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With No Grammar and No Textbooks!

## **Episode #207**

### English Punctuation Marks

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I find inspiration in cooking my family and my dog.

*That sounds crazy! Right?*

*We need some commas here!*

Hi, everybody! I am Georgiana, your English teacher and founder of [SpeakEnglishPodcast.com](https://speakenglishpodcast.com). My mission is to help you speak English fluently.

Today I am talking about punctuation. :)  
In the second part, you will improve your English fluency with a fun mini-story. It's like having a conversation with another person in English!

Before we start, visit [SpeakEnglishPodcast.com/podcast](https://speakenglishpodcast.com/podcast) to get the transcript of this episode.

Ok! Today I am talking about punctuation. By this word, I mean the different spelling marks used when writing. These are the main ones.

**Period or full stop .** - is a punctuation mark that we use to show the end of a sentence.

**Commas ,** are the ideal punctuation mark to divide sentences or indicate when to pause.

**Apostrophes ' -** we use them to identify something that belongs to someone or to show a letter or multiple letters are missing from a word.

**Colons :** are used to precede a list of items, a quotation, or an expansion or explanation.

**Semicolons ;** indicate a pause, usually between two main sentences, longer than that indicated by a comma.

**Ellipsis ...** We use them to show that one or more words have been removed from a quote and create suspense by adding a pause before the end of the sentence. And we can also use it to show the end of a thought.

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**Quotation marks " "** Inform the reader that you have used written material from other sources or direct speech.

**Question marks ?** Indicate that the speaker is asking a question. They're used at the end of the question (or interrogative) sentences.

**Exclamation marks !** Can change a sentence's meaning and tone. They still end a sentence, but they can add emotion, whether excitement, anger, or nervousness!

**Round brackets ( )** are used similarly to commas when we want to add an explanation, an afterthought, or a comment related to our primary line of thought but different from it.

**Square brackets or brackets [ ]** We use them for special purposes, such as technical manuals.

**Hyphen -** we use it to join words and separate syllables of a single word.

Punctuations can be very confusing, especially if you don't know where to place them, and can change the entire meaning of what you want to say.

Let's look at **some examples of situations** when we do not use punctuation marks properly:

### **#1 Woman Without Man**

A teacher wrote the following sentence on the board and asked his class to punctuate it:

Woman without her man is nothing.

Half of the class punctuated the sentence in the following way:

**Woman: without her, man is nothing.**

The other half of the class responded with the following:

**Woman, without her man, is nothing.**

Fascinating how punctuation can change the meaning of a sentence entirely.

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Another example:

## #2 Your granny's life depends upon it!

Here, **commas** matter.

Let's eat granny!

Or

Let's eat, granny!

See the difference?

## #3 Eat your dinner.

You say to a child: **Eat your dinner!**

You say to a cow: **Eat! You're dinner!**

Here, **apostrophes** matter.

## #4 I'm sorry I love you.

When you are in a terrible fight, you might say a horrible thing like this one:

**I'm sorry I love you.**

And when you want to make up again, you can say:

**I'm sorry; I love you.**

**Semicolons** matter! :)

## #5 I find inspiration in cooking my family and my dog.

That sounds crazy! Right?

We need some commas here!

Let's hear it again:

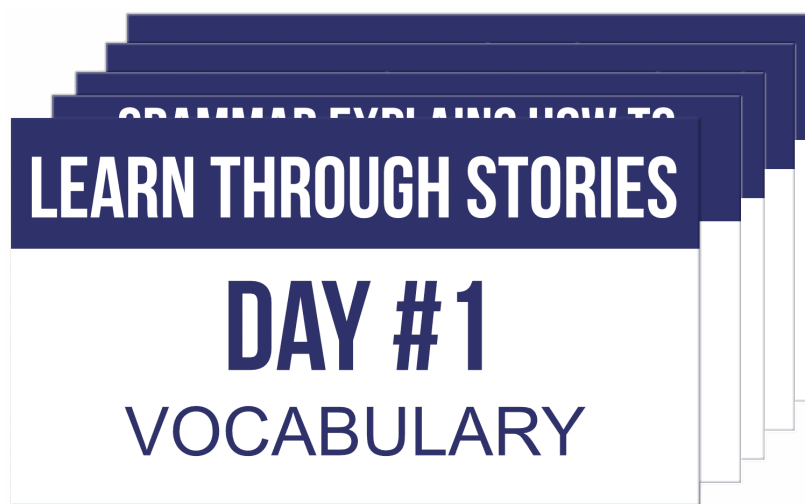
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I find inspiration in cooking, my family, and my dog.

That's much better!

By the way, if you want to know how to **speak English** using the right techniques, visit [SpeakEnglishPodcast.com](http://SpeakEnglishPodcast.com) and [subscribe](#) to my mailing list. I will send you my **5-day video course**, so you can **learn how to speak English fluently**. And it's completely free.

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Ok. Now it's time for you to practice your speech with a mini-story.

## Mini-Story

**(Practice your speaking)**

What's a mini-story?

A mini-story is very simple. I give you information using phrases, and then I ask you questions.

After each question, there will be some seconds of silence: it's your turn to answer the question!

Just try to give an easy and short answer. Not a complex one.

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After your answer, I'll give you the correct answer.

And just like that, I'll tell a story with questions and answers.

Are you ready?

**When Tom sent written messages, misunderstandings always occurred.**

**Were there sometimes misunderstandings?**

No, not sometimes. There were always misunderstandings whenever Tom sent written messages.

**When were there misunderstandings?**

When Tom sent written messages, text messages.

**What was there?**

Misunderstandings. There were misunderstandings.

**The problem was that Tom never used any punctuation marks.**

**The problem was that he never used any punctuation marks?**

Yes. That was the problem. He didn't use any punctuation marks.

**The problem was that he didn't use road signs?**

No, no. Not road signs. Punctuation marks.

**Who didn't use punctuation marks?**

Tom. Tom didn't use punctuation marks.

**Tom started using punctuation marks, but he put them all at the end of the message.**

**Did Tom start using punctuation marks?**

Yes, he started using punctuation marks. He started using them.

**Did he use them correctly?**

No, he didn't use them correctly. He used them incorrectly.

**Tom's plan made the situation worse, not better.**

**What did it make better?**

Nothing. It didn't make anything better. It made the situation worse.

**What made the situation worse?**

Tom's plan. Tom's plan made the situation worse.

**In the end, Tom, tired, started sending video and audio voice mails instead of written messages.**

**Was Tom tired?**

Yes, he was tired.

**What did he start doing?**

He started sending videos and voice audios instead of written messages.

**Instead of what?**

Written messages. He started sending videos and audios instead of messages.

Very good. That's the end of this exercise. Poor Tom. He didn't know where to put punctuation marks. So he put them all at the end of the messages. That doesn't make any sense. Tired of so many misunderstandings, he sent videos and voice mails. That way, he avoided misunderstandings.

Perfect! It's the end of this mini-story. And as you can see, through questions and answers, you can practice and improve your speech just like in a **real conversation**.

It is one of the techniques that I use in my [premium courses](#).

I recommend you to you take a look at:

[SpeakEnglishPodcast.com/courses](https://SpeakEnglishPodcast.com/courses)

Ok! We have reached the end of this episode.

Remember to listen to it several times. It will help you with your English.

Do you know how you can help me? You can share the podcast with your friends and family. Tell them to go to [SpeakEnglishPodcast.com](https://SpeakEnglishPodcast.com) and get my free mini-course.

That would mean a lot to me. Thanks.

See you soon!  
Bye! Bye!



*Georgiana*

founder of [SpeakEnglishPodcast.com](http://SpeakEnglishPodcast.com)

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