



COURT REPORTERS BOARD OF CALIFORNIA

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PUNCTUATION GUIDELINES FOR THE CSR EXAMINATION

Each incorrect punctuation mark is counted as one error. Errors in punctuation include but are not limited to the following:

Run-On and Comma Splice Sentences: There must be a period or a semicolon between two independent sentences that are not connected by a conjunction.

DICTATED:	They arrived late Friday. We picked them up at the airport.
TRANSCRIBED:	They arrived late Friday. We picked them up at the airport. (no error)
	They arrived late Friday; we picked them up at the airport. (no error)
	They arrived late Friday we picked them up at the airport. (one error)
	They arrived late Friday, we picked them up at the airport. (one error)

DICTATED:	She worked at the hospital at the time; is that correct/true/right?
TRANSCRIBED:	She worked at the hospital at the time; is that correct/true/right? (no error)
	She worked at the hospital at the time. Is that correct/true/right? (no error)
	She worked at the hospital at the time, is that correct/true/right? (no error)
	She worked at the hospital at the time is that correct/true/right? (one error)

Oxford Comma: A comma before the conjunction in the final item in a series is preferred but is not counted as an error.

DICTATED:	I looked in the house, in the garage, and in the house.
TRANSCRIBED:	I looked in the house, in the garage, and in the house. (no error)
	I looked in the house, in the garage and in the house. (no error)
	I looked in the house in the garage and in the house. (one error)
	I looked in the house in the garage, and in the house. (one error)

Terminal Punctuation: All sentences must have terminal punctuation.

 DICTATED: What time did you **arrive?**
 TRANSCRIBED: What time did you **arrive**
 (one error)

Terminal Punctuation: An obvious question must end in a question mark.

 DICTATED: When will you be able to give me the figures?
 TRANSCRIBED: When will you be able to give me the **figures?**
 (no error)
 When will you be able to give me the **figures.**
 (one error)
 When will you be able to give me the **figures**
 (one error)

Terminal Punctuation: A polite request may end in a question mark or a period.

 DICTATED: Will you give me the names of the people on the committee.
 TRANSCRIBED: Will you give me the names of the people on the **committee.**
 (no error)
 Will you give me the names of the people on the **committee?**
 (no error)

Terminal Punctuation: Command forms must end in a period.

 DICTATED: Hand that document to counsel.
 TRANSCRIBED: Hand that document to **counsel.**
 (no error)
 TRANSCRIBED: Hand that document to **counsel?**
 (one error)

Abbreviations: Certain titles absolutely must have a period.

 DICTATED: Mr. Hanson had left the meeting early.
 TRANSCRIBED: **Mr. Hanson** had left the meeting early.
 (no error)
 TRANSCRIBED: **Mr Hanson** had left the meeting early.
 (one error)

Compound Sentence: When two sentences are joined by one of the conjunctions *and*, *but*, *or*, or *nor*, there must be a comma before the conjunction. When there is not an independent sentence after one of these conjunctions, there is NOT a comma before the conjunction.

 DICTATED: I called earlier in the day, but there was no answer.
 TRANSCRIBED: I called earlier in the **day, but** there was no answer.
 (no error)
 TRANSCRIBED: I called earlier in the **day but** there was no answer.
 (one error)

DICTATED: Ann wrote to me **daily and** always included a clever joke.
TRANSCRIBED: Ann wrote to me **daily and** always included a clever joke.
(no error)
TRANSCRIBED: Ann wrote to me **daily, and** always included a clever joke.
(one error)

Dash: A dash must be used for broken sentence structure, a sudden change in thought.

DICTATED: We were with my – it was very late at night.
TRANSCRIBED: We were with **my – it** was very late at night.
(no error)
TRANSCRIBED: We were with **my it** was very late at night.
(one error)
TRANSCRIBED: We were with **my, it** was very late at night.
(one error)
TRANSCRIBED: We were with **my. It** was very late at night.
(one error)

Apostrophes for possessives:

Singular possessive form: Add an apostrophe “s” to the singular form of the word to form the singular possessive. If the singular of a word ends in “s” or “z,” it is acceptable, though not recommended, to add only the apostrophe.

DICTATED: She was seated to Mary’s right.
TRANSCRIBED: She was seated to **Mary’s** right.
(no error)

DICTATED: She was seated to **Tess’s** right.
TRANSCRIBED: She was seated to **Tess’s** right.
(no error)

TRANSCRIBED: She was seated to **Tess’** right.
(no error)

TRANSCRIBED: She was seated to **Tesses** right.
(one error)

Plural possessive form: Make the word plural. If the plural of the word ends in “s,” add an apostrophe only to the plural form of the word to form the plural possessive. If the plural of the word does not end in “s,” add apostrophe “s” to make the plural possessive form of the word.

DICTATED: He worked with the **Hansons’** agent.
TRANSCRIBED: He worked with the **Hansons’** agent.
(no error)

TRANSCRIBED: He worked with the **Hanson’s** agent.
(one error)

DICTATED: He worked with the **Hollises’** agent.

TRANSCRIBED: He worked with the **Hollises'** agent.
(no error)

TRANSCRIBED: He worked with the **Hollis's** agent.
(one error)

TRANSCRIBED: He worked with the **Hollises's** agent.
(one error)

NOTE:

There will be no punctuation error counted as part of a drop.
If punctuation is correctly used with inserted or omitted words, no punctuation errors will be counted.