



GEN 1004 COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Lecture 8: Writing Technical Reports (Punctuation and Verb Tenses)

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12/12/2019



The Importance of Using Punctuation Marks:

The marks, such as full stop, comma, and brackets, used in writing to separate sentences and their elements and to clarify meaning.

Check the following two sentences: (What is the difference?)

- I hate liars like you; I believe that honesty is the best policy.
- I hate liars, like you; I believe that honesty is the best policy.



SENTENCE vs. CLAUSE vs. PHRASE

A Phrase : is a group of words without a subject or a verb that modify the meaning.

- e.g.* - *After dinner, . . .*
- *Waiting for the rain to stop, . . .*

A Clause : is a group of words that have both a subject and a predicate, and it can form a complete thought (independent clause) or not (dependent clause)

- e.g.* - *The dog barked at him.* (independent clause)
- *When the man broke into the house, . . .* (dependent clause)

A Sentence: A complete sentence has a subject and a predicate, and can often be composed of more than one clause.

- e.g.* *When the man broke into the house, the dog barked at him.*



PUNCTUATION

1- Period (Full Stop):

a. Mark the end of a sentence which is not a question or an exclamation.

e.g. Rome is the capital of Italy. (Note there is no space between the period (or any mark) and the word before it, there should be a single space after it)

b. Indicate an abbreviation.

e.g. - I will arrive between 6 a.m. and 7 a.m.

- His name is L.A. James.

c. Ellipsis.(Each period should have a single space on either side)

e.g. He is always late, but you know how I feel about that . . .

d. Period after a single word.

e.g. "Stop."

e. Periods in numbers.

e.g. \$10.43 = ten dollars and 43 cents.



PUNCTUATION

2- Comma:

a. To separate elements in a series (These elements can be sentences, verbs, nouns, adjectives, etc.), but it **is not** used before **and** or **or**:

e.g. *-I met Harry, we went for a swim together and afterwards Harry went home.*

- For dinner I had soup, fish, chicken, dessert and coffee.

- She was young, beautiful, kind and intelligent.

b. To separate two independent clauses with (and, or, but, yet, for, nor, so):

e.g. *Harry walked home, and he directly slept.*



PUNCTUATION

2- Comma (Continued):

c. To enclose a nonrestrictive clause:

- e.g. - *China, one of the most powerful nations on Earth, has a huge population.*
- *Cats, unlike dogs, do not respect their masters.*
- *My friend, Jim, likes to go scuba diving.*

d. To set off introductory dependent clauses or phrases:

- e.g. - *Since we have finally arrived in town, we went shopping.*
- *Last Sunday, I went shopping.*



PUNCTUATION

2- Comma (Continued):

e. To separate numbers in thousands:

e.g. This TV costs \$3,500.

f. To separate date:

e.g. The project is planned to start on Thursday, June 5, 2020.

g. To separate city and country:

e.g. The project is planned to be in Giza, Egypt.

h. With names if the surname is mentioned first:

e.g. His name is James, L.A.



PUNCTUATION

3-Colon:

a. To introduce a list that demonstrates whatever was previously stated, definition, example, cautionary words, headings, sub-headings or equations.

e.g. -There are many reasons for poor written communication: lack of planning, poor grammar, misuse of punctuation marks and insufficient vocabulary.

- Caution: hazardous materials , example:

Note: If the list consists of independent clauses, then capitalize the first letter after the colon (according to AmE).

e.g. The following tasks should be done: I need to study, You have to go shopping.



PUNCTUATION

3-Colon (Continued):

b. Time:

e.g. The meeting will be at 12:30 am.

c. Ratio :

e.g. The number of boys to girls is 1:3.

d. Correspondence:

e.g. Dear Mr.John:



PUNCTUATION

3-Semicolon:

a. Between two independent clauses not joined by a coordinating conjunction.

e.g. The light source was unusual; it emanated from a crack in the plastic surrounding the cathode.

b. To separate a list containing internal items.

e.g. The persons who attended the meeting are: Susan, the president; Mark, the vice president and John, the treasurer.



PUNCTUATION

4-Hyphen:

a. To create a compound adjective.

e.g. -He is a well-known engineer.

-Analysis of thin-walled structures.

- The load caused in-plane and out-of-plane forces.

b. To join numerator and denominator of a fraction.

e.g. Three-halves of the student will go.

c. To write a two word number.

e.g. Twenty-six people attended the conference.

d. To indicate the division of a word at the end of a line.

The word must not be a one-syllable word. At least two letters plus the hyphen on the first line, and three letters on the run-on line.



PUNCTUATION

5- En Dash: (you can type it by holding the Alt key+0150)

a. Span or range of numbers

e.g. You will find this material in chapters 8–12.

b. Conflict or connection

e.g. - The liberal–conservative debate never ends.

- The Perth–Dubai–Boston flight takes more than a day.

- There is a north–south railway in the same area as the highway that runs east–west.

c. Compound adjectives. (similar to hyphen)



PUNCTUATION

6-Apostrophe:

The apostrophe has three uses: contractions, plurals from letters or numbers and possessives.

e.g. - *let's, don't, couldn't, it's, she's*

-*He received four A's and two B's.*

-*The child's toy*

-*Excessive lawyers' fees. (the apostrophe comes after the plural s)*



VERB TENSES

Please try to translate the following sentences into English:

1. إنني أشرب ثلاثة اكواب من الماء في اليوم.
2. إن المطر ينهر بغزارة.
3. غدا، سوف أذهب إلى الجامعة.
4. هل شاهدت هذا المسلسل من قبل؟
5. انا أدرس هذا الموضوع منذ ساعتين.
6. لقد ذهبت إلى الجامعة بالأمس.
7. لقد كنت نائما عندما إتصلت بي.
8. لقد قرأت 100 كتاب عندما بلغت عمر 13.
9. غدا بعد الظهر، سوف اكون مسافرا.
10. كنت قد ذاكرت لمدة ساعتين عندما اتصلت بي.
11. بحلول العام القادم، سوف اكون قد درست علم الهندسة لمدة عامين.
12. بحلول العام القادم، سوف اكون قد قرأت 5 كتب.



VERB TENSES

Translation of the sentences:

1. I drink three cups of water daily. (Present simple)
2. It is raining heavily outside. (Present continuous)
3. Tomorrow, I will go to college. (Future)
4. Have you watched this movie before? (Present perfect)
5. I have been studying this subject for 2 hours. (Present Perfect Continuous)
6. Yesterday, I went to college. (Past)
7. I was sleeping when you called me. (Past Continuous)
8. I had read 100 books by the time I was 13years old. (Past Perfect)
9. Tomorrow afternoon, I will be traveling.(Future Continuous)
10. I had been studying for 2 hours when you called me. (Past Perfect Continuous)
11. By next year, I will have been studying engineering for 2 years. (Future Perfect Continuous)
12. By next year, I will have read 5 books. (Future Perfect)



End of Lecture 8

*Please study chapter 7 in Ref[4] and Appendix A
in Ref[5]*

*Also visit the following website to study verb
tenses: [https://www.grammarly.com/blog/verb-
tenses/](https://www.grammarly.com/blog/verb-tenses/)*