**Punctuation** marks are used in sentences to make the meaning clear. Even a slight change of punctuation can change the meaning of a sentence!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>In a sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.</td>
<td>A full stop comes at the end of a sentence. It shows that a sentence is complete and finished.</td>
<td>Let’s go to the cinema.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| ,    | A comma is used:  
  - to separate items in a list  
  - before a coordinating conjunction such as *or*, *and* or *but*  
  - after a subordinating clause at the start of a multi-clause sentence  
  - after an adverbial if you are using it at the start of a sentence. | I like to eat apples, seeds, grapes and nuts. I like swimming, but I love ice skating! When he realized how much money I had spent, my dad went mad. Luckily, I had revised all the topics that came up in the exam. |
| !    | An exclamation mark is used at the end of a sentence to show:  
  - that the sentence is about something urgent or surprising,  
  - a strong emotion  
  - a command. | I can’t believe you just said that! Sit down! |
| ?    | A question mark is used at the end of a sentence to show that it is a question. | What are you reading? |
| :    | A colon can be used to:  
  - introduce a list  
  - introduce examples or explanations. | There are three friends in the book: Harry, Ron and Hermione. I like the colour blue: it is the colour of my favourite team. |
| ;    | A semicolon can be used:  
  - to separate two sentences or main clauses which are of equal importance.  
  - To separate longer phrases in a list. | The film was brilliant; I had a great time. I need: as many bananas as you have; a tub of vanilla ice cream; and chocolate to sprinkle on top. |
| ()   | Brackets, and dashes can all be used to separate a word or phrase that has been added to a sentence as an explanation or afterthought. This is called a parenthesis. | I looked up (squinting because of the sun) and saw the birds flying. I looked up - squinting because of the sun - and saw the birds flying. |
| ” ” | Speech marks, or inverted commas, are used:  
  - in writing direct speech  
  - in writing to show that you are quoting what someone has written or said. | “I’m beginning to understand,” he said. Duffy uses the words ‘puce’, ‘yellow’, ‘green’ and ‘red’ to make the reader think of the colours they might see in a bruise. |
| ’    | An apostrophe is used to show:  
  - Ownership or possession.  
  - that letters are missed out of a word. These are called contractions. | the boy’s pen/ children’s books it + is= it’s/ did + not= didn’t |

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This advice comes from *Oxford Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar Dictionary.*

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