# End Marks

# What are end marks?

End marks are punctuation that typically occur at the end of a clause or sentence. There are three main end marks: the period, the questions mark, and the exclamation point. Unlike the question mark and the exclamation point, the period end mark has multiple uses.

# Periods:

* Use a period to close sentences that make statements, give mild commands, or make polite requests. Examples:

Most files are arranged in alphabetical order.

Make two copies of the document.

Please close the door.

* Use periods for indirect questions. Example:

I asked how old the child was.

* In American English, periods are also used with most abbreviations. However, many abbreviations made up of capitalized letters may be written with or without periods.  
  Examples:

Mr. Dr. BC (or B.C.)

Ms. Ph.D. BCE (or B.C.E.)

Mrs. M.B.A. AD (or A.D.)

Jr. R.N. a.m. and p.m. (or AM and PM)

* Some abbreviations do not require periods: postal abbreviations of state names and most group initials that have become common usage. Examples:

CA GE FBI

FL CIA TV

TN AIDS UNICEFF

[Note: Do not use an additional period when a sentence ends with an abbreviation that has its own period. Example: The social worker referred me to Evelyn Pintz, M.D.]

# Question Marks:

* Use question marks to close sentences that ask direct questions. Example:

“How am I going to finish all of my homework?”

* Questions in a series may have question marks even when they are not separate sentences. Example:

I often confront a difficult choice: should I go to practice? finish my homework? spend time with my friends?

[Note: Remember not to use question marks with indirect questions.]

# Exclamation Points:

* Use an exclamation point to show surprise or strong emotion.

Example: Look out!

* Use exclamation points very sparingly because they can distract your readers or suggest that you are exaggerating.

Wrong usage: This valley is so large, so varied, that attempting to tell someone everything about it would take three years!

* Do not use a comma or period immediately after an exclamation point that ends a direct quotation.

Wrong usage: On my last visit, I looked out the sliding glass doors and I ran breathlessly to Connor in the kitchen: “There’s a huge black pig in the backyard!”.