USING PUNCTUATION EFFECTIVELY

Punctuation marks are like signs that tell the reader how your words work together.

	Period **.** **Come to a full stop.** **What follows will be an independent sentence that expresses a new idea.**
	Comma **,** **Slow down, take a breath, and then proceed with a closely related thought that continues the sentence.** **A comma cannot join two independent clauses.**
	Semicolon **;** **Slow way down and pay attention to what's coming next; it will be relevant.** **A semicolon is used primarily to join two independent clauses that are clearly related to each other.**
	Colon **:** **What follows explains what came before.** **Use a colon between two closely related independent clauses OR after an independent clause when it introduces something: a list, a quotation, or an appositive.**
	Parentheses **( )** **An interruption that will take you off the main path for a moment.** **Use parentheses to set apart information that is relevant but not necessary for the sentence to be.**