

LITERACY BASICS- EVERYTHING YOU SHOULD KNOW....

CAPITAL LETTERS

We all think capitals are basic, but if you forget them too often, you could drop down a whole grade. Seven places you need capitals:

1. People's **names** and **titles**- **Mr Terry Brown**
2. Names of **towns** and **places**- **Sprowston, Norwich**
3. Things to do with **countries**- **I am French. I come from France and I speak French.**
4. Names of **companies** and **organisations**- **the Ministry of Transport**
5. **Titles** of books, films, programmes etc- **Eastenders**
6. **Days** of the week and **months** of the year- **Monday 5th September**
7. And of course, at the **start of a sentence.**

EXCLAMATION MARKS

Exclamation marks are like strong full stops.

DO USE THEM:

If the sentence is a command- *Go Away!*

When someone is shouting- *I'm over here!*

To show surprise or anger- *I've won the lottery!*

DON'T

Use them all the time- *We couldn't hear anything! Jack opened the door!*

It was gone!

Never use more than one in a sentence- *Ouch!!!!!!!!!!*

QUESTION MARKS

Always remember a question mark when you are waiting for an answer.

How can I get an A in my GCSE?

DASHES

Use dashes to link two ideas in one sentence

Wayne Rooney is a famous footballer- he has scored lots of goals.

COMMAS

Commas break up lists, add ideas and keep sentences clear.

LISTS- *I love cake, ice cream, sweets and chocolate.*

Don't forget- when you write a list, put a comma after each thing.. except the last two.

TO MAKE THE MEANING CLEARER- *Tom told her to be quiet, but she started to scream.* The sentence contains two pieces of information so we need a comma to make it clearer. Remember, you must use a comma in sentences with two clear points.

COMMAS FOR EXTRA INFORMATION- When adding extra information to a sentence, you must use a comma. *With a growl, the tiger pounced on the poodle.* Sometimes the extra information is added to the middle of the sentence, so you need two commas. *The twins, who were confused by the event, were sitting on the grass.*

APOSTROPHES

Apostrophes are used to show **ownership** of something and to indicate that some **letters are missing**.

FOR OWNERSHIP- When you are writing about a belonging, add an apostrophe + 's' to the name of the owner. *David's dog was missing.*

If the name ends in 's' you can choose to stick it on the end of the s *James' suitcase* or add another 's, *James's suitcase*.

For groups of people of things-

If the group already ends in s, add the apostrophe on the end. Words like men, women and mice follow the same rules. *They found the killer eels' during the men's swimming championships.*

FOR MISSING LETTERS- You must use an apostrophe when you are using the shortened version of two words such as *he's* in stead of *he is*.

The following are all shortened versions and must have an apostrophe

I'm- I am

I won't - I will not

I'd- I would or I had

I've- I have

they're- they are

who's - who is

don't- do not

doesn't- does not

can't- can not

we're - we are

COLONS are used for lists and explanations

LISTS- The colon is used to let you know that a list is about to begin.

You will need the following ingredients: a large egg, 200grams of flour, 250 ml of milk

EXPLANATIONS- Colons are also to introduce an explanation. Colons are used to divide a sentence where the second part of the sentence explains the first part, or tells you more about it.

The office was empty: everyone had finished their work and gone home.

SEMICOLONS divide clauses in a sentence and break up lists.

DIVIDING CLAUSES- semicolons are used to turn two sentences into one. The two sentences **must be about the same thing** and they must be of **equal importance** to one another. *The door creaked open; the girl tiptoed shyly into the room.*

BREAKINGS UP LISTS- Semicolons are used to break up lists when the items in the list are long phrases or clauses. If the items in the list have their own punctuation, you must use a semicolon.

At the fete there were stalls selling cakes; a 'guess the weight of a pig' competition; children bouncing on a bouncy castle; and an egg and spoon race.

BRACKETS Brackets, commas and dashes can all be used to separate extra pieces of information from the main body of the sentence. Brackets are used to bring something extra into a sentence. The extra something can be an explanation, an interruption, or something that occurred to the narrator as an afterthought.

Sarah and Jodie (the twins) have just learnt ballet

SPEECH MARKS Speech marks are used around words that are spoken.

Direct speech is when someone is actually talking. Speech marks go before and after the spoken words. You must **always use a capital letter** when someone starts to speak **and a comma** to separate the speech from the rest of the sentence.

Jack said, " Don't do that, you'll wake him." The comma goes before the speech mark and the full stop in front of the speech marks as it is the end of the sentence.

Reported speech does not use speech marks. This means, if you write about what someone has said in your own words, you do not need speech marks. Speech marks are only needed for the exact words spoken.

Harry said, " I hate cabbage" = direct speech

Harry said that he hated cabbage. = reported speech.

PARAGRAPHS

The golden rule for paragraphs is that you should start a new paragraph **every time something changes**. For example, if you start to write about a new person, new place, new time or new development, you should use a new paragraph.

REMEMBER....

To achieve a C or above in English, you must use paragraphs correctly and three different types of punctuation correctly other than a full stop and comma.

GOOD LUCK!