

Punctuation

Punctuation	When to Use It	Effect on Writing	Example
,	Separate items in a list; separate clauses	Makes the sentence clearer	I bought apples, bananas, and oranges.
.	End a statement or fact	Shows the sentence is complete	The storm was very strong.
?	End a question	Shows someone is asking	Where is the lake?
!	Strong feeling (surprise, fear, excitement)	Adds emotion	Watch out!
" "	Show exact spoken words	Shows quoted text	"I am scared," she whispered.
:	Introduce a list or explanation	Shows something important next	He packed the essentials: water, food, and a flashlight.
;	Join two related sentences	Shows close connection	The sky was dark; the storm was coming.
...	Pause or unfinished thought	Adds suspense	The wind began to blow...
—	Extra information or pause	Adds emphasis	The lake—cold and wild—roared loudly.
-	Join words; compound adjectives	Makes meaning clearer	well-known author