

Punctuation Overview

Punctuation is used to aid the smooth reading of texts. Writers use punctuation as a powerful tool in shaping meaning. An absence of punctuation, or misused punctuation, can lead to ambiguity or complete misunderstanding.

A note on quotation marks

Quotation marks or inverted commas identify words that are direct speech or spoken or written words belonging to people other than the writer. Quotation marks should not be used for indirect speech such as: She said that she would be late. There is an increasing trend for single quotation marks ('...') to be used in place of double ("...") although this is a matter of style. Double quotation marks are used for material quoted within single marks and vice versa if the material is quoted within double marks.

Skill Focus: Sentence Structure – Sentence definition

STAGES ESI–I

Strategy

Reconstructing sentences from cut up sentence strips

It is important to teach students what a sentence is so they can punctuate correctly and understand that punctuation helps us to read and make sense of what is written. By breaking up sentences into single words and punctuation marks, students can reconstruct them in modelled, guided and independent activities.

Explicitly teaching the metalanguage of sentences assists students to look for, be aware of and use punctuation markers in sentences.

Opportunities to put elements together to form a coherent whole in contextual and meaningful activities should be provided so that students can practise, verbalise and transfer skills to new situations.

Activities to support the strategy

Guided

Exploring metalanguage (QTF)

The teacher explores students' prior knowledge by discussing how to make a group of words make sense – or make a sentence using a combination of words that create a simple sentence. Gauging the students' prior knowledge guides the modelled component of the lesson to meet the needs of the students.

cat	The	.	the	ate	food
-----	-----	---	-----	-----	------

Asking the students for suggestions and allowing them to manipulate the words to try their hypothesis is encouraged. They also need to verbalise the skills for another student or for the teacher to carry out. For example, the student may say:

You could put the word with the capital first and you need to put the full stop at the end. You can put the naming word at the beginning of the sentence and the doing word after it. No, that doesn't make sense because it does not tell you what the naming word is doing.

Guided

Exploring deep knowledge (QTF)

Ask students:

What is a sentence?

As students provide the facts, display the matching pre-prepared flashcards on the whiteboard.

This builds a class framework fact sheet.

has to make sense

K–6 Outcomes

- WESI.9: Writes a text using random marks and scribbles
- WESI.10: Begins to use capital letters at the beginning of sentences and full stops at the end of sentences
- WSI.10: Uses most common punctuation marks
- RSI.6: Identifies a sentence in printed texts

Item & Stimulus

Writing task criterion 9
Punctuation



Item Descriptor

Using correct and appropriate punctuation to aid the reading of a text

Statements of Learning for English (p. 19)

Students have the opportunity to draw on their knowledge of texts and language to use basic punctuation marks.

tells what happens

has at least one noun (a naming word)

has a verb (has something or someone doing this)

has a capital letter at the beginning

The end of the sentence can have a full stop .

OR
exclamation mark !
OR
question mark ?

Independent

Punctuation Hunt

Exploring deep understanding (QTF)

During a shared 'big book' reading activity, the students listen for the full stops as the teacher reads (the text is not shown to the students). When students think they hear a pause that indicates a full stop (a complete idea) they put their hands on their head, clap their hands or tally on a piece of paper. They can then check their score as they read the book together.

Alternatively, volunteer students can tally a specific punctuation mark on the white board. The results can be discussed at the end of reading. This template could be used:

full stop.	Capital Letter	question mark ?	'speech marks'	comma ,	exclamation mark !

Developing problematic questions about the total tally of each section assists students to analyse the types of punctuation marks and their common use.

Skill Focus: Identifying and using direct speech

STAGE 2 Supporting ESL Students

Strategy

Reconstructing sentences from published texts

Exploring metalanguage (QTF)

Reconstructing language from texts that have been studied using the whole language approach enables an explicit look at how the language works after meaning and context has been explored. Also see the accelerated literacy approach (Aboriginal Education Overview).

Activities to support the strategy

Focus Text

Tashi and the Bandits by Anna and Barbara Fienberg in *The big, big, big book of Tashi*.

These lessons are designed to complement an author study on Anna Fienberg. The implementation of prior modelled reading sessions, deconstruction and reconstruction of parts of the text is advised before using these activities. This ensures students have an understanding of the vocabulary used, the story line, the text structures, the targeted audience, characters and settings before deconstructing the language conventions.

Modelled (Controlled)

Exploring metalanguage (QTF)

Issue copies of the section of text on which the class will be focusing (worksheet and OHT provided).

Have this text on an overhead and use different coloured markers to highlight the following with students as the passage is read:

- inverted commas
- saying verbs
- the character who is talking.

Ask students to record on their copies as you work together highlighting the targeted language conventions. Provide enough time for students to complete each component.

Explain that inverted commas are used in English to indicate what a character has said.

Note the symbols << and >> are used to show speech in French.

Ask students to share with the class how speech is notated in their first language or any other language they have learnt.

K-6 Outcomes

WS2.10: Uses correct punctuation when publishing

RS2.8: Uses correct punctuation marks

ESL Scales

4.7.10: Follows direct and indirect speech

4.11.12: Uses direct and indirect speech appropriately in context

Item & Stimulus

Writing task criterion 9
Punctuation



Language Conventions
Year 5 Q: 32

Item Descriptor

Using correct and appropriate punctuation to aid the reading of a text

Statements of Learning for English (p. 19)

Students have the opportunity to draw on their knowledge of texts and language to use basic punctuation marks.

Tashi and the Bandits

‘Enough!’ shouted the Bandit Chief to his wife. ‘This boy is not like our son. He sings like a crow, he tangles your hair, he loses the rice, he scatters the horses, he warns our enemies – and now he has spoilt our dinner. This is too much.’ And he turned to Tashi.

‘You must go home to your village now, Tashi. You are a clumsy, useless boy with no more brain than the ducks you ruined.’

Tashi smiled inside, but put on a sorrowful face and turned to the Bandit Wife. ‘I’m sorry that I wasn’t like your son,’ he said, but she was already on her way down to the river to fetch some more water.

Tashi turned to go when a rough hand pulled him back.

‘You don’t deserve to go free, Duck Spoiler,’ snarled Me Too. ‘Say goodbye to this world and hello to the next because I’m going to make an end of you.’

But as he turned to pick up his deadly nose-hair plucker, Tashi shook himself free and tore off into the forest. He could hear the bandit crashing through the trees after him, but if he could just make it to the river, he thought he would have a chance.

He was almost there when he heard a splash. He looked up to see the Bandit Wife had slipped on a stone and had fallen into the water.

‘Help!’ she cried when she saw Tashi. ‘Help me, I can’t swim!’

pp. 50–55

verbs

inverted commas

character who is talking

Tashi and the Bandits

'Enough!' **shouted** the **Bandit Chief** to his wife. 'This boy is not like our son. He sings like a crow, he tangles your hair, he loses the rice, he scatters the horses, he warns our enemies – and now he has spoilt our dinner. This is too much.' And he turned to Tashi.

'You must go home to your village now, Tashi. You are a clumsy, useless boy with no more brain than the ducks you ruined.'

Tashi **smiled** inside, but put on a sorrowful face and turned to the Bandit Wife. 'I'm sorry that I wasn't like your son,' **he said**, but she was already on her way down to the river to fetch some more water.

Tashi turned to go when a rough hand pulled him back.

'You don't deserve to go free, Duck Spoiler,' **sarled** **Me Too**. 'Say goodbye to this world and hello to the next because I'm going to make an end of you.'

But as he turned to pick up his deadly nose-hair plucker, Tashi shook himself free and tore off into the forest. He could hear the bandit crashing through the trees after him, but if he could just make it to the river, he thought he would have a chance.

He was almost there when he heard a splash. He looked up to see the **Bandit Wife** had slipped on a stone and had fallen into the water.

'Help!' **she** **cried** when she saw Tashi. 'Help me, I can't swim!'

pp. 50–55

Prepare flashcards that have the words and punctuation markers from the sentence in italics. Prepare a sentence strip with a copy of the complete sentence. *You don't deserve to go free, sarled Me Too.*

Exploring deep understanding (QTF)

Twelve volunteer students participate in the next demonstration.

Give each student a flashcard. Some students will have a card with a word; others will have a punctuation mark.

Read out the focus sentence.

Instruct students who have words on their cards to arrange themselves into the correct sentence order.

Then ask the students who have punctuation on their cards to place themselves where they think they belong in the sentence.

Ask the rest of the class whether they think their peers are correct.

Peers can be selected to rearrange the students if desired.

The sentence (a copy of the same text cards pasted in sequence on a large strip of cardboard) is displayed and compared with the students' sentence construction.

Guided

Text sequencing activity

- Arrange students into pairs with designated roles. These roles are discussed before commencing the activity.
- Issue each pair with the Text Sequencing Worksheet (provided) on A3 size paper.
- Students cut text and arrange into sentences using the punctuation marks.
- Conference with students to check their work before they glue onto another sheet of A3 paper.
- Students illustrate characters and paste next to their direct speech.

shouted	Enough	.	'
'	!	the Bandit Chief	

,	'	'	.
he	I'm sorry that I wasn't like your son		said

You don't deserve to go free		'	,
.	snarled	'	Me Too

'	!	she	.
cried	'	Help	

Use an overhead or interactive white board where students identify parts of direct speech in controlled sentences by circling the direct speech marks.

For example:

You don't deserve to go free, Duck Spoiler, snarled Me Too.

Ask students to copy the sentence, using correct punctuation.

Skill Focus: Using capital letters

STAGES 2–3

Strategies

Deconstructing sentences to identify where and when to use capital letters

Composing sentences using capital letters correctly

Activities to support the strategies

Modelled

Deconstruct a variety of sentences on the board. Reinforcing that sentences start with capital letters. Ask:

- *Where else in a sentence might you expect to find a capital letter?*
(Answer: for a proper noun)
- *What are proper nouns?*
(Answer: proper nouns are the names of particular people, places, days of the week, etc.)

Brainstorm all of the categories of proper nouns that students can think of. Make sure that the list is comprehensive and includes:

- the names of people
- the names of places
- the days of the week
- the names of months
- the names of planets
- the names of companies
- people's titles
- holidays.

Provide an example on the board of each of the proper nouns identified, e.g.

- John
- Sydney
- Monday
- January
- Jupiter
- Woolworths
- Doctor Smith
- Easter Sunday.

Get students to use each of the examples in a sentence.

Guided

Activity One

Give students examples of sentences that do not use capital letters appropriately and get them to identify where the mistakes are. Begin with capital letters at the beginning of sentences and then include capital letters for proper nouns. For example:

Circle the letters that should be capitalized.

1. come over here, please.
2. he didn't answer when I asked him a question.

K–6 Outcomes

WS2.10: Students use correct punctuation including capital letters, full stops, question marks and commas

Item & Stimulus

Writing task criterion 9
Punctuation



Language Conventions

Year 3 Q: 33

Year 5 Q: 28

Item Descriptor

Students use correct and appropriate punctuation to aid the reading and writing of a text

Statements of Learning for English (p. 19)

Students have the opportunity to draw on their knowledge of texts and language to use basic punctuation marks.

3. no you are not allowed to go.
4. would you like some lunch?
5. i ill be late home tonight.
6. have a good day at school.
7. where is your brother?
8. be home by dark.
9. can we play outside?
10. it is time to go home.
11. are you going to kate's house on sunday?
12. we will be spending Christmas day at nana's house.
13. i am going to sleep over at ken's house on saturday night.
14. the Nile river is in Egypt.
15. canberra is the capital city of australia.
16. where is peter?
17. Mrs Jones told ian to sit down.
18. i live in kent street, auburn.
19. my dad works at david jones in the city.
20. mars is called the red planet.

Get students to work in pairs. Each student must make up five sentences that do not use capital letters correctly. They are to swap the sentences with their partner and correct to sentences that they have been given.

Independent

Activity one

Divide students into teams of four. Write five capital letters on the board. In their teams, students are to write as many proper nouns as they can using the given capital letters. The team that writes the most words wins the game.

You can make the game more challenging by decreasing the number of capital letters used. This can also be a game that is played individually.

Further activities

Free worksheets and interactive games to reinforce the development of students' skills in using capital letters for proper nouns can be found at the following websites:

http://steckvaughn.hmhco.com/HA/correlations/pdf//LEd4_capitalletters.pdf

<http://www.docstoc.com/docs/4707739/Capital-letters-for-proper-nouns-and-the-beginning-of>

<http://www.skillsworkshop.org/sentence/e1e2capitalletters.pdf>

<http://www.english-zone.com/spelling/caps01.html>

Worksheet I

Circle the letters that should be capitalized.

1. come over here, please.
2. he didn't answer when I asked him a question.
3. no you are not allowed to go.
4. would you like some lunch?
5. i ill be late home tonight.
6. have a good day at school.
7. where is your brother?
8. be home by dark.
9. can we play outside?
10. it is time to go home.
11. are you going to kate's house on sunday?
12. we will be spending Christmas day at nana's house.
13. i am going to sleep over at ken's house on saturday night.
14. the nile river is in Egypt.
15. canberra is the capital city of australia.
16. where is peter?
17. mrs jones told ian to sit down.
18. i live in kent street, auburn.
19. my dad works at david jones in the city.
20. mars is called the red planet.

Skills Focus: Identifying and using direct and indirect speech

STAGES 3–4 Supporting ESL Students

Strategy

Building the foundation with lower-order thinking activities (introduce concept, respond and evaluate) followed by higher-order activities that require students to analyse texts and separate information into categories

Activities to support the strategy

These activities are designed to complement an author study on Morris Gleitzman.

The implementation of prior modelled reading sessions, deconstruction and reconstruction of parts of the text is advised before using these lessons. This ensures students have an understanding of the vocabulary used, the story line, the text structures, the targeted audience, characters and settings.

Focus text: *Misery Guts* by Morris Gleitzman

FOCUS TEXT ONE

First period at school was science and Keith managed to have a quiet word with Mr Crouch the science teacher.

‘Sir,’ said Keith, ‘You know all those science magazines you read? What’s the latest research data on cheerful people who have to live with misery guts?’

Mr Crouch, who was reading a gardening magazine, looked at him suspiciously.

‘How do you mean?’

‘Well,’ said Keith, ‘if a person who’s still pretty cheerful has to live with people who aren’t cheerful any more, what’s the average amount of time it takes for the cheerful person to end up a misery guts too?’

Mr Crouch told him to go back to his seat and finish boiling his tap water.

p. 10

FOCUS TEXT TWO

Keith sighed. They looked like they’d sent in two box tops and four pounds ninety-nine and got back an inflatable dog poo.

‘I’m just trying to cheer you both up,’ he said.

‘Well it’s not working,’ said Dad.

p.8

K–6 Outcome

WS3.10: Uses correct punctuation

KLA Outcomes

English 4.4.2: Students maintain coherence of medium, form and content through specific language use

English 4.6.12: Students learn about textual and visual conventions for composing dialogue

ESL Scales

4.7.10: Follows direct and indirect speech

5.7.6: Shows an understanding of the meaning of noun phrases following verbs of saying and thinking

6.11.6: Incorporates direct and indirect speech appropriately in a text

3.10: Uses correct punctuation

4.4.2: Students learn to use coherence of medium, form and content through specific language convention

Item & Stimulus

Writing task criterion 9
Punctuation



Language Conventions

Year 5 Q: 32

Year 7 Q: 43, 46, 51 and 52

Year 9 Q: 40, 43 and 51

Guided

The teacher explains that the purpose of the activity is to help students to identify the difference between direct speech and indirect speech.

INDIRECT SPEECH	
LANGUAGE FEATURE	EXAMPLE FROM TEXT
Past tense verbs	
Third person <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • he • him • she • her • they • them 	
Type of saying verbs	

DIRECT SPEECH	
LANGUAGE FEATURE	EXAMPLE FROM TEXT
Present tense verbs	
Speech marks	
First person <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I • me 	
Second person <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you 	
Type of saying verbs	

Item Descriptor

Using correct and appropriate punctuation to aid the reading of a text

Statements of Learning for English (p. 22)

When students write imaginative texts, they have the opportunity to use dialogue.

Exploring metalanguage (QTF)

Photocopy the focus text excerpts, enlarging them onto A3 paper.

Guide students to identify:

- the speech marks in direct speech
- the use of first person: **'I'm** just trying to cheer you both up,' he said (text two).

In this example, third person would be used to show the speaker's involvement in indirect speech – He said that he was just trying to cheer them both up.

- The use of second person, 'How do you mean?' (text one) to refer to the recipient of the speech. Translated to indirect speech, it may read – *Mr Crouch asked him what he meant.*
- The use of past tense in indirect speech. For example, Mr Crouch told him to go back to his seat and finish boiling his tap water. (text one)
- the use of present tense in direct speech, 'Sir,' said Keith, 'you **know** all those science magazines you read ...' (text one)

Students colour-code the sentences according to whether the speech is direct or indirect. Students write the examples into the charts.

Guided

Sorting Activity

Create laminated text cards using resource and A3 sheets for sorting text cards.

SORTING ACTIVITY	
DIRECT SPEECH	INDIRECT SPEECH

TEXT CARDS

Mr Crouch stated, 'I have someone's test paper with no name on it.'	He explained, 'It is a birthday surprise for Dad.'
He said he was just trying to cheer them both up.	Keith declared, 'I like bright coloured paint.'
Dad exclaimed that this was what he did not understand.	Mr Crouch stated that he had someone's text paper with no name on it.
Keith declared that he liked bright coloured paint.	He said, 'I am just trying to cheer you both up.'
He explained it was a birthday surprise for Dad.	Dad exclaimed, 'This is what I don't understand.'

Arrange students into groups of three.

Issue students with the sorting proforma.

Students read the text to their group and then sort (categorise) into direct and indirect speech.

For example:

DIRECT SPEECH	INDIRECT SPEECH
Dad exclaimed, 'This is what I don't understand.'	He explained it was a birthday surprise for Dad.

Ask students to circle the first verb after the saying verb in the direct speech examples.

Ask

- What happens to this verb when you convert direct speech to indirect speech?
- Why does the tense change?

Skill Focus: Identifying and using the semicolon

STAGE 4

Strategy

Semicolons are a sophisticated punctuation device. When used correctly, they add greatly to the effectiveness of writing. If students learn to use them to replace the incorrect 'splice comma' in their writing, they would write much better sentences and improve the clarity and effectiveness of their writing.

The semicolon marks the boundary between two separate sentences that are combined together as one. Generally the sentences are very closely related. Here are two examples of sentence sets punctuated differently.

The train was really crowded today. I have no idea why.

I remember her when she was a baby. Now she's a company director.

The train was really crowded today; I have no idea why.

I remember her when she was a baby; now she's a company director.

The version of these two sentences using a semicolon emphasises the closeness of the two statements and focuses the reader's attention on the second statement.

The semicolon can also mark the boundaries between a series of words or phrases in a complex list:

I have known her since she was a baby; she was always a hard worker; she graduated with honours; now she's a company director.

When we are rehearsing we must remember that there are many complex pieces to master, especially for the new players; the auditions are next week; and our performance must be of the highest standard.

The 'splice comma'

Students sometimes join two or more separate sentences with what is often called a 'splice comma'. These 'splice commas', **which are incorrect**, could be replaced by full stops, but in some cases a semicolon would be a much better option.

Following is an example of the incorrect use of a 'splice comma' to join two separate sentences:

My little brother is the only one in the family who hasn't started school yet, he has already turned five but is still too immature for school.

There are two ways to correct this sentence:

- Forming two separate sentences:

My little brother is the only one in the family who hasn't started school yet. He has already turned five but is still too immature for school.

- Joining the two sentences with a semicolon, which is a more sophisticated way of expressing the two ideas in the statements:

My little brother is the only one in the family who hasn't started school yet; he has already turned five but is still too immature for school.

K-6 Outcome

WS3.10: Students use knowledge of sentence structure, grammar and punctuation to edit own writing

KLA Outcome

English 4.4.2: Students learn to ensure coherence of medium, form and content through specific language conventions and vocabulary

Item & Stimulus

Writing task criterion 9
Punctuation



Language Conventions
Year 9 Q: 53

Item Descriptor

The use of correct and appropriate punctuation to aid the reading of a text

Statements of Learning for English

When students write stories they have the opportunity to draw on their knowledge of texts and language use.

Activities to support the strategy

Constructing sentences using semicolons

Exploring deep understanding (QTF)

The following worksheet provides some examples of the use of the semicolon as an effective punctuation mark.

Punctuate these sentences using semicolons and commas.

My head stopped hurting all pain had disappeared I felt relieved.

In a last desperate act I ran for the door and pushed it as hard as I could suddenly I was free.

Drying my eyes I looked out the window there in the distance I could see the soldiers speeding towards me.

I turned to leave the house for the last time I had spent many happy years there so I was reluctant to go.

The brown leather of the boots scratched at my hands as I tried to pull them off the boots no longer felt comfortable and warm.

Answers

My head stopped hurting; all pain had disappeared; I felt relieved.

In a last desperate act, I ran for the door and pushed it as hard as I could; suddenly I was free.

Drying my eyes, I looked out the window; there in the distance I could see the soldiers speeding towards me.

I turned to leave the house for the last time; I had spent many happy years there, so I was reluctant to go.

The brown leather of the boots scratched at my hands as I tried to pull them off; the boots no longer felt comfortable and warm.