Overview

Punctuation marks help clarify and give expression to your writing. Without them, a reader may have trouble making sense of the words and may misunderstand your intent. When you write, you want to make yourself as clear as possible, but perhaps you find yourself confused about the effects of the different punctuation marks. You may ask, Would a comma help or hinder? Where do you place quotation marks? or What would be the effect of an exclamation mark? This course will provide you with the modern styles and rules of American English punctuation. Its goal is to enable you to use punctuation correctly.

This course is divided into seven lessons. Lesson 1 describes the history of punctuation and discusses conventions of style. Lessons 2 through 6 explain the use of all the punctuation marks, including the period, question mark, exclamation point, comma, semicolon, colon, dash, parentheses, quotation marks, hyphen, and apostrophe. Lesson 7, which is optional, discusses rules for italicization and
capitalization. The Appendix includes a list of all the rules presented in this course for easy reference.

You must have earned a passing grade on the English Placement Test to begin this course. To complete it, you’ll need writing materials in the medium of your choice.

You might already be familiar with the information presented in some of the lessons. Therefore, Lessons 2 through 6 begin with pretests that enable you to determine if you have enough knowledge to complete the assignment without reading the entire lesson. Answers follow each pretest. Since these pretests are for your personal development only, do not mail them to your Hadley instructor. You can always contact your instructor, however, to either clarify items on these pretests or discuss your answers. To do so, just call 800-323-4238 between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Central Time.

Lessons 2 through 6 also include practice exercises. These are also for your personal
development only; therefore, do not send them to your Hadley instructor either. Don’t hesitate to contact your instructor, however, to either clarify these activities or discuss your answers.

To complete the course, you are required to submit six assignments, one at the end of each lesson except Lesson 7. These assignments enable your instructor to measure your ability to apply the concepts presented in the lessons. Submit each assignment when you complete a lesson, and wait for your instructor’s reply before sending in the next assignment. In this way, you can apply any corrections or comments from your instructor to subsequent lessons and assignments.

As you complete each assignment, send it to your instructor. If you mail your assignments, send them Free Matter for the Blind provided they are in braille, in large print (14 point or larger), or on computer disk. Mailing labels are enclosed for your convenience. The Contact Information Card that is also enclosed indicates your instructor’s fax number and e-mail address if you prefer to send
your assignments electronically.
Lesson 2: End Marks

Pretest 2

Lesson 2 explains the use of end marks. However, you may already be familiar with the information presented in this lesson. Take this pretest before starting Lesson 2 to determine if you are ready to go directly to Assignment 2. After you complete the pretest, compare your answers with those that follow.

Are the following statements true or false? If false, reword the statement to make it true.
1. A declarative sentence asks a question.
2. Exclamation points are not used in newspaper writing.

Insert the correct end marks in the following sentences or outlines:
3. Open your mouth wide
4. Lucy’s mama asked if the cows had been milked
5. Is he Dr Williams or Mr Williams
6. II Building Codes
   a Residential
      1 Foundation
      2 Electrical
      3 Plumbing
   b Commercial

III Parking Permits
   a Passenger cars
   b Vans
   c Commercial vehicles

7. *Splat* The eggs hit the floor

8. I couldn’t help wondering, Why didn’t they pick me to sing in the chorus as the sound of voices filled the hall

9. Campers must weigh over 27 kgs and under 114 kgs to ride a horse

10. Lexington, Mass, was where our car broke down
Answers to Pretest 2

1. False. A declarative sentence makes a statement, while an interrogative sentence asks a question.
2. True. Exclamation points are not used in newspaper writing.
3. Open your mouth wide.
4. Lucy’s mama asked if the cows had been milked.
5. Is he Dr. Williams or Mr. Williams?
6. II. Building Codes
   a. Residential
      1. Foundation
      2. Electrical
      3. Plumbing
   b. Commercial
III. Parking Permits
   a. Passenger cars
   b. Vans
   c. Commercial vehicles
7. Splat! The eggs hit the floor.
8. I couldn’t help wondering, Why didn’t they pick me to sing in the chorus? as the sound of voices filled the hall.

9. Campers must weigh over 27 kgs. and under 114 kgs. to ride a horse.

10. Lexington, Mass., was where our car broke down.

If you answered every item correctly, proceed directly to Assignment 2. Remember, this pretest is for your personal development only, so do not mail it to your Hadley instructor. You can always contact your instructor, however, to either clarify an item on this pretest or discuss your answers. To do so, just call 800-323-4238.
Introduction

Lesson 1 described the development and styles of punctuation. This lesson introduces the three types of punctuation marks used to end sentences: the period, the question mark, and the exclamation point. The lesson also explains the other ways these marks are used. Familiarizing yourself with the information in this lesson will enable you to use punctuation correctly.

Objective

After completing this lesson, you will be able to use end marks correctly.

End Marks

Punctuation marks that indicate the end of sentences are called end marks. The three kinds of end marks are the period, the question mark, and the exclamation point. This section includes explanatory text and examples. Because punctuation is part of a living language, exceptions to the rules exist. In this course, exceptions appear after the rules, with examples.
The Period

Rule 1: Use a period at the end of a declarative sentence. A declarative sentence makes a statement. For example:

- The streets are covered with ice.
- I never eat peas.
- The audience filled the auditorium.
- He gave me his solemn word.

Rule 2: Use a period at the end of most imperative sentences. An imperative sentence orders or requests someone to do something. Use a period after imperative sentences that do not convey a lot of emotion; do not phrase the request as a question. For example:

- Watch your step, please.
- Don’t be hasty.
- Eat your peas.
- Let us pray.

Rule 3: Use a period at the end of an indirect question. An indirect question is one that does not use directly quoted material to ask the question. You might think of an indirect question as a
statement that reports on a question. You usually find words such as *if* and *whether* in indirect questions. For example:

- The captain asked whether the ship was on course.
- I wonder who was chosen as class president.
- Mary asked if she had to eat all her peas.
- The coach asked who was missing from practice.

**Rule 4:** Use a period at the end of an abbreviation or an initial. An abbreviation is a shortened form of a word. An initial is the first letter of a name. For example:

- Gov. James R. Thomas opened the proceedings.
- The county fair runs Aug. to Sept.
- Lt. Margaret B. Hill saluted smartly.

**Exception to Rule 4:** Certain shortened forms of words do not use periods. These are usually acronyms, or words made up of the first letters of a series of words. In addition, a recent trend in punctuation is toward eliminating periods in
abbreviations of measurement terms. Check with a style manual or dictionary if you are unsure whether to use a period. Examples of measurement terms that can be written with or without periods are:

- lb or lb.
- oz or oz.
- mph or m.p.h.

Examples of abbreviations and initials that are written without periods:

- Do not use periods after acronyms that represent agencies, organizations, and broadcasting networks; for example, CIA (Central Intelligence Agency), UN (United Nations), NATO (North American Treaty Organization), and NPR (National Public Radio).
- Do not use periods when referring to well-known persons by their initials; for example, JFK (John Fitzgerald Kennedy) or FDR (Franklin Delano Roosevelt).
- Other acronyms that do not take periods include CB (citizens’ band), AM/FM (amplitude modulation/frequency modulation),
RAM (random-access memory), and AWOL (absent without leave).

Many such abbreviations and acronyms exist in the English language—indeed, more are being added every day. If uncertain how to spell one, try to remember where you might have encountered it before. Then check that source to determine whether or not periods are needed. Contact your instructor for other sources.

Rule 5: Use a period after each number or letter for an item in an outline or a list. For example:

Outline

I. Sports
   A. Contact
      1. Football

List

1. nails
2. hammer
3. putty
The Question Mark

Rule 6: Use a question mark at the end of a direct question. A direct question shows the exact words of the person asking the question. For example:

• What do you want for dinner?
• Is the ship on course?

The previous sentences rewritten as indirect questions, therefore ending with periods, would read as follows:

• Frank asked what his son wanted for dinner.
• The captain asked whether the ship was on course.

Rule 7: Use a question mark at the end of a tag question. A tag question is a sentence that starts out as a statement, then ends up as a question. For example:

• Margaret was going out to get some supplies, wasn’t she?
• He should quit eating fatty foods, shouldn’t he?
• The students in your class are all graduating, aren’t they?
• Bill finished his chores, didn’t he?

Rule 8: Use a question mark to make a sentence that is declarative or imperative into an interrogative sentence (i.e., a sentence that asks a question). For example:
• You’re not angry with me?
• The store is on the northwest corner of the intersection?
• Put the cake on the table now?

Rule 9: Use a question mark at the end of a question that is part of another sentence. For example:
• I asked myself, How can Gail afford this? as I looked at the price tag.
• What’s next? was the question on everyone’s mind.
• I wondered, Do they all have jobs? Work permits? as I looked down the line of immigrants.

The Exclamation Point
Use an exclamation point when you want to indicate a lot of emotion or urgency. Sentences
ending with an exclamation point may be declarative, imperative, or interrogative. If you want to convey less emotion, end these sentences with a period or question mark.

In formal writing you rarely use the exclamation point. Formal writing includes newspaper and magazine articles and academic papers. Exclamation points can be very effective, however, when used sparingly in letters, fiction, and creative nonfiction, such as personal essays. Beware of overusing the exclamation point. Doing so will negate the expressive effect.

Rule 10: Use an exclamation point at the end of a sentence that expresses urgency or strong feeling. For example:

- Watch out!
- Hurry up!
- The tree crashed down right on top of our roof!
- How could you possibly eat the whole thing!
- Imagine the frustration!
- What gorgeous birds show up in this park!
Rule 11: Use an exclamation point after a word that conveys a loud noise or sudden action. For example:
- Boom! Crash!

Rule 12: Use an exclamation point after an interjection. An interjection is one or more words that show strong feeling. For example:
- Nice!
- Ouch!
- Not again!
- Super!

Rules 44 and 45, in Lesson 5, explain the use of end marks when they appear with quotation marks.

**Practice Exercises**

Read the following sentences, then explain three situations in which the same sentence could be written ending with a period, a question mark, and an exclamation point. For example: Wait here

a. Ending with a period, this is not an urgent statement. It is an imperative sentence, requesting that someone wait.

b. Ending with a question mark, this sentence
indicates that someone is asking whether he or she should wait at a particular place.

c. Ending with an exclamation point, the sentence conveys urgency, fear, or brutal authority.

1. This is your answer
2. Put the dog outside
3. She left her entire doll collection in the rain

Complete the following outline and sentences by using correct end marks:

4. I Foods containing calcium
   A Dairy products
     1 Milk
     2 Cheese
   B Vegetables
     1 Kale
     2 Navy beans

5. Vince asked why the car had a fiberglass hood
6. Lt Moseley was stationed in New Orleans, La, when he wrote his first poems about life in the service
7. UN stands for United Nations
8. Make out the check to Mr Edwin Wellright, Jr
9. Why does each desk have two telephones
10. How would you write to your representative in Congress
11. Is that a cake you baked Is it for me
12. Mark wrote that contract, didn’t he
13. The birds in this park are noisy, aren’t they
14. Help I can’t carry all this myself
15. Joan wondered, Where do they get all that food as she watched the zookeeper feed the elephants
16. *Pow Crackle Kaboom* The grand finale of the fireworks show lit up the sky all around the lake
17. Aaron asked if China bordered Mongolia
18. Please send all complaints to Brown, Brooks, and Co in Chicago
19. Is that an AM or FM station you’re listening to
20. Should I make the check out to Sara Bosco, MD, or to Dr. Sara Bosco

When you are finished, check your answers with those that follow.
Answers to Practice Exercises

1. a. This is your answer. Ending with a period, this is an unemotional statement of fact.
   b. This is your answer? Ending with a question mark, this is a question about whether a specific answer is yours.
   c. This is your answer! Ending with an exclamation point, this is possibly part of an argument, indicating heated emotions, with the emphasis on *this*.

2. a. Put the dog outside. Ending with a period, this is an imperative sentence conveying little emotion or urgency.
   b. Put the dog outside? Ending with a question mark, this is a question about whether to carry out the action.
   c. Put the dog outside! Ending with an exclamation point, this is an urgent command perhaps following an unfortunate accident.

3. a. She left her entire doll collection in the rain. Ending with a period, this is a statement about what happened.
b. She left her entire doll collection in the rain? Ending with a question mark, this is a question that tries to confirm a report.

c. She left her entire doll collection in the rain! Ending with an exclamation point, this sentence conveys dismay over a ruined collection.

4. I. Foods containing calcium
   A. Dairy products
      1. Milk
      2. Cheese
   B. Vegetables
      1. Kale
      2. Navy beans

5. Vince asked why the car had a fiberglass hood.

6. Lt. Moseley was stationed in New Orleans, La., when he wrote his first poems about life in the service.

7. UN stands for United Nations.

8. Make out the check to Mr. Edwin Wellright, Jr.

9. Why does each desk have two telephones?

10. How would you write to your representative in Congress?
11. Is that a cake you baked? Is it for me?
12. Mark wrote that contract, didn’t he?
13. The birds in this park are noisy, aren’t they?
14. Help! I can’t carry all this myself!
15. Joan wondered, Where do they get all that food? as she watched the zookeeper feed the elephants.
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17. Aaron asked if China bordered Mongolia.
18. Please send all complaints to Brown, Brooks, and Co. in Chicago.
19. Is that an AM or FM station you’re listening to?
20. Should I make the check out to Sara Bosco, M.D., or to Dr. Sara Bosco?

**Assignment 2**

Complete this assignment in the medium of your choice. Begin by giving your full name, address, and phone number. Also indicate the name of this course, Assignment 2, your instructor’s name, and the date you plan to send this assignment. Then
provide your answers. Be sure to indicate the question number along with each answer. Instructions for mailing your assignment are included in the Overview to this course.

Complete the following items:
1. Identify three types of end marks.
2. Give an example of when each end mark is used.

Complete the following sentences by adding the correct end marks:
3. Mr Franz asked the company, Gilson Inc, whether the bill was correct.
4. In AD 79, the eruption of Mt Vesuvius destroyed Pompeii.
5. Wait! Don’t open the door until I tell you.
6. Rev Thomas ran through the St Louis airport with five minutes to spare.
7. Get these from the grocery this afternoon:
   1. milk
   2. sugar
   3. flour
   4. butter
5 chocolate sprinkles

8. Watch out
9. Are you serious Mrs James actually chose me for the leading role in the play
10. Shoo Get out
11. You want to reduce your intake of fat, don’t you
12. He asked himself, Do I have the strength to go two more miles
13. On the sidelines his buddies asked each other if he would make it
14. Fox continued down Ash St, past Stevens and Co, FAO Schwarz, Ltd, and Bidwell’s, Inc
15. If the refrigerator is 1 m 60 cm high, will it fit under the cabinet
16. Where do students buy textbooks
17. I sometimes wonder where these kids get their energy
18. He began teaching in the Phys Ed department at the Bolling State Univ on Dec 1, 1965

Read the following sentences, then explain three situations in which the same sentence could be
written ending with a period, a question mark, and an exclamation point:

19. The creature was covered with spikes
20. John made the honor roll

Once you have completed this assignment, send it to your instructor. Then proceed to Lesson 3, Commas.