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# Parentheses

Parentheses are used to:

* Enclose loosely related information
* Enclose numbers in a series

## use parentheses:

* To set off incidental information or comment

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| **Examples:** | Senator Kennedy (Massachusetts) was chairman of the committee.  |
|  | The painting (the most original in the exhibition) received little notice.  |
|  | The fact that the body cells need more oxygen during and after exercise is reflected by the increased rate of breathing (see chart 2).  |

* To enclose letters or figures; references and directions; and question marks that indicate uncertainty

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| **Examples:** | LETTERS OR FIGURES: She is authorized to (1) sign checks, (2) pay bills, and (3) make purchases.  |
|  | REFERENCES AND DIRECTIONS: The map (see page 9) will help you. |
|  | QUESTION MARK TO INDICATE UNCERTAINTY: He was born in 1897(?) in Billings, Montana |

* For accuracy in business letters

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| **Example:** | I enclose fifty dollars ($50).  |

* In combination with other punctuation marks:

**Note:** The comma, semicolon, or period are placed after the second parenthesis when the parentheses set off material in a sentence.

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| **Examples:** | If we go (we are still not sure)**,** you may go, too. |
|  | He deceived us (weren't we foolish?)**;** he was very clever. |
|  | I believed her (though I can't imagine why)**.**  |

* + The comma, semicolon, colon, and period may precede the first parenthesis in enumerations.

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| **Examples:** | She is authorized to do the following: (1) sign checks with a cosigner; (2) pay bills, if not more than $50; (3) make purchases.  |
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|  | The resolution lauded him because: (1) he was decisive; he did not procrastinate. (2) he was diligent; he did not merely stimulate industry. (3) he was cooperative; he never stood on the letter of a rule.  |

* + The question mark and the exclamation point are placed inside the parentheses if they belong to the parenthetical element; otherwise, outside.

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| **Examples:** | One of the translators was Aquila (died A.D. 138).  |
|  | Have you read the translation of Tyndale (died 1536)?  |
|  | He promised to write me from Millwalky (sic).  |

## Do not use parentheses:

* To indicate deletions. Instead draw a line through the deleted words.
* To enclose editorial comment. Use brackets [like these] for this purpose.

**Note:** Do not overuse parentheses.

# Practice Exercise

## In the following sentences, add parentheses where necessary.

1. The end marks of punctuation are 1 period, 2 exclamation point, and 3 question mark.
2. The statement read: "Enclosed you will find fifty dollars $50 to cover expenses."
3. I saw *The Taming of the Shrew* William Shakespeare, and then the musical adaptation *Kiss Me, Kate*.
4. Two of my friends one has very serious emotional problems need psychiatric help.
5. She received a check can you believe it for $10,000 from the contest she entered.