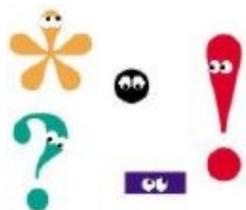


## Help With: Punctuation Practice



There was little punctuation or capitalization in early forms of English. Until the invention of mass printing texts were usually read out loud and at most there were simple dashes or dots to indicate pauses or stops. Here's an example of English from around the year 1000:

*fæder ure þu þe eart on heofonum si þin nama gehalgod tobecume þin rice gewurþe ðin willa on eorðan swa swa on heofonum*

“Our father who is in heaven hallowed be your name your kingdom come your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”

Modern English has a more complex system of phrasings and sentence structures, and punctuation is now used to help the text make sense. The following sentences are difficult to understand until proper punctuation is added.

1. Several countries participated in the airlift Italy Belgium and Luxembourg
2. Only one course was open to us surrender said the ex-major and we did
3. Judge Judy later to be nominated for the Supreme Court had ruled against civil rights
4. In last months *Rolling Stone* one of my favorite magazines I enjoyed reading Lelands article  
How Not to Go Camping
5. Yes Jim said Ill be home by twelve Ill leave the Crown & Whistle early
6. There was only one thing to do study till dawn
7. The following are the primary colors red blue and yellow
8. Arriving on the 810 plane were Brad Cruise my old roommate his wife Maria their son Tom and  
Clarissa their dog
9. When the teacher commented that her spelling was poor Lynn replied All the members of my  
family are poor spellers Why not me too
10. He used the phrase you know so often that I finally said No I dont know
11. Whoever thought said Lady Evelyn that Sir Cheswick would be so good at video games at his  
age he must like blowing things up
12. Whoever is elected secretary of the club Ashley or Kelly or Susan must be prepared to do a great  
deal of work said Juanita the outgoing secretary

## Suggested Corrections

1. Several countries participated in the airlift: Italy, Belgium, and Luxembourg. *This is a short declarative sentence with a list of three components. Separate each item with a comma and an 'and' before the last one.*
2. Only one course was open to, us according to the general: surrender. After consulting with the civilian leaders, we did. *You could probably omit the last comma. Only do this if the sentence is grammatically simple and unambiguous.*
3. Judge Judy, later to be nominated for the Supreme Court, had ruled against civil rights. *Two commas are necessary because her nomination is inserted information—a non-restrictive clause sentence.*
4. In last month's *Rolling Stone*, one of my favorite magazines, I enjoyed reading Leland's article, "How Not to Go Camping." *The period goes inside the quotation marks here because it is not a quotation; there is no reference.*
5. "Yes," Jim said, "I'll be home by twelve. I'll leave the Crown & Whistle early." As he left, he thought, "Sheesh, what a killjoy." *Thoughts are placed in quotation marks to differentiate them from indirect thought: He thought about what a killjoy his roommate was.*
6. My brothers, who are architects, are left-handed. I always wonder if it's a coincidence. *Commas are necessary if all the brothers are architects but not if only some of the brothers are: Those of my brothers who are architects are left handed.*
7. The following are the primary colors: red, blue, and yellow.
8. Arriving on the 8:10 plane were Brad Cruise, my old roommate, his wife Maria, their son Tom, and Clarissa, their dog. *This is not a very clear sentence to begin with, but we can make it better with punctuation and by trying to make the elements parallel. If Brad Cruise was the roommate it might be better to write: my old roommate Brad Cruise.*
9. When the teacher commented that her spelling was poor, Lynn replied, "All the members of my family are poor spellers. Why not me too?"
10. He used the phrase "you know" so often that I finally said, "No, I don't know." *In many texts the 'you know' would be in single quotes; either use is fine if used consistently.*
11. "Whoever thought," said Lady Evelyn, "that Sir Cheswick would be so good at video games at his age. He must like blowing things up." At his age, he must like blowing things up *is also grammatical but makes less sense.*
12. "Whoever is elected secretary of the club—Keith, Kelly or Susan—must be prepared to do a great deal of work," said Juanita, the outgoing secretary. *You could also use commas to separate the list: Whoever is elected secretary of the club, Keith, Kelly, or Susan, must also... etc. Dashes can be handy if they aren't overused.*