**Recapitulation of the Major Points in Punctuation**

**Fourteen (14) punctuation marks are commonly used in English. They are the period, question mark, exclamation point, comma, semicolon, colon, dash, hyphen, parentheses, brackets, braces, apostrophe, quotation marks, and ellipsis.**

**Period:**

Use a period at the end of a complete sentence that is a statement.

If the last item in the sentence is an abbreviation that ends in a period, do not follow it with another period.

Question marks and exclamation points replace and eliminate periods at the end of a sentence.

**Question mark:**

Use a question mark only after a direct question.

Question marks replace and eliminate periods at the end of a sentence.

Capitalize the word that follows a question mark

Avoid the common trap of using question marks with indirect questions, which are statements that contain questions. Use a period after an indirect question.

Rhetorical questions should not end with a question mark because they don't require or expect an answer.

Use a question mark when a sentence is half statement and half question.

The placement of question marks with quotation marks follows logic. If a question is within the quoted material, a question mark should be placed inside the quotation marks.

If a quoted question ends in midsentence, the question mark replaces a comma.

**Exclamation point:**

Use an exclamation point to show emotion, emphasis, or surprise.

An exclamation point replaces a period at the end of a sentence. It also replaces a midsentence comma.

Avoid using an exclamation point in formal business writing.

Overuse of exclamation points is a sign of undisciplined writing.

**Comma:**

Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction (and, but so, or nor, for) ( FANBOYS) when it joins two complete ideas (independent clauses).

Use a comma after an introductory clause or phrase.

**(1)**

Use a comma to separate each item in a series; a series is a group of three or more items having the same function and form in a sentence.

Use commas to enclose clauses not essential to the meaning of a sentence.

An appositive is a noun or noun phrase that renames a nearby noun. Appositives offer nonessential information. Nonrestrictive appositives are set off with commas; restrictive appositives are not.

When a speaker in a sentence names the person to whom he is speaking, this addressing of his audience is called direct address. Direct address is indicated by the use of a comma or commas, depending upon its placement within the sentence.

A dialogue is a conversation between two or more people. If the speaker (not the listener) in the conversation is identified, his name, (or the noun or pronoun used to refer to the speaker), and the verb that refers to his speaking are enclosed within commas.

In dates, the year is set off from the rest of the sentence with a pair of commas.

The elements of an address or place name are separated by commas.

If a title follows a name, separate the title from the rest of the sentence with a pair of commas.

In numbers more than four digits long, use commas to separate the numbers into groups of three, starting from the right. In numbers four digits long, a comma is optional.

**Semicolon:**

Use a semicolon to join two independent clauses when the second clause restates the first or when the two clauses are of equal emphasis.

Use a semicolon to join two independent clauses when the second clause begins with a conjunctive adverb (however, therefore, moreover, furthermore, thus, meanwhile, nonetheless, otherwise) or a transition (in fact, for example, that is, for instance, in addition, in other words, on the other hand, even so).

Use a semicolon to join elements of a series when individual items of the series already include commas.

**Colon:**

Use a colon to join two independent clauses when you wish to emphasize the second clause.

Use a colon after an independent clause when it is followed by a list, a quotation, an appositive, or other ideas directly related to the independent clause.

Use a colon at the end of a business letter greeting.

Use a colon to separate the hour and minute(s) in a time notation.

Use a colon to separate the chapter and verse in a Biblical reference.

**(2)**

**Dash:**

Dashes are used to set off or emphasize the content enclosed within dashes or the content that follows a dash. Dashes place more emphasis on this content than parentheses.

Use a dash to set off an appositive phrase that already includes commas. An appositive is a word that adds explanatory or clarifying information to the noun that precedes it.

**Hyphen:**

Two words brought together as a compound may be written separately, written as one word, or connected by hyphens.

Use a hyphen to join two or more words serving as a single adjective before a noun. However, when compound modifiers come after a noun, they are not hyphenated

Use a hyphen with compound numbers

Use a hyphen to avoid confusion or an awkward combination of letters

Use a hyphen with the prefixes ex- (meaning former), self-, all-; with the suffix -elect; between a prefix and a capitalized word; and with figures or letters

Use a hyphen to divide words at the end of a line if necessary, and make the break only between syllables:

For line breaks, divide already-hyphenated words only at the hyphen

For line breaks in words ending in -ing, if a single final consonant in the root word is doubled before the suffix, hyphenate between the consonants; otherwise, hyphenate at the suffix itself:

Never put the first or last letter of a word at the end or beginning of a line, and don't put two-letter suffixes at the beginning of a new line

**Parentheses:**

Parentheses are used to emphasize content. They place more emphasis on the enclosed content than commas. Use parentheses to set off nonessential material, such as dates, clarifying information, or sources, from a sentence.

**Brackets:**

Brackets are interruptions. When we see them, we know someone else has added them. They are used to explain or comment on the quotation.

When quoting something that has a spelling or grammar mistake or presents material in a confusing way, insert the term sic in italics and enclose it in no italic (unless the surrounding text is italic) brackets.

In formal writing, brackets are often used to maintain the integrity of both a quotation and the sentences others use it in.

**(3)**

**Braces:**

Braces { }, also known as curly brackets, are used in various programming languages, certain mathematical expressions, and some musical notation. They should never be used in place of parentheses ( ) or square brackets [ ].  
  
**Apostrophe:**

A contraction is a shortened form of a word (or group of words) that omits certain letters or sounds. In a contraction, an apostrophe represents missing letters.

For most singular nouns, add apostrophe+s

For most plural nouns, add only an apostrophe

For plural nouns that do not end in s, add apostrophe+s

**Quotation marks:**

Use quotation marks to enclose direct quotations. Note that commas and periods are placed inside the closing quotation mark, and colons and semicolons are placed outside. The placement of question and exclamation marks depends on the situation.

Use quotation marks to indicate the novel, ironic, or reserved use of a word.

Use quotation marks around the titles of short poems, song titles, short stories, magazine or newspaper articles, essays, speeches, chapter titles, short films, and episodes of television or radio shows.

Do not use quotation marks in indirect or block quotations.

**Ellipsis:**

If words are omitted from a quotation, use ellipsis marks in place of the words that are omitted.

**Italics:**

Italicize the titles of magazines, books, newspapers, academic journals, films, television shows, long poems, plays of three or more acts, operas, musical albums, works of art, websites, and individual trains, planes, or ships.

Italicize foreign words.

Italicize a word or phrase to add emphasis.

Italicize a word when referring to that word.

**(4)**

**The end**