This document supports the [Punctuation Literacy Focus](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/discipline/english/literacy/writing/Pages/litfocus.aspx) located in the Literacy Teaching Toolkit (Department of Education and Training, Victoria)

Common forms of punctuation

| **Punctuation mark/symbol** | **Example** |
| --- | --- |
| Capital letter | To begin sentences   * e.g. **T**om went to the beach.   To begin proper nouns   * e.g. One day **S**emi and **T**yler went to the beach   To begin direct speech   * e.g. Tyler called, “**P**ut on the brakes.”   To begin words in titles   * e.g. **T**he **C**ity by Armin Greder   To begin lines of poetry   * e.g. ‘**T**was Mulga Bill, from Eaglehawk, that caught the cycling craze;   To begin words that reference deity   * e.g. **G**od, **A**llah, **J**ehovah, **K**rishna   To write the first person singular pronoun ‘I’   * e.g. Mum and **I** went to the shop.   Abbreviations and trade names   * e.g. **NSW**-New South Wales, **A**rnott’s biscuits |
| Full stop . | Used to signal the end of a sentence. It comes immediately after the last word in the sentence.   * e.g. Fraser barracks for St. Kilda**.** |
| Question mark ? | Used to signal asking a question. It comes immediately after the last word in the question.   * e.g. Is it supposed to rain tomorrow**?** |
| Exclamation mark ! | To mark surprise   * e.g. Oh no**!**   To indicate strong feelings   * e.g. Go away**!**   To show emphasis   * e.g. Happy birthday**!**   To give commands   * Stop**!** |
| Quotation marks “ ” | Always come in pairs and must contain both an open quotation mark and a close quotation mark  To signal direct speech/dialogue or quoting a source   * e.g. **“**Katherine, get out of bed!**”** yelled Dad.   To emphasise a word or phrase   * e.g. We don’t mention the word **“**late**”** around him.   To signal a title, poem, song, book, play, movie   * e.g. **“**Go to Sleep Jessie!**”** by Libby Gleeson and Freya Blackwood |
| Comma , | Used to denote a slight pause  To separate clauses   * e.g. After the rain stopped**,** the sun came out.   To separate phrases within a sentence   * e.g. Every morning**,** Jan took Chester her dog**,** for a walk.   To separate items in a list   * e.g. Eliza bought sweet potato**,** tofu**,** chick peas and spinach for a vegetarian curry. |
| Apostrophes ’ | To signal a contraction   * e.g. they are = they’re   To signal the singular possessive   * e.g. This is Gary’s golf club. * e.g. Here is James**’** house or Here is James**’**s house (both acceptable)   To signal the plural possessive   * e.g. This is my parents**’** car * e.g. The children**’**s clothes |
| Colon : | To signal a list of items   * e.g. Punctuation is made up of many elements**:** full stops, capital letters, question marks and exclamation marks. |
| Semicolon ; | To signify a strong pause, slightly longer than a comma but not as final as a full stop.  Used between two independent clauses when they are too closely linked to be made into two separate sentences   * e.g. One hand I can see his point of view; on the other hand, I think my point of view is better. |
| Ellipsis … | To indicate an omission of a word, phrase, line or paragraph.   * e.g. Today, after months of hard work, we finished the project.   Today … we finished the project.  To express hesitation, changes of mood, suspense, or thoughts trailing off.   * e.g. The car sped towards the cliff and … And then…? |