



Punctuation Basics

What Is Punctuation?

Punctuation includes marks like periods, commas, question marks, and others. These marks help organize your writing and make meaning clear.

Why Is Punctuation Important?

Punctuation:

- shows where sentences end
- separates ideas
- helps your reader understand your meaning

Common Punctuation Marks

Periods (.)

Used to end a statement.

Example: Students need time to study.

Question Marks (?)

Used for questions.

Example: How do students manage their time?

Exclamation Points (!)

Used to show strong feeling (use sparingly in academic writing).

Example: This is important!

Commas (,)

Separate ideas and parts of a sentence.

Example: Students study, work, and attend class.

Apostrophes (')

Show possession or contractions.

Example: the student's book / don't

Quotation Marks (" ")

Used for direct quotes.

Example: "Students need support," the professor said.

Common Mistakes

Missing End Punctuation:

Sentences and questions should always have end punctuation.

Incorrect: Students are busy

Correct: Students are busy.

Overusing Exclamation Points:

Avoid in academic writing.

Incorrect: Students need to study hard! They have a lot of work!

Correct: Students need to study hard. They have a lot of work.

Incorrect Apostrophes:

Its vs. it's (its = possession, it's = it is)

Incorrect: The dog wagged it's tail.

Correct: The dog wagged its tail. (correct for possession—no apostrophe)

Incorrect: It's book is on the table.

Correct: Its book is on the table.

Tip: Remember: it's = it is, its = possession

Final Takeaway

Punctuation helps organize your writing. Use it carefully to make your ideas clear and easy to follow.