



Comma Sense: A Fundamental Guide to Punctuation

Richard Lederer , John Shore

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Are you confounded by commas, addled by apostrophes, or queasy about quotation marks? Do you believe a bracket is just a support for a wall shelf, a dash is something you make for the bathroom, and a colon and semicolon are large and small intestines? If so, language humorists Richard Lederer and John Shore (with the sprightly aid of illustrator Jim McLean), have written the perfect book to help make your written words perfectly precise and punctuationally profound.

Don't expect "Comma Sense" to be a dry, academic tome. On the contrary, the authors show how each mark of punctuation--no matter how seemingly arcane--can be effortlessly associated with a great American icon: the underrated yet powerful period with Seabiscuit; the jazzy semicolon with Duke Ellington; even the rebel apostrophe with famed outlaw Jesse James. But this book is way more than a flight of whimsy. When you've finished "Comma Sense, "you'll not only have mastered everything you need to know about punctuation through Lederer and Shore's simple, clear, and right-on-the-mark rules, you'll have had fun doing so. When you're done laughing and learning, you'll be a veritable punctuation whiz, ready to make your marks accurately, sensitively, and effectively.

Comma Sense: A Fundamental Guide to Punctuation Details

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Helen says

What a hilarious book! Who would have thought that punctuation could be funny? The authors, Richard Lederer and John Shore, did not want this book to be tedious and boring so they presented the material in an original and humorous way. Some of my favorites are:

What's the difference between a cat and a comma?

A cat has claws at the end of its paws - but a comma is a pause at the end of a clause.

To learn the seven coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or, nor, yet, for, so) sing along to the tune of the Julie Andrews hit "Do, Re, Mi".

And, a word, a real small word;

But, it's spelled with just one t;

Or, a stick we use to row;

Nor, half of a cold countreeee;

Yet, you bet it rhymes with wet;

For, one number more than three;

So a button on your fly -

And that brings us back to do, re, mi!

The following example demonstrates the use of a colon between chapters and verses in the Bible.

In Exodus 15:22-35, we are reassured that Moses was a male, because he spent forty years wandering around the wilderness, and never asked for directions.

The following shows the use of a dash to signify a sudden change in thought.

Just think! We're only an hour away from being the first people in history to fly around the world in a hot air balloon! We're going to be famous! We're going to - what's that burning smell?

I think I'm getting carried away here. Anyway, it was a fun read and I ended up finishing it in one sitting.

Tanu Gill says

It is a really fun book. Easy-peasy rules. Amusing examples. A fun read.

Michelle says

I know it's supposed to be humorous, but I didn't think it was that hilarious. Or even a good reference for punctuation usage. Pass

AC says

Both interesting and informative (and might just make you wonder what your teachers were thinking when you discover the info they failed to give you or the ease with which rules could have been provided). This is a book that should be read a couple of times throughout life from the early teenage years (to get a good start) and every 5-10 years thereafter (to refresh and rebuild) if you'd like to stay focused on avoiding the most common mistakes and understand why they are mistakes.

Regan says

First, no I did NOT read this for pleasure. It was assigned for a class. I may be an English major, but grammar and punctuation isn't exactly my idea of an evening of reading well spent, you know?

It's meant to be cute and accessible, mostly it's just cloying and vaguely annoying. The book could be half the length and still get the job done...and it's only 140 pages long (including table of contents, cheat sheets, and acknowledgements).

They pun. A LOT.

They compare each mark of punctuation to a famous figure - the dash is Fred Astaire, the ellipsis is the Andrews Sisters, etc. Then they go on and on and on about, essentially, how witty it is to compare the one to the other.

However, for a book on punctuation, it's a mighty easy read. It also jogged my memory about some things I had definitely forgotten. Plus, ANY reminder about "it's its its" is always welcome.

So, I can't recommend this as just a "sit down and enjoy" sort of book, but I can say that if you're just really needing to brush up your punctuation, this is an inexpensive and easy reading option.

Gary Geiger says

I can get more info on punctuation from a dictionary without Richard Lederer's lame attempts at humor. The Rich Lederer who trumpeted Bert Blyleven's as a Hall of Fame pitcher could have done a better job!

Shannon says

I really like Mr. Lederer's books - they are always fun and educational. This one will help those that are looking for some quick and easy reference in how to punctuate. Definitely not the Elements of Style that one would need for their college papers or theses but definitely good enough to keep you in tune for your regular work stuff.

Navneet Kaur says

This book was really entertaining (if a bit sexist at times). It felt to me as if I was reading a comedy book that was just being generous at random times to give me some rules for punctuation, contrary to what I had thought it would be like when I started it. The **examples** were out-of-the-world hilarious! The **rules** were easy to understand and remember. I recommend this book to those who can't read those stuffy and boring grammar books that remind you of your school textbooks.

I would like to add this one thing, though: The title makes you think that this book only tackles commas, but it isn't so. It covers all punctuation marks (with amusing illustrations for them--a special touch that I really loved.) The little things all counted to make this book a memorable one for me. Even though I now know the rules really well, I might read it again just for fun's sake. ;-)

Ryk Stanton says

I really appreciate Lederer's sense of humor as he writes about language - in this case, about punctuation. He covers all the major punctuation marks in a way that makes them approachable and memorable. There's not much to say about this book - if you want to learn more about punctuation and get some silly analogies to help you remember them, this is a great book to read. If you don't care much about such things, then you won't care about this book.

Of course, it might be a good book to keep in any special rooms in the house that you visit for five minutes or so a couple times a day, just to pick up and read while you're waiting for events to unfold.

Me, I loved it.

Eden says

Comma Sense takes a humorous and fun approach to learning punctuation.

I want to learn better punctuation so I decided to search my library for a book to help me. I found many, most of them over 300 pages or more. I knew if I borrowed one of those it would feel rather tedious. I just wanted a simple and to the point book on punctuation.

Comma Sense is just that. It was a simple, easy read while teaching punctuation. I feel that it did help me and I hope to own a copy soon so I can keep rereading and get a better grasp of punctuation.

Leah Petersen says

The preface states: "Never forget: Punctuation can mean the difference between a second date and a

restraining order."

I'm intrigued.

Hilarious. Really, I know it seems paradoxical; a book on punctuation that is not a sleeping pill, but Comma Sense really hit the nail on the head. If you're already a punctuation pro, read it simply for the absurd example sentences. "...and that's when I realized Irene was probably a cannibal."

"Like it or not, writing well-not artistically, not ornately, not floridly, but just competently-really is the difference between being largely able to define your own life and having much of your life defined for you."

Jane Dee says

I liked this book. I also learned that this book conflicts with what one of my english teachers taught me about commas which conflicted with what I always thought about commas but what I thought about commas does not conflict with this book. Hmmm. I knew she didnt know what the hell she was talking about.

Dana says

I am a word junkie. I can't help but pick up and read every grammar book I find. This was, by far, the most helpful and easy to read. In fact, I keep it in the office next to the AP Stylebook for all my reporters to use as a reference.

Mary says

I learned a lot, but could have done without the over-the-top, trying-anything-for-a-laugh humor. It made me skim portions of the book so I didn't have to read/deal with it! I would have given it a one star, but I took away some very useful information from it.

Lisa says

Quick and useful guide. And funny. Wish it had an index.
