Apostrophes ‘
- Use to show possession or ownership: Suzanne’s books are on the windowsill.
- Use to show plural possessive forms: The girls’ papers are printing out.
- Use to show the plural of a number (date): She was born in the late 1920’s. [Note: this apostrophe is often omitted in recent publications, so either way may be correct, i.e. 1920s.]
- Use when a word or letter is omitted (contractions): She can’t find it.

Brackets [ ]
- Use to enclose a comment that interrupts or corrects a direct quotation: “She [Jane Austen] creates fairytale plots, settings, and characters” (Hoffman 34).

Colon :
- Use before a list: I need to pick up these foods: pizza, soda, chips, and pretzels.
- Use before a long quotation: Abraham Lincoln said: “Fourscore and seven years …”
- Use after the salutation of a business letter: To Whom It May Concern:

Semicolon ;
- Use to join two closely related complete sentences: The river was rising quickly; the people scrambled out of their tent and up the bank.
- Use to separate clauses in a list where the clauses have interior commas: Her packing list included: light, inexpensive, waterproof clothes; sturdy, lug-soled boots; and small, interesting paperback books.

Commas ,
- See separate Comma Handout

Ellipsis …
- Use to show a pause or interruption: No … I don’t think so.
- Use to show deleted words or sentences from a quote: “He writes using images… images depicting nature in acute detail” (Frey 26).

Exclamation Marks !
- Use after a sudden or surprising statement: Watch out! (Use sparingly)

Hyphen -
- Use to show a word break at the end of a line: She grew impatient with answering every single tiresome question.
- Use for compound nouns: great-grandfather
- Use for fractions and numbers: twenty-six

Parentheses ( )
- Use for in-text citations: “You are the last man on earth whom I would ever marry” (Austen 87).
- Use to enclose numbers or letters: My daily schedule: (1) Go to work; (2) Go home; (3) Go to bed.

Periods .
- Use after a complete sentence: Tristan went for a walk.
- Use after a command: Clean your room.
- Use after abbreviations: Michael Savage, Jr.

Question Marks ?
- Use after a question: Where are you going?

Quotation Marks “ ”
- Use to set-off a speaker's exact words: Andrew said, “I’ll be home after dinner.”
- Use for titles of short-stories, poems, essays, songs, newspaper & magazine articles, and chapter titles: Kate loves “A Rose for Emily.”
- Use to set-off a definition: The word “misguided” means “showing faulty judgment.”

Underline (or Italics)
Use for titles of books, movies, magazines, newspapers, TV shows, and plays.