

PUNCTUATION

Punctuation marks are an integral part of writing. They signal the end of a sentence (.), show strong feeling (!), indicate a query (?), separate items (,), show possession (’), introduce a quote (“ ”), make a break within a sentence (:), indicate the beginning of a new sentence (Capital letter) and provide many other important instructions to the reader.

These instructions tell the reader how the sentence should be understood.

STUDY TIPS

For IELTS Writing Task 1 and Writing Task 2, remember to leave approximately two minutes to check your punctuation, including capital letters.

PUNCTUATION RULES

PUNCTUATION SIGN		USE	EXAMPLE
full stop/ period	.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ at the end of a sentence ▪ to mark a decimal point in numbers 	<p>A full stop is used to mark the end of a sentence.</p> <p>32.5%, \$ 475.25</p>
question mark	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ at the end of a yes/no or <i>wh</i>-question 	<p>Are you preparing for the IELTS test? What subjects are you studying?</p>
exclamation point	!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ after a strong statement (rarely used in formal academic writing) 	<p>That is impossible!</p>
Comma	,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to separate a series of three or more words or phrases ▪ to separate a series of two or more adjectives, when each qualifies the noun separately ▪ to separate independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction 	<p>The tea-producing countries manufacture black, green, and oolong tea.</p> <p>Tea plants have beautiful, small, fragrant flowers.</p> <p>The growing conditions for tea plants this season were exceptionally good, so the quality of the crop will be desirable. Tea plants grow in tropical climates, and mature in three</p>



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		years.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ after transitional words or phrases ▪ after an introductory phrase or clause ▪ after a dependent clause when it comes at the beginning of a sentence ▪ between an adjective clause when it begins with a relative pronoun (who, whom, which, whose, that) or relative adverb (where, when) if it provides extra information ▪ before a direct quotation 	<p>Firstly, the leaves are plucked from the tea plant. At higher altitudes, tea plants do not mature as quickly.</p> <p>Steaming the leaves, manufacturers prevented the leaves from changing colour.</p> <p>Although they grow at higher altitudes, tea plants prefer the conditions at lower altitudes.</p> <p>The Dutch traders, who imported the tea from China and Japan, introduced the custom of tea drinking in the 17th century.</p> <p>The host announced, "Tea will be served in the drawing room."</p>

colon	:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ after a complete sentence to show that a list follows 	There are three kinds of tea grown in China: black, green, and oolong.
semicolon	;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ between two main clauses that are not connected by a coordinating conjunction 	The air is blown over the tea leaves; this is to remove excess moisture.
apostrophe	'	<p>to indicate possessive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ proper nouns ▪ plural nouns ▪ indefinite pronoun ▪ compound nouns ▪ abbreviations <p>for joint possession after</p>	<p>Japan's method the plants' growing conditions somebody's tea the Emperor of China's palace ABC's programs</p> <p>John and Jill's tea plantation</p>



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		<p>the last noun</p> <p>for individual possession on both nouns</p> <p>in contractions (informal English only)</p> <p>omission of a number (informal English only)</p>	<p>Smith's and Clark's tea plantation</p> <p>can't (cannot), it's (it is)</p> <p>the '90s</p>
hyphen	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ for a compound of two or more words when they belong together ▪ compound numbers from twenty-one to ninety-nine <p>consult a dictionary if uncertain whether a compound word should be hyphenated</p>	<p>sweet-smelling tea plants, well-dressed man, old-fashioned style, tea-producing countries</p> <p>forty-five, seventy-two, twenty-nine</p>
quotation marks	“ ”	to indicate a direct quote	The manager of the plantation said, “Orange pekoe is one of the best teas available on the market.”

