

# **TEACHING ADVANCED PUNCTUATION**

# COLONS FOR LISTS

A colon :

**On my desk, I have: a  
lamp, a book, several  
pens and a stapler.**

If it important that items in the list are not forgotten, use the bullet-pointed list.

For Hawkfirst, you will need:

- a towel
- pyjamas
- toiletries
- swimsuit

# Dashes & Hyphens

Dashes and hyphens look different.

A dash is longer than a hyphen. There should be a space between the dash and the words, whereas there should be no gap with a hyphen ie:

It was a bad day — an awful day, actually!

It was red-hot

A hyphen is used to link words together to make compound words and to change the meaning.

Eg: My friend has a red, hot fire.

My friend's times tables are red-hot!

How has the meaning changed here?

Sometimes a word needs a hyphen for it to be spelt correctly.

For example: • one-off  
• part-time • face-to-face



In compound adjectives (single adjectives formed from two or more words) that appear **before a noun**.

For example:

- An up-to-date guide
- An energy-efficient fridge

If the compound adjective **follows the noun**, hyphens are not normally needed ie: a guide which is up to date and a fridge which is energy efficient.

To distinguish one word from a similar one.

For example:

- re-sort, not resort
- co-op, not coop
- re-form, not reform

Some words formed with a prefix are always hyphenated.

For example:

- self-employed
- pro-family
- anti-aircraft

With some prefixes, a hyphen is not necessary but is preferable to help with pronunciation, avoid a double vowel, or stop a word looking odd.

For example:

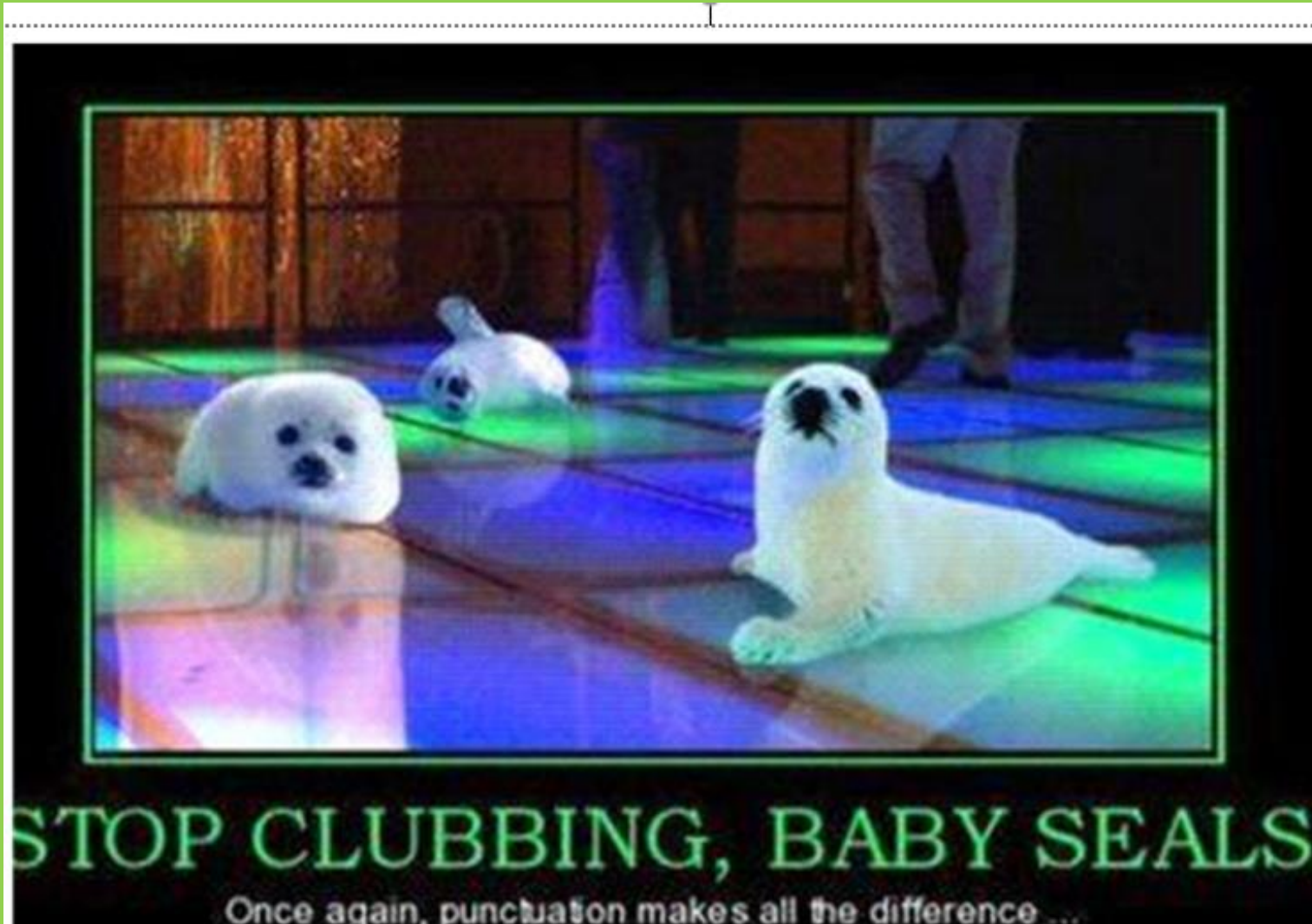
- co-ordinate (coordinate)
- re-enter (reenter)
- de-ice (deice)

When numbers between 21 and 99  
are written out in full For example:

- twenty-one
- ninety-nine
- one hundred and thirty-four

(Note that only 'thirty-four' is hyphenated.)

To avoid ambiguity.





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Let's eat grandpa.

Let's eat, grandpa.

**correct punctuation can  
save a person's life.**



**Dashes can be used in pairs,  
in place of commas and brackets.  
This is called PARENTHESIS.**

The man, who was angry, flopped in a heap on the floor.

The man (who was angry) flopped in a heap on the floor.

The man - who was angry - flopped in a heap on the floor.

Dashes can also be used singly when what follows is an afterthought- or to create suspense.

There it was again, that creak on the staircase. Pamela sat upright in bed, eyes wide open in the darkness. Just Marmalade her cat, she thought – or was it?

He could only do that once because he'd get hurt- but what if he didn't?

The horse leapt over the fence- an amazing feat!

Colons to separate clauses.

Colons and semi-colons do sometimes get confused.

A colon is used to separate clauses when each clause is not of equal importance, often when the clause after the colon gives more explanation about the clause before.

Eg: As a student living in London, I know all about money pressures: part-time jobs barely cover the cost of accommodation and there is no money left for going out.

The essay was badly written: it was full of punctuation and spelling mistakes.

Note that the word following the colon is lower-case unless it is a proper noun.

**Semi-colons ;**

Look at this passage.

My grandmother's attic was full of rubbish. There were several old frames from pictures long discarded, broken chairs, all from the Victorian era, a suitcase full to the brim with sepia photographs, many old dresses, many with rips and buttons missing and a massive gilded parrot cage.

What is the problem?



The problem is that it is unclear. Yes, it is a list but some commas separate the items whilst others add further information. So, it's confusing . To help, simply change some commas to semi- colons.

My grandmother's attic was full of rubbish. There were several old frames from pictures long discarded; broken chairs, all from the Victorian era; a suitcase full to the brim with sepia photographs; many old dresses, many with rips and buttons missing and a massive gilded parrot cage.

**Semi- colons can also  
be used to separate clauses  
in a sentence.**

*My mother loved Wednesdays; she hated Mondays though.*

In this example, note that the clauses are of equal weight.  
They are also connected.

The letter following the semicolon should be lower case  
unless a proper noun.

More examples:

I sat on the floor; Joe sat with me.

It was the best of days; it was the worst of days.

The sun was shining; it was an amazing sight!

This is wrong.

***I visited the farm; but my dad went to the house.***

A semi-colon replaces a connective.

## **Bullet-Pointed List.**

**The trick here is to be consistent as there appear to varying rules regarding their application.**

**In this example, the stem and the tail must make sense.**

**You will need to bring:**

- **an old tracksuit**
- **several –shirts**
- **a pad and pen**

**When the list is complete sentences...**

**The rules for participation are as follows:**

- **The eldest person goes first.**
- **All must wear a helmet.**
- **Points will be given for entertainment-value.**

**However the same list could look like this....**

**The rules for participation are as follows:**

- The eldest person goes first**
- All must wear a helmet**
- Points will be given for entertainment-value**

**..... consistency is key.**



**The correct  
punctuation is  
important.**

# Thank You!

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PERSISTENT COUGH

EMS-POST OP LEFT SHOULDER

UNABLE TO EAT DIARRHEA

FORGETFULNESS HEADACHE

CHEST PRESSURE

FEVER

FEVER 102, WHEEZING, IRRITABLE

FALL BT ARM INJURY

**COMMAS. USE THEM.**

# The Comma Splice

This is when a comma is used incorrectly- very often in place of a full stop. These are sometimes called run-on sentences.

Reading work aloud is one valuable tool to sort this out.

EG:

The old man sat on the floor, he put his legs beneath him.

Fanning the slice of pizza with a napkin, Jolene waited for it to cool, she had already burned the roof of her mouth with the fried cheese sticks.

Teaching pupils how to use  
dashes and semi-colons may help here too.

Punctuation for  
effect.

# Punctuation for effect



# Read these sentences aloud.

1. He stopped, he looked. He turned.
2. He stopped. He looked, he turned.
3. He stopped. He looked. He turned.

**They create a different level of impact. Which is the most dramatic?**

1. He stopped, he looked. He turned.
2. He stopped. He looked, he turned.
3. He stopped. He looked. He turned.

Does this increase, or decrease, the tension.

He stopped. He looked.

He turned.

And these.....

I ran as fast as I could.

I ran- fast!