

Punctuation

Use this cheat-sheet to help remind your child of what the different punctuation marks are used for.

Name	Symbol	What it does
Period	.	Used at the end of a sentence
Comma	,	- Use commas to separate words, and word groups, in a simple series of three or more items. Example: I like cats, dogs, and birds. - Use a comma after writing in someone's name, if you are speaking directly do them Example: Harry, you are a wizard
Colon	:	- The colon is often used to start a list. Example: I like: cats, dogs, and birds - The colon often introduces a quotation. Example: That's when she said: "this is not love. This is like" - The colon is often used to give emphasis. Example: She had one love: chocolate. - When a colon is used, it usually gives the silent impression of "as follows," "which is/are," or "thus" Example: There are three types of people in this world: nice, not nice, and super nice. - Connects two separate sentences, when the second sentence is directly related to the first sentence, and when the emphasis is on the second sentence. Example: The research is conclusive: climate change is a reality
Semicolon	;	- The semicolon often connects two closely related sentences. It usually take the place of words like 'and', and 'because'. Example: It was cold and the sun was shining → it was cold; the sun was shining - Semicolons separate items within a list (especially when the list includes groupings that already have commas). Example: My dream band would be: Eddie Vedder on lead guitar, acoustic, guitar, and backup vocals; Dave Grohl on drums; Alicia Keys on piano; and Billy Eilish on lead vocals. - Semicolons can also lead people from one idea to the next. It's like a way of saying "sssooooooooooooooooo" or "and because of that...", or "and as a result", or "so therefore" Example: It was a fabulous concert; I would easily go again
Ellipsis	...	- An ellipsis can be used to represent a trailing off of thought. Example: I thought I had friends... who knows... - An ellipsis can be used to represent a hesitation... like suspense. Example: Well... you see... I stole the money... so...
Apostrophe	'	- The apostrophe shows when letters have been left out, in the form of a contraction. Example: Don't go (do not go) - The apostrophe shows ownership. Example: My mom's hat
Curved Brackets	()	Brackets add important information, without changing the meaning of the sentence. Adds extra info. Clarifies. Example: I have a dog (a Golden Retriever)
Square Brackets	[]	Brackets add information to information already in brackets. Square brackets go inside rounded ones. Example: My mom's name is Linda (she was named after my nana [my nana was amazing])
Single Quotation Marks	' '	You can use quotation marks, to quote something WITHIN a quote. Doubles outside... singles inside. Example: Bobbi told me, "Delia said, 'This will never work' "
Double Quotation Marks	" "	- Double quotation marks tell us what someone else has said (this is a direct quote) Example: Ben said "I like pizza" - Quotation marks go around book, movie and song titles. Example: Harri's favourite movie was "Star Wars" - Double quotation marks indicate irony sarcasm, or judgement. Often called "air quotations", "scare quotes" or "air bunnies". Example: Today's lesson was super "educational" - Double quotation marks introduce an unfamiliar term. Example: The powerhouse of the cell is the "mitochondria" - Double quotation marks indicate a nickname. Example : Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson
Exclamation Mark	!	Used to add emphasis to the idea. Example: I won the lottery! I am so excited!
Hyphen (smallest)	-	Links parts of a compound words containing NOUNS. Example: She is an award-winning novelist.
En dash (middle size)	—	- Links parts of a compound word containing ADJECTIVES and ADVERBS. Example: old-fashioned - Time Ranges. The en dash is used to represent a span or range of numbers, dates, or time. The 2010–2011 season was our best yet. - The en dash can also be used between words to represent conflict, connection, or direction. Example: The Israeli–Palestine conflict is very challenging to solve
Em dash (widest)	—	- In place of commas, to add more emphasis. Example: When she finally arrived — 4 months later — she quit - Instead of brackets, to make it less formal. Example: She found errors — 24 errors — and the book was ruined - In place of a colon, to make it less formal. Example: the jury reached a verdict — guilty

The goal for this activity is for your child to start to recognize a pattern, for when to use which punctuation mark. Copying, is encouraged... because then the PATTERN sinks in.

The following example paragraphs incorporate all of the punctuation marks correctly. Have your write their own paragraph (but copy the format of the example paragraphs), using as many of the punctuation marks as possible.

Example #1: Dogs

Dogs are amazing animals. They're friendly, loyal, and fun to play with! Some dog breeds are famous, like: Great Danes, Saint Bernards, and Golden Retrievers. Dogs love to run, dig, bark... and nap. My dog's favorite toy is a red ball (he takes it everywhere [but he never forgets it anywhere]). He also has a blanket that says, "Best Dog Ever!" I told my friend, "Dogs are the best pets." She smiled and said, "I totally agree." Dogs need things like food, water, and exercise (especially long walks). If you care for your dog, they'll be your best friend forever; they might even protect you. A dog-friendly home should include: a cozy bed, some chew toys, and treats. Dogs—just like people—need love, attention, and time. Dogs are... the best.

Example #2: Horses

Horses are amazing animals. They're strong, graceful, and fun to ride! Some horses are small—like ponies—while others are large: Clydesdales, Shire horses, and even Percherons. Horses love to run, graze, neigh, and rest. Horses can be... well... silly. My horse's favorite treat is a red apple (he eats it every day [and sometimes twice a day]). His name is written above his stall. The sign says "Bucky". I told my mom, "thanks for letting me have a horse. I love horses". She smiled and said, "me too." Horses need things like food, water, and grooming (especially hoof care). If you care for your horse, they'll be your best companion forever; they might even feel like a friend. A horse-friendly barn should include: a soft stall, some fresh hay, and clean water. Horses—just like people—need love, attention, and time.

Example #3: Getting enough sleep

Getting enough sleep is important. It helps your body rest, grow, and stay healthy! A good night's sleep makes you feel better—more focused and full of energy—while not sleeping enough can leave you tired. If you are tired, you might experience: slow thinking, mood swings, and even trouble at school. Sleep helps your brain sort memories, clean out waste, and get ready for a new day. Your body's favorite time is bedtime (especially when you've had a long day). My brother has a pillow that says, "Dream Big, Sleep Well!" I told him, "Sleep is the key to success." He laughed and said, "Then I must be very successful!" Kids need things like quiet, darkness, and comfort (such as a soft blanket [and breathable]) to sleep well. If you make sleep a priority, you'll feel better; you might even do better in school. A sleep-friendly room should include: a cozy bed, no screens, and a calm atmosphere. Sleep—just like exercise—keeps your mind and body strong. Sleep, as it turns out... is everything.

Example #4: The Guitar

The guitar has a long and interesting history. It has changed in shape, sound, and size over time! Some say the first guitars were created thousands of years ago—maybe in ancient Egypt or Mesopotamia—while others believe they came from Spain. The guitar used to have: wooden bodies, gut strings, and simple designs. Over time, people added frets, tuning pegs, and... new materials. Today's guitar's design is much more advanced (and easier to play). My uncle owns an old guitar with a sticker on it, that says, "Music Lives Here!" I asked him, "Did people play guitars hundreds of years ago?" He nodded and said, "They sure did!" Guitars need parts like strings, frets, and a strong neck (usually made of wood) to make music. If you learn how to play, you'll enjoy it for life; you might even join a band. A guitar-friendly setup should include: a tuner, a case, and extra picks. Guitars—just like pianos—have changed through time.