

**BUSINESS COMMUNICATION SKILLS  
[BCS1101]**

**WRITING SKILLS  
Part 2**

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# APPLICATION OF WRITING SKILLS

## Outline of presentation

- 1) Rules of using Punctuation Marks
- 2) Sentence Structure
- 3) Paragraphing
- 4) Essay Writing

# RULES OF USING PUNCTUATION MARKS

**4) Hyphen:** A hyphen (–) is a punctuation mark with three main uses. Many people confuse this punctuation mark with the dash, but the two are quite different. The hyphen can be used in compound words, to link words to prefixes, and also as a way to show word breaks.

## ***Example 1: (compound words)***

- I work part-time.
- Self-development
- Self-confidence

## ***Example 2: (compound names)***

- Jane-Gina Johnson
- Annie Musonda-Mubanga

## ***Example 3: (prefixes to words)***

- These things happened before the pre-lecture time.

## ***Example 4: (indicate word breaks)***

- The twentieth-century was very different from other preceding time periods.

**5) Dash:** The dash (–) is used to separate words into statements.

- The dash can also be used to mark off words or statements that are not important to the meaning of the statement.
- \*The dash (–) is slightly wider than a hyphen.
- There are two kinds of dashes, the en dash, and the em dash.
  - 1) The en dash is a symbol (–) that is used in writing or printing to indicate a range or connections.
  - 2) The em dash is twice longer than the en dash, and is used in places of a comma, parenthesis, or colon to enhance readability or emphasize the conclusion of a sentence.
- **Example 1:** (En dash)
  - The Berlin conference was signed in the years 1884–1885
- **Example 2:** (Em dash)
  - She gave him her answer—No!

## 6) Exclamation Mark:

- An exclamation mark (!) is used to show emphasis, show strong emotion or give a command.
- It can be used in the middle of a sentence or at the end of a sentence. When used at the end of a sentence, it also takes on the role of a full stop or a period.
- ***Examples:***
- Stop!
- Come here!
- Sit down!
- What a beautiful house you have!
- Help!

## 7) Colon:

- A full colon or simply colon (:) is a punctuation mark is used to introduce a quotation, an example, a series, or even an explanation. Secondly, it can be used to separate two independent clauses. Finally, a colon can be used to show emphasis.
- ***Examples:***
- You have two choices: finish the work today or lose the contract.
- That's because we have one goal: for you to consider your website a success.
- Alice has all the ingredients: flour, salt, milk, potatoes and onions.

## 8) Semicolon:

- A semicolon (;) is used to separate two independent clauses while still demonstrating that a close relationship exists between them.

- ***Examples:***

- 1) My daughter is a teacher; my son is a doctor.
- 2) We have five members in the team: two from China; and three from Brazil.
- 3) Richard always slept with the light on; he was afraid of the dark.

## 9) Parenthesis: ( )

- Parenthesis is used to add or enclose extra information in your own writing such as numbers, words, phrases, sentences, letters, symbols.
- It is used to enclose materials that are used as explanations or commentaries and which could be excluded without changing the meaning of the sentence.
- It is also used when additional information is added to indicate either a plural or singular forms of a word such as: “the choice(s).”
- ***Example:*** The two brothers (Richard and Sean) were learning how to play a guitar.

# 10) Brackets: [ ]

- The term brackets is used to enclose information
  - which is missing
  - which is used to explain what the original author stated
  - added by someone else other than the original author
- It is also used to alter or change quotations such as when referring to someone else's statement.

## ***Example:***

- I appreciate it [the gift], but I am sorry I cannot accept it.
- Was he [the defendant] there when you arrived?

# Difference between Parenthesis and brackets

While both parentheses and brackets are punctuation marks used to set apart certain words and sentences, there are differences:

- Parentheses, ( ), are used to add extra information in text, while brackets, [ ], are used mainly in quotations to add extra information that wasn't in the original quote.

## **How do you know when to use brackets or parentheses?**

- Parentheses are used to enclose additional information in your own writing;
- brackets are editorial marks used to insert comments into someone else's words that you are quoting

# 11) Ellipsis ...

- An ellipsis is usually represented by three dots (...) and four dots when used at the end of the sentence (....)
- This punctuation symbol is used to show that there has been an omission of some letters or words.
- In many cases, ellipses are used to cut statement short to avoid unnecessary or irrelevant words that have no impact on the meaning of the statement being made.
- We often use an ellipsis to show that parts of sentences are left out.

## ***Examples:***

- 1) The manager stated that... hard work is the hallmark of this company.
- 2) After signing their business project, both parties were met by a long silence....

## 12) Slash: /

- The **slash** is the oblique slanting line of a punctuation mark
- The slash can be used to separate lines when they are written in a continuous line or show two contradictory notions.
- When a slash is used in a text, it is meant to indicate the word **or**
- **Example1:** (show fractions)  $1/3 = one-third$
- **Example2:** (abbreviations)  $w/o = without$   $N/A = not applicable$
- **Example3:** (word “per” in measurements)  $80 miles/hour = 80 miles per hour$
- **Example4:** (show alternatives)  $please press on Refresh/Reload button.$

# SENTENCE STRUCTURE

- A sentence constitutes a number of phrases and these phrases merge to form clauses.
- A sentence comprises of five units called elements of a sentence structure.
- These elements include the **subject, verb, complement, object and adverbial**.
  - A verb A verb is a word that indicates a physical action (e.g., “drive”), a mental action (e.g., “think”), or a state of being (e.g., “exist”). Every sentence contains a verb.
  - The subject of the sentence is that element which is being talked about (the topic or theme)
  - The predicate is the word or group of words which comes after the verb as in

# Examples of Short Sentences

- (i) The Dean (subject) is extremely kind (predicate)
- (ii) Martha (subject) killed a goat (predicate)

# PARAGRAPHING

- A paragraph is a set of related sentences dealing with a single topic.
- There is no rule about the length of a paragraph. It varies according to the need.
- For example, in a book that discussed concepts such as Economics, there may be long paragraphs. In business letters, the paragraphs are short; and in a report the paragraphs may be longer.

# Characteristics of a good paragraph

- Topic sentence: A topic sentence is a sentence that indicates in a general what idea the paragraph is going to deal with.
- Adequate development: Add supporting ideas to the topic sentence, to develop it fully and adequately. There should be 3 to 6 ideas to support the topic sentence.
- Add RENNS (reasons, examples, names, numbers, senses), which give details and further explain the supporting ideas.
- Concluding sentence: The concluding sentence is the last sentence of the paragraph. It should leave the reader with something to think about. It can be written by restating the topic sentence in different words.

NEXT LESSON?

**ACADEMIC AND BUSINESS WRITING**