

Punctuation Chart

COMMAS

1. Items in a Series . . . A [comma] B [comma] (and/or) C . . .

. . . the dog, the cat, and the bird jumped, spun, or ran . . .
. . . through the house, out the door, and into the road . . .

2. Direct Quotation . . . introduction [comma] [quotation mark] quote . . .

. . . he asked, “How much did it cost?”
. . . like my sister said, “It was on sale! I saved 40%.”

3. Appositive . . . noun [comma] appositive [comma] . . .

. . . the dog, a brown cocker spaniel, wagged his tail . . .
. . . James, the supervisor’s brother, did not come in . . .

4. Nonessential Phrase . . . noun [comma] nonessential phrase [comma] . . .

. . . the burger, which was overcooked, was too expensive . . .
*Note: a nonessential (nonrestrictive) phrase has a verb, but it cannot have a subject.

5. Subordination and Coordination [Review the Sentence Variety Chart](#)

COLONS

After a Complete Sentence . . . Complete Sentence [colon] list, quote, etc. . .

Donna called me from the store: “They are out of Miracle Whip!”
Sentences need three things: a subject, a verb, and punctuation.

*Note: A colon replaces a period to introduce a list, quote, explanation, or definition.

SEMICOLONS

1. Complex List . . . A , a [semicolon] B , b [semicolon] (and/or) C , c . . .

I have a dog, a poodle; a cat, a Siamese; and a bird, a parakeet.

2. Coordination [Review the Sentence Variety Chart](#)

DASHES

1. Complex Appositive / Nonessential . . . [dash] A (comma) a [dash] . . .

The style manuals—APA, MLA, and Turabian—are sometimes hard to use.
My new car—a Toyota Prius, which is a hybrid—runs on gas and electricity.
*Note: A dash is formed by 2 hyphens, and there is no space before or after it.

2. Shift in Tone or Thought . . . [dash] . . .

I waited in the checkout line for an hour—and the cash register went down!