



The Penguin Guide to Punctuation

R.L. Trask

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Do you find punctuation difficult? Are you puzzled by colons and semicolons? Unsure of where commas should go? Confused by hyphens and apostrophes? If so, then this jargon-free and succinct guide is for you.

- Contains precise and up-to-date definitions of every type of punctuation mark and shows how each should be used
- Gives numerous examples of good and bad usage
- Explains the correct use of capital letters, contractions and abbreviations, italics, boldface and the special characters available on a word processor

The Penguin Guide to Punctuation Details

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Martin says

I am rating this very high because it is a readable book on punctuation. That is in itself an achievement. The book is actually very funny at times and is what its title says: a guide to punctuation.

Nate Hewitt says

This book really helped me!

Kate B says

A gem of a book. Everything you need to know about punctuation, written in a readable style, with concise summary points at the end of chapters for ease of reference.

I bought this as it was recommended in my proofreading training, and I read it from cover to cover on a (fairly short) train journey. It now sits with the other books I refer to when working.

I won't need to buy another book on this topic ever again.

Silje says

Absolutely brilliant! Written in a fun and informal tone, this books is a must-have for everyone producing texts in English. How is this book not required reading for everyone studying English (especially those studying it as ELF)?

The explanations are simple, easy to follow and accompanied by good examples. They are intermixed with some humor (a book on punctuation actually made me laugh!) which makes it easy to get through it without feeling like you're about to die from boredom.

Roman says

I enjoyed the author's remarks about the various perspectives on the grey areas (lightly touching style guidance) of certain grammar topics, his take on it and a short argumentation on why he thinks that way. That really helped me in forming/aligning/arguing my own understanding of those things. Most importantly: he put in extra words where necessary (commas) and at the same time kept everything else short and to the point. No extraneous nonsense. This is the kind of book I'd like to keep in my bag. It's probably also one of the very few 'printed' things I'd use to look something up rather than going online—simply because it's faster and more precise than a Google search.

Stanley says

very useful.

Gary Ross-Jordan says

Does what it says on the tin and does it very well!

B. Mason says

Clear, concise and quite witty, R.L. Trask has written an impeccable guide to punctuation.

Kylie says

An informative and thorough look at punctuation. A valuable reference tool for anyone.

Andrew says

An excellent semicolonic irrigation for any constipated writer.

Hazza902 says

Excellent read. Covered all main topics of punctuation. The book is straight to the point with a lot of examples, so it is clear what to do and what not to do.

I do not share the same opinion as the writer on some topics, like using a comma outside quotation marks, instead of using them inside of the marks. However, the writer mentions what the common practice is, so the choice on what to do is up to the reader. I like this. There are a lot of books that force the opinion of the writer down your throat, which is not the case in this book.

Tim says

Very informative. Does not babble on too much as do other books. This book is straight to the point. I especially like the bullet points at the end of each section. These mean I do not need to read the whole section for a reminder; the bullet points should do spark my memory.

julius vainaa says

I recommend this book very highly for anyone who wants to revise the punctuation rules and practices. It's well-written and informative, introduces clear examples, and is easy and pleasant to follow.

Tamason says

At just 156 pages it is not a tedious textbook that will haunt you for months; it could be read in a matter of hours. If you do pick it up though remember that the things you have been taught at school may be challenged.

Did you know that the comma is not a simple comma? There is actually four types of comma. There is a difference between a hyphen and a dash and I won't even mention what I now know about compound modifiers. Confused? Welcome to my world.

This book also goes on to look at the rules for apostrophes, quotation marks, italics and boldface. Until reading this I never knew that rounded brackets were called parentheses or that the dots I use to break up a quotation (...) are referred to as ellipsis.

Whilst it may sound like I dislike this book, in truth, it has opened my eyes up to how little I know about the English language even though I have studied it for years. No wonder it is classed as one of the hardest languages to learn.

If you would like to improve your writing skills, especially if you would like to publish some of your work, this book could help you.

Rebecca Bradley says

I can never remember specifically doing punctuation at school. Well, not to any real degree of intimacy. And if I did, I must have forgotten it all because if you asked me the rules on colons and semicolons and that blasted apostrophe, especially after words ending with an s, well I'd be doomed. So, as a writer I thought I'd better take my craft a bit more seriously and look it up.

This book is absolutely wonderful. It's small book. It's concise, to the point and easy to understand. It goes through each piece of punctuation chapter by chapter and breaks it down, explaining the rules and giving examples. It starts easy with the second chapter (the first is on why the need to learn to punctuate) being about the full stop, question mark and exclamation mark. It then goes in for the kill with the comma. Seriously. The comma. No, the rule about using the comma when you need to breathe isn't correct. Did you know there are actually four uses of the simple comma? Four!

Yes, I will be keeping this book by my laptop as I work.

It goes through abbreviations, quotation marks and quotes within quotation marks. It really is comprehensive for such a small book.

If you're a writer and you maybe want to make sure you're getting your punctuation right (and this book gives the UK and US versions) then I'd highly recommend this book. I know I will keep dipping into it every now and again just to remind myself about some of the rules. And yes, I've been very careful in the writing of this post!
