



PUNCTUATE YOUR POINT!

Does punctuation matter in an email message? Yes! Why is following the rules of punctuation so important? To answer that question, ask yourself another question – are your customers or colleagues going to be comfortable with your work when you can't even punctuate a sentence properly? By using proper punctuation, you can demonstrate that you are professional and competent.

Want to see how good your punctuation skills are? Take the following quiz.

Quiz

Directions: Indicate whether the punctuation of each specified phrase is Correct (C) or Incorrect (I).

- C I 1. (You're) our first choice for this job.
- C I 2. (Its) a beautiful city.
- C I 3. (They're) is a videoconference tomorrow.
- C I 4. Please send the information by (Monday May 5).
- C I 5. The teleconference was held in (September 2005).
- C I 6. In (June 2006), we launched a new product.
- C I 7. Call before (noon, or) you won't be able to obtain a dinner reservation.

Solutions

1. Correct.

(You're) is a contraction of "You are."

2. Incorrect.

(Its) should be "It's"

"It's" is a contraction of "It is."

3. Incorrect.

(They're) is a contraction meaning "They are."

The correct choice for this sentence is "There."

4. Incorrect.

The correct punctuation is: "Monday, May 5."

A comma is required to separate the day of the week from the month.

A comma is also required to separate the day of the month from the year, as in "May 2, 2006."

5. Correct.

Don't use commas when you are including only the month and day (June 1), or month and year (June 2006).

6. Correct.

Same reason as above.

7. Correct.

Since the conjunction "or" has an independent clause on both sides of it, you need a comma.

In case you were wondering, the subject in the first clause is the "understood you." Since this is a command, the subject "you" is implied.

Score:

7 = You're perfect. (But, you knew that already.) Keep emailing!

5 - 6 = You're okay. You could learn a few tips from my book, *Email Etiquette Made Easy* (see link in resource box).

3 - 4 = You could use some help. Try my book, *Email Etiquette Made Easy* (see link in resource box).

Less than 3 = Ugh! Call me now! We'll schedule your intense therapy immediately.