



WRITING CENTER

Parentheses

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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

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

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

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.

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).

Parentheses

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

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.

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.

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 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.