

# Editing a Text

## The importance of punctuation

In this lesson we explore punctuation symbols that are often used incorrectly and discuss how they should be used.

### Outcomes

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- explain how punctuation marks influence how language is read aloud
- use the colon and the semi-colon in context
- differentiate between the hyphen and the dash in context

### Curriculum Links

#### LO 3: Writing and Presenting

- reflect on, and evaluate own work, considering the opinion of others, and present final product

#### LO 4: Language

- use structurally sound sentences in a meaningful and functional manner

### Lesson Notes

Punctuation is used to indicate how language should be read aloud. It also adds meaning to written language. Look at the sentence below to see how punctuation can affect meaning:

*A solution must be found.*

- On the simplest level, the capital letter and the full stop show us that this is a complete idea.
- But, if we insert an exclamation mark, the text will look like this...

*A solution must be found!*

- By adding an exclamation mark, we have indicated urgency – it has now become very necessary to find the solution.
- By adding inverted commas, a reader now knows that someone is saying these words...

*"A solution must be found!"*

#### The punctuation of titles in a text

- If you refer to the title of a film, novel or newspaper in your writing, you need to use punctuation to show that you are mentioning another text. For example:
  - I love "Gone with the Wind"
  - I love Gone with the Wind,
  - I love *Gone with the Wind*

The inverted commas, the underlining, and the italics show that a title is being referred to.

#### The colon

The colon is used to indicate that a list, a reason or explanation is to follow. What comes after the colon explains and expands on what comes before the colon.

*I value the following qualities: honesty, integrity and initiative.*

In this example, it appears at the start of a list of attributes that the writer values.

#### The semi-colon

The semi-colon is used to separate related, equally important sentences.

*It was a beautiful day; his mood was not in line with the weather.*

#### Note

**Do not be tempted to replace the semi-colon here with a comma, as you would then be guilty of making the comma splice error.**

#### The hyphen (-) and the dash (–)

Although these punctuation marks look similar, they are used differently:

- For example, the word co-operate uses a hyphen to join two parts of the same word. The two letters are separated to indicate how the word should be pronounced.
- The pair of dashes in the following sentence is used on either side of the additional information which is not essential to the meaning of the sentence.

*She was – before he met her – someone he never thought he'd like.*

### TASK

Read the passage below and state the function of each punctuation mark that has been used:

*I applied for the job of co-ordinator at summer camp – it was such a surprise when I was appointed! Before arriving I need make sure that I have a full camping kit: back pack, tent, torch and sleeping bag.*