



Punctuation Practice

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for the
Classroom



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Termination Marks

Periods, Question Marks, Exclamation Points

Termination Marks

Every sentence must begin with a capital letter and end with a form of punctuation (i.e., period, question mark, or exclamation point).

There are three types of sentences:



Declarative makes a statement



Interrogative asks a question



Exclamatory shows strong emotion and/or surprise and is also used for a command

Termination Marks

Although the words are the same, notice how the punctuation changes the emotion of the sentence:

Jessica had a baby.

a simple statement

Jessica had a baby?

a question

Jessica had a baby!

a shout of joy or surprise

Periods

Periods

Periods, which are used at the end of declarative sentences, are the most commonly used termination mark. A *declarative sentence* is simply a statement that can illustrate any of the following:

a fact

Jeannette Rankin was the first woman to be elected to Congress.

a condition

Many endangered species could be saved if we stop destroying their habitats.

a possibility

One day, we will find a cure for AIDS.

Periods

It is important to have periods at the end of sentences to tell where one thought ends. Look at the following passage and see if you can tell where the periods belong:

While walking to school yesterday, I noticed an object lying in the street as I walked closer to it, I could see that it was an injured kitten the animal was barely moving and had some blood on its fur it might have been struck by a vehicle since it wasn't wearing a collar, I decided to take it home my mother said she would take it to the vet's office while I was at school.

While walking to school yesterday, I noticed an object lying in the street. as I walked closer to it, I could see that it was an injured kitten. the animal was barely moving and had some blood on its fur. it might have been struck by a vehicle. since it wasn't wearing a collar, I decided to take it home. my mother said she would take it to the vet's office while I was at school.

Question Marks

A *question mark* is used to punctuate an interrogative sentence. An *interrogative sentence* asks a direct question. When journalists write, for example, they often seek to answer the following questions:

Who?

Where?

What?

Why?

When?

How?

Question Marks

Here are some examples of direct questions:

What time is the party?

How many people live in China?

Where is the restroom?

Who voted for class president?

Do you think we'll get enough volunteers?

Question Marks

Sometimes a statement will have interrogative qualities, or sometimes an indirect question will be asked; in these cases, a period is used.

Pedro asked me whether I had completed the project yet.

(Have you completed the project yet?)

The officer wanted to know why I was speeding.

(Why were you speeding?)

I wasn't sure if he was telling me the truth.

(Are you telling me the truth?)

I don't understand why she keeps trying to feed me peas when she knows I don't like them

(Why does she keep trying to feed me peas when she knows I don't like them?)