

# Punctuation: A Guide for Self-Editing

\*For more rules, examples, or guidelines, please see <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

## *Commas:*

\_\_ Do you use a comma after an introductory word, phrase, or clause that comes before a main clause?

Again, only after Odysseus has eaten is he asked about who he is and where he is from.

\_\_ Do you use commas around words, phrases, and clauses in the middle of a sentence when they aren't essential to the meaning of the sentence?

They claim happiness is something that makes them feel good and, by extension, they believe that a person's state of mind can fluctuate from happiness to sadness.

\_\_ Do you use a comma after a quote is introduced, but not before the citation?

For instance, "in medicine this is health, in generalship victor"  
(Aristotle 7.1097a).

\_\_ Do you use commas to separate items in a list (the official Writing Center recommendation is to include a comma before the last item- before "and")?

In *The Athena Lemnia*, Phidias uses line, position, and texture to bring the piece to life.

\_\_ Do you use commas after a long introductory or dependent clause (usually more than five words)?

In the epic the *Odyssey*, Homer presents a variety of prominent themes.

\_\_ Do you use commas between adjectives?

The selfish, arrogant suitors ran rampant in Odysseus' house.

\_\_ Do you avoid comma splices (combining two independent clauses with only a comma)?

(Example of what not to do)

~~Odysseus is seen as demanding and self indulged, he chooses to enter the cave without permission.~~

## *Semicolons:*

\_\_ Do you use semicolons to connect two independent clauses (a clause with that has a subject and a verb and can stand alone) that repeat or relate to each other?

Zeus doesn't intend to use his powers to control everything; Zeus views his powers as a responsibility to keep peace and balance in the world.

\_\_Do you use a semicolon to combine two independent clauses in which the second clause begins with a conjunctive adverb (in fact, however, thus)?

The stance is also reminiscent of the rigid poses seen in precious statuary; however, the sculptors were also breaking from the traditional pitfalls that separate archaic art from later periods.

### *Colons:*

\_\_Do you use a colon after an independent clause when it is followed by a list?

Zeus of Artemisium displays emphasis on many muscles: biceps, abdominal muscles, leg muscles, and facial muscles.

\_\_Do you use a colon to join two independent clauses when the second clause is a result of the first?

Odysseus had been without an identity: the trials he faced are ones that enabled him to regain this identity.

### *Dashes:*

\_\_Do you use a dash to set off or emphasize the content enclosed within two dashes or the content that follows a dash?

They blindly assume the definition of happiness—a pleasurable and comfortable life—and achieve it without guidelines.