

Year group expectations - Punctuation at a glance

Year one

Capital letter (proper nouns, personal pronoun)

Capital letter (sentence start)

Full stop (end of a sentence)

Question mark (at the end of a sentence whether you expect an answer or not)

Exclamation mark (surprise, excitement, exclamations)

Year two

Capital letters, full stops, question marks and exclamation marks to demarcate sentences

Commas to separate items in a list (including longer lists such as: the boy woke up, he opened his curtains, he headed downstairs to get his breakfast and he switched on the TV.)

Apostrophes to show where letters are missing (this needs to be referred to as: missing letters, omission and contraction/contracted form)

Apostrophe to mark singular possession (it isn't until year 4 when they visit the apostrophe for plural possession, however I cannot see why it wouldn't be taught alongside singular possession)

Year three

Introduction to inverted commas to punctuate direct speech, (they also need to be referred to as speech marks)

Year four

Use of inverted commas and other punctuation to indicate direct speech

Apostrophes to mark plural possession, however I do want this to be introduced at year 2 when singular possession is covered

Use of commas after fronted adverbials, eg: Later that day, I heard the bad news...(the phrase 'fronted adverbials' was 'made up' as a name by the government, so you will only find it called that in any new material produced in accordance with the New Curriculum)

Year five

Commas, brackets or dashes to indicate parenthesis

Use of commas to clarify meaning/avoid ambiguity

Year six

Use of the semi-colon, colon and dash to mark the boundary between independent clauses

Use of the colon to introduce a list and the use of semi-colons within lists

Punctuation of bullet points to list information

How hyphens can be used to avoid ambiguity, eg: man eating shark versus man-eating shark, or recover versus re-cover)