

RULES FOR PUNCTUATION

A. A period is used:

1. at the end of a statement. (Ex. I have twenty-seven dogs.)
2. at the end of an order. (Ex. Get those dogs spayed and neutered.)
3. after numbers and letters in outlines. (Ex. Look at the numbers in this handout!)
4. after an abbreviation or an initial. (Ex. Ms M. Smith has arrived.)

B. A comma is used:

1. to separate items in a series. (Ex. I have apple, pear, peach, and plum trees.)
2. to separate adjectives of equal value. (Ex. The sly, quick, brown fox bit me.)
3. to separate the day of the month from the year. (Ex. January 1, 1999)
4. to separate the names of a city and a state. (Ex. Albuquerque, New Mexico)
5. to separate a name from a title. (Ex. Gary Johnson, Governor)
6. to set off a name used in direct address. (Ex. Mary, close the door.)
7. after the greeting in a friendly letter. (Ex. Dear Mom,)
8. after the closing in ANY letter. (Ex. Love, OR Sincerely,)
9. between the last name and the first name. (Ex. Jones, Mary)
10. after a mild interjection within a sentence. (Ex. Gosh, that looks awful.)
11. to set off introductory words like *no* and *now*. (Ex. No, I'm not going out with you.)
12. to set off words like *however*, *moreover*, *too*, etc. (Ex. I will not, however, go out with you. However, I will not go out with you. I will not go out with you, however. I'll get you and your little dog, too.)
13. before a conjunction in a compound sentence. (Ex. I went to Walmart, and I bought a stereo.)
14. to set off appositives. (Ex. My Uncle Jake, the butcher, gave us a roast. Have you seen Cujo, a large St. Bernard?)
15. after an introductory adverbial clause.
16. after an introductory participial phrase.
17. to set off a non-restrictive adjective clause.
18. to separate a direct quotation from the rest of the sentence.
19. whenever necessary to make the meaning clear to your readers.

C. A semicolon is used:

1. to connect two independent clauses when joined by such words as *however*, *consequently*, *therefore*, etc.
2. to connect two closely related independent clauses whenever no FANBOYS conjunction is used.
3. To separate items in a list which already contain commas. *Example: I have lived in Albuquerque, New Mexico; Columbus, Ohio; and San Francisco, California.*