

Grammar Conventions Checklist

Convention	When to use it	Example
<p>Comma</p> <p style="text-align: center;">,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use a comma after the first independent clause when you link two independent clauses with one of the following coordinating conjunctions: For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So. (acronym FANBOYS) ○ Use commas to separate words and word groups in a simple series of three or more items. ○ Use a comma after certain words that introduce a sentence ○ Use commas to set off expressions that interrupt the sentence flow ○ Use a comma to separate the day of the month from the year, and city from the province ○ When starting a sentence with a dependent clause, use a comma after it. ○ Use commas to enclose degrees or titles used with names ○ If the quotation comes before <i>he said, she wrote, they reported, Dana insisted,</i> or a similar attribution, end the quoted material with a comma, even if it is only one word ○ Commas always go inside quotation marks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>He walked all the way home, and he shut the door.</i> ❖ <i>We had coffee, cheese and crackers and grapes.</i> ❖ <i>No, you can't have a dollar.</i> ❖ <i>I am, by the way, very nervous about this.</i> ❖ <i>Orillia, Ontario</i> ❖ <i>November, 1, 2015</i> ❖ <i>If you are not sure about this, let me know now.</i> ❖ <i>Al Smith,, M.D.</i> ❖ <i>"I don't care," he said.</i>
<p>Quotation Marks</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“ ”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quotation marks always come in pairs. Do not open a quotation and fail to close it at the end of the quoted material. ○ Use Quotation marks to set off a direct (word-for-word) quotation. ○ Quotation marks are often used with technical terms, terms used in an unusual way, or other expressions that vary from standard usage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>"When will you be here?" he asked.</i> ❖ <i>It's an oil-extraction method known as "fracking."</i>

<p>Hyphen</p> <p>-</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hyphenate two or more words when they come before a noun they modify and act as a single idea. ○ When writing out new, original, or unusual compound nouns, writers should hyphenate whenever doing so avoids confusion. ○ Hyphens are often used to tell the ages of people and things (unless plural) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>an off-campus apartment</i> ❖ <i>I changed my diet and became a no-meat eater.</i> ❖ <i>We have a two-year-old child.</i>
<p>Capitalization</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Capitalize the first word of a document and the first word after a period. ○ Capitalize proper nouns ○ Capitalize the first letter of a direct quote when the quoted material is a complete sentence. ○ Capitalize titles when they are used before names ○ Capitalize specific geographical regions. Do not capitalize points of the compass. ○ Do not capitalize the first item in a list that follows a colon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>the Grand Canyon</i> ❖ <i>Mr. Johnson, who was working in his field that morning, said, "The alien spaceship appeared right before my own two eyes."</i> ❖ <i>Chairman of the Board William Bly will preside at the conference.</i> ❖ <i>North America</i> ❖ <i>Bring the following: paper, a pencil, and a snack.</i>
<p>Parentheses</p> <p>()</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use parentheses to enclose information that clarifies or is used as an aside. ○ Commas are more likely to follow parentheses than precede them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>He finally answered (after taking five minutes to think) that he did not understand the question.</i> ❖ <i>When he got home (it was already dark outside), he fixed dinner.</i>
<p>Apostrophes</p> <p>,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use an apostrophe to show possession ○ Regular nouns are nouns that form their plurals by adding either the letter <i>s</i> or <i>-es</i>(<i>guy, guys; letter, letters; actress, actresses; etc.</i>). To show plural possession, simply put an apostrophe after the <i>s</i>. ○ Never use an apostrophe to make a name plural. ○ If two people possess the same item, put the apostrophe + <i>s</i> after the second name only. ○ Use an apostrophe with contractions. The apostrophe is placed where a letter or letters have been removed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>The woman's hat</i> Correct: <i>guys' night out</i> (<i>guy + s + apostrophe</i>) Incorrect: <i>guy's night out</i> (implies only one guy) ❖ <i>The Wilson's are here.</i> ❖ <i>Jessica and Maryl's home is constructed of redwood.</i> ❖ <i>doesn't, wouldn't, it's,</i> ❖ <i>can't, three days' leave</i>

<p>Colon</p> <p>:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A colon means "that is to say" or "here's what I mean." Colons and semicolons should never be used interchangeably. ○ Use a colon to introduce a series of items. Do not capitalize the first item after the colon ○ Avoid using a colon before a list when it directly follows a verb or preposition. ○ Use a colon rather than a comma to follow the salutation in a business letter, even when addressing someone by his or her first name 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>I want the following items: butter, sugar, and flour.</i> ❖ <i>I want: butter, sugar, and flour.</i> ❖ <i>Dear Ms. Smyth:</i>
<p>Semi-colon</p> <p>:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It's no accident that a semicolon is a period atop a comma. Like commas, semicolons indicate an audible pause—slightly longer than a comma's, but short of a period's full stop. ○ A semicolon can replace a period if the writer wishes to narrow the gap between two closely linked sentences. ○ Use a semicolon before such words and terms as <i>namely, however, therefore, that is, i.e., for example, e.g., for instance, etc.</i>, when they introduce a complete sentence. It is also preferable to use a comma after these words and terms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Call me tomorrow; you can give me an answer then.</i> ❖ <i>Bring any two items; however, sleeping bags and tents are in short supply.</i> ❖ <i>When I finish here, and I will soon, I'll be glad to help you; and that is a promise I will keep.</i>
<p>Dash</p> <p>—</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Indicates added emphasis, an interruption, or an abrupt change of thought. ○ Dashes subtly change the tone of the following sentences ○ Dashes replace otherwise mandatory punctuation, such as the commas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>You are the friend—the only friend—who offered to help me.</i> ❖ <i>I pay the bills—she has all the fun.</i> ❖ <i>The man—he was from Ames, Iowa—arrived.</i>
<p>Ellipses</p> <p>...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When you're quoting material and you want to omit some words. The ellipsis consists of three evenly spaced dots (periods) ○ An ellipsis can be used to represent a trailing off of thought. ○ An ellipsis can also indicate hesitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>The ceremony honored twelve athletes ... visiting the Canada.</i> ❖ <i>If only she had ... Oh, it doesn't matter now.</i> ❖ <i>See, the thing is ... I didn't mean it.</i>
<p>Exclamation Mark</p> <p>!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use an exclamation point to show emotion, emphasis, or surprise. ○ An exclamation point replaces a period at the end of a sentence. ○ Do not over use the exclamation mark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Yay! We won!</i>