

Punctuation Matters

The importance to meaning of the pause or stop that punctuation signals



Why punctuation matters. Some people find inspiration in cooking their families and their dogs. Others find inspiration in cooking, their families, and their dogs.

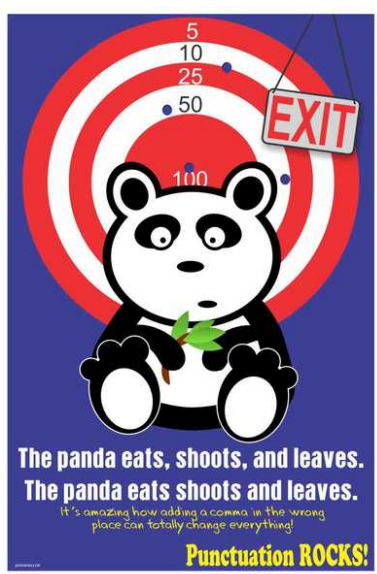


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Woman, without her man,
is nothing.

Woman! Without her,
man is nothing.



**HUNTERS
Please Use
Caution
When Hunting
--Pedestrians
Using
Walk Trail**



"It says your signal is important to us."

```
def add5(x):  
    return x+5  
  
def dotwrite(ast):  
    nodename = getNodeName()  
    label=symbol.sym_name.get(int(ast[0]),ast[0])  
    print '  %s [label="%s' % (nodename, label)  
    if isinstance(ast[1], str):  
        if ast[1].strip():  
            print '= %s';' % ast[1]  
        else:  
            print ''  
    else:  
        print ''  
        children = []  
        for n, child in enumerate(ast[1:]):  
            children.append(dotwrite(child))  
        print ', ' %s -> (' % nodename  
        for n, child in enumerate(children):  
            print '%s' % child,
```

The Code of Writing: Punctuation As Signs of Voice

An experiment in reading.

What follows is the same text, but in three different versions. Read each version in turn and notice your experience in understanding the text and what is helping or harming your ability to make sense of the text.

Version #1

thesecretsofpunctuationaremanymorethanyouguessthesesecretsareasancient
assmokesignalsorjungledrumsinplaintermsthetruthsignificantlyliesintheconn
ectionbetweensignsandsoundsthatalittledotwithacurvedtailmightrepresentap
auseinspeechmusthavebeenarevolutioninwritingnocuneiformclaytabletposse
ssedquestionmarksmusthavebeentotallyradicalwhenpunctuationdawnedmea
ningarosetoo

Version #2:

the secrets of punctuation are many more than you guess these secrets are as ancient as smoke signals or jungle drums in plain terms the truth significantly lies in the connection between signs and sounds that a little dot with a curved tail might represent a pause in speech must have been a revolution in writing no cuneiform clay tablet possessed question marks must have been totally radical when punctuation dawned meaning arose too

Version #3:

The secrets of punctuation are many. More than you guess, these secrets are as ancient as smoke signals or jungle drums. In plain terms, the truth—significantly—lies in the connection between signs and sounds. That a little dot with a curved tail might represent a pause in speech must have been a revolution in writing no cuneiform clay tablet possessed—question marks must have been totally radical! When punctuation dawned, meaning arose too.

--continue to the next page to see all three versions close together

Three Versions of the Same Text: What a Difference Punctuation Makes

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