

# Punctuation Basics

Helping You to Communicate More Effectively

## PUNCTUATION SHORTCUTS:

**Comma:** tells the reader when to pause.

**Period:** indicates the end of a sentence.

**Question Mark:** asks the reader for a response.

**Exclamation Mark:** expresses shock, surprise or anger.

## What Is Punctuation?

Punctuation enables your reader to understand what you're saying. When you forget to use punctuation, or you use it incorrectly, the reader can get the wrong idea.

1

For example, what's wrong with this sentence?

**"I like cooking my family and my cat."**



2

Adding **commas** to the list tells the reader when to pause, and makes your meaning clear.

**"I like cooking, my family, and my cat."**



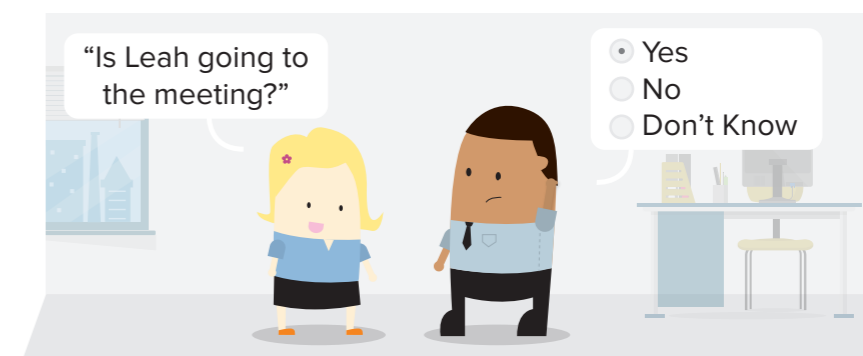
3

A **period** or **full-stop** indicates a longer pause. It tells the reader that the sentence has ended, and that the next one will likely introduce a new idea.

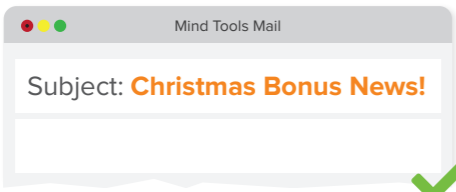


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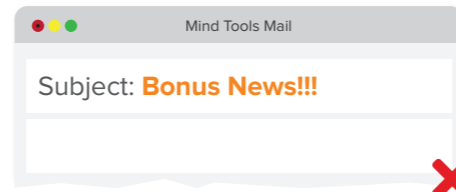
A **question mark** asks the reader for a response.



6



An **exclamation mark** indicates surprise, shock, anger, or emphasis.



But using too many can make you seem **less** serious, especially in business writing.

To learn more Punctuation Basics, read our article at: [mindtools.com/punctuation-basics](http://mindtools.com/punctuation-basics)

"I wonder if this is too high."



But some questions don't need an answer, so they don't need a question mark.

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