### GRAMMAR

#### Punctuation Basics

| . | ? | ! | ; |
| period | question mark | exclamation point | semicolon |
| , | -- | - | : |
| comma | dash | hyphen | colon |
| ‘ ’ | “ ” | ( ) | … |
| single quotation mark | quotation mark | parentheses | ellipses |

### Periods, Question Marks, and Exclamation Points

Mark the end of sentences.

**Examples:**
- Prices of stocks and bonds fluctuate.
- Do you find reading textbooks difficult?
- You got a great price for that dress!

### Commas

Separate elements -- clauses, phrases, and words -- within sentences.

**Examples:**
- Paul got divorced recently, but he is getting married again soon.
- While sugar is sweet, vinegar is sour.
- My grandmother has always been kind, helpful, and interested.

### Semicolons

Show that two independent clauses are closely related.

**Examples:**
- The storm caused severe damage; many people were left homeless.
- It rained all night; however, our basement didn’t flood.

### Colons

Can be used after an independent clause to highlight words that follow.

**Examples:**
- Mary was an unattractive child: pale, awkward, and withdrawn.
- Bob announced: “Jazz is an American creation that has become popular.”

### Dashes

Are used for emphasis, drama, and abrupt shifts in mood. They are informal.

**Examples:**
- The door was locked -- or so we thought.
- Only one person -- the director-- can hire or fire.

### Hyphens

Are used primarily to link words. They cannot combine adverbs.

**Examples:**
- self-esteem (compound noun)
- old-fashioned (compound adjective)
- twenty-one or 13-year-old (numbers that are written out or modify)
- anti-French (prefixes that precede proper nouns)
**Quotation Marks** are used to demonstrate dialogue or placed around direct quotes.

Examples:  
“We will celebrate with our friends another time,” said Kim. 
According to the author, “Most students want to do well.”

**Single Quotation Marks** are used to show a quote inside another quote.

Examples:  
“The detective spoke to the room, ‘The culprit is one of you!’”
“‘It’s about time,’ smiled Shante Wolfe, 21, as she left the courthouse in Montgomery with partner Tori Sisson.

**Ellipses** are used to show that something was removed from inside a direct quote.

Examples:  
“Just hours before the Supreme Court’s decision, Alabama’s chief justice had already ... [pit] state’s rights against federal rulings.”
“This is not the first time that Moore ... has endorsed defying a federal judge’s order.”

**Parentheses** are used in formal writing to indicate citation information. Informal writing sometimes uses parentheses to indicate interrupting information.

Examples:  
“We will celebrate with our friends another time,” said Kim (Barnes). 
I will be a student at American University (I hope) in the fall.