***University of* *M'sila Department of English***

***Second Year LMD Students Written* *Expression Courses***

**PUNCTUATION ( PART ONE)**

**2. MECHANICS**

**2.2. PUNCTUATION**

When speaking, we can *pause* or change *the tone* of our voices to indicate emphasis. When writing, we use *punctuation* to indicate these places of emphasis .So ,punctuation helps to clarify the meaning of our written pieces.

**Punctuation marks and their uses**

**1-Comma (,) :** Comma is used to :

**a-** ***Separate main clauses joined by one of the* *coordinating conjunctions and ,but ,or, nor*, ,or *for***.

**E.g.** The peoples of the Sahara have never been united**,** *nor* have they even considered uniting in any common cause considered

* **Caution :** Do not confuse the compound sentence ( two main clauses) with the simple sentence ( one main clause) containing compound predicate.
* **Exception :** When the main clauses are short, the comma is frequently omitted before *and* or *or.* However, in narrative writing, the comma is dropped even when the clauses are long**.**

**E.g.** The next night the wind shifted *and* the thaw began ( narrative short clauses)

**b-** ***Set off certain introductory elements*** : Introductory elements such as *adverb clauses*, *long phrases , transitional expressions ,* and *interjections* are usually set off by commas .

* **Pattern**: Adverb clause + main clause : **E.g.** If any college man will work intelligently**,** I guarantee his success.
* **Pattern** : Main clause+ Adverb clause : **E.g.** I waited here until he returned
* Notice that when the adverb clause follows the main clause, there is usually *no pause* and so no need

for comma.

* **Long introductory phrases** **:** **E.g.** In two years of acting in cowboys films **,** W.S. Hart earned $900,000.
* **Introductory phrases** containing*a gerund, a participle , or an infinitive***,** even though shortshould be followed by comma to prevent misreading. E.g. Because of his effort to escape**,** his punishment was increased.
* **Transitional expressions and interjections :** Interjections as well as transitional expressions as *in* *fact, for example, on the other hand…*when used as introductory elements, they are usually followed by comma. **E.g**. *For example*, most boys enjoy fishing.

***c- Separate items in series*** ***( in lists)*** : Words , phrases, or clauses in a series ( including coordinate adjectives) are separated by commas to prevent confusion. **E.g**. The natives ate beans**,** onions **,** rice**,** and honey.( Words)

**E.g.** We rang the bell**,** we knocked on the door**,** and we shouted until we were hoarse.( Main clauses in series).

**E.g.** A clean **,** quiet room ( Both adjectives modify the same word).

**d- *Set off nonrestrictive clauses and phrases*** : Adjective clauses and phrases are nonrestrictive ( Non-essential) when they merely add information about a word already identified.

**E.g.** Henry Smith**,** *who is lazy***,** will lose his job ( Nonrestrictive clause) .**BUT**: A boy *who is lazy deserves* to lose his job. ( Restrictive clause, so the comma is omitted).

**e-*Set off nonrestrictive appositives, contrasted elements, geographical ,names, and items in dates and addresses***

**E.g. 1** **:** Jesse**,** *the caretaker***,** is a good fellow ( The appositive here is equal to the nonrestrictive clause who is the caretaker) .

**E.g. 2:**Our failures, *not our success*, will be remembered.( The contrastive element is a sort of negative appositive)

**E.g.3:** Pasadena **,***California***,** is the city of the Rose Bowl.(Geographical name, *California* is similar to the nonessential clause *which is in California*)

**E.g.4 :**Address the letter to Mr. J. L .Karnes **,**Clayton **,** Delaware *19938* ( The zip code is not separated by a comma from the name of the state) .

**E.g.5:** Sunday**,** May 6 **,**1967, in Chicago ; 6 May 1967 ; May**,**1967 ( Item in dates) .

**f-Set off parenthetical expressions :** The word *parenthetical* is commonly used to refer to expressions as on *the other hand, in the first place, to tell the truth, however, that is , I hope , I report ,he says, he observed, he said*…

**E.g.1 :** *To tell the truth***,** we anticipated bad luck.

**E.g.2:** "We believe "**,** *he replied***,**" that you are correct". **BUT**: He is *perhaps* the best swimmer on the team

* Some parenthetical expressions as *perhaps, too, indeed ,at least, likewise*, *also*, etc. cause little or no pause while reading

**E.g.3:**This**,** *my friend*s**,** is the whole truth, Come here**,** *Marry* **,** and help us .( Direct address)

**E.g.4 :** *Win or lose***,** play the rule ( Absolute phrase) , Jane does not play the flute**,** *does she* ? ( Tag question).

**2- Semicolon (;) :** It is used to :

**a-Separate two main clauses not joined by one of the coordinating conjunctions *and, but, or, nor*, or *for*.**

**E.g.** We did not abolish truth **;** even we could not do that

* Use Semicolon before conjunctive adverbs like *accordingly , also ,anyhow, consequently, furthermore, still , then, nevertheless, thus ,instead ,*and transitional phrases as *in fact, in other words ,for example, on the contrary, that is* when they connect main clauses

**E.g.**The organism gets a chance to function according to its own laws **;** in other words**,** it gets a chance to realize such good as it is capable of.

**Suggested task** : Add or omit a comma or a semicolon where required. Justify your choice.

1-Ben arrived before the train did

**Justification** : …………………………………………………………………………………………………

2-At ninety she was still active

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

3-Well just to send up and face life's problems takes courage.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………...

4-The room is bright and clean and quiet.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

5-He learnt at an early age the necessity of economizing.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

6-The poem has nobility of sentiments and dignity of style.

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7-A mother who does not love her children is unnatural

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

8-The girl sitting near the window laughed at me.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………...

9-I enjoy the study of history geography and geology.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

10-History geography and geology are interesting subjects.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

11-I refuse Sir to believe the report.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

12-William Congreve was born in Bardsey England on January 24 1670.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

13-Please send all communications to 757 Third Avenue New York New York 10017.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

14-The narrow windows and the steeply sloping oppressed me I wished to turn away and go back.

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

15-It is beyond possibility to mention all the outstanding books however some of the highlights are suggested in the chronological list that follows.

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**PUNCTUATION ( FOLLOW UP**)

**3- Colon (:)**

While the semicolon is a strong *separator* almost equal to a period, the colon is a formal *introducer.* It usually means as *follows.* The colon can be used :

**a**-At the end of a sentence to introduce lists, tabulations, texts, etc. Capitalize the first word after a colon only if it is a proper noun or the start of a complete sentence.

**E.g**. He promised this**:** **T**he company will make good all the losses. **BUT** : There were three considerations**: e**xpense, time ,and feasibility.

**b**- Sometimes to give *emphasis*. **E.g**. He had only one hobby **:** eating*.*

**c**-After salutations in a business letter, between a title and a subtitle, between figures indicating the chapter and verse of a reference, or between the hour and the minute of a time reference

**E.g.** Dear Sir**:** , Creative pattern Practice**:** A New Approach to Writing , exactly at 11**:**15 p.m

**d**-In dialogues ( including also question / answer patterns)

**e**- To introduce quotations : Use *a comma* to introduce a direct quotation of *one sentence* that remains within a paragraph. Use *a colon* to introduce *longer quotations* within a paragraph

* **Placement:** Colons go *outside* quotation marks unless they are part of the quotation itself.

**4- Apostrophe (') :** It is used to :

**a-**Indicate the possessive case of nouns and indefinite pronouns : The apostrophe indicates a relationship that can be expressed by " of phrase" .

**E.g.** The girls**'** mother ( the mother *of the girls*), no one**'s** fault ( the fault *of no one)*

* For inanimate objects the *"of phrase"* is more commonly used that the **'s .E.g.** The top of the desk**.**
* If the ending ( either singular of plural) is not an "s or z" sound, add the apostrophe and **"s** "

**E.g.** The man**'s** hat ( singular) , the children**'s** playground ( plural) , anybody**'s** room ( indefinite pronoun)

* If the plural ends in an "s or z" sound, add only the apostrophe .**E.g.** Boys**'** shoes, ladies**'** dresses.
* If the singular ends in an "s or z" sound ,add the apostrophe and "**s**" for words of one syllable.

**E.g.** James**'**s book, Marx**’s** theories, Butz**’s** policies

* If the singular ends in "s or z" sound, add only the apostrophe for words of more than one syllable if the second word starts also with "s

**E.g.**The witnes**s’s** **a**nswer, the witnes**s’** **s**tory.

* Compounds or nouns in joint possession show the possessive case in the last word only. But if there is individual ( or separate) possession ,each one takes the possessive form.

E.g. My brothers-in-law**'s** houses, Helen and Mary**'s** piano ( Joint ownership), Helen**'s** and Mary clothes (Individual possession)

**b-** The apostrophe is not used with the pronouns *his ,hers ,its ,ours ,yours ,theirs ,*and *whose.*

**E.g.** He is a friend of *yours* and *theirs*

* Do not confuse the possessive pronouns *its* with the contraction *it's,* which means it is, or the possessive *whose* with the contraction *who 's* which means who is.

**E.g.** The bird returned to *its* nest , BUT : *It 's* a small nest.

**c-**To mark omission in contracted words **.E.g.** Can't, he's , isn't , haven't ( not is'nt or have'nt )

**d-**To form the plural of letters, symbols and words refer to as a words **.E.g.** the 1950**'s** or the 1950**s** ; two B**'s** and three C**'s** ,or two Bs and three Cs ( notice that the apostrophe is sometimes omitted in such examples)

**Task 01:**Insert apostrophes to indicate the possessive case in the following examples :

1. The girls coat ( sing.) ………………………………………………………………………………….
2. The girls coats( pl.)…………………………………………………………………………………….
3. A months pay…………………………………………………………………………………………..
4. Two months pay……………………………………………………………………………………….
5. Babys toys……………………………………………………………………………………………..
6. Babies toys……………………………………………………………………………………………..

**Task 02 :** Write brief sentence correctly using (a) the possessive singular ,(b) the plural, and (c) the possessive plural of each of the following words. An example is given

**E.g. Student**

a-A student's attitude is important.

b- Several students dropped the course .

c- The students' parents were invited.

1-Father 5- Brother-in-law

2-Cars 6-Army

3-Woman 7- Goose

4-Other