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**?**
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| 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**!**
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| Quotation marks “ ” | Always come in pairs and must contain both an open quotation mark and a close quotation markTo 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 pauseTo 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.
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| 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
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| 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.
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| 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.
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| 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…?
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