

Signs: A Grammar Handbook

Answers to Exercises

Section III

Chapter 15

EXERCISE 1

Directions: Use commas to set off introductory words, phrases, or clauses where needed.

1. Also called a paragraph mark or marker, the pilcrow is a symbol that signifies individual paragraphs.
2. In the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the entry for *pilcrow* gives c. 1440 as the earliest use for the word.
3. Inserted at the point where a paragraph should begin, the pilcrow is a useful tool for copyediting.
4. In desktop publishing, the pilcrow usually marks a new paragraph or the carriage return following a paragraph.
5. Although the pilcrow can be useful for editing, it is rarely used when documenting sources.

EXERCISE 2

Directions: Add commas in the following sentences when and where needed. Some sentences may not need commas. Be able to explain why you choose to add a comma.

1. An asterisk is a typographical symbol, or it can also be classified as a glyph.
2. The asterisk symbol resembles a star, and the word *asterisk* comes from the Greek for “little star.”
3. Some printers and computer programmers refer to the asterisk as a *splat*.
4. Three asterisks together can be used to represent a change of thought or scene, but an asterisk on its own can also represent zero.
5. A great defensive play in baseball can be noted on a baseball card with an asterisk.

EXERCISE 3

Directions: Add commas where needed, setting off non-essential clauses, phrases, and appositives. Not all sentences will need a comma.

1. The ampersand is a symbol that represents the word *and*.

2. The ampersand is rarely used in academic writing, which is more formal than personal writing.
3. However, if an ampersand is part of the name of a business, such as in Jacoby & Meyers, then a writer should use the ampersand.
4. In APA documentation style, the ampersand, representing the word *and*, is used.
5. Stephen Fry, now a prolific author, and Hugh Laurie, now television's Dr. House, performed a skit about ampersands on their television show.

EXERCISE 4

Directions: Add commas where needed for transitions, interjections, direct address, or tag questions.

1. The writer uses many bulleted lists on the first page of his essay, doesn't he?
2. A bullet, granted, is a typographical symbol that writers use to highlight a list of items.
3. A writer can, however, overuse bulleted lists; they should only be used sparingly, and when absolutely necessary, to organize information that may be difficult to process.
4. Bullets are a type of punctuation that come in many shapes and sizes.
5. Chris, do you use a lot of bullets in your essay writing?

Chapter 16

EXERCISE 1

Directions: Revise these sentences, adding semi-colons where needed. Not all sentences will need semi-colons.

1. Bob Berner first introduced the backslash to computer programming in the 1960s; it is sometimes called a *slosh*.
2. The backslash is a typographical mark; furthermore, it is an ASCII character.
3. The backslash is also used to separate the directory and file parts of a website address.
4. The backslash, a typographical mark, is used in computing to indicate that whatever follows should be treated differently or specially; it is used in mathematics to indicate a set difference; and it is used with the forward slash in linguistics to indicate phonemes.
5. Asian programmers can use other characters that are treated exactly as the backslash; consequently, this can cause some confusion.

Chapter 17

EXERCISE 1

Directions: Add colons where needed in the following sentences. Not all sentences may need a colon.

1. The English word *colon* came to English through two languages that influenced many English words: Greek and Latin.
2. The colon was introduced to English in the 1600s: early British printers, such as William Caxton, embraced its use.
3. Be sure to use a colon when writing any of these types of elements: a ratio, a scriptural verse, or a subtitle.
4. How colons are used in different ways is discussed in *Girl Talk: Complete guide to im lingo, emoticons, and more!*
5. While trying to use commas accurately, the author was upset by the variations in MLA and APA rules: “Why is it that so many different styles exist?”

Chapter 18

EXERCISE 1

Directions: Fill in the blanks with the correct punctuation mark: period (.), exclamation point (!) or question mark (?),

1. Have you ever gotten lost reading something that is poorly written?
2. Punctuation marks are like tiny road signs for the reader.
3. Also referred to as a full stop, the period tells the reader that a complete thought, or sentence, has come to an end.
4. Although periods are the most common way to end a sentence, did you know that there are two other ways to do this?
5. The exclamation point is sometimes overused by excited students. Be careful!

Chapter 19

EXERCISE 1

Directions: Add the missing apostrophes to the following paragraph.

I can't believe how lucky I was to land the latest client for my advertising company. It's not that I doubted my abilities, but this client has been particularly picky in choosing an advertising firm to represent it. Since it's such an established company, the board's decision to reinvent themselves with a new logo could launch them into future success or signal the end of their heyday. It's a delicate situation to be sure, and I'm excited for the challenge. I already have an idea in mind, and its success could land me a significant promotion if all goes to plan. Though I can't disclose specific details, I'll just say that the client's former business focus was on an outdated technology. Now that they've adapted to modern technological advances, my job is to bring their image up to date as well. I've handled similar situations with other outdated companies' images with success, so I'm confident that I'll be able to pull this off. I can't wait to see my family's reaction when I tell them about this great news!

Chapter 20

EXERCISE 1

Directions: Add quotation marks and capital letters where needed.

1. "What does a red sky mean?" asked my friend John.
2. I asked, "When did you see the red sky? The time of day can influence the meaning of red sky." OR
I asked, "When did you see the red sky?" The time of day can influence the meaning of red sky.
3. Shakespeare has a quotation in his play *Venus and Adonis* about a red morn.

4. An old adage about sailing during a red sky says, “Red sky at night, sailor’s delight. Red sky in morning, sailor’s warning.”

5. Malcolm Coleman even wrote a poem entitled “Red Sky.”

Chapter 21

EXERCISE 1

Directions: Add a hyphen where necessary.

1. My mother-in-law’s X-ray was the first sign of her health crisis.
2. The recreation or remodeling of a piece of art can cause controversy.
3. *Signs* is a hair-raising film from beginning to end, even though the audience does not know what is truly happening until halfway through.
4. Although M. Night Shyamalan is best known for *The Sixth Sense*, *Signs* is also a well-known film.
5. Both *The Sixth Sense* and *Signs* are truly all-American films.

Chapter 22

EXERCISE 1

Directions: Add a dash where needed.

1. Latin and Old French—these are languages that had the word “sign” before English.
2. Signs—usually flat and clearly visible—help us navigate the world around us.
3. Astrology, however, can also have signs, and these signs—whether Native American, Indian, or Chinese—often share some common descriptions.
4. Omens—a different kind of sign entirely—can be taken quite seriously.
5. A sign—such as a thumbs-up—can often be understood across language or cultural boundaries.

Chapter 23 to 26: No exercises in book

Chapter 27

EXERCISE 1

Directions: Capitalize where needed.

1. When I visited china and the great wall, I had two books in my backpack: *The Signs of Life in the Universe* and *Life After School*. **Note: *After* is capitalized because it is not a **short** preposition.
2. I learned quite quickly that I should have been carrying a Chinese-English dictionary.
3. People often asked me on my Asian trip whether I was Canadian, Australian, or American.
4. While visiting monasteries, my brother Alex and I learned about Buddha and Buddhism (and also Lao Tse and Taoism).
5. We also learned that the People's Republic of China (the PROC.) and the Republic of China (ROC) are considered two different countries (China and Taiwan, respectively) by all countries except for the PROC.

Chapter 28

EXERCISE 1

Directions: Italicize when needed.

1. On *The Bruce and Janet Show* on satellite radio, they often end the show by saying *au revoir* or *adios*.
2. Once, on the *Queen Mary*, Bruce ended the show by saying *adios*.
3. Some of the show's best conversations have been collected on *Talk the Talk with Bruce and Janet*, a limited-edition CD.
4. *The Dictionary of American Radio Dialects* also has three entries that describe some of the funny expressions that Bruce uses.
5. My favorite Bruce expression is *quack like a duck but roar like a lion*.