Punctuation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commas</th>
<th>Capital letters</th>
<th>Exclamation marks</th>
<th>Speech marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full stops</td>
<td>Semicolons</td>
<td>Question marks</td>
<td>Apostrophes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Capital letters A B C**

- start a sentence
- the pronoun 'I'
- begin a name

For example:  
I am going to visit Jocelyn in Tauranga.  
I, Jocelyn, Tauranga

**Full stops . . .**

- show abbreviations
- end a sentence

For example:  
Dr. Spock visited hospitals in the U.S.A. during summer.

**Commas , , ,**

- separate items in a list
- indicate a pause in a sentence

For example:  
Some say the earth will end in ice, wind, flood and fire.  
Note:  
No comma before ‘and’ in a list.

Even though my grandmother is ninety, she still enjoys a daily gin and tonic.

**Question marks ? ? ?**

- indicate a question is being asked
- take the place of a full stop

For example:  
Why do you keep texting me the same message?  
Could we please drop in at Jacob’s house?

**Exclamation marks ! ! !**

- indicate a loud voice (anger, surprise, warning)
- take the place of a full stop

For example:  
“Get out of my sight!”  
“Fire! Run!”
Speech marks (sometimes called quotation marks) “ ”

- sit either side of whatever is spoken
- sit either side of quoted material

For example: My mother always said, “Don’t wash your hair and then go outside. You’ll catch a cold”. What do you think of Dan Brown’s “The Da Vinci Code”?

Note: In New Zealand, the full stops, question marks and exclamation marks sit outside the speech (quotation) marks.

Semicolons ; ; ;

- indicate a long pause separating two related clauses

For example: My mother stays up late every night; she is afraid that she will miss out on something.

Colons : : :

- show a list is coming next

For example: Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy now itemizes:
  Creating
  Evaluating
  Analysing
  Applying
  Understanding
  Remembering

Apostrophes ’ ’’

- indicate ownership – the fireman’s hat
  the student’s backpack
  the men’s room
  six weeks’ time

- indicate missing letter(s) – We mustn’t laugh
  I’d like to see Elton John

Further Learning Centre Handouts related to this topic:

- Apostrophes