Apostrophes:

- Form a possessive noun or pronoun
  Example: We went to Jon’s house for lunch.

- Indicate a contraction
  Example: Who’s up for some ice cream? [who is]

NOTE: To make the word both plural and possessive, form the plural first, and then form the possessive by adding the apostrophe.
Example: The students’ papers were amazing!

Semicolons separate two complete statements that are closely related.

* As a general rule, if a period will not work, neither will a semicolon.

  Examples: We should go to the fair; I hear that they have good funnel cakes.
  We shouldn’t go to the fair; however, I do hear that they have good funnel cakes.

- They also separate items in a series when the items already contain commas.
  Example: Nicole has lived in St. Louis, Missouri; Chicago, Illinois; and Detroit, Michigan.

Colons signal to the reader that additional information will follow to elaborate on or explain a statement.

Example: The best part of the week is approaching: the weekend.

- They also introduce a numbered list after a complete statement.

  Correct Example: I had to watch three children: Hannah, Noah, and Thomas.
  [this revision forms a complete sentence prior to the colon]

Quotation Marks are used for material that is quoted or emphasized.

Examples: Joseph said, “I cannot finish my quiz!” (direct quotation)
Joseph said he could not finish his quiz. (indirect quotation)

- Use double quotation marks around unusual, unfamiliar, invented, or slang terms.

  Example: I told my friend that she was “the bomb.”

NOTE: Commas and periods always go inside the end quotation mark.

**Parentheses and dashes** are used to set off supplementary information when commas might be inappropriate. Parentheses and dashes should be used sparingly because they disrupt the flow of writing.

Examples: You are not to wear gym shoes to work. (Refer to the employee handbook.)
Please submit your Weekly Status Update (WSU).
Sally’s best friends—Nicole, Jessica, and Michelle—went to visit her in New York.

**Hyphens** are used to separate compound words. It can be difficult to tell when to use a hyphen. Always consult your dictionary if you are unsure about a word. However, these are general rules for when to use hyphens:

- **Compound adjectives that precede the noun it is modifying**
  Examples: The well-dressed student decided to study fashion merchandising.
  It’s difficult to drive downtown because there are so many one-way streets.
  He decided to send a follow-up e-mail to the instructors.
  *(A hyphen is used here because “follow-up” is a compound adjective modifying “e-mail.”)*
  Tomorrow, Blake plans to follow up with Nancy about the project.
  *(A hyphen is not used here because “follow up” is a verb in this sentence.)*

  **NOTE:** When compound adjectives come after a noun, hyphens are not used.
  Example: The fashion merchandising student is well dressed.

- **Compound numbers**
  Examples: My sister turned thirty-two this year.
  The magazine will celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary this year.

- **Usually, do not use a hyphen with a prefix (keep it one word), but there are a few exceptions such as the prefixes ex-, self-, all-, and suffix -elect. Hyphens are also used between words and figures.**
  Examples: Our neighbor is bilingual.
  *(“Bi” is the prefix here, but a hyphen is not necessary.)*
  Jake is an introvert and tends to be antisocial.
  *(A hyphen is not necessary between “anti” and “social.”)*

  Stephen’s ex-wife will be at the art exhibit on Monday.
  She tends to be self-conscious about wearing glasses.
  On most cruises, the food is all-inclusive.
  Mayor-elect, John Brown, promises to develop the community recreational center.
  He has so many T-shirts!
  My dad’s favorite restaurant closed in the late-1990s.