

---

# Mechanics and Conventions of Research Paper Writing



Jency James  
Assistant Professor  
Department of English  
St. Mary's College Thrissur



# Punctuation

## Traffic Signals of Language

tell us to slow down, notice this, take a detour and stop

- Comma
- Semicolon
- Colon
- Double Quotation Marks
- Single Quotation Mark
- Period
- Capitalization



# Comma

❖ Tells the reader to pause or the word preceding the comma is a part of list.

## Rules for using comma:

- After the introductory word or phrase
- To list nouns in a sentence
- To list coordinating adjectives and to separate items in any other series
- To separate two independent clauses or complete thoughts in a compound sentence connected by ‘and’, ‘but’, ‘for’, ‘or’, ‘nor’, ‘so’, ‘yet’.
- To separate interrupting words and expressions in a sentence
- To set off a quote from the rest of a sentence



# Semicolon

**A semicolon indicates a pause or a break in a sentence which is longer than a comma but shorter than a period.**

Uses of semicolon:

- To combine two closely related independent clauses not linked by a coordinating conjunction
- To separate items in a list when the items are phrases or one of the items includes a conjunction or a comma
- To replace a period, if one wishes to reduce the gap between linked sentences in a paragraph.
- To use before the word ‘however’



# Colon(:)

Colons are used for the following purposes

- To separate two independent clauses where the first introduces or explains the second
- To start a list of items
- To introduce a quotation that is independent from the structure of the main sentence
- To separate title from the subtitle



# **Double Quotation Mark(“)** **&** **Single Quotation Mark (‘)**

## **Double Quotation Mark**

- Helps to differentiate ideas/words of others from ones own idea
- To set off titles of essays, journal and magazine articles, poems and short stories

## **Single Quotation Mark**

- To introduce a word or a phrase as a technical term
- To use a word as a word.



# Period

## The simplest punctuation mark

- A direct question ends with a question mark but an indirect question ends with a period.
- An ellipsis is indicated by a series of three periods.
- If a sentence ends with a parentheses the period is usually placed outside the parentheses. However if the parentheses contains a full sentence the period falls inside the parentheses.
- Used with most lowercase and mixed case abbreviations
- Used with certain uppercase abbreviations like academic qualifications



## **Capitalization**

**Refers to writing the first letter of a word in uppercase and the rest in lowercase.**

In addition to the first words, the following are always capitalized

- The main words of a title
- Proper nouns and adjectives derived from proper nouns
- Days and months





## **Academic Style**

**Refers to the difference of academic essays, project papers, journal articles and dissertations from other non academic writings like newspaper articles, magazine essays and informal communications**

### **MLA Style**

- Introduced by Modern Language Association in 1985
- Popular style followed in liberal arts and humanities.
- Published eight editions till 2016

### **APA Style**

- Introduced by American Psychological Association
- Style followed in social sciences and science



## REFERENCE

❖ [www.universityofcalicut.info/SDE/sde593.pdf](http://www.universityofcalicut.info/SDE/sde593.pdf)

❖ Dr. George, Jacob. *Writing for Academic and Professional Success, CU, 2017.*