

Internet Quest



Punctuation Online

When do you use a semicolon vs. a colon? What is the correct style? Go to Northern Illinois University's Writing Across the Curriculum program's Web site to find the six basic punctuation rules. Go to www.mhhe.com/cec9.

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Online Writing Assistant

Need some help in using punctuation correctly? Then, explore the Paradigm® Online Writing Assistant Web site. You'll find how to use commas, periods, question marks, exclamation marks, semicolons, apostrophes, colons, parentheses, dashes, quotation marks, brackets, and ellipses. Go to www.mhhe.com/cec9.

REVIEW OF KEY POINTS

- The mechanics of style—punctuation and capitalization—are writing signals for readers. They let readers know when one thought ends, how ideas are connected, and when to pause.
- Capital letters provide important information to readers. Besides indicating the beginning of a sentence, they indicate proper names, business names, titles, and essential words. When writing a business memo or letter, specific rules govern the use of capital letters.
- In most cases, it is inappropriate to use abbreviations in formal writing or in business writing. In business writing, however, abbreviations are frequently used in addresses. If a company abbreviates parts of its official name, then business writers should do likewise in corresponding with the company. Business writers should limit the use of abbreviations except for those that are considered somewhat standard (*Inc.*, for example). They should also consult a business reference book when in doubt about correct abbreviations.
- When writing numbers, writers must know when to use words or numerals. Whether one is expressing sums of money, quantities for orders, addresses, or statistics, errors in number use can be expensive and time-consuming. Typically, numerals are used when the number is a significant statistic. Words for numbers are generally used in formal messages.

CASE 7.1

College Admission Standards

Did you know that Richard Atkinson, president of the University of California, is on a crusade to eliminate the SAT as part of the admission process for the University of California? When visiting his 12-year-old granddaughter, he was shocked that she was practicing SAT verbal analogies. He feels that too much emphasis is placed on the SAT instead of mastering the basics of a high school curriculum. Gaston Caperton, president of the College Board, disagrees. He claims that colleges need some sort of measurement guide to evaluate college applicants.

With whom do you agree? If the SAT is abolished, how, then, should college applicants be evaluated?

CASE 7.2

Deadline Dilemma

Marina Lourdes works as an administrative assistant at Centennial Travel Agency. One of her responsibilities is to revise, edit, and format a monthly newsletter that is sent to all business customers. Andrea Jeager, a travel agent, writes the draft of the newsletter and then submits the draft to Marina.

Andrea was busy and submitted her newsletter to Marina without checking it. Because the newsletter was also late, Marina had only one day to work on her revision.

Marina found several inconsistencies in punctuation. She also noticed that Andrea used both figures and words for the same types of numbers.

Marina is working on a tight deadline. What resources could Marina use to help her check the use of punctuation and numbers?

CEC Online



Are you overwhelmed about the rules of mechanics? Then, visit www.mhhe.com/cec9 and wonder no more.

Communicating in Your Career

A lot of personal information is discussed in a company's human resource department. Assistants, administrators, managers, and counselors are privy to confidential material. Although this information should remain within the office, there are always people who want to know everything—curious employees who want to be in the know. If they encounter such an inquiring person, how should human resource employees handle questions about revealing information that may affect their jobs or those of other employees?

Ethics in Action

Contractual Obligations

Numbers are very important when dealing with contracts. One day, you failed to verify the numbers in a price quotation. Instead of keying \$4000, you keyed \$400 in the quotation for a printing contract. You made a “typo” and the client realizes that you could not do the job for \$400. What is the ethical thing to do in this situation?