


Warm up

Ask students if they can remember what capitalization and punctuation they use when they write emails, essays or reports. They should mention capital letters at the beginning of a sentence, and full stops, question marks and exclamation marks at the end. Elicit what other uses of punctuation and capitalization they know.

Practice

1  Here are two mind maps. See if you can complete them with uses of punctuation and capitalization.

- Use this section to clear up any misconceptions students have shown in the Warm up. You can also use this exercise to point out all the uses of capitalization and punctuation which are focused on here. Unless you feel your students are ready for other examples such as the semicolon or dash, you can tell students you are now focusing on only some specific uses.

Suggested answers

- a**
- Question mark ends a question
 - Exclamation mark ends a sentence showing surprise/excitement
 - Comma to separate parts of a sentence / in lists
 - Apostrophe for possession / to show a letter is missing
- b**
- To begin a sentence
 - For proper nouns
 - In titles
 - For names of countries, mountains, hotels, etc.

2 A student has written this text. They have made some mistakes with capital letters and full stops. Rewrite it correctly.

- Make sure students understand they only need to focus on capital letters and full stops here. If they need a clue, you could tell them that there are two sentences.

Suggested answer

Great Britain is an island surrounded by many small islands. To one side is the North Atlantic Ocean, and to the other, the North Sea.

3 Read Ben's shopping list. Complete the sentence which describes what he bought. Pay attention to commas.

- This exercise focuses on using commas in lists.
- **Note:** Depending on what they have read, students may have an opinion on whether or not a comma should be used between the last two items in the list (after *minced beef*). A comma used in this way is called an 'Oxford comma' or a 'serial comma'. Whether or not to use it is generally a matter of style in British English. Sometimes using it can help to avoid confusion. In American English, it is very often used.

Suggested answer

Ben bought some eggs, grapes, lychees, rice, pak choi, mushrooms, minced beef and washing liquid.

4 Match the endings (1–6) to the beginnings (a–f) to make sentences. Add a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark at the end of the sentences.

- Students could complete this exercise in pairs. Depending on how well they deal with the exercise, you could elicit or suggest that most of these sentences are informal, and some of them use some colloquial English. It might help students to say the sentences aloud in order to work out the tone.
- When you are checking the answers, see if students can tell you the context – who would say each sentence?

Suggested answer

- a** 1 !
b 6 ?
c 3 .
d 5 ?
e 4 .
f 2 !

5 The apostrophes are missing. Add them where they are needed.

- You may want to point out here that to show possession in a regular plural noun you put the apostrophe after the plural *s*; there is no additional possessive *s* after the apostrophe (see sentence **f**). In irregular plural nouns like *women* and *children*, on the other hand, no plural *s* is needed; so you add the apostrophe and then a possessive *s* (see sentences **c** and **e**).
- Item **a** requires students to add the apostrophe correctly to the word *won't*, which is the standard English contraction of *will not*. Students will probably have come across this contraction before, but if they can't work out what it is, you will have to explain it, as the dissimilarity from the uncontracted words makes it impossible to guess. It's worth noting that, although this contraction is irregular, it follows the same rule for shortening *not* – i.e. the apostrophe goes between the *n* and the *t*.

Answers

- a** Gemma won't give me the flowers because she says they're hers.
b Forest High School hasn't won a rugby match since he's been a student there.
c We didn't bring the children's suitcases from the car!
d Do you have Charlie's email?
e I've found the women's football kit.
f Our parents' house is very old.

Reflect

6 Write a sentence including as many examples of the uses of punctuation and capital letters as you can.

- Ideally, students will come up with examples which cover a lot of the uses mentioned in the mind maps from the Warm up.
- Ask students to compare their sentences in pairs or small groups. See if they can help each other add more example uses to their sentences.
- You could elicit a few examples from the class and write them on the board. Ask the class to identify the usages.

Extra help

If your students need extra help with this topic, you could print out the 'Guide to punctuation and capitalization' on the next page and give it to them.

Guide to punctuation and capitalization

In the text, each instance of capitalization/punctuation is highlighted, numbered and annotated in the list below.

Do¹ you like to see and try a product in a store before you buy it online?² When³ you're⁴ in a store,⁵ do you use your smartphone to check online prices?⁶ If⁷ your answers are 'yes',^{8/9} you are probably a showroomer.¹⁰
Asia's^{11/12} shoppers are experts at showrooming.¹³ The¹⁴ top showroomers are in Vietnam.^{15/16} Forty¹⁷ per cent of Vietnamese¹⁸ people use their smartphones to compare prices in store and online.¹⁹ Many²⁰ younger shoppers (aged 18–30)^{21/22} also use smartphones while shopping to compare prices and find the best deals.²³

- 1 capital letter – begins a sentence
- 2 question mark – ends a question
- 3 capital letter – begins a sentence
- 4 apostrophe – shows a letter is missing
- 5 comma – separates parts of a sentence
- 6 question mark – ends a question
- 7 capital letter – begins a sentence
- 8 quotation marks – show what someone says
- 9 comma – separates parts of a sentence
- 10 full stop – ends a sentence
- 11 capital letter – begins a sentence
- 12 apostrophe – shows possession
- 13 full stop – ends a sentence
- 14 capital letter – begins a sentence
- 15 capital letter – shows a proper noun (name of a country)
- 16 full stop – ends a sentence
- 17 capital letter – begins a sentence
- 18 capital letter – shows a proper noun (nationality)
- 19 full stop – ends a sentence
- 20 capital letter – begins a sentence
- 21 brackets – show a definition or extra information
- 22 dash – shows a range of numbers
- 23 full stop – ends a sentence