**Punctuation**

A sentence end is indicated with one of the following punctuation marks:

1) **Full stop (.)** is placed at the end of declarative sentences:

*It’s cold today.*

*The office was closed.*

2) **Question mark (?)** is placed at the end of interrogative sentences with direct

or inverted word order:

*Who’s that?*

*Did you see the show?*

*Could you wait, please?*

3) **Exclamation mark (!)** is placed at the end of exclamatory or imperative

sentences:

*Oh, no! I don’t believe it!*

*Stop shouting!*

Between parts of a simple or complex sentence there are also used:

1) **Semi-colon (;)**

The **semi-colon** is used between two separate statements which are linked in

meaning.

*Melanie is a very kind person; she visits David in hospital every day.*

We could also use a full stop between the parts of this complex sentence.

2) **Colon (:)**

We use a **colon** before a list or an enumeration in a simple sentence or before an

explanation in a complex sentence:

*There wasn’t much in the fridge: a couple of sausages, some butter, half*

*a bottle of milk.*

*Vicky felt nervous: she hated the dark.*

3) **Dash (-)**

A **dash** is rather informal, it may appear either in a simple or complex

sentence. It is sometimes used instead of a colon or a semi-colon:

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*I’m having a great time – there’s lot to do.*

*Vicky felt nervous – she hated the dark.*

4) **Comma (,)**

a) We often use a comma when we link two statements within a compound

sentence with *and, but* or *or:*

*Daniel was tired, and his feet were hurting.*

*It’s a really good camera, but I can’t afford it.*

b) We can also use a comma in a complex sentence when a clause has

subordinating conjunctions *if, when* and *although, etc.* A subordinate clause

usually comes before a principal one in these cases:

*When the office is busy, Sarah has to work late.*

c) A comma is often used to mark detached parts of the sentence:

*Sarah, unfortunately, has to work late.*

*On busy days, Sarah has to work late.*

d) We also use commas in a list of more than two homogeneous parts of the

sentence. The last two are linked by *and*, often with a comma:

*I went out with Rachel, Vicky, Emma* ***and*** *Matthew.*

e) A comma can detach a direct address:

*You, Miss Brown, must leave the class at once.*

f) We also use commas when parenthetical words or phrases are included

into a sentence:

*The car was just average. Not too new.* ***To tell you the truth,*** *I didn’tpay much attention to it.*