Grammar 3: Articles, prepositions and punctuation

Workshop objectives

This workshop will assist you in becoming familiar with:

- **The general rules and correct us of definite/indefinite articles**
- **Prepositions of place, time and other collocations**
- **The function and correct use of punctuation marks**

Articles

- Articles are modifiers that appear before nouns and noun phrases.

- The articles in the English language are *the* and *a/an.*

- Some noun and noun phrases do not use articles.

Rules: a/an & the

To know when to use or not use an article some rules are needed:

1. Is it definite or indefinite?
2. Is it singular or plural?
3. Is the noun countable or uncountable?

Rules: a/an & the

If the noun is definite, it always take the article *the*;
if the noun is indefinite, it never takes the article *the*.

countable

	definite	indefinite
singular	the	a, an
plural	the	Ø

uncountable

	definite	indefinite
	the	Ø

a or *an*

Using *a* or *an* depends on the beginning <u>sound</u> (not letter) of the next word.

a + singular countable noun beginning with a vowel sound	*a* boy; *a* car; *a* user; *a* university; (the letter U sounds like Y in you.) *a* horse; *a* historical event
an + singular countable noun beginning with a consonant sound	*an* elephant; *an* idiot; *an* umbrella; *an* hour; *an* honour (the letter h is silent)
These rules also apply when you use acronyms.	*an* ITRP student; *a* UTS student

Practice

- _____ group work is _____ important part of ____ university student's learning experience.

- _____ microchip is a phenomenal invention.

- He has _____ honorary doctorate from Yale University.

- Fifty percent of the Australian population are now using _____ smartphones

- _____ amount of information freely available on the Internet seems to be infinite.

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Prepositions at/on/in: Place

at is used to talk about a large place or position at a point or before a proper noun

Turn left at the next intersection. The train stops at Central. I shop at Myers. (I was in a shop).

at is used when commenting on activities that occur somewhere

I saw Macbeth at the theatre. I was at the library/work/university.

on is used for position on a surface

It's on the table. It's on the map.

in is used for position inside a large area

I was in the bush. She's not in the office. I live in Sydney.

Prepositions at/on/in: time

at	on	in	no preposition
+ clock time	**+ a day of the week**	**+ a part of the day**	**+ next/this/last/ each/every**
at 6:00pm *at dinnertime*	*on Monday* *on Saturday night*	*in the evening* *in the morning*	*next week* *last year*
+ the weekend **+ holiday period**	**+ date**	**+ longer period of time (e.g. month, year)**	**+today/tomorrow /yesterday**
at the weekend *at Christmas* (but on Christmas day)	*on the 19th of May* *on his birthday*	*in 2016, in April,* *in Spring, in the 18th century*	

Prepositions: other collocations

Many verbs, nouns and adjectives collocate with particular prepositions.

for	with	in
famous for	agree with	invest in
apologize for	familiar with	in a mood
for business	trouble with	interested in

about	on	of
worried about	dependent on	capable of
argue about	concentrate on	consist of
complaint about	on average	a photo of

at	from	to
good at	suffer from	listen to
arrive at	absent from	similar to

Punctuation

- Full -stop
- Comma
- Semi-colon
- Colon
- Parentheses (Brackets)
- Dash
- Apostrophe

Run-on sentences

A run-on sentence occurs when two simple sentences are incorrectly joined.

Poverty, famine and major public health problems around the developing world are important indicators of a changing climate **these issues are not being addressed globally.**

There are two ways to resolve a run-on sentence:

1. Use a joining or linking word such as *and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet.*

Poverty, famine and major public health problems around the developing world are an important indicator of a changing climate, **but** *these issues are not being addressed globally.*

2. Make two separate sentences.

Poverty, famine and major public health problems around the developing world are an important indicator of a changing climate. ***These issues are not being addressed globally.***

Activity: correct these run-ons

My professor was very mad I will try harder next time.

You gave an excellent presentation, it is a pity your exam results were low.

Comma

- Introductory word/s, phrases or subordinate clauses need a comma before the main idea.

- Additional information added to the main idea

- Listing things

- Resolving ambiguity

Comma

Introductory words, phrases or subordinate clauses need a comma before the main idea. These are not complete thoughts: they simply introduce the main subject and verb.

- *Generally, teachers are friendly and helpful.*
- *Throughout his early life, Mozart showed signs of genius.*
- *Dissatisfied with his fame, the celebrity went on a reality show.*
- *As far as the economy is concerned, the mining boom accounts for a large amount of the revenue.*

Comma

Additional information added to the main idea:

Two commas can be used to separate additional information within the sentence, but it is separate from the primary subject and verb of the sentence. The words within the commas are not necessary to understand the rest of the sentence.

- *Bob Mills, a sophomore from Raleigh, was the only North Carolina native at the Japanese food festival in Cary.*

- *Aaron thought he could see the future, not the past, in the wrinkles on his skin.*

Comma

Additional information: relative clauses
The words within the commas are not necessary to understand the rest of the sentence.

Compare the following two sentences.

1. My sister, who lives in the USA, is coming to visit next month.
2. My sister who lives in the USA is coming to visit next month.

1. I have one sister and I am just giving extra information about where she lives.
2. I have more than one sister and I am defining which sister I am talking about.

Comma

Commas are used when **listing** things (single words or phrases).

- *I went to Australia, New Zealand, Italy and Malta.*

- *A good student listens to his teachers without yawning, reads once in a while and writes papers before they are due.*

Comma

Resolving ambiguity:
If the information in the sentence can be interpreted in different ways then use a comma to help separate the information. i.e. Create bundles of information by using a comma to separate them. The aim is to make the sentence clear to the reader.

Compare these sentences:

- *The panda eats shoots and leaves.*

- *The panda eats, shoots and leaves.*

Semi-colon

- Separating items in a list where the items are long or complicated

- Suggesting a strong relationship between two independent clauses, sometimes replacing connectors and/ but.

Semi-colon

A semi-colon can be used to separate items in a list where the items are long or complicated.

You may use the library on condition that your membership is paid quarterly; that you always return books to their rightful place after using them; that you pay any fines for books returned late; and that you are quiet when using the facilities.

Semi-colon

A semi-colon can be used to narrow the gap and suggest a strong relationship between two *independent* clauses.

The European Union's history consists of two stages; its original form was known as the European Economic Community (EEC).

We have paid our dues; we expect all the privileges listed in the contract.

Colon

- Introducing material (e.g. quotation, data, figure, diagram, text) that explains, expands, summarises the comment that precedes it

- Introducing a list which is long and/or complicated, or which is made more conspicuous intentionally

- To separate the subtitle from the title.

Colon

A colon can be used to introduce material (e.g. quotation, data, figure, diagram, text) that explains, expands or summarises the comment that precedes it.

- *Shakespeare's most famous quote says: "To be or not to be."*

- *The results are as follows:*
  80% of students passed
  20% of students failed

- *Life is a puzzle: trying to work it out is half the fun.*

Colon

A colon can be used to introduce a list which is long and/or complicated, or to intentionally draw more attention to it.

RULE: The clause before the colon must be an independent clause.

- *We covered many aspects in our writing class: grammar, punctuation, and voice.*

- *My husband gave me the things I needed most: companionship and quiet.*

Activity: find the mistake

- *The very best peaches are: those that are grown in the great state of Georgia.*

- *My favourite cake is made of: carrots, flour, butter, eggs, and cream cheese icing.*

- *There are many different types of paper, including: college ruled, wide ruled, and plain copy paper.*

Colon

A colon can be used to separate the title from the subtitle.

- *Greece: Ancient Times to Modern*

- *Language: Barriers of European speakers*

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Activity: Semi-colons,Colons and Commas

http://www.grammarbook.com/grammar_quiz/semicolons_and_colons_1.asp

Parentheses (brackets)

- Referencing e.g. (Malvin, 2012)

- Indicating information that is extra to the main idea such as giving an example or additional detail, qualifying a point, referring to another part of the text

Parentheses and dashes

Parentheses **( )** indicate the additional information is less important than the material in the sentence.
Dashes **-** show the additional information is equally important to the material in the sentence.

Everything I saw in my new city – from the crashing waves at the beach to the jewelled harbour – brought tears to my eyes.

Apostrophe

Contracted forms are **not** usually used in *academic* English.

~~can't~~

cannot ✓

~~hasn't~~

has not ✓

~~I've~~

I have ✓

~~It's~~

It is/has ✓

Apostrophes are used to show possession.

*The girl's mother, the kids' father,
my mother's sister's husband's friend,
Rebecca's daughter, James' car* (or James's car)

Apostrophes are not used with possessive determiners and pronouns.

*The money is ours.
The baby was delighted with its presents.*

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