



## 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 <b>Friday. We</b> picked them up at the airport.                |
| TRANSCRIBED: | They arrived late <b>Friday. We</b> picked them up at the airport.<br>(no error)  |
|              | They arrived late <b>Friday; we</b> picked them up at the airport.<br>(no error)  |
|              | They arrived late <b>Friday we</b> picked them up at the airport.<br>(one error)  |
|              | They arrived late <b>Friday, we</b> picked them up at the airport.<br>(one error) |

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| DICTATED:    | She worked at the hospital at the <b>time; is</b> that correct/true/right?               |
| TRANSCRIBED: | She worked at the hospital at the <b>time; is</b> that correct/true/right?<br>(no error) |
|              | She worked at the hospital at the <b>time. Is</b> that correct/true/right?<br>(no error) |
|              | She worked at the hospital at the <b>time, is</b> that correct/true/right?<br>(no error) |
|              | She worked at the hospital at the <b>time is</b> that correct/true/right?<br>(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 <b>garage, and</b> in the house.                      |
| TRANSCRIBED: | I looked in the house, in the <b>garage, and</b> in the house.<br>(no error)        |
|              | I looked in the house, in the <b>garage and</b> in the house.<br>(no error)         |
|              | I looked in the <b>house in</b> the <b>garage and</b> in the house.<br>(one error)  |
|              | I looked in the <b>house in</b> the <b>garage, and</b> in the house.<br>(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)