Full Stops

Full stops end sentences

A sentence is the order of words used to communicate a complete idea or thought to the reader. It begins with a capital letter and ends in a full stop. In academic writing, sentences tend to be declarative, stating facts and theories, and contain a subject and additional relevant information.

Example: Students are expected to submit their assignments on time.

Note: Students lose marks for lengthy sentences that place commas where there should be full stops. See the guides, 'Sentences' and 'Commas' for further advice on this.

Full stops abbreviate

Example: doz. (dozen), i.e. (that is), e.g. (for example), etc. (and so on)

Abbreviations that use the first and last letter of a name do not need a full stop, for example, Mr (Mister) Dr (Doctor)

Note: Abbreviations are too informal for academic assignments. Do not use them, unless they are part of a quotation. Write 'for example' not 'e.g.'

Do not use etc. in assignments. It shows vagueness in your evidence, and limited use of research.

Abbreviating names of organisations

Abbreviations for the names of organisations do not need full stops, for example: BBC, ITV, DfES. Write out the full name of the organisation when you first mention it, then abbreviate it afterwards.

Example: The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) provides guidelines for practising nurses. According to the NMC (2002) nurses have a duty of care to patients.

Full stops indicate ellipsis …

Ellipsis is the use of three dots to show an incomplete quote. This is a good way to shorten quotes so that you only use the relevant information for your essay.

Example: 'Writing cannot be separated from other processes such as reflection, goal-setting, organisation and research … [and] in practice you will find that they are interrelated' (Cottrell, 2010:167).

Note: When you use ellipsis … the sentence should still make sense. If you need to add words to complete the sense of the sentence, these should appear in square brackets.

Full Stops for numerical information

Example: £10.99, 2.5%, however, use colons for time 10:00, 21:00