

ENGLISH MECHANICS

Third Edition

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Judy F. Chen

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improving reading and writing skills*

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computer software to help write business letters

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chapters, ○ around titles of essays, ○ around titles of songs, ○ around titles of short poems.

“Where did she go?” ← Punctuation inside quotation

“Where did she go”? ← Punctuation outside quotation

Quotation marks are used when you write words that are copied from somewhere. They may be from a book, magazine, journal, or something that someone said. These are called *quotations* or *quotes*.

The trouble with using quotation marks is knowing how to use other punctuation marks at the end of a quotation with the quotation marks. Here are some simple rules to follow:

1) When a period or a comma is at the end of a quotation, always place the period or comma inside the quotation mark.

Yesterday, Bill told me, “I just cannot study any more.”

2) A colon, dash, or semicolon should always be placed outside the quotation mark when the colon, dash, or semicolon occurs at the end of the quotation.

Mary said, “I am tired of going to school so much”—Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

He spoke quite loudly, “I cannot go on”; his feet, however, began moving forward.

3) Question marks can sometimes go inside the right quotation

mark and sometimes outside. When the clause within the quotation is a question, the question mark is placed inside the right quotation mark.

John asked me, “Will you come with me?”

Mary quickly asked him, “Do you love me?”

4) When the quotation is not a question, the question mark must be placed outside the right quotation mark. The rest of the sentence, outside the quotation, is a question.

Do you believe she said, “I never loved him”?

How could he say, “You can’t stay with me”?

5) If both the quotation and the sentence are questions, the question mark will be placed inside the right quotation mark.

Do you understand the question, “Which came first, the chicken or the egg?”

Is it possible that she asked, “When will all of the money be ready?”

6) Quotation marks are also used around the titles of articles, book chapters, essays, songs, and short poems. These titles are for things that are part of a larger work. A book title will be underlined, but a chapter title, from the book, should be placed inside quotation marks.

Spring Snow contains a chapter called “Love.”

Bobby McFerrin’s song “Don’t Worry Be Happy” is a great song to listen to if you want to feel happy.

MORE EXAMPLES:

The President said, “We must unite in a common cause.”

His first word was, “Mommy.”

“Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.” is a famous quote from President Kennedy.

When I first met him, he always liked to say, “I see”; one year later he liked to say, “I see the light.”

John stated that, “There are many factors influencing the economy today”: exchange rate, inflation, politics, and the stock market are a few he mentioned.

When the boss called me into the office he asked, “Do you think that you can find the time to talk to me?”

The most important question is, “How much does it cost?”

What do you mean when you say, “I feel so so”?

Do you understand the statement, “I feel so very bad”?

This month's Free China Review has a very interesting article called "Taiwan, 1999."

"The Meeting" is chapter five of the book.

"Love Is Like a Flower" is a very famous short poem.

EXERCISE 2:

Write the sentences correctly.

1) He asked me, "How much money do you need."

2) I heard the teacher say, "You are my best student".

3) The boss told us, "The list of your mistakes is long:" using the wrong forms, coming in late, calling the wrong customers.

4) Ben said, "Every Friday I wake up early and play basketball; we never saw him on the basketball court though."

5) The President asked the students, “Can you work hard enough to graduate”?

6) Someone said, “Tomorrow will be better”, and I believe it.

7) You once asked me, Do you love me.

8) Did you ever hear the question, “What came first, the chicken or the egg.”

9) I like David Bowie’s song China Girl.

10) In yesterday’s paper, I saw an interesting article called Tall

People Are Smarter.

3**3**

Use a colon when you add new information to a clause.

Use a dash when summarizing, explaining, or reversing what was stated in the preceding clause.

Lead-in clause

Jane is enrolled in many classes this semester:
English, mathematics and statistics.

After a colon, new information making Jane seem like a hard working student.

Jane is enrolled in many classes this semester—she normally cannot even finish one class.

After the dash, information reverses the lead-in clause, making Jane seem like a lazy student.

A colon tells the reader that what comes after the colon is going to add new information to the clause that came before the colon. A dash tells the reader that the words coming after it are not telling something new. The words after a dash will, explain, or reverse the ideas in the clause (before the dash).

At school, you need to do only one thing: study.

At school, you need only study—a job that is not very easy.

In both cases, the clause that comes before the dash or the colon must be an independent clause—it must have a subject and a predicate.

A dash is formed, on a typewriter, by using two hyphens together. There should be no space before the dash and no space after the dash. This use of two hyphens makes the dash long. When writing, by hand, you form the dash by making a line that is longer than a hyphen would be. Again, there is no space before or after the dash.

A dash formed by a typewriter:

At school, you need only study--a job that is not very easy.

When you have an independent clause before and after a colon, capitalize the first letter of the clause after the colon only if the second clause is an independent passage and not dependent on the first clause.

The mornings we spent studying: The evenings we spent partying.

I was so proud of my son: Happiness was mine for a day.

MORE EXAMPLES:

When you go to work, you need to do many things: dress well, speak well and do what the boss tells you to do.

I love this car: it's fast and beautiful.

She was the most beautiful woman I knew—I only knew two

women.

We were in love—she said.

EXERCISE 3:

Find the sentences where the dash or colon is used in the wrong way.

1. Their final offer was given yesterday: we are not satisfied.

2. Statistics is my favorite class: all my other classes are just too boring.

3. I—understand you at least I think I understand.

4. We should join—the English contest.

The phrase *which was older than I* is not needed for the reader to know what *Rose's car* is. The phrase only tells some *more* information about *Rose's car*. When you take the phrase out of the sentence, you have: *Rose's car looked very beautiful*. This sentence still has the same meaning as the first sentence. Therefore, the adjective clause is nonrestrictive. Here are some more examples:

Sentences with a nonrestrictive adjective clause:

Last year, which was the Year of the Dragon, I got married.

Mary Smith, who is my friend, will come to class tomorrow.

Sentences without the nonrestrictive adjective clause:

Last year, I got married.

Mary Smith will come to class tomorrow.

A nonrestrictive adjective clause can be used to form a separate sentence that adds meaning to the first sentence.

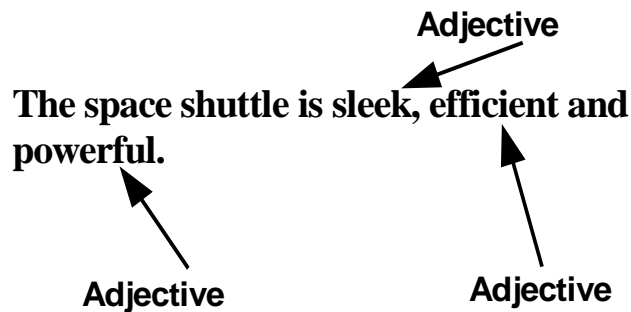
Last year, I got married. It was the Year of the Dragon.

Mary Smith will come to class tomorrow. She is my friend.

Do not use commas for restrictive adjective clauses. A restrictive adjective clause helps to tell the meaning of the sentence and cannot be removed.

Cars that are red are usually fast.

sentence should use parallel structure. Each describing word must be the same type of word, all adjectives, all nouns, etc.



Students often have problems with parallel structure. When a sentence has two or more parts, each part must follow the same structure and word form. Here are examples of breakdown in parallel structure:

They are easy to prepare, delicious, and help to balance nutrition.

In my impression, my friends are so good and humor.

It is important that you sign the papers, speak to the manager, and are beautiful.

Parallelism must be used so that a sentence contains words that are about one idea. If your sentence is about how beautiful something is, you should use adjectives in every part of the sentence. Do not mix nouns, adjectives, verbal phrases, etc., in the same sentence. When the reader begins to read a sentence, (s)he expects one idea to continue to the end of the sentence. If you have a different idea, use more than one sentence.

Here are some sentences that contain parallel structure:

Tests show that the newer students of our school are smarter and

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