



GRAMMAR AND MECHANICS

Using End Punctuation

The use of end punctuation in forming a complete sentence is a significant factor in writing clear, informative, and effective prose. A sentence can be categorized by type (simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex) and by purpose (declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory). Most sentences end with a period; however, sentences can also end with either a question mark or exclamation mark.

USING THE PERIOD

Use a period:

- after a declarative sentence (a sentence providing information or stating a fact): **I am leaving on the next train.**
- after an imperative sentence (a sentence making a request or stating a command): **Close the door.**
- after an indirect question (a sentence that reports a question rather than asking it directly): **He asked if you would attend the meeting.**
- after an abbreviation of titles: **Mr., Ms., Dr., Jr., Sr.**; Latin words or phrases: **i.e.** (that is), **e.g.** (for example), **etc.** (and so forth, and so on); time designations: a.m. (or AM), p.m. (or PM)
- after numbers and letters in an outline:

I. _____
 A. _____
 1. _____
 2. _____
 a. _____
 b. _____
 B. _____
II. _____

Do not use a period:

- after abbreviations of national or international agencies: NATO, UNESCO, HUD
- after abbreviations of labor unions: AFL, CIO, ILGWU
- after call letters of radio or television stations: WNBC, WLIB, WBAI

- after even dollar denominations of money: \$45 (but \$45.54)
- after abbreviations for ordinal numbers: 2nd, 5th, Henry VIII
- after common abbreviations: memo, math, exam, lab, dorm
- after a number or letter enclosed in parentheses: (1), (a)
- after numbers that are part of a title: *Henry V*, Act 1, Scene 2; *The Grapes of Wrath*, Chapter 1

Using Periods to Form the Ellipsis Mark

The ellipsis mark consists of three spaced periods used to show intentional omission of words in a quoted passage: Abraham Lincoln said the following: "We are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation . . . can long endure." If you delete a full sentence or more in the quoted passage, use a period before the ellipsis mark.

The ellipsis mark can also be used to indicate pause, hesitation, or interrupted speech: He seemed nervous . . . stared straight ahead . . . kept twitching and jerking . . . then he ran for shelter.

USING THE QUESTION MARK

Use a question mark:

- after a direct question: **Are you going? It's a long trip, isn't it?**
- within parentheses to indicate doubt or uncertainty about a fact: Chaucer was born in **1340 (?)** and died in 1400.

Do not use a question mark:

- after an indirect questions (one that is reported rather than asked directly): He asked if I was going.
- polite requests in question form: Will you please send me three copies.

USING THE EXCLAMATION POINT

Use an exclamation point after an emphatic word, phrase, clause, or sentence: **Wonderful! What a surprise!**

Be sparing in the use of exclamation points. If a sentence expresses only mild emotion or excitement, do not use the exclamation point. A general guideline is to use the exclamation point in sentences in which you use "how" or "what" as intensifiers: **How dreadful! What a calamity!**