

Punctuation Quiz

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ANSWER KEY

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 one punctuation error. For further explanation of the correct answers, refer to the cited section 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 (§8.2.1.14, Comma, Dialogue; see also §8.2.3.2, Colon, Introducing Quotations and Enumerations). When the question mark is part of the quoted or parenthetical material, place the question mark inside the end quotation mark (§8.1.2.2, Question Mark, Placement; see also 8.6.5, Quotation Marks, Placement).

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 (§8.2.1.2, Comma, Series). Use a comma after opening dependent clauses (whether restrictive or not) or long opening adverbial phrases (§8.2.1.1, Comma, Separating Groups of Words).

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 (§8.2.1.1, Comma, Separating Groups of Words).

4. Data were collected daily from November 1 1989 through December 31 1989 with an exemption on Christmas Day 1989.

ANSWER: Data were collected daily from November 1, 1989, through December 31, 1989, with an exemption on Christmas Day 1989.

Editor's Note: In dates and similar expressions of time, use commas according to the following examples. Commas are not used when the month and year are given without the day or between a holiday and its year (§8.2.1.9, Comma, Dates).

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 (eg, time) (§8.2.1.11, Comma, Units of Measure).

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 (eg, *also, besides, furthermore, hence, however, indeed, then, thus, yet*) or a coordinating conjunction (*and, but, for, nor, or, yet, so*) if one of the clauses has internal punctuation or is long (§8.2.2.1, Semicolon, Separating Independent Clauses).

7. We conducted a double-blind, randomized, clinical 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 clinical 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 (§8.2.1.2, Comma, Series). The term randomized clinical 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 (§8.2.1.8, Comma, Addresses).

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 off *Jr* and *Sr* by commas when they follow the name of a person, the JAMA Network journals do not use these commas (§8.2.1.7, Comma, Setting Off Degrees and Titles). The word *coauthor* requires no

hyphenation (see also §8.3.1.6, Hyphen, When Not to Use Hyphens, for examples of prefixes that are not joined by hyphens).

9. The number of children with hepatitis E virus related infection has increased markedly in lower-income countries because of the increasing number of hepatitis E virus infected women of childbearing age.

ANSWER: The number of children with hepatitis E virus–related infection has increased markedly in lower-income countries because of the increasing number of hepatitis E 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 (§8.3.2.2, Dashes, En Dash).

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 immediately after *because* or forms of the verb *include* (§8.2.3.1, Colon, When Not to Use a Colon).

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 (§8.3.1.3, Hyphen, Expressing Ranges and Dimensions).

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).

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

ANSWER: African Americans with diabetes 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 (§8.3.1.6, Hyphens, When Not to Use Hyphens).



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 a numeral (including years) (§8.7.5, Using Apostrophes to Form Plurals).

15. PubMed 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.

OR: 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 most instances, italics is preferred (§8.6.7, Coined Words, Slang; see also §21.9, Editing, Proofreading, Tagging, and Display).