

# Punctuation

**.** period Use a period at the end of declarative and imperative sentences and when writing abbreviations.

**?** question mark Use a question mark at the end of a question.

**!** exclamation point Use an exclamation point at the end of a sentence that expresses strong emotion.

**,** comma Use a comma to separate items in a series, to join independent clauses with a conjunction, and to set off a direct quotation in a sentence.

**“ ”** quotation marks Use quotation marks to enclose direct quotations and some titles.

**'** apostrophe Use an apostrophe when writing possessive nouns and contractions.

**:** colon Use a colon before certain lists and when writing the time.

**;** semicolon Use a semicolon between two independent clauses if a conjunction is not used.

**-** hyphen Use a hyphen to join two words that are put together to form a single idea, and when writing fractions, words, and some number words.

**( )** parentheses Use a pair of parentheses to enclose explanations and other useful information in a sentence.