

Lesson two
Punctuation

17 Punctuation. Notice the boldface capital letters and marks of punctuation in the following sentences.

Mr. William Allen is a professor.
Is Mrs. Allen a professor?
No, she isn't.
Is Miss Brown an instructor?
No, she's a student.
This is an English class.
The teacher is Professor Allen.

a. Capitals

The first word of every sentence begins with a capital letter.
All titles begin with capital letters.
All names begin with capital letters.
Adjective forms derived from the names of nations begin with capital letters.

b. Apostrophes

Every contraction contains an apostrophe (') in the place where one or more letters have been left out.

c. Periods

Every statement is followed by a period (.).
Most abbreviations are followed by periods (Mr., Mrs., Dr.).¹¹

d. Commas

A comma (,) follows *yes* or *no* in a short or long response.

e. Question marks

Every question is followed (not preceded) by a question mark (?).

f. Indentation

A paragraph is a sequence of sentences about one topic. One way to indicate a paragraph is to indent the first sentence. To indent means to start writing a few spaces to the right of the left-hand margin. There are three paragraphs on page one of this lesson. This is also a paragraph. It is a sequence of six sentences about the topic of paragraphing, and the first sentence is indented.

¹¹ An abbreviation is a short way of writing something. Abbreviations are standard forms; you cannot invent them. These periods are not used in Britain.

18 Questions students sometimes ask

- a. Is it really correct to use contractions? Are they good English?

Yes, they are very good English and they are much more generally used than the long forms.

- b. Is it better to say *he's not* or *he isn't*?

It doesn't make any difference which you use because they both mean exactly the same thing. Some people use *he's not* when they want to emphasize the *not* and *he isn't* at all other times.

- c. Why is *professor* sometimes written with a capital initial and sometimes with a small one?

When the word *professor* stands before a name it is a title, as in *Professor Allen*. In all other positions it is an ordinary common noun and is not capitalized.

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Exercises are designed to give you practice in speaking quickly and correctly. Questions are based on the information in the model paragraphs and in the explanations, to provide meaning and continuity to your statements. Students who become familiar with the characters and think about their responses will derive the most benefit. Exercises should be done with books closed.

- a. Tell some things about yourself. Tell your nationality, your age, your occupation, and some of your personality traits. Try to use different adjectives (cheerful, generous, kind, nervous, . . .). Follow the patterns in Lesson I (§§ 2, 12, 15).

I am American. I am thirty-two. I am a teacher.
I am quiet and studious.¹²

- b. The instructor will tell you about some of the characters in the book. Ask your neighbor a yes/no question about the same information (§ 3).

Instructor: Mr. Allen is tall.

Student 1: Is Mr. Allen short?

Student 2: No, he isn't.

Student 3: Is he tall?

Student 4: Yes, he is.

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| 1. Mrs. Allen is a librarian. | 9. She is a good cook. |
| 2. She is slim and attractive. | 10. Jack is carefree. |
| 3. She is pleasant and sociable. | 11. Bill is studious. |
| 4. Mr. Baker is a chemistry professor. | 12. Jane is frivolous. |
| 5. He is rather elderly. | 13. Betty is serious. |
| 6. He is very kind. | 14. George is very bright. |
| 7. Mrs. Baker is a housewife. | 15. Sue Liu is charming. |
| 8. She is rather heavy. | |

- c. Make negative statements to oppose the following affirmative ones about the past (§§ 5b, 8).

Instructor: Sue was sad.

Student: She wasn't happy.

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| 1. Bill's room was large. | 4. George was poor. |
| 2. It was light. | 5. His clothes were old. |
| 3. It was comfortable. | 6. His suitcase was light. |

¹² Instructor: Describe yourself.

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| 7. Sue was rich. | 13. The lesson was short. |
| 8. Her clothes were beautiful. | 14. The items were easy. |
| 9. Her suitcase was heavy. | 15. They were useful. |
| 10. Mrs. Allen was sick. | |
| 11. She was weak. | |
| 12. She was unhappy. | |

d. Make information questions from the following statements and answer them. Substitute a question word for the word the instructor is saying when he raises his hand ¹³ (§§ 4, 11).

Instructor: *Mr. Baker is a chemist.*

Student 1: Who is a chemist?

Student 2: Mr. Baker.

Instructor: *Mr. Allen is away.*

Student 1: Where is Mr. Allen?

Student 2: He's away.

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| 1. <i>Sue Liu is Chinese.</i> | 11. <i>Mr. and Mrs. Allen are here.</i> |
| 2. <i>Her room is large.</i> | 12. <i>Their friends are outside.</i> |
| 3. <i>It is near the library.</i> | 13. <i>The lunch is in the car.</i> |
| 4. <i>Bill Brown is a good student.</i> | 14. <i>The picnic is at noon.</i> |
| 5. <i>He's in the library now.</i> | 15. <i>We are very happy.</i> |
| 6. <i>This is a practice exercise.</i> | |
| 7. <i>These are questions.</i> | |
| 8. <i>Those are answers.</i> | |
| 9. <i>The questions are here.</i> | |
| 10. <i>The answers are there.</i> | |

e. The instructor will mention something in this room. Repeat the word your instructor says, preceding it with *a/an* or *the*, whichever is appropriate (§ 13).

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| 1. teacher | 6. window | 11. blackboard |
| 2. student | 7. door | 12. eraser |
| 3. book | 8. ceiling | 13. pen |
| 4. desk | 9. floor | 14. pencil |
| 5. chair | 10. radiator | 15. briefcase |

¹³ Instructor: Raise your hand while saying the italicized words.