

Some people continue to use the hyphen in this way when writing, so be sure to tell students when this use is appropriate and when it is best avoided. For additional information, visit [owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/g\\_hyphen.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/g_hyphen.html).

## Titles

*Content includes:*

- Capitalizing words in a title
- Determining when to use italics, underlining or quotation marks

*Discussion Questions & Activities*

- Short prepositions, like “in” and “of,” are typically not capitalized in a title. Generate a list of other short prepositions to which this guideline can be applied. Post this list in a place for student reference.
- Have students create a top 5 lists of their favorite books, television shows, movies, etc. Remind them to use proper capitalization and punctuation when they write the titles. Students can share their lists in small groups to see what favorites they might have in common and to check each other's work.

## Punctuating Dialogue

*Content includes:*

- What is a direct quotation?
- What is the speaker's tag?
- Using commas, quotation marks and end punctuation

*Discussion Questions & Activities*

- When writing dialogue, the speaker's tag is a great way to reveal to readers the mood of the speaker. Consider the difference between these tags: “he said,” “he whispered,” “he retorted,” and “he proclaimed.” Have students generate a list of different speaker's tags and discuss when each tag would be appropriate for use. Post this list in the room for reference.
- Have students examine a passage of dialogue and point out what they notice about punctuation, capitalization, etc. Students may notice that each time the speaker changes in a dialogue, a new paragraph is started. This is an important element of writing dialogue, because it helps readers to keep track of who is speaking and when the speaker changes. Have students practice this formatting by writing imaginary dialogues between themselves and someone they would like to meet.

## Punctuating Formal & Friendly Letters

*Content includes:*

- Addressing formal and friendly letters
- Parts of a letter: salutation, body, closing

(Continued)

- Identifying the difference between formal and friendly letters

*Discussion Questions & Activities*

- Choosing an appropriate closing in a letter is important. Have students generate a list of different closings and then go through each closing listed and designate if it is best for a formal letter, friendly letter or both!
- Get students involved in a school or community concern and have them practice writing formal persuasive letters to community leaders. Students can look up the mailing addresses of these leaders and draft letters. Have them work in small groups to revise their letters and check for proper capitalization and punctuation of the addresses, salutation, closing, etc.

## Suggested Print Resources

- Truss, Lynne. *Eats, Shoots & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation*. Gotham Books, New York, NY; 2003.
- Venolia, Jan. *Write Right!: A Desktop Digest of Punctuation, Grammar, and Style*. Ten Speed Press, Berkeley, CA; 2001.

## Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at [www.LibraryVideo.com](http://www.LibraryVideo.com)

- [grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/](http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/)  
The Guide to Grammar & Writing provides in-depth explanations of grammar concepts. Quizzes are also provided to test understanding.
- [www.nationalpunctuationday.com/](http://www.nationalpunctuationday.com/)  
Easy-to-understand explanations and examples are included along with a useful list of additional print and internet resources.

## TEACHER'S GUIDE

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## TITLES IN THIS SERIES

- COMMON USAGE ERRORS
- SENTENCE STRUCTURE
- USING ADJECTIVES, ADVERBS & OTHER MODIFIERS
- USING CAPITALIZATION & PUNCTUATION
- USING CLAUSES & PHRASES
- USING END MARKS & COMMAS
- USING NOUNS & PRONOUNS
- USING VERBS

Teacher's Guides Included  
and Available Online at:

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## USING CAPITALIZATION & PUNCTUATION Grades 5–12

Effective communication, both in the classroom and the real world, is important and grammar is a key element of communication. All students should understand how their choice of words, the order in which they are placed and the punctuation they use work together to express their thoughts in a clear and accurate way. *Grammar Tips for Students* is designed as brief mini-lessons that highlight specific grammar topics using clear explanations and specific examples and offering useful tests and tips for avoiding confusion and misuse.

Because each show contains a series of independent clips, clips can be viewed individually or in groups. Teachers can also choose to show the clips in an order that works for them and their curriculum.



## Program Overview

There's more to punctuation than commas and end marks! Punctuation marks, such as colons, semicolons, dashes, hyphens and parentheses, are important visual indicators in a text of where you are going and what might come next. Similarly, capital letters are also important. In addition to signaling proper nouns and proper adjectives, capital letters play a role in how dialogue, titles and letters are written. This video program is a tip-filled exploration of capitalization and punctuation, and how they can work together. Students will step beyond traditional definitions and investigate examples that showcase the variety of ways in which these elements of grammar are used. *Using Capitalization & Punctuation* can serve as a useful tool to develop students' written communication skills.

## Supporting English Language Learners (ELLs)

- ELLs bring to English their own language experiences. The amount and type of exposure ELLs have to the English language can vary greatly. In addition, their ability to read and write in their native languages can influence their understanding of grammar as well as the type of grammar errors made. Keep in mind that some punctuation marks are used in different ways in other languages. Double arrow brackets, for example, are sometimes used in Spanish to enclose direct quotations. For a quick comparison of Spanish and English punctuation, visit [www.oxfordlanguage dictionaries.com/Public/PublicResources.html?direction=b-esen&sp=S/oldo/resources/es/punctuation.html](http://www.oxfordlanguage dictionaries.com/Public/PublicResources.html?direction=b-esen&sp=S/oldo/resources/es/punctuation.html).
- While sharing grammar tips with ELLs is helpful, it is also important for them to develop reading fluency. By exposing ELLs to texts written in English and encouraging them to read extensively, they can increase their comfort and familiarity with the language and how words and punctuation are used.

## Vocabulary

**colon** [:] — A punctuation mark used within a sentence to indicate that what follows is a clarifying explanation, example or long quote. When used in a sentence, the colon must follow an independent clause. A colon is also used after a formal salutation in a letter.

**dash** [—] — A punctuation mark used to set off a word, phrase or series that might interrupt the flow of the sentence.

**dialogue** — A written account of a speaker's exact words.

**direct quotation** — The exact words said by a speaker. A direct quotation is typically enclosed in quotation marks.

**hyphen** [-] — A short line that connects the parts of a compound word or the parts of a word that have been divided.

**independent clause** — A group of words that contains a subject and verb and can stand on its own as a complete sentence. *(Continued)*

**parentheses** [( )] — Punctuation marks used together to set apart additional words, phrases or clauses that might interrupt the flow of your text, but nonetheless are included for some purpose.

**proper adjective** — A descriptive adjective formed from a proper noun, or a proper noun that functions as a descriptive adjective (e.g., Japanese food, Philadelphia newspaper).

**proper noun** — A noun that names a particular person, place or thing. Proper nouns are always capitalized.

**salutation** — The greeting of a letter. This is where the recipient of the letter is acknowledged.

**semicolon** [;] — A punctuation mark used within a sentence to distinctly separate items in a series, or to join independent clauses in a compound sentence.

**speaker's tag** — A set of words used with written dialogue to indicate who is speaking. "She said," "Bernard replied" and "we declared" are examples.

## Capitalizing Proper Nouns & Proper Adjectives

*Content includes:*

- What are proper nouns?
- What are proper adjectives?

*Discussion Questions & Activities*

- A proper noun names a specific person, place or thing. Discuss with students what is meant by "specific" and compare proper nouns to common nouns. All students would benefit from clear examples, particularly ELLs.
- Some proper adjectives are proper nouns that function as descriptive adjectives (e.g., Idaho potato). Discuss the difference between form and function in relation to parts of speech and have students come up with their own examples in small groups.

## Using Colons

*Content includes:*

- Using a colon to introduce a list
- Using a colon to introduce a long quote
- Using a colon after a formal salutation

*Discussion Questions & Activities*

- As students become comfortable with using different punctuation marks, they may realize that sometimes they have a choice of more than one. Have students list the different ways in which a colon can be used and then go through the list to see if other punctuation marks can be used in the same way. For example, in the sentence, "I have three favorite subjects: art, music and writing," a dash could be used in place of the colon.

## Using Semicolons

*Content includes:*

- Using semicolons to organize items in a series
- Using a semicolon to join independent clauses

*Discussion Questions & Activities*

- A semicolon looks like cross between a comma and a colon. Discuss some of the ways in which semicolons are used and see if they share any characteristics with the comma and colon besides their physical appearance. If students could "invent" a punctuation mark of their own, what would it be and how would it be used?

## Using Parentheses

*Content includes:*

- Using parentheses to provide additional information
- Using parentheses with listed items in a sentence
- Capitalization and punctuation inside parentheses

*Discussion Questions & Activities*

- Investigate brackets ([ ] ) and some of the ways in which they are used. How are they similar to parentheses and how do they differ? Visit [www.nationalpunctuationday.com/brackets.html](http://www.nationalpunctuationday.com/brackets.html) for additional information about brackets.

## Using Dashes & Hyphens

*Content includes:*

- Using dashes to set off a phrase or series from the rest of the sentence
- A hyphen can help prevent confusion between two words, avoid awkward combinations of letters or can help words to function together as a unit.

*Discussion Questions & Activities*

- Another use of the hyphen is with some prefixes and suffixes. Hyphens are typically used with the prefixes ex-, self-, and all-, as well as with the suffix -elect. First, work with students to define these prefixes and suffixes, and then try to attach them to root words with hyphens. Write each prefix and suffix on a piece of poster paper and post them around the room. Invite students to visit each poster and add as many words as they can that use each affix.
- Hyphens are also used to divide a word at the end of a line of text. This was a widespread use of the hyphen when typewriters were common. Share this information with students and allow them to tackle a few words to determine the best place to insert a hyphen.

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