Make Your (Punctuation) Mark!

Annie Bramson, Audrey Douglas, Micaela Garcia, Erin Hamilton, Lucy Hankins, Gillian Jarrard, Eli Moss, Cynthia Narkin, Michelle Norman, Olivia Ownby, Kieran Paskins, Cambria Roberts, Gracie Shippen, Kutter Wright

Honors 1320

Bethany Nay, UTF

Professor Kinkead

Writing in Ancient Rome

- ARCHAICLATINWASWRITTENPRIMARILYINSCRIPTIOCONTINUAWHICHMEANSNOWORDBREAKSORPUNCTUATIONBETWEENWORDSONOCCASIONTHEINTERPUNCTWOULDBEUSEDWHICHISADOTORWHATWEMIGHTCALLAMIDLEVELPERIODTHATWASUSEDTOSEPARATEWORDSTHEINTERPUNCTMIGHTEVENBETRIANGLESHAPED

- A·TEXT·WITH·INTERPUNCTS·MIGHT·LOOK·LIKE·THIS

The Period / Full Stop

❖ Developed by Aristophanes of Byzantium in ancient Greece, 3rd century BCE

❖ Originally a high dot ˙ but evolved into the lower dot we know today

❖ Used in many different contexts:

➢ ending a declarative sentence

➢ denoting abbreviations (Mrs. Smith)

➢ in math with decimals

➢ denoting file types (essay.docx)

➢ separating website and email addresses

❖ Called a *full stop* in Commonwealth English
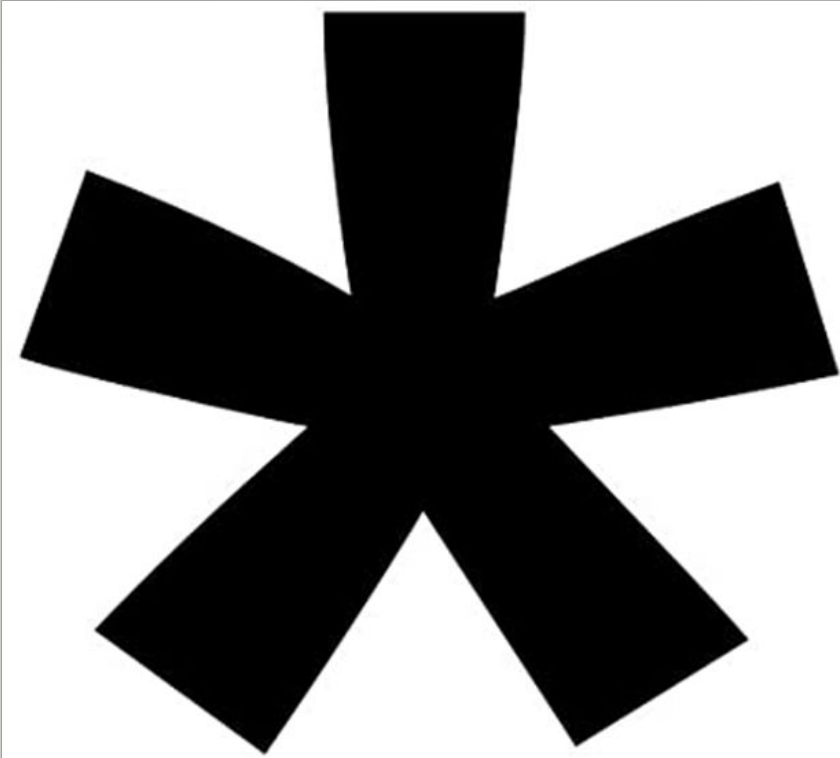
The Comma

- Came from Greek word "κόμμα" or "komma"
- First used in 1490s by Albus Manutius, who was an Italian printer and publisher
- 13th-17th century: originally a slash (/)
- Signals when the reader should breathe

Semicolon

- Created in Venice in 1494 by printer Aldus Manutius

- Semicolons didn't have a strict purpose until much after their invention

- Many writers dislike semicolons and find them unnecessarily fancy

- In the last few years, the semicolon has been adopted to act as a symbol for many suicide prevention campaigns

THE ASTERISK

- One of the oldest punctuation marks (300 B.C)

- '*asteriskos*' = little star

- Developed by Aristarchus of Samothrace (ancient Greece), but…

- Hypothesis that Sumerians invented a symbol called *dingir*, similar to *asteriskos* (5000 B.C)

- Used in the middle ages in the copying of Bibles to flag up text from other sources.

- Today's use:

- - as an informal footnote

- - three asterisks together (***) denote censorship

- - as a sign of multiplication
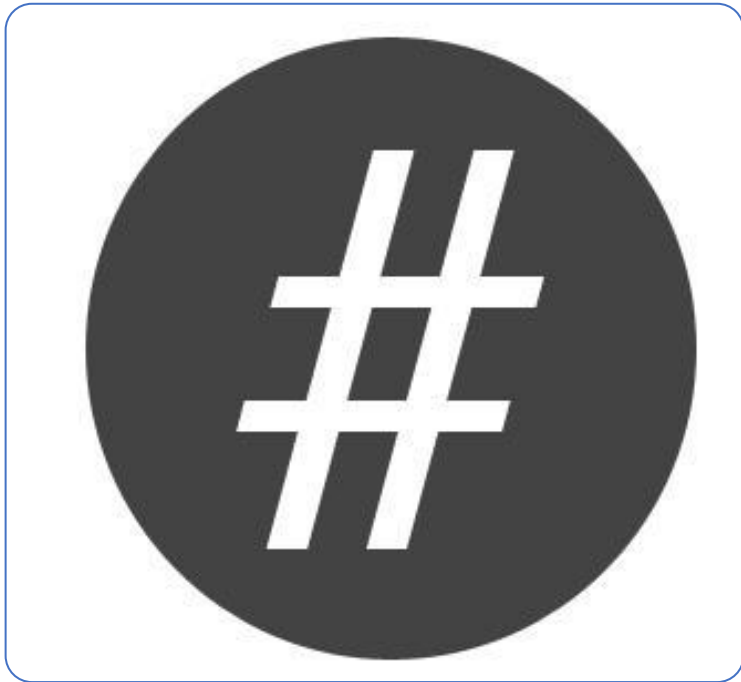
Exclamation Mark

- Originated in ancient Rome – "io" in capital letters
- Put on the keyboard in 1970
- Frequent use is criticized
- Currently seen as friendly instead of obnoxious or "too loud"
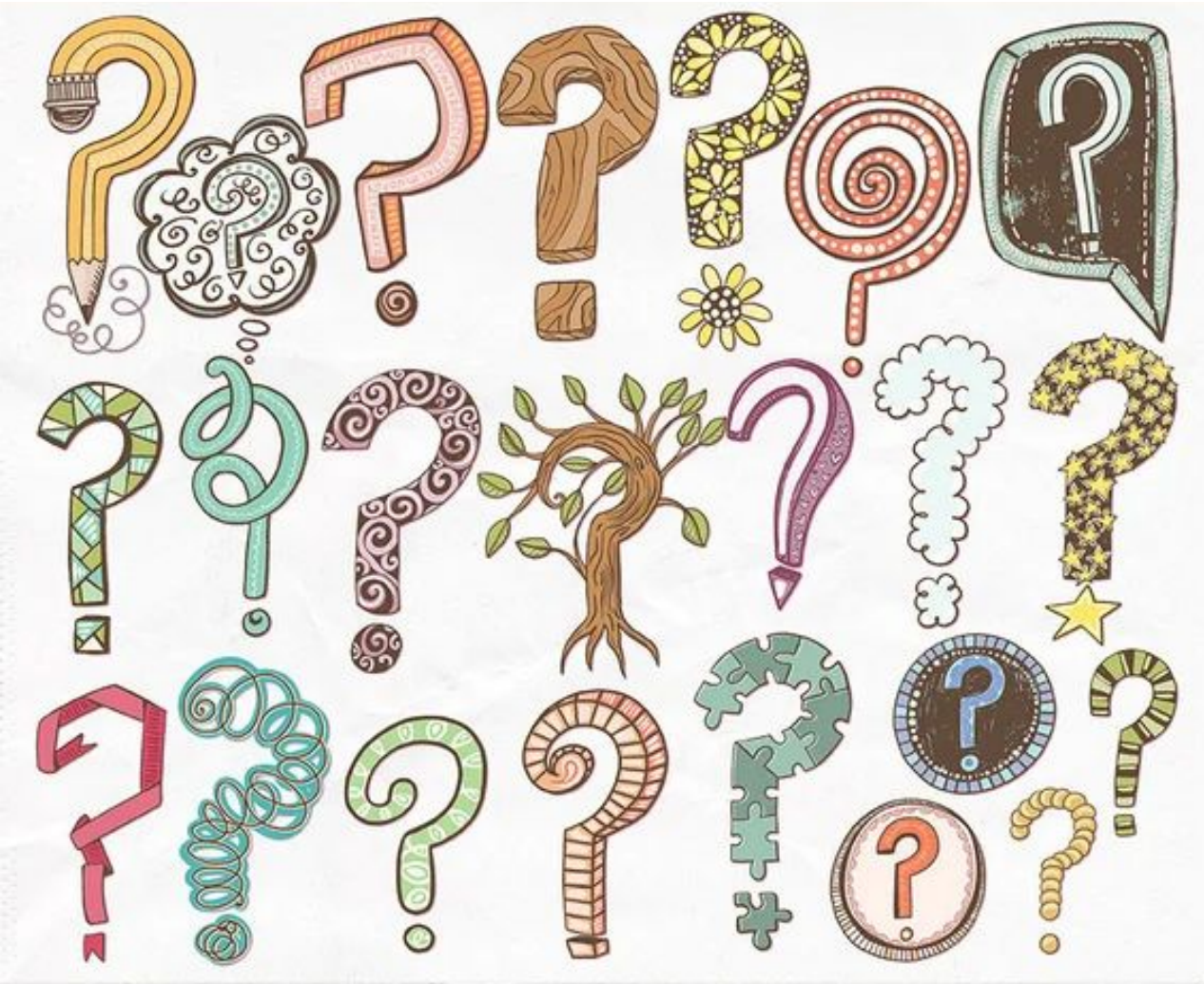- Women use more exclamation marks than men

Ampersand

- Origin: *and per se and, et.*
- 1797
- Used for shorthand
- Most common in passwords

Octothorpe or Hashtag

- Pound symbol–Latin roots (*libra pondo*), meaning "pound in weight"
- Octo–8 sides of the symbol
- Adopted by the telecommunications industry for the touch-tone feature on the telephone (1960s)
- Hashtag symbol suggested by Chris Messina in a **tweet** in 2007 to group topics and trends
- Extremely versatile: numbers, hashtags, sharp in music, checkmate

THE QUESTION MARK

In the Middle Ages, scholars wrote l *QUAESTIO* at the end of a sentence to show it was a question.
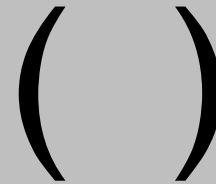
From *QUAESTIO*, shortened to *QO*.

Printer Henry Denham transformed QO to the question mark in the 1580s.

Question marks indicate questions or uncertainty.

In France, some writers insert a space before the question mark.

PARENTHESES

★ Appeared around 1500
★ Allowed a writer to include additional information
★ Derived from:
  ○ Greek word *parenthesis* meaning 'injection, insertion' or literally 'putting in beside'
  ○ French word *parenthèse,* Medieval Latin word *parenthesis* 'addition of a letter to a syllable in a word
★ Also called *lunula* by Desiderius Erasumus (1466 – 1536).

( )

Apostrophe - 1509

- Rhetorical device on Greek stage to absent listener
- Marking absence: contractions
  - don't, can't, there's
  - its v. it's
- Noting possession
  - Cambria's
  - students'
- Conflict over use
- Evolution of language
- Death of the Apostrophe?

Hyphen

❖ Dates back to Classic Greece

❖ Used in modern conventions of combining compound words in the 1400's

❖ Gutenberg invented the use of the hyphen to separate two syllables in order to keep the movable type in neat lines to look like handwritten work
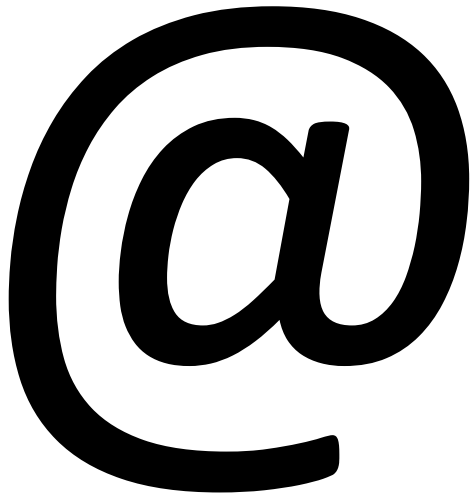
Em Dash

—

- ❖ Not to be confused with an en dash or hyphen—Em dashes are wider
- ❖ Approximately the width of "M"
- ❖ Attributed to Gutenberg
- ❖ Functions as a comma, colon, or parenthesis
- ❖ Ambiguity in the grammar community if spaces should be used around an em dash
  - ➢ Example: "The new nurse—who was wearing the same purple scrubs as the old nurse—entered the room with a tray of Jell-O."

Ellipsis fast facts…

- Modern Use: a pause or omission of thought
- First appeared in Terence's *Andria* in 1588 as dashes and hyphens
- Became highly used in plays
- Printing presses: made out of any available block
  - The … we know today appeared in the 19th century
- Modern association with lazy writing
- Gen Z uses it to imply a very specific emotion — see picture
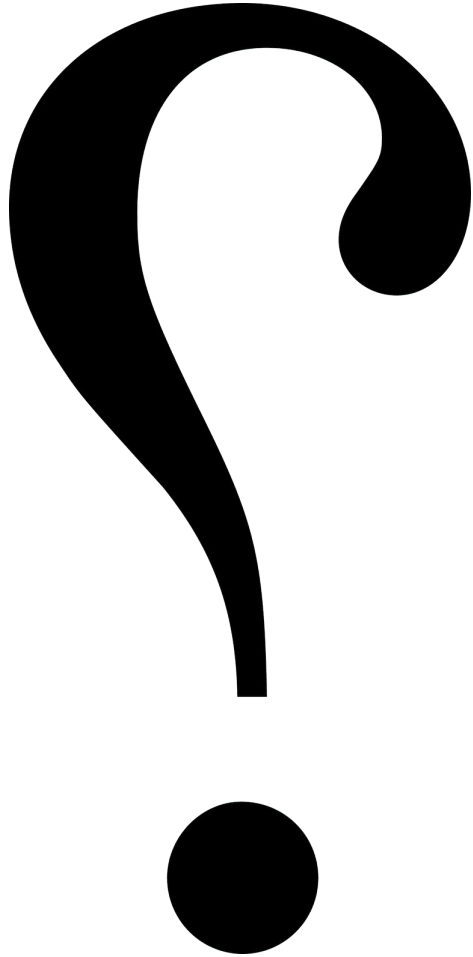
The @ Symbol

@

- Origin of @ is unknown
- First documented use in 1536 by a French merchant to denote units of wine
- In the 1970s, used in email addresses
- No official universal name exists symbol
  - Italians refer to @ as the "snail"
  - Dutch call it the "monkey tail"

Percontation Point

- Believed to have been invented by printer Henry Denham around 1580
- Used to indicate a rhetorical question or sarcasm
- Short lived, dying out in the 17th century

Interrobang

★ Richard Isbell in 1965

★ Exclamation + Question

★ "What are you doing?"

Punctuation Saves Lives

Let's eat Grandma.
Let's eat, Grandma.

Punctuation
saves lives.

Why Punctuate?

As noted writer and memoirist Russell Baker said when speaking aloud you punctuate constantly with body language your listener hears commas dashes question marks exclamation points quotation marks as you shout whisper pause wave your arms roll your eyes wrinkle your brow in writing punctuation plays the role of body language it helps the readers hear the way you want to be heard
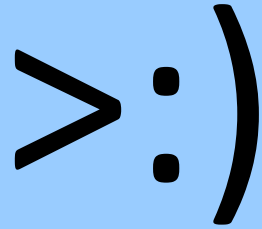
A Punctuation Poem

The stop point out, with truth, the time of pause

A sentence doth require at ev'ry clause.

At ev'ry comma, stop while *one* you count;

At semicolon, *two* is the amount;

A colon doth require the time of *three*;

The period *four*, as learned men agree.

--Cecil Hartley

The Gentleman's Book of Etiquette

and Manual of Politeness (1873)

Gen Z Punctuation for Text Language

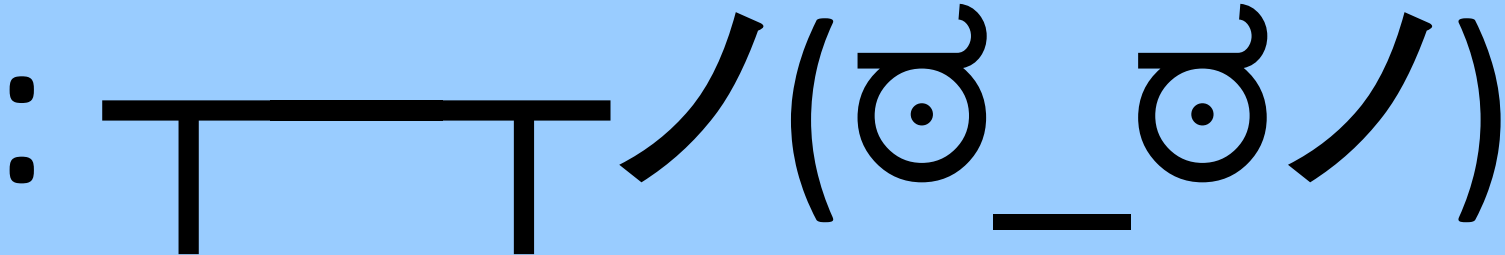# Impish Grin

>:)

"I'm mad"
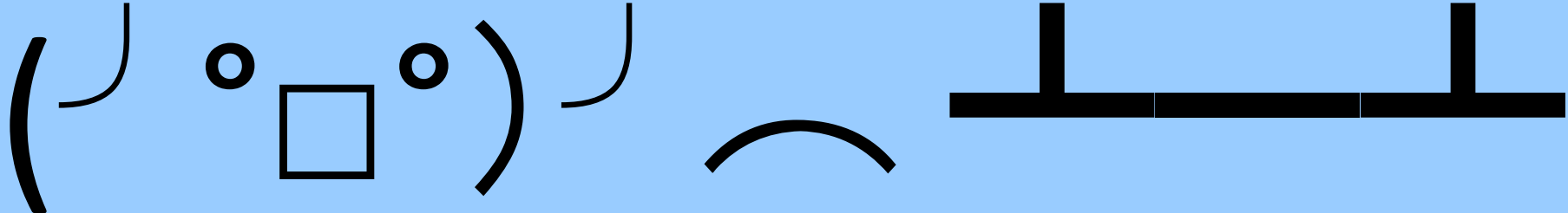
>:(

(often with a touch of irony)

The "Dead Look"

:/
or
:|

The Flipped Table (and Back Again)

(╯°□°)╯︵ ┻━┻

:┯━┯ノ(ಠ_ಠノ)

(Cue sheepish look)

Punctuation Matters

*"Sometimes you get a glimpse of a semicolon coming, a few lines farther on, and it is like climbing a steep path through woods and seeing a wooden bench just at a bend in the road ahead, **a place where you can expect to sit for a moment,** catching your breath."*

--Lewis Thomas, "Notes on Punctuation"

Honors 1320: History of Writing

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DARE TO KNOW

— SAPERE AUDE —