

Types of Punctuation

Sentence Finishers – Much like relief pitchers or closers in baseball, these are the punctuation marks which get the job done and close the game – or in this case, the sentence. Every sentence has one of these. It alerts the reader that the sentence is complete, and can also serve as cue for the reader to pause and take a breath before they continue reading aloud, if applicable.

Period: (.) Used for declarative and imperative sentences, this punctuation shows the reader the sentence is neither a question nor an exclamation.

Declarative Incorrect Example: *The Rangers are historically the best baseball team in Texas they have the most integrity.*

Correction: This sentence is a run-on. There are two independent clauses which can be separated by giving both clauses a period, or they can be joined with a comma and a coordinating conjunction, or a semi-colon.

Ex: *The Rangers are historically the best baseball team in Texas. They have the most integrity.*

The Rangers are historically the best baseball team in Texas; they have the most integrity.

Declarative Incorrect Example: Mexican food is my favorite food it is much better than hamburgers and hot dogs.

Correction: This sentence is a run-on. “Mexican food is my favorite food,” is a complete sentence, or an independent clause. “It is much better than hamburgers and hot dogs,” is also an independent clause. This can be remedied by either placing a period at the end of each clause, or separating them with a comma and a coordinating conjunction such as “and” or “for.”

Ex: *Mexican food is my favorite food, for it is much better than hamburgers and hot dogs.*

Imperative Incorrect Example: *Pass the salt, please?*

Correction: While this can be a request, the writer/speaker requesting the salt left out a question word, implying the sentence is a command, rather than a request. The sentence should be read without a rise in pitch.

Ex: *Pass the salt, please.*

Question Mark: (?) Used for sentences which ask a question, this punctuation shows the reader the sentence is a question, and that their pitch should rise at the end of the sentence.

Interrogative Incorrect Example: *Will you go to the store with me.*

Correction: Due to the word, “will” this is a question, and thus requires a Question Mark.

Ex: *Will you go to the store with me?*

Exclamation point (!) Used for sentences in which the speaker is expressing excitement, urgency, anger, or is communicating from a far-off distance.

Exclamatory example: *The birthday party will have not just cake, but also a pinata.*

Correction: While it may be an assumption that everyone likes both cake and pinatas, it certainly makes more a more exciting party to have both. Therefore, it is a better choice to include the exclamation point, unless the speaker hates joy or was recently diagnosed with diabetes.

Ex: *The birthday party will have no just cake, but also a pinata!*