

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?</p> <p>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>



<p>Comma</p>	<p>,</p> <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 years.</p>
	<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 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>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> <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."