



## Help With: Unusual Punctuation

### Exclamation Marks

Exclamation points are used to indicate emphasis. They are fine if used occasionally, but don't end every sentence with them like an *Archie* comic or else their effect will weaken.

*Churchill's former teachers were likely surprised!*

It's fine to have an exclamation point in the middle of a sentence if it is a sound effect or if you are quoting something with that point:

*All night long, the dogs barked woof! in the yard. She shouted "Please be quiet!" as the class started.*

If you are emphasizing a quote, put the exclamation point outside of the quotation marks:

*The generals called it "a very small war"!*

If the exclamation point is in the original quote, put it inside the quotation marks:

*Edison told his assistant to "come quickly!"*

If a book has punctuation in it, you also need to include it in italics or underline.

*Did you read Lenin's What is to be Done? this week?*

### Quotation Marks

Some very conservative British writers use only single (') quotation marks, and some Americans use only both ("). Be consistent. Newspapers might do this to save space: *Congress Cries 'Shame!'*

When directly quoting someone, use a comma instead of a period, unless the quote ends a sentence.

*"On the other hand," she said over dinner, "we could always go to Brazil."*

### Dash

The dash (—) is a sort of general punctuation mark which usually suggests a pause. It works well if used occasionally, but some academics find it too casual to be used at all.

*She played a paradiddle—a sort of short military drum riff—as part of her orchestra solo.*

### Ellipses (...)

The ellipsis is a set of three periods used to indicate a thought trailing off (*I wandered lonely as a cloud...*) or to indicate missing text in a quotation.

Using an ellipsis within a quotation: *"In 1971... many of the greatest musicians of the 60s were dead from drug abuse" (Cohn 8).* Use four periods if you are moving to a different sentence.

You do not need an ellipsis before or after quoted text if it's obvious that there is more to the sentence. Source example: *A council member may miss a meeting because of personal illness but should not be absent because of vacations.*

*A member may "miss a meeting because of personal illness" (Strum 10).*