

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Answer Key: Sharpen Your College Writing Punctuation

Foundational review of standard punctuation marks to ensure academic clarity and proper sentence boundaries in your university coursework.

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**1. Which sentence correctly uses an apostrophe to indicate possession for a plural noun ending in 's'?**

**Answer:** A) The professors' lounge is located in the East Wing.

To show possession for a plural noun that already ends in 's', you typically add only an apostrophe after the 's'.

**2. The following sentence is punctuated correctly: 'Since the lab results were inconclusive; the researchers decided to repeat the experiment.'**

**Answer:** B) False

The first clause is a dependent clause starting with the subordinating conjunction 'Since'; therefore, it should be followed by a comma, not a semicolon.

**3. Select the punctuation mark that best completes the sentence to introduce a formal list: 'Students must bring the following items to the field trip \_\_\_ a notebook, a camera, and a raincoat.'**

**Answer:** C) :

A colon is used after a complete sentence to introduce a list of items.

**4. In academic writing, which sentence uses quotation marks correctly for a short title?**

**Answer:** B) The lecture focused on the essay titled "Self-Reliance" by Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Standard American English style uses double quotation marks for titles of short works like essays, poems, and articles.

**5. A comma is required after an introductory prepositional phrase that is four or more words long.**

**Answer:** A) True

While shorter phrases sometimes omit the comma, standard convention suggests using a comma after introductory phrases of four or more words to prevent reader confusion.

**6. Choose the correct punctuation to join these two independent clauses: 'The library will be closed for renovations \_\_\_ however, the digital archives remain open.'**

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**Answer:** C) ;

A semicolon is used before a conjunctive adverb like 'however' when it connects two independent clauses.

**7. Which of these sentences is a 'comma splice' error?**

**Answer:** C) The deadline is tomorrow, I need to finish my draft.

A comma splice occurs when two independent clauses are joined by only a comma without a coordinating conjunction.

**8. Identify the missing punctuation in this citation: 'According to Dr. Aris \_\_\_\_ "The data supports the hypothesis."'**

**Answer:** C) ,

A comma is used to set off a direct quotation from the speaker tag or introductory phrase.

**9. In the sentence 'The student's grades improved,' the apostrophe indicates that the grades belong to more than one student.**

**Answer:** B) False

The placement of the apostrophe before the 's' signifies a singular possessive noun (one student).

**10. Which sentence correctly uses the Oxford (serial) comma?**

**Answer:** B) Please bring your textbook, notebook, and a pen.

The Oxford comma is the final comma in a list of three or more items, placed before the conjunction 'and'.