

# CAE – PUNCTUATION AND SPELLING

## PUNCTUATION RULES

The best way to learn the rules of punctuation and spelling is to practise. The following are simply a few points to remember.

**Capital letter:** at the beginning of a sentence; for names of people and places; in headings and sub-headings of reports and articles; languages; for the personal pronoun "I"; days, months, festivals and names of certain professions and positions e.g. *Professor Jones*.

**Full stop:** at the end of a sentence.

**Comma:** to separate items in a list; after adverbial phrases e.g. *Finally, I passed my driving test*; adverbial clauses e.g. *When we got there, the film had already begun*; participle clauses e.g. *Feeling rather tired, she went straight to bed*; to separate quotations from the reporting verb e.g. *"Stop that", he said*.

**Quotation marks:** around direct speech e.g. *"What time will you be back?" she asked*.

**Apostrophe:** in contracted forms: e.g. *It's mine*; to show possession e.g. *Anne's cat*.

**Dash:** to separate a word or phrase which is independent of the rest of the sentence, usually before a comment or a definition or in order to emphasise the following words e.g. *Even though he had talent – considerable talent – he never got a leading role*.

**Hyphen:** in compound words e.g. *dining-room*; to link a prefix to a noun e.g. *pre-war*; in numbers between tens and units e.g. *twenty-four*; in expressions of amount used as adjectives e.g. *a two-hour lesson*.

**Colon:** before words or phrases which refer to the statement preceding the colon e.g. *The show was a complete success: the cast were superb and the costumes were spectacular!*; to introduce examples e.g. *If you're thinking of going on a detox diet, you'll have to take certain precautions: drink plenty of water, get lots of sleep and take lots of vitamins*; to introduce a quotation e.g. *In the words of Alfred Hitchcock: "Television has brought back murder into the home - where it belongs."*

**Semi-colon:** to divide parts of a sentence which are complete on their own. It shows a pause which is longer than a comma but shorter than a full stop e.g. *She had become very thin and her hair was completely grey; she had grown old overnight!*

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## SPELLING RULES

### -ie and -ei- words

**-ie** when the sound is /i:/ as in *believe*; exceptions: after the letter **c**: *receive*

**-ei** when the sound is other than /i:/ e.g. *neighbour*; **exception**: *friend*

### Doubling consonants

The final consonant is doubled

a) in verbs which end in a consonant preceded by a single vowel e.g. *stop – stopped*

b) when the last syllable is stressed e.g. *regret – regretted*

**exceptions:** final **-w**, **-x** and **-y** are never doubled e.g. *renew – renewed*

c) verbs ending in **'l'** after one vowel e.g. *travel – travelled*

### Verbs ending in -ie:

change to **-y** e.g. *die – dying* or a **-d** is added e.g. *die – died*

### Verbs ending in -ee:

the two **-e's** remain with other endings added e.g. *agree – agreed, see – seeing*

**Verbs which end with -c:** usually add **-k** before **-ed** or **-ing** e.g. *panic – panicking*

### Words ending in -y:

**-y** following a consonant changes to **-ie** when adding **-s** e.g. *variety – varieties*

**-y** changes to **-i** before the other consonants or vowels e.g. *happy – happiness*

**-y** following a vowel doesn't change e.g. *monkey – monkeys*.