

Grammar - Revise your symbols

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A **star (asterisk)** (i.e. *) is a reference mark used to indicate an explanatory sentence or paragraph at the bottom of a page. A * is also used to replace a letter or letters left out in swear words to avoid them becoming objectionable, yet conveying the same force meant by the speaker e.g. *He replied, "Don't be such a b***** fool!"* We can also use a * for example when talking about a 3* hotel. An **asterisk** is often used to mean multiply in programming languages.

Don't forget to use an **apostrophe** (i.e. ') in the right place. One example of this is in the previous sentence where letters have been left out (i.e. **don't**). Another is the possessive case of a singular noun we add an **apostrophe** and an **s** e.g. **Dave's Café**. We can also form the possessive case of a plural noun, by adding an apostrophe after the **s** e.g. girls' teams. Warning – do not use an open-quote when an apostrophe is required at the start of a word. The default automatic corrections of modern word processors, to cope with the lack of a distinction between apostrophes and open-quotes on keyboards, often get this wrong e.g. '98 for 1998 should not be '98.

Let's move on. An **ellipsis** (i.e. three dots ...) can be used in various ways in sentences. It can be used to show an unnaturally long pause e.g. *"So Marty...what shall we do next?"* It can also be used as a sentence that trails into silence e.g. *I had the feeling you might say that...* An ellipsis can be used as an unfinished thought e.g. *Now shall I go shopping...?* It can also be used as an intentional omission of words e.g. *the concert was awesome...truly amazing!* Rather than *(it was) truly amazing!*

Category: English / Grammar / Symbols
Level: Intermediate / Upper intermediate

Some words in sentences are underlined (i.e. **underlined**) or put in italics (i.e. ***italics***) or bold (i.e. **bold**) to emphasise them. An ***underscore*** (i.e. **_**) is popular on e-mail addresses e.g. jack_frost@hotmail.com. An ***underscore*** can also be used when filling in a blank on a line e.g. *Your name _____*.

Forward slash (Virgule/slash/solidus/diagonal) (i.e. **/**) is used in webpage addresses or in html or other programming languages. It is also used to show alternative words are possible e.g. *student/employee* or to indicate choice e.g. *he/she*. It's also used as a mathematical symbol for division e.g. 300/10, or in fractions such as ¼ or ½ or in units such as 15m/s (metres per second). ***Forward slash*** is also used as a separator of dates e.g. 11/09/01 or in American English 09/11/01 or *he played for Manchester United in the 2009/2010 football season*.

Backward slash (backslash, reverse solidus, reverse division, oblique, a slosch, backslant whack, backwhack, reverse slant) (i.e. ****) is used in some programming languages. This article has hopefully been a fun bit of revision.

EXERCISES

- 1. Dictation:** The teacher will read four to six lines of the article slowly and clearly. Students will write down what they hear. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again. Self correct your work from page two - filling in spaces and correcting mistakes. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total number of errors. Less than five is very good. Ten is acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than twenty - we need to do some work!
- 2. Reading:** The students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.
- 3. Vocabulary:** Students now look through the article and underline any vocabulary they do not know. Look in dictionaries. Discuss and help each other out. The teacher will go through and explain any unknown words or phrases.
- 4. The article:** Students look through the article with the teacher.
 - a) What is the article about?
 - b) What do you think about the article?

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5. **Let's chat!** In pairs: One of you is speaking on your mobile **or** computer to your friend on Skype in another country. You are telling them all about the English grammar lesson you did today in class! Tell them about the grammar symbols revision you did! The other then chats about the symbols used in their country. How do they compare?

6. **Let's do 'The Article Quiz':** Have the students quiz each other in pairs. They score one point for each correct answer, and half a point each time they have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

Student A

- 1) When is an asterisk used?
- 2) Whose café was mentioned?
- 3) When is an apostrophe used?
- 4) What was truly awesome?
- 5) When are italics used?

Student B

- 1) When do you use forward slash?
- 2) Name the famous football team.
- 3) What is forward slash also known as?
- 4) What football season dates are mentioned?
- 5) What is backward slash used for?

7. **Let's think!** Swap partners. With your new partner on the board write as many words to do with **punctuation and symbols** as you can. *One-two minutes.* Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

8. **Let's write an e-mail:** Write and send a 200 word e-mail to your teacher: **The importance of symbols.** Try to use as many forms of punctuation as you can! Your e-mail can be read out in class.

SPELLING TEST

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards, check your answers with your teacher, using the following ratings: **Pass = 12, Good = 15, Very good = 18, Excellent = 20**

1	symbols	11	diagonal
2	reference	12	omission
3	explanatory	13	awesome
4	unnaturally	14	example
5	thought	15	pound
6	apostrophe	16	separator
7	ellipsis	17	mathematical
8	objectionable	18	division
9	Manchester	19	substitute
10	conveying	20	revision

LET'S PRACTICE

1. Ellipsis - ... and apostrophe - ': Write a sentence using an ellipsis - ... then write another using an apostrophe. Correct your mistakes. Compare with what other students have written.

1) _____

2) _____

2. %, =, &, @ symbols: Write two sentences using either %, =, & or @ symbols in the following two sentences. Correct your mistakes. Compare with what other students have written.

1) _____

2) _____

3. Symbols - £/\$/€: Write two sentences using **pounds, dollars** or **euros** signs in your sentences. Correct your mistakes. Compare with what other students have written.

1) _____

2) _____

4. Forward slash - /: Write two sentences using a forward slash in each sentence. Correct your mistakes. Compare with what other students have written.

1) _____

2) _____

5. Asterisk - *: Write two sentences using an **asterisk - *** in each sentence. Correct your mistakes. Compare with what other students have written.

1) _____

2) _____

6. Underscore and underline: Write two sentences using an **underscore** in one. In the other **underline** something. Correct your mistakes. Compare with what other students have written.

1) _____

2) _____

GAP FILL: READING

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

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A **star (asterisk)** (i.e.*) is a (2)_____ mark used to indicate an explanatory sentence or paragraph at the bottom of a page. A * is also used to replace a letter or letters left out in (3)_____ words to (4)_____ them becoming (5)_____, yet (6)_____ the same force meant by the speaker e.g. *He replied, "Don't be such a b***** (7)_____!"* We can also use a * for example when talking about a 3* (8)_____. An **asterisk** is often used to mean multiply in programming languages.

Don't forget to use an **apostrophe** (i.e.') in the right place. One example of this is in the (1)_____ sentence where letters have been left out (i.e. **don't**). Another is the possessive case of a singular noun we add an **apostrophe** and an **s** e.g. **Dave's Café**. We can also form the possessive case of a plural noun, by adding an apostrophe after the **s** e.g. girls' teams. Warning – do not use an open-quote when an apostrophe is required at the start of a word. The default automatic corrections of modern word processors, to cope with the lack of a distinction between apostrophes and open-quotes on keyboards, often get this wrong e.g. '98 for 1998 should not be `98. Let's move on. An **ellipsis** (i.e. three dots ...) can be used in various ways in sentences. It can be used to show an unnaturally long (2)_____ e.g. "*So Marty...what shall we do next?"* It can also be used as a sentence that trails into (3)_____ e.g. *I had the feeling you might say that...* An ellipsis can be used as an unfinished (4)_____ e.g. *Now shall I go (5)_____...?* It can also be used as an intentional (6)_____ of words e.g. *the (7)_____ was (8)_____...truly amazing!* Rather than *(it was) truly amazing!*

swear

objectionable

hotel

fool

avoid

conveying

addresses

reference

omission

awesome

pause

thought

silence

previous

shopping

concert

GAP FILL: LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

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A **star (asterisk)** (i.e.*) is a _____ to indicate an explanatory sentence or paragraph _____ page. A * is also used to replace a letter or letters left out in swear words to avoid them becoming objectionable, yet conveying _____ by the speaker e.g. *He replied, "Don't be such a b***** fool!"* We can also use a * for example when talking about a 3* hotel. An **asterisk** is often used to mean multiply in programming languages.

Don't _____ **apostrophe** (i.e. ') in the right place. One example of this is in the previous sentence where letters have been left out (i.e. **don't**). Another is the possessive case _____ add an **apostrophe** and an **s** e.g. **Dave's Café**. _____ possessive case of a plural noun, by adding an apostrophe after the **s** e.g. girls' teams. Warning – do not use an open-quote when an apostrophe is required at the start of a word. The default automatic corrections of modern word processors, to cope with the lack of a distinction between apostrophes and open-quotes on keyboards, often get this wrong e.g. '98 for 1998 should not be `98.

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GRAMMAR 1: MIDWAY

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Grammar - Revise your symbols

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DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS

- 1) Why are symbols important in grammar?
- 2) How do you think symbols have changed over time?
- 3) What is punctuation?
- 4) How do British English symbols differ from the ones used in your language?
- 5) Do you prefer to write or type? Why?
- 6) How often do you 'write' a letter by hand?
- 7) Tell your partner eight symbol marks you know?
- 8) Has this been a useful lesson for you?
- 9) How important are spelling tests and dictation in these lessons?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS

- 1) What do you think about what you read?
- 2) What other grammar revision would you like to practise?
- 3) How good is your grammar? Explain.
- 4) What new symbols have been introduced on your computer keypad over the last twenty years?
- 5) Tell your partner eight punctuation marks you know.
- 6) How often do you use a backward slash?
- 7) What is the future for the English language?
- 8) How many words does the English language have?
- 9) How does the number of words in the English language differ from the number of words in your language?

ANSWERS

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