

## **Ohio Standards Connections**

### **Writing Conventions**

#### **Benchmark B**

Use correct punctuation and capitalization.  
(Grades 8 - 10)

#### **Indicator 2**

Use correct punctuation and capitalization.  
(Grade 8)

#### **Benchmark C**

Demonstrate understanding of the grammatical conventions of the English language.  
(Grades 8 - 10)

#### **Indicator 3**

Use clauses (e.g., main, subordinate) and phrases (e.g., gerund, infinitive, participial).  
(Grade 9)

#### **Indicator 4**

Use parallel structure to present items in a series and items juxtaposed for emphasis.  
(Grade 9)

### **Lesson Summary:**

*Students will correctly use quotation marks, colons and semicolons in a variety of writing situations; they also will identify and use parallel structure correctly.*

**Estimated Duration:** 20 minutes for each lesson – one punctuation skill per lesson.

### **Commentary:**

Increased frequency in writing helps students learning to improve their skills in writing conventions. Correct spelling, proper punctuation and correct grammar and word usage are all associated with developing and refining written text. One way teachers may do this is by noting errors and misuses of conventions found in student compositions. This approach is ongoing and responsive to the needs of students.

The Writing Conventions Standard is best addressed in a lesson that addresses writing conventions skills in the context of writing application or writing process lessons assigned to students. This lesson not only provides teachers and students with an awareness of writing conventions that should be mastered with practice at the secondary level, but it also provides students with opportunities to ask the teacher questions about rules of punctuation or capitalization without necessarily drawing attention to personal errors or areas of weakness.

Teachers who used this lesson during its pilot test conducted by The Ohio Department of Education, commented that the use of overhead transparencies vs. chalk boards enhances the lesson, and with the inclusion of the Blackline Masters that accompany this lesson, they found the lesson practical and easy to implement. Reviewers also noted that many of the rules of writing conventions may be taught effectively in the context of a focused mini-lesson. This lesson may be used as a springboard to developing mini-lessons.

### **Pre-Assessment:**

- This can be accomplished by evaluating each student's abilities as demonstrated on daily assignments or on their most recent compositions. The three-point rubric that follows can be used to assess student achievement.
- A pre-test that includes sentences requiring correct use of quotation marks, colons, semicolons and parallel structure can provide specific information about students' levels of competence for all skills. The test can be administered as one test with different sections or as four separate mini-tests. The pre-test should include increasing levels of difficulty so all students have the opportunity to improve their skills. Sample mini pre-tests are included with this lesson. Points can be administered for each punctuation skill.

### **Scoring Guidelines:**

3 = Consistently uses punctuation marks correctly.

2 = Uses punctuation marks correctly on most occasions.

1 = Makes frequent punctuation errors.

0 = Consistently makes common punctuation errors.

### **Post-Assessment:**

A post-test similar to the pre-test should be administered.

- If the pre-test was an evaluation of student compositions, then this method should be used for the post-test.
- If a separate pre-test was administered for each specific skill, the same test or one of similar design should be given for the post-test.

### **Scoring Guidelines:**

3 = Consistently uses punctuation marks correctly.

2 = Uses punctuation marks correctly on most occasions.

1 = Makes frequent punctuation errors.

0 = Consistently makes common punctuation errors.

### **Instructional Procedures:**

1. Work with one skill at a time (either quotation marks, colon, semicolon or parallel structure).
2. Explain to the students that you want them to discover patterns in the sentences you are going to show them. Once they discover a pattern, they should raise their hands. Explain that you will not call on them immediately. After several students have figured out the pattern, ask them to identify some of the patterns, provide their own examples of patterns for the class to examine and eventually call on someone to explain a pattern to the entire class.
3. Show the class one example of a sentence that uses quotation marks correctly and tell the class that this is an example of a "yes" sentence. Show two or three "yes" examples before showing a "no". A "no" example might have quotation marks used incorrectly or not used at all where they are needed. After some students have raised their hands to indicate they understand the pattern, call on one student to correctly identify an example as a "yes" or as a "no". Repeat this process a few more times. Then have one of the students who has correctly identified a sample provide his/her own example. Let someone else explain the patterns he/she found. Record the patterns or "rules" on a chalkboard or chart paper. Have the students match the sample sentences to the various rules.
4. Answer any questions that might arise.
5. Have students edit and revise a paper they have previously written, correcting any errors related to the concept taught in this lesson.
6. This process is the same regardless of the specific skill being presented.

### **Differentiated Instructional Support:**

Instruction is differentiated according to learner needs, to help all learners either meet the intent of the specified indicators(s) or, if the indicator is already met, to advance beyond the specified indicator.

- Use of the pre-test allows the teacher to design small groups based on students' mastery levels. Very easy examples can be provided until the concept is grasped. More difficult examples can follow. This lesson could be taught using all examples on paper rather than on the overhead. A tutor can work with the students as long as needed. Samples can be made for students to take with them and study on their own.
- This entire unit can be done as small group lessons for students who have not mastered specific skills.
- Sophisticated examples can be used to help students gain expertise in this area. Passages from published works can be used that include all types of phrases and clauses, as well as slang and dialect.

### **Extension:**

- Bring in a comic strip from a newspaper or magazine for students to examine how this medium uses or fails to use the rules for correct punctuation.
- Students could collect other examples from print media that seem to "break the rules" (e.g. billboards, bus panels, etc.).

### **Homework Options and Home Connections:**

- Students can rewrite a brief passage (perhaps one paragraph) from a nonfiction selection in their textbook adding parallel structure in place of the author's original style.
- Students can revise any passage of their choosing. Or they can be required to bring in the original passage along with their rewritten passage that uses parallel structure.

### **Interdisciplinary Connections:**

The overhead transparencies developed for instruction can reference texts or passages relating to content areas outside of English class.

### **Materials/Resources Needed:**

*For the teacher:* Sample sentences printed on overhead transparencies that demonstrate quotation marks used correctly and incorrectly (See Blackline Master 1); samples on overhead transparencies that demonstrate correct and incorrect use of colons, semicolons and parallel structure (See Blackline Master 2) and washable transparency markers.

*For the students:* Pen or pencil for the pre-test.

### **Key Vocabulary:**

- Parallel Structure

### **Technology Connections:**

- This would be a good time to demonstrate how to fully utilize features in Office software "Tools".

### **General Tips:**

- This is an effective and fun procedure that helps students focus on one skill at a time. It also allows the teacher to work with students at their current skill level(s).
- Usually by high school, students have already had direct instruction in punctuating clauses and dialogue, but the finer points of using quotation marks in a research paper may be a new area of application for students.
- This style makes an old subject seem new and helps students grasp concepts they missed along the way.
- If using this lesson with an entire class of students whose skills are high, the "yes" and "no" examples can cover more than one usage rule at a time.

**Attachments:**

- Blackline Master #1
- Blackline Master #2
- Blackline Master #3: Key