

1 Here's the Idea

End marks include periods, question marks, and exclamation points. This chart shows you how to use them correctly.

End Marks

Using End Marks		
End Mark	Use after . . .	Example
Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• a declarative sentence• an imperative sentence• an indirect question	The key to good driving is concentration. Follow that car. He asked if I was too tired to drive.
Exclamation point	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• an exclamatory sentence• a strong interjection• words that express a sound	What phenomenal skill she has! Oh, no! Crash!
Question mark	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• an interrogative sentence• a declarative sentence that asks a question	Did you check the oil? You ran out of gas?

For more about using end marks with direct quotations and parentheses, see p. 252 and p. 256.

Other Uses of Periods

Periods are also used with abbreviations and in outlines.

Putting Periods in the Proper Places		
Usage	Rule	Example
Abbreviations	Use a period with abbreviations or initials.	Mr. Emil T. Schmidt, Sr., Sat., 2 A.M., A.D., 1 hr., 32 ft., Main St., Ala., Speedy Tires Ltd.
Outlines	Use a period after each number or letter in an outline or list.	A. Longest traffic jam B. Oldest driver C. Biggest car

Do not include periods with these abbreviations: metric measurements (cm ml kg g l), acronyms (NATO UNICEF NASA NASCAR), abbreviations that are pronounced letter by letter (CIA NBA IRS), state names in postal addresses (TX CA FL), points on a compass (N E S W).