

Recognizing Common Errors in Punctuation

The following exercise is intended to make you sensitive to the most common grammar errors made by engineers and scientists in their writing. Explanations of these errors can be found at the following site:

<http://writing.engr.psu.edu/exercises/>

Each of the word groups below has one of the following punctuation errors: missing punctuation, unwanted punctuation, or incorrect choice of punctuation. Identify and correct the error.

- 1) The new conductor, which will be available next week, is composed of barium, copper, and oxygen.
- 2) As the flame front propagates, hot combustion products expand, resulting in a rapid pressure increase.
- 3) The three largest divisions are production, marketing, and research and development.
- 4) The fluid serves as a transmission medium for hydrodynamic energy in the torque converter, hydrostatic energy in servos and logic circuits, and sliding friction energy in clutches.
- 5) In addition to the temperature data shown here, we also made velocity measurements; see Appendix A.
- 6) Every year, an earthquake of magnitude between 8.0 and 8.9 on the Richter scale, will be experienced somewhere in the world.
- 7) We studied five types of marsupials; opossums, bandicoots, koalas, wombats, and kangaroos.

How do you punctuate a sentence that incorporates an equation?

In the United States, you place end quotation marks (inside / outside) of commas and periods?

Which of the following should be placed in italics and which should be placed in quotation marks:

Title of Book?

Title of Book Chapter?

Title of Long Report or Long Thesis?*

Title of Short Report or Short Thesis?

Title of Journal?

Title of Journal Article?

Title of Newspaper?

Title of Newspaper Article?

* A gray area exists as far as what defines *long*. Longer than 100 pages is definitely long; fewer than 50 pages is definitely not. Between 50 and 100 pages is the gray area—for such lengths, make a choice and remain consistent.