fuels and using our cars.
 - b) We have to stop doing these harmful things: polluting the rivers, burning fossil fuels and using our cars.
 - c) These things cause environmental damage: polluting the rivers, burning fossil fuels and using our cars.
 - d) Our quality of life is damaged by: polluting the rivers, burning fossil fuels and using our cars so much.
10. Circle the correctly punctuated sentences.
- a) The new house was: modern, spacious and luxurious.
 - b) Our new house looked: modern, spacious and luxurious.
 - c) I like a new house to be all of the following: modern, spacious and luxurious.
 - d) All the houses on the new estate were: modern, spacious and luxurious.
11. Circle the correctly punctuated sentences.
- a) Give me: mushrooms, cheese, ham and coleslaw.
 - b) I love: mushrooms, cheese, ham and coleslaw.
 - c) I love a huge breakfast: mushrooms, cheese, ham and coleslaw.
 - d) Bring me a huge breakfast: mushrooms, cheese, ham and coleslaw.

Answers:

- 1) B
- 2) A
- 3) A
- 4) B
- 5) C
- 6) B
- 7) D
- 8) A
- 9) C
- 10) C
- 11) C

In each sentence, decide whether a colon or a semi-colon would be most appropriate.

1. Java a popular programming language for the World Wide Web.
a) colon (:)
b) semi-colon (;)
2. I took my umbrella it looked like it was going to rain.
a) colon (:)
b) semi-colon (;)
3. The USA has a very large land area Canada is even larger.
a) colon (:)
b) semi-colon (;)
4. I bring everything I need to class every day my pens, my books and my dictionary.
a) colon (:)
b) semi-colon (;)
5. Three countries are involved in the discussions however, only Mexico and Canada will sign the treaty immediately.
a) colon (:)
b) semi-colon (;)
6. I had lamb for lunch Fred had steak.
a) colon (:)
b) semi-colon(;
7. There are two things about him that drive me crazy his music and his cooking.
a) colon (:)
b) semi-colon(;
8. If you get lost in the snow, this is what you should do stay where you are, make yourself warm and comfortable and wait for help.
a) colon (:)
b) semi-colon(;
9. Young-Hee failed her English test nevertheless, she was able to get a good job.
a) colon (:)
b) semi-colon(;
10. This is what I told him "Buy yourself a bicycle, so that you don't have to borrow mine!"
a) colon (:)
b) semi-colon(;

Answers:

1. a
2. b
3. b
4. a
5. b
6. b
7. a
8. a
9. b
10. a

Apostrophes:

These punctuation marks are used in two situations:

a) in contractions b) to show ownership

a) in contractions:

A contraction results when two words are combined together to make one word.

have + not = haven't I + will = I'll who + is = who's

Here is a list of commonly used contractions (include the examples above):

I + am = I'm

I + have = I've

I + had = I'd

Do + not = don't

Did + not = didn't

It + is = it's

it + has = it's

is + not = isn't

could + not = couldn't

I + would = I'd

they + are = they're

we + will = we'll

b) to show ownership:

the jacket that belongs to Ruth **Ruth's** jacket

the paws of the dog the **dog's** paws

When a **singular word or name ends in "s"**, just **add an apostrophe** after the **"s"** to show possession.

James' book Iris' desk Ferris' day off

When a **plural word ends in "s"**, show possession by **adding an apostrophe after the "s"**.

College **instructors'** cars are often old.

Many **students'** lockers were raided.

All of the **soldiers'** rations were spoiled.

Note: **No** apostrophe is used with possessive pronouns such as:

hers, his, its, theirs, yours, ours

Note: For plural words, just add an "s" to the word, but **don't add an apostrophe**.

His book is ruined. His **books** are ruined.

Note: Some words are already plural in an unusual form. **Add an apostrophe plus "s"**.

children's toys, men's clothes, women's work

Example Hes been going to school for months, but Tonys marks are still better than his.

Added Apostrophes:

He's been going to school for months, but **Tony's** marks are still better than his.

The meaning of the sentence:

He has been going to school for more than one month, but **the marks Tony has** are better than his marks.

Practice: Add an apostrophe where needed. Write the meaning of the sentence.

1. Weve been working on Davids car for days.
2. Todays leftovers will go to Iris dogs.
3. Most dogs breath is smelly.
4. Theyre ready to clean Phyllis moms bedrooms.
5. Heres a long list of students complaints about Mondays meeting.

Answers:

1. **We've** been working on **David's** car for days.

We have been working for more than one day on **the car David owns**.

2. **Today's** leftovers will go to **Iris'** dogs.

The leftovers that **belong to today** will go to **the dogs that belong to Iris**.

3. Most **dogs'** breath is smelly.

The breath that **belongs to most dogs** is smelly.

4. **They're** ready to clean **Phyllis' mom's** bedrooms.

They are ready to clean more than one of the bedrooms that **belong to the mom of Phyllis**.

5. **Here's** a long list of **students'** complaints about **Monday's** meeting.

Here is a long list of the complaints **that came from (or belong to) the students** about the meeting that was on Monday (**belonging to Monday**).

Note: If you would like more practice, ask the instructor in the A.B.E Learning Centre for more materials to study.