



Punctuation Quiz by Laura King, MA, ELS

Directions: Correctly punctuate the following sentences based on the information outlined in chapter 8 of the *AMA Manual of Style*. Some sentences contain more than 1 punctuation error. For further explanation of the correct answers, refer to the cited section of the online or print version of the *AMA Manual of Style*.

1. The question before us is “Is there sufficient evidence to justify clinical trials of imatinib in uveal melanoma?”

ANSWER:

The question before us is, “Is there sufficient evidence to justify clinical trials of imatinib in uveal melanoma?”

Editor’s Note: Commas are often used before direct dialogue or conversation is introduced (§[8.2.1](#), Comma, p 341 in print). Place the question mark inside the end quotation mark when the question mark is part of the quoted material (§[8.1.2](#), Question Mark, p 335 in print; §[8.6.5](#), Placement, p 359 in print).

2. In this population-based prospective cross-sectional analysis we used magnetic resonance imaging to assess the presence and location of microbleeds.

ANSWER:

In this population-based, prospective, cross-sectional analysis, we used magnetic resonance imaging to assess the presence and location of microbleeds.

Editor's Note: In a simple coordinate series of 3 or more terms, separate the elements by commas (§8.2.1, Comma, p 337 in print). Use a comma after opening dependent clauses (whether restrictive or not) or long opening adverbial phrases (§8.2.1, Comma, pp 336-337 in print).

3. If anticoagulant drugs predispose patients to symptomatic intracranial bleeding which usually has a major clinical impact these patients would have been less likely to be included in our population-based study.

ANSWER:

If anticoagulant drugs predispose patients to symptomatic intracranial bleeding, which usually has a major clinical impact, these patients would have been less likely to be included in our population-based study.

Editor's Note: Use commas to set off nonrestrictive subordinate clauses or nonrestrictive participial phrases (§8.2.1, Comma, p 337 in print). See also §7.2.2, Relative Pronouns, page 318 of the *AMA Manual of Style* for information on usage of *that* vs *which*.

4. The study took place from January 1 1989 through December 31 1989 and included 105 participants.

ANSWER:

The study took place from January 1, 1989, through December 31, 1989, and included 105 participants.

Editor's Note: In dates and similar expressions of time, use commas before and after the year (§8.2.1, Comma, p 340 in print).

5. The patient was 12 years, 3 months of age.

ANSWER:

The patient was 12 years 3 months of age.

Editor's Note: Do not use a comma between 2 or more measures of the same dimension (§8.2.1, Comma, p 341 in print).

6. We found that the sensitivity of the family history data was high, however, in our study the sensitivity was low.

ANSWER:

We found that the sensitivity of the family history data was high; however, in our study the sensitivity was low.

Editor's Note: Use a semicolon between main clauses joined by a conjunctive adverb or a coordinating conjunction if 1 of the clauses has internal punctuation or is considerably long (§8.2.2, Semicolon, pp 341-342 in print).

7. We conducted a double-blind, randomized, controlled trial of healthy infants 2 to 6 months of age who were attending a shared pediatric community practice in Toronto Ontario Canada for their routine primary series of vaccinations.

ANSWER:

We conducted a double-blind randomized controlled trial of healthy infants 2 to 6 months of age who were attending a shared pediatric community practice in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, for their routine primary series of vaccinations.

Editor's Note: When fewer than 3 modifiers are used, avoid adding a comma if the modifiers and the noun are read as one entity (§8.2.1, Comma, p 338 in print). The term *randomized controlled trial* is considered a single entity; the word *double-blind* is modifying that single entity, so no commas are needed. Use commas to separate the elements in an address. Use commas after the city and before and after the state or country name (§8.2.1, Comma, p 340 in print).

8. John James Jr MD and Martin V. Smith III MD co-authored the study on Alzheimer disease.

ANSWER:

John James Jr, MD, and Martin V. Smith III, MD, coauthored the study on Alzheimer disease.

Editor’s Note: Academic degrees and titles are set off by commas when they follow the name of a person. Although it is not incorrect to set *Jr* and *Sr* off by commas when they follow the name of a person, *JAMA* and the *Archives Journals* are now deleting these commas (§8.2.1, Comma, p 340 in print). The word *coauthor* requires no hyphenation. See also §8.3.1, Hyphen, p 349 of the *AMA Manual of Style* for examples of prefixes that are not joined by hyphens.

9. The number of children with human immunodeficiency virus related infection has increased markedly in developing countries because of the increasing number of human immunodeficiency virus infected women of childbearing age.

ANSWER:

The number of children with human immunodeficiency virus–related infection has increased markedly in developing countries because of the increasing number of human immunodeficiency virus–infected women of childbearing age.

Editor’s Note: The punctuation mark after “virus” is an en dash. The en dash is longer than a hyphen but half the length of the em dash. The en dash shows relational distinction in a hyphenated or compound modifier, 1 element of which consists of 2 words or a hyphenated word, or when the word being modified is a compound (§8.3.2, Dashes, pp 352-353 in print).

10. Other therapies that have been tried include: systemic corticosteroids, topical retinoids, nicotinamide, pentoxifylline, aspirin and dipyridamole, clofazimine, hyperbaric oxygen, and fumaric acid esters.

ANSWER:

Other therapies that have been tried include systemic corticosteroids, topical retinoids, nicotinamide, pentoxifylline, aspirin and dipyridamole, clofazimine, hyperbaric oxygen, and fumaric acid esters.

Editor’s Note: Do not use a colon after *because* or forms of the verb *include* (§8.2.3, Colon, p 342 in print).

11. During the 12 to 14 day study period, we examined 32 patients with high blood pressure.

ANSWER:

During the 12- to 14-day study period, we examined 32 patients with high blood pressure.

Editor's Note: When expressing ranges or dimensions used as modifiers, use the appropriate hyphens and spacing (§8.3.1, Hyphen, p 349 in print).

12. Treatment of so-called “crush syndrome” includes resolution of limb swelling and reduction of edema.

ANSWER:

Treatment of so-called crush syndrome includes resolution of limb swelling and reduction of edema.

Editor's Note: A word or phrase following *so-called* should not be enclosed in quotation marks (§8.6.9, *So-called*, p 361 in print).

13. African-Americans with diabetes mellitus are at increased risk for heart disease.

ANSWER:

African Americans with diabetes mellitus are at increased risk for heart disease.

Editor's Note: Most combinations of proper adjectives derived from geographic entities are not hyphenated when used as noun or adjective formations (§8.3.1, Hyphen, p 351 in print).

14. The study examined women in their early 40's who had undergone hysterectomies in the previous 5 years.

ANSWER:

The study examined women in their early 40s who had undergone hysterectomies in the previous 5 years.

Editor's Note: Do not use an apostrophe to form the plural of an all-capital abbreviation or of numerals (including years) (8.7.5, Using Apostrophes to Form Plurals, p 363 in print).

15. MEDLINE was searched for the following keywords: “diabetes,” “high blood pressure,” “heart disease,” and “overweight.”

ANSWER:

MEDLINE was searched for the following keywords: *diabetes*, *high blood pressure*, *heart disease*, and *overweight*.

Editor’s Note: Do not use quotation marks when emphasizing a word, when using a non-English word, when mentioning a term as a term, or when defining a term. In these instances, italics is preferred (§[8.6.7](#), Coined Words, Slang, p 360 in print). See also §[22.5.4](#), Italics, page 925.