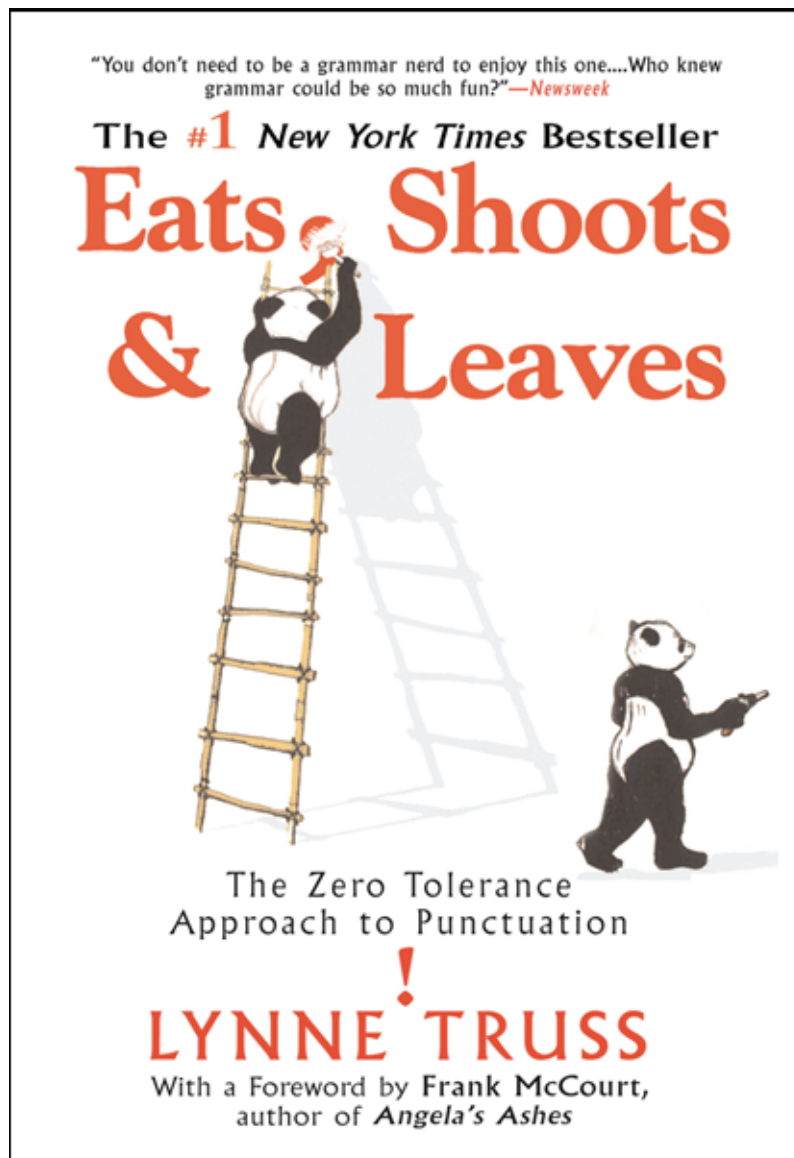


An Educational Companion to
EATS, SHOOTS & LEAVES
by Lynne Truss



Introduction: The Seventh Sense (pages 1-34)

While completing the exercises in this book, keep in mind these differences between American English and British English:

1. Parentheses are called brackets.
2. Periods are called full stops.
3. Exclamation points are called exclamation marks.
4. 7:30 is written 7.30.
5. Americans place all terminal punctuation inside closing quotation marks, while British usage sometimes “picks and chooses.”

Exercises Guaranteed to Bring Out Your Inner Stickler

- 1) Take a walk or drive through your village, town, or city and write down signs or advertisements that are egregiously punctuated. Look particularly for those “pesky apostrophes” and “delightful/horrific examples of idiotic sign-writing.” (Should you become obsessed with these outings, we suggest you wear a disguise and whip out your notebook when no one is looking. You do not want to be recognized as one of Lynne Truss’s sticklers on the prowl!)
- 2) When you have found a sign with a punctuation error, write a courteous letter explaining the correct use of the apostrophe and “express the gentle wish that, should the offending ‘Bob,s Pets’ sign, for example, be replaced, this well meant guidance might be borne in mind.” These letters won’t be necessary, after the A.P.S. (Apostrophe Protection Society) has created a more militant wing.
- 3) Look through your local newspaper and find errors such as, “DEAD SONS PHOTOS MAY BE RELEASED.”
- 4) Look on Amazon for a film/book review and, keeping in mind Lynne Truss’ rules, correct the punctuation.
- 5) Imagine that you are trying to persuade a non-stickler that punctuation is important. Come up with at least three reasons.

The Tractable Apostrophe (pages 35-67)

Do not take the apostrophe's talent for adaptability for granted. Take it seriously and end its suffering by learning the following eight rules:

1. The apostrophe indicates a possessive in a singular noun.

The boy's hat.

- 1a. When the possessor is plural, but does not end in an "s," the apostrophe similarly precedes the "s":

The children's playground.

The women's movement.

- 1b. But when the possessor is a regular plural, the apostrophe follows the "s":
The boys' hats. (more than one boy)

2. The apostrophe indicates time or quantity.

In one week's time.

Four yards' worth.

Two weeks' time.

3. The apostrophe indicates the omission of figures in dates:

The summer of '68.

4. The apostrophe indicates the omission of letters:

We can't go to Jo'burg (We cannot go to Johannesburg.)

- 4a. Most famously of all, the apostrophe of omission creates the word "it's":

It's (it is) your turn.

It's (it has) got very cold.

NOTE: Be very careful not to confuse the possessive "its" (no apostrophe) with the contractive it's (with apostrophe). You do not want to set off a "simple Pavlovian 'kill' response in the average stickler." The rule is:

**The word "it's" (with apostrophe) stands for "it is" or "it has".
If the word does not stand for "it is" or "it has", then what you require is "its."**

5. The apostrophe indicates strange, non-standard English. This is often used in British English to signal that the speaker is using a regional dialect, such as cockney English.

6. The apostrophe features in Irish names such as O'Neill and O'Casey.

By the way, "possessive determiners" and "possessive pronouns" do not require an apostrophe.

Possessive determiners

<i>my</i>	<i>our</i>
<i>your</i>	<i>your</i>
<i>his</i>	<i>their</i>

Possessive pronouns

<i>mine</i>	<i>ours</i>
<i>yours</i>	<i>yours</i>
<i>his</i>	<i>theirs</i>

<i>her</i>	<i>their</i>	<i>hers</i>	<i>theirs</i>
<i>its</i>	<i>their</i>	<i>its</i>	<i>theirs</i>

Additional rules of the apostrophe for the ardent stickler who desires to venture into “murky tunnels of style, usage and (oh no!) acceptable exception”:

1. Current guides to punctuation (including that ultimate authority, *Fowler’s Modern English Usage*) state that with modern names ending in “s” (including biblical names and any foreign name with an unpronounced final “s”), the “s” is required after the apostrophe:

Keats’s poems
Philippa Jones’s book

1a. With names from the ancient world, the “s” is not required after the apostrophe:

Achilles’ heel

1b. And an exception is always made for Jesus:

Jesus’ disciples

2. The double possessive:

Elton John, a friend of the footballer’s, said last night ...

NOTE: The only time you drop the double possessive is when, instead of being involved with an animate being, you are “a lover of the British Museum,” because obviously the British Museum does not — and never can — love you back.

Finally, a few more rules of the apostrophe, which may seem simple, but when broken bring grief to true sticklers everywhere:

1. If you can replace the word with “who is” or “who has,” then the word is who’s:

Who’s knocking at my door?

2. If you can replace the word with “they are,” then the word is they’re:

They’re not going to get away with this.

3. If you can replace the word with “there is,” the word is there’s:

There’s a surprising amount about the apostrophe in this book.

4. If you can replace the word with “you are,” then the word is you’re:

You’re never going to forget the difference between “its” and “it’s.”

Exercises to Bring Out Your Inner Stickler

1) Identify the type of apostrophe misuse in each example below and correct the error.

For example, “Trouser’s reduced” is a case of a singular possessive used instead of a simple plural. It should read “Trousers reduced.”

- a) Pupil's entrance (on a very selective school, presumably)
- b) Lands' End
- c) Mens Toilets
- d) Violet's ready (Is she?)
- e) Angels in box
- f) It need'nt be a pane (on a van advertising discount glass)
- g) Dear Mr. Steven's
- h) Hot Dogs a Meal in its' Self (sign in Great Yarmouth)
- i) Antique,s; Apple,s

2) If you are too peaceful to take up arms in the name of the apostrophe war and/or feel uncomfortable at the thought of carrying correction fluid, big pens, stickers, guerilla clothing or a gun, I suggest the following exercise:

Imagine you're the shopkeeper in Bristol who deliberately stuck ungrammatical signs in his window as a ruse to draw people into the shop. Come up with five of your own particularly humorous or egregious ungrammatical signs that misuse the apostrophe, then rewrite the sign using the apostrophe correctly.

That'll do, Comma (pages 68-102)

More than any mark, the comma draws our attention to the mixed origins of modern punctuation, and the comma has two distinct functions:

1. To illuminate the grammar of a sentence.

2. To point up—rather in the manner of musical notation—such literary qualities as rhythm, direction, pitch, tone and flow.

Punctuation developed slowly and cautiously not because it wasn't considered important, but, on the contrary, it was such an intensely important ju-ju. Pause in the wrong place and the sense of a religious text can alter in significant ways. Compare the following:

"Verily, I say unto thee, This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise."
"Verily I say unto thee this day, Thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

If you do not already picture yourself resorting to threats over the "correct way to punctuate using commas," by the time you have read the following rules on commas, we sincerely hope you will.

The comma, the "sheepdog" of punctuation, performs the following functions:

1. Separating items in a list:

Commas divide items in a list but are not required before the and on the end. The comma is correct if it can be replaced by the word *and* or *or*.

The flag is red, white and blue.

- 1a. However, some people favor the Oxford (or Harvard) comma. These people place a comma before the *and*.

The flag is red, white, and blue.

NOTE: In America, standard usage is to leave the comma in.

1b. In a list of adjectives, again, the rule is that you use a comma where an *and* would be appropriate — where the modifying words are all modifying the same thing to the same degree.

It was a dark, stormy night.

It was a dark and stormy night.

But you do not use a comma for the following. Here, the adjectives are not intended as a list.

It was an endangered white rhino.

The Grand Old Duke of York had ten thousand men.

2. Joining sentences:

Commas are used when two complete sentences are joined together, using such conjunctions as *and*, *or*, *but*, *while*, and *yet*:

The boys wanted to stay up until midnight, but they grew tired and fell asleep.

3. Filling gaps

Missing words are implied by a comma.

Annie had dark hair; Sally, fair.

4. Setting off direct speech

The Queen said, "Doesn't anyone know it's my birthday?"

5. Setting off interjections

Blimey, what would we do without it?

Stop, or I'll scream.

6. Commas that come in pairs

"The commas mark the places where the reader can—as it were—place an elegant two-pronged fork and cleanly lift out a section of the sentence, leaving no obvious damage to the whole."

John Keats, who never did any harm to anyone, is often invoked by grammarians.

To decide whether or not a pair of commas is needed, you need to determine whether the bit between the commas is "defining," or restrictive, or not. If the clause is "defining," you don't need to present it with a pair of commas. Thus:

The Highland Terriers that live in our street aren't cute at all.

If the information in the clause is "non-defining," however, then you do:

The Highland Terriers, when they are barking, are a nightmare.

When the interruption to the sentence comes at the beginning or at the end, the grammatical rule of commas-in-pairs still applies, even if you can only see one of the commas. Thus:

Of course, there weren't enough tickets to go round.

is, from the grammatical point of view, the same as:

There weren't, of course, enough tickets to go round.

Common Comma Pitfalls

Avoid the following:

1. The “yob’s comma.” “The yob’s comma has no syntactical value: it is the equivalent of a fuddled gasp for breath, as the poor writer marshals his battered thoughts.”

The society decided not to prosecute the owners of the Windsor Safari Park, where animals, have allegedly been fed live to snakes and lions, on legal advice.

2. Avoid American telegraphese in news headlines, where the comma is increasingly given the job of replacing the word “and.” Thus:

UK study spurns al-Qaeda, Irak link

Exercises to Bring Out Your Inner Stickler

1) Come up with four sentences of your own using the comma. Make sure the meaning of each sentence is significantly altered by the placement of the comma.

2) Punctuate the following paragraph taken from *The New Yorker*.

Not long ago in Paris I met a young Muslim woman named Djamila Benrehab who at the age of twenty had donned not only a black head scarf but a billowy black abaya and under it all a tight black bandanna to her eyebrows that left only the circle of her face exposed. Djamila is a big apple cheeked endearing person. She speaks a beautiful lilting French and is intelligent and quite charming. Her dream is to leave Paris and go to Brooklyn where she has heard Muslim girls go veiled and nobody minds and in any case "It can't be worse than here."

3) Punctuate the following sentences. (For explanations see page 97)

- a) Leonora walked on her head a little higher than usual.
- b) The driver managed to escape from the vehicle before it sank and swam to the riverbank.
- c) Don't guess use a timer or a watch.
- d) The convict said the judge is mad.

4) Come up with a sentence to illustrate each rule of the comma given above. Be sure to include sentences in which the placement of the comma significantly alters the meaning of the sentence.

5) Come up with three sentences that properly employ commas to offset restrictive clauses. Include at least one sentence whose meaning would be changed significantly if commas were not used.

6) Look through your local newspaper and find sentences in which the comma has been misused. Then write a letter to the editor explaining the correct use of the comma. Try to remain modest and not brag about your newfound prowess with punctuation.

Punctuation History Questions for the True Stickler

- 1) Who printed the first semicolon?
- 2) Who stated in 1566 that the main object of punctuation is the clarification of syntax?

Airs and Graces (pages 103-131)

So far you have been dabbling in the art of punctuation. If you really want to become a master of your craft, you must learn how to use the semicolon and the colon.

The Semicolon:

Here is the American essayist Lewis Thomas on the semicolon:

The semicolon tells you that there is still some question about the preceding full sentence; something needs to be added [...] The period [or full stop] tells you that that is that; if you didn't get all the meaning you wanted or expected, anyway you got all the writer intended to parcel out and now you have to move along. But with the semicolon there is more to come; read on; it will get clearer.

(*The Medusa and the Snail*, 1979)

Lynne Truss tells us, "Expectation is what these stops are about; expectation and elastic energy. Like internal springs they propel you forward in a sentence towards more information, and the essential difference between them is that while the semicolon lightly propels you in any direction related to the foregoing ("Whee! Surprise me!") the colon nudges you along lines already subtly laid down." p. 114

If used according to the following rules, semicolons can be, as Lynne Truss warns, "dangerously habit-forming."

1. The main place for putting a semicolon is between two related sentences where there is no conjunction such as "and" or "but," and where the comma would be ungrammatical:

*I love Opal Fruits; they are now called Starburst, of course.
I remember him when he couldn't write his own name on a gate;
now he's Prime Minister.*

In each of the examples above, a dash could certainly be substituted for the semicolon without much damage to the sentence. But it is worth learning the different effects created by the semicolon and the dash. Whereas the semicolon suggests a connection between the two halves of each of these sentences, the dash ought to be preserved for occasions when the connection is a lot less direct, when it can act as a bridge between bits of fractured sense:

*I loved Opal Fruits—why did they call them Starburst?—reminds me of that joke "What did Zimbabwe used to be called?—Rhodesia. What did Iceland used to be called?—Bejam!"**

* Iceland is the name of a British grocery retailer that purchased a much-larger rival store chain, Bejam, turning all Bejam outlets into Iceland stores.

2. Occasionally, the semicolon "performs the duties of a kind of Special Policeman in the event of comma fights."

Fares were offered to Corfu, the Greek island, Morocco, Elba, in the Mediterranean, and Paris. Margaret thought about it. She had been to Elba once and had found it dull, to Morocco, and found it too colourful.

There is no option for an upstanding semicolon in such circumstances than to step in, blow a whistle and restore order.

Fares were offered to Corfu, the Greek island; Morocco; Elba, in the Mediterranean; and Paris. Margaret thought about it. She had been to Elba once and had found it dull; to Morocco, and found it too colourful.

3. Linking words such as “however,” “nevertheless,” “also”, “consequently” and “hence” require a semicolon.

He woke up in his own bed; nevertheless, he was OK.

The Colon:

According to H.W. Fowler, the colon “delivers the goods that have been invoiced in the preceding words.” George Bernard Shaw tells us, when two statements are “placed baldly in dramatic apposition,” use a colon. Thus:

Luruns could not speak: he was drunk.

Shaw explains to Lawrence that when the second statement reaffirms, explains or illustrates the first, you use a colon; also when you desire an abrupt pull up:

Luruns was congenitally literary: that is, a liar.

Lynne Truss tells us that a colon is nearly always preceded by a complete sentence, and in its simplest usage it rather theatrically announces what is to come. “Like a well-trained magician’s assistant, it pauses slightly to give you time to get a bit worried and then efficiently whisks away the cloth and reveals the trick complete.”

This much is clear, Watson: it was the baying of an enormous hound.

(This much is clear, Watson—yes! it was the baying of an enormous hound.)

Tom has only one rule in life; never eat anything bigger than your head.

(Tom had only one rule in life—yes! never eat anything bigger than your head.)

I pulled out all the stops with Kerry-Anne: I used a semicolon.

(I pulled out all the stops with Kerry-Anne—yes! I used a semicolon.)

As well as the “Yes!” type colon, there is the “Ah” type, when the colon reminds us there is probably more than has met the eye:

I loved Opal Fruits as a child: no one else did.

A classic use of the colon is a kind of fulcrum between two antithetical or oppositional statements:

Man proposes: God disposes.

As Shaw put it, the colon can simply pull up the reader for a nice surprise:
I find fault with only three things in this story of yours, Jenkins: the beginning, the middle and the end.

Some rules of the colon:

1. Colons start lists (especially lists using semicolons):

In later life, Kerry-Anne found there were three qualities she disliked in other people: Britishness; superior airs; and a feigned lack of interest in her dusting of freckles.

2. Colons set off book and film subtitles from the main titles:

Berks and Wankers: A Pessimist's View of Language Preservation
Gandhi II: The Mahatma Strikes Back

3. Conventionally, colons separate dramatic characters from dialogue:

Philip: Kerry-Anne! Hold still! You've got some gunk on your face!
Kerry-Anne: They're freckles, Philip. How many more times?

Exercises to Bring Out Your Inner Stickler

- 1) Find an old essay written for a class, or better yet, an old love letter and re-punctuate it, keeping in mind the punctuation rules you have just learned.
- 2) Write a letter imploring a “non-stickler” to believe in the importance of punctuation. Be sure to use the apostrophe, the comma, the colon, and the semicolon.
- 3) Insert the necessary semicolons and other punctuation in this passage by Jane Austen using modern punctuation rules. (Austen was very fond of semicolons.)

Sir Walter Elliot of Kellynch Hall in Somersetshire was a man who for his own amusement never took up any book but the Baronetage there he found occupation for an idle hour and consolation in a distressed one there his faculties were roused into admiration and respect by contemplating the limited remnant of the earliest patents there any unwelcome sensations arising from domestic affairs changed naturally into pity and contempt as he turned over the almost endless creations of the last century and there if every other leaf were powerless, he could read his own history with an interest which never failed...

(Persuasion, 1818)

- 4) Insert the necessary parenthesis, italics, commas and periods in this famous passage by James Joyce using the punctuation rules you've learned:

There was no hope for him this time it was the third stroke. Night after night I had passed the house it was vacation time and studied the lighted square of window and night after night I had found it lighted in the same way faintly and evenly. If he was dead I thought I would see the reflection of candles on the darkened blind for I knew that two candles must be set at the head of a corpse. He had often said to me I am not long for this world and I had thought his words idle. Now I knew they were true...

(Dubliners, 1916)

Punctuation History Questions for the True Stickler

- 1) How old are the colon and semicolon?
- 2) Why has the semicolon fallen out of fashion with newspapers?

Cutting a Dash (pages 132-167)

Follow the guidelines below, and you will soon be able to use effectively, without overusing, the “expressive, attention seeking punctuation”: the exclamation point, the dash and the italic. As tempting as it is to follow Gertrude Stein’s lead and banish this “punctuation that can’t help saying it with knobs on” entirely, Lynne Truss recommends going the way of Perekladin and Hugo, who were able to embrace the cathartic nature of such marks and use them to their advantage.

The Exclamation Point

The exclamation point comes at the end of a sentence, is unignorable and hopelessly heavy-handed, and is known in the newspaper world as a screamer, a gasper or a startler.

The exclamation point is used:

1. in involuntary ejaculations:

Phew! Lord love a duck!

2. to salute or invoke:

O mistress mine! Where are you roaming?

3. to exclaim (or admire):

How many goodly creatures are there here!

4. for drama:

That’s not the Northern Lights, that’s Manderley!

5. to make a commonplace sentence more emphatic:

I could really do with some Opal Fruits!

6. to deflect potential misunderstanding of irony:

I don’t mean it!

The Question Mark

The question mark, though it takes up twice the space of an exclamation point, annoys people far less. Its name, though fairly boring, is a good indicator of its function.

Question marks are used in a direct question:

What is the capital of Belgium?

When the question is inside quotation marks, again it is required:

“Did you try the moules and the chips?” he asked.

When the question is indirect, though, the sentence manages without it:

What was the point of all this sudden interest in Brussels, he wondered.

I asked if she had something in particular against the Belgian national character.

Avoid the increasing trend of (ignorantly) adding question marks to sentences containing indirect questions. While the reason for it is not hard to identify, says Lynne Truss, the practice is a bit depressing, and certainly irritating.

Italics

Italics are the print equivalent of underlining, and they are used for:

- 1. titles of books, newspapers, albums, films**
- 2. emphasis of certain words**
- 3. foreign words and phrases**
- 4. examples when writing about language**

Like the exclamation point, italics should be used sparingly for purposes of emphasis.

Quotation Marks

Use double quotation marks for speech and single quotations for quotations-within-quotations.

American grammarians insist that, if a sentence ends in inverted commas, all the terminal punctuation for the sentence must come tidily inside the speech marks, even when this doesn't seem to make sense.

Sophia asked Lord Fellamar if he was "out of his senses". (British)
Sophia asked Lord Fellamar if he was "out of his senses."

(American)

The Dash, the Double Dash, and Brackets

The Dash

Whereas a dash is generally concerned to connect (or separate) phrases and sentences, the tiny, tricky hyphen (used in such phrases as "quasi-dashes," "double-taps," and "stream-of-consciousness") is used quite distinctly to connect (or separate) double words. A single dash creates a dramatic disjunction that can be exploited for humor, for bathos, or for shock. Byron is a great master of the dramatic dash:

*A little still she strove, and much repented,
 And whispering "I will ne'er consent"—consented.*

Double dashes are a bracketing device.

Brackets

Brackets come in various shapes, types and names:

- 1. round brackets (which the British call brackets, and Americans call parentheses)**
- 2. square brackets [which the British call square brackets, and Americans call brackets]**

3. brace brackets {which are shaped thus and derive from mathematics}

4. angle brackets <used in palaeography, linguistics and other technical specialties>

Parentheses are used to add information, to clarify, to explain, and to illustrate:

Tom Jones (1749) was considered such a lewd book that, when two earthquakes occurred in London in 1750, Fielding's book was blamed for them.

Starburst (formerly known as Opal Fruits) are available in all corner shops.

Robert Maxwell wasn't dead yet (he was still suing people.)

Parentheses are perfect for authorial asides of various kinds:

Tom Jones was blamed for some earthquakes (isn't that interesting?).

Square brackets are quite another thing. They are an editor's way of clarifying the meaning of a direct quote without actually changing any of the words:

She had used it [Tom Jones] for far too many examples by this stage.

Square brackets are most commonly used around the word *sic* (from the Latin, *sicut*,

meaning "just as"), to explain the status of an apparent mistake. Generally, *sic* means the foregoing mistake (or apparent mistake) was made by the writer/speaker I am quoting; I am but the faithful messenger; in fact I never get anything wrong myself.

She asked for "a packet of Starburst [sic]"

However, there are distinctions within *sic*: it can signify two different things:

1. This isn't a mistake, actually; it just looks like one to the casual eye.

I am grateful to Mrs. Bollock [sic]

2. Tee hee, what a dreadful error! But it would be dishonest of me to correct it.

Please send a copy of The Time's [sic]," he wrote.

Square brackets also (sometimes) enclose the ellipsis, when words are left out.

The Ellipsis

The ellipsis should be used:

1. To indicate words missing from a quoted passage.

2. To trail off in an intriguing manner. ...

Exercises to Bring Out Your Inner Stickler

1) In the following paragraph insert the necessary exclamation points, italics, ellipses, and parentheses. (Brackets are used where a punctuation mark is needed.)

Well, maybe you're right, baby. You can't come together with nothing, and you're nothing[] SNAP [] It went snap tonight at Daddy's party [] Dripping contempt, but there is fury and loss under it[] I sat there at Daddy's party and I watched you[] I watched you sitting there, and I watched the younger men around you, the men who were going to go somewhere."
(*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* 1962)

Punctuation History Questions for the True Stickler

- 1) When was the exclamation point introduced and what was it known as?
- 2) When was the question mark introduced and what did it look like?
- 3) What shape of bracket appeared first and what attractive name was it given by Erasmus?
- 4) From what language does the word "bracket" derive?

A Little Used Punctuation Mark (pages 168-176)

Traditionally the hyphen joins together words, or words-with-prefixes, to aid understanding; it keeps certain other words neatly apart, for the same reason.

1. Many words require hyphens to prevent ambiguity: words such as “co-respondent,” “re-formed,” and “re-mark.” A re-formed rock band is quite different from a reformed one. Likewise, a long-standing friend is different from a long standing one.

2. It is necessary to use hyphens when spelling out numbers.

I have thirty-two cousins.

3. Use a hyphen when linking nouns with nouns. Typesetters and publishers use a short dash, known as an en-dash, for this function.

London-Brighton train;

3a. This also applies to linking adjectives with adjectives.

American-French relations.

4. Though it is less rigorously applied than it used to be, there is a rule that when a noun phrase is used to qualify another noun, it is hyphenated.

The home featured a stainless-steel kitchen.

5. Certain prefixes traditionally require hyphens.

*pro-hyphen
quasi-grammatical.*

6. When words are to be spelled out, it is customary to use hyphens to indicate that you want the letters enunciated (or typeset) separately.

“Kensham, that’s K-E-N-S-H-A-M.”

7. Purely for expediency, the hyphen is used to avoid an unpleasant linguistic condition called “letter collision.” However much you might want to create compound words, there will always be some ghastly results, such as “deice” (de-ice) or “shelllike” (shell-like.)

8. One of the main uses of the hyphen is to indicate that a word is unfinished and continues on the next line.

9. Hesitation and stammering are indicated by hyphens.

“I reached for the w-w-w-watering can.”

10. When a hyphenated phrase is coming up, and you are qualifying it beforehand, it is necessary to also hyphenate the modifying word or phrase.

“He was a two- or three-year-old.”

Exercises to Bring Out Your Inner Stickler

1) Insert the necessary hyphens.

Arulpagrasam's British manager duct taped a banner reproducing M.I.A.'s spray painted, circular orange and green logo to the turntables, which were suspended from the ceiling by chains.

(The New Yorker, 2004)

2) Now that you are an expert at using the hyphen, write a passage in which you employ the hyphen in each of the ten ways described above.

Answer Key:

Question 1 (page 5)

- a) singular possessive instead of plural possessive
- b) Plural possessive instead of singular possessive
- c) No possessive where possessive is required
- d) Dangling expectations caused by incorrect pluralisation
- e) Unintentional sense from unmarked possessive
- f) Someone knows an apostrophe is required ... but where, oh where?
- g) Misplaced possessive in a proper name
- h) Itself – no possessive required (But a colon after “Hot Dogs” would be nice.)
- i) Commas instead of apostrophes – and neither are required because the words are not possessive

Exercises to Bring Out Your Inner Stickler (Page 8)

Question 2 (page 8)

Not long ago in Paris, I met a young Muslim woman named Djamila Benrehab who, at the age of twenty, had donned not only a black head scarf, but a billowy black abaya and, under it all, a tight black bandanna to her eyebrows that left only the circle of her face exposed. Djamila is a big, apple cheeked, endearing person. She speaks a beautiful, lilting French and is intelligent and quite charming. Her dream is to leave Paris and go to Brooklyn, where she has heard Muslim girls go veiled and nobody minds and, in any case, “It can’t be worse than here.”

Question 3 (page 8)

- 3) Punctuate the following sentences. (For explanations see page 97)
 - a) Leonora walked on, her head a little higher than usual.
 - b) The driver managed to escape from the vehicle before it sank, and swam to the riverbank.
 - c) Don’t guess; use a timer or a watch.
 - d) “The convict,” said the judge, “is mad.”

Punctuation History Questions for the True Stickler (Pages 8-9)

- 1) Who printed the first semicolon? *Aldus Manutius*
- 2) Who stated in 1566 that the main object of punctuation is the clarification of syntax? *Aldus Manutius the Younger*

Exercises to Bring Out Your Inner Stickler

Question 3 (Page 12)

Sir Walter Elliot, of Kellynch Hall in Somersetshire, was a man who, for his own amusement, never took up any book but the Baronetage. There, he found occupation for an idle hour, and consolation in a distressed one; there, his faculties were roused into admiration and respect, by contemplating the limited remnant of the earliest patents; there, any unwelcome sensations, arising from domestic affairs, changed naturally into pity and contempt as he turned over the almost endless creations of the last century; and there, if every other leaf were powerless, he could read his own history with an interest which never failed...

(Persuasion, 1818)

Question 4 (Page 13)

There was no hope for him this time: it was the third stroke. Night after night I had passed the house (it was vacation time) and studied the lighted square of window; and night after night I had found it lighted in the same way, faintly and evenly. If he was dead, I thought, I would see the reflection of candles on the darkened blind for I knew that two candles must be set at the head of a corpse. He had often said to me, "I am not long for this world," and I had thought his words idle. Now I knew they were true...

(Dubliners, 1916)

Punctuation History Questions for the True Stickler

- 1) How old are the colon and semicolon? *The first printed semicolon was used in 1494 by Alfred Manutius, although medieval scribes used similar symbols in their works as well. Both the colon and the semicolon had been adopted into English well before 1700.*
- 2) Why has the semicolon fallen out of fashion with newspapers?
The most common reasons are:
 - 1) *They are old-fashioned.*
 - 2) *They are middle-class.*
 - 3) *They are optional.*
 - 4) *They are mysteriously connected to pausing.*
 - 5) *They are dangerously addictive.*
 - 6) *The difference between the colon and the semicolon is too negligible to be grasped by the brain of man.*

Exercises to Bring Out Your Inner Stickler (Page 16)

Question 1 (Page 16)

Well, maybe you're right, baby. You can't come together with nothing, and you're nothing! SNAP! It went snap tonight at Daddy's party. *(Dripping*

contempt, but there is fury and loss under it) I sat there at Daddy's party and I watched you...I watched you sitting there, and I watched the younger men around you, the men who were going to go somewhere."
(Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? 1962)

Punctuation History Questions for the True Stickler (Page 16)

- 1) When was the exclamation point introduced and what was it known as? *The exclamation point was introduced by humanist printers in the 15th century and was known as "the note of admiration" until the mid 17th century.*
- 2) When was the question mark introduced and what did it look like? *The question mark began to appear in the second half of the 8th century, when it resembled a lightning flash, striking from right to left.*
- 3) What shape of bracket appeared first and what attractive name was it given by Erasmus? *The angle shape was the earliest to appear, but in the 16th century Erasmus gave the attractive name "lunulae" to round brackets, in reference to their moon-like profile.*
- 4) From what language does the word "bracket" derive? *The word "bracket" comes from the same German root as "brace" or "breeches," and originally referred to the kind of bracket that holds up a bookshelf.*

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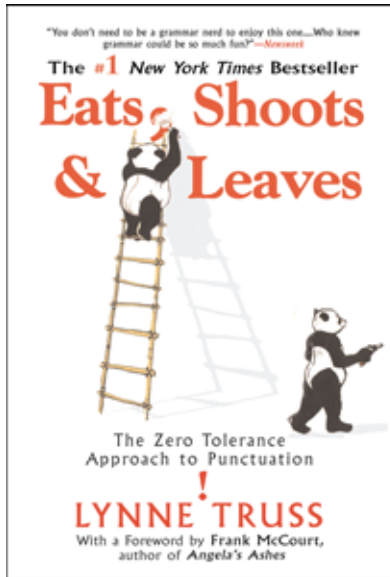
Question 1 (Page 18)

Arulpagrasam's British manager duct taped a banner – reproducing M.I.A.'s spray painted, circular orange and green logo – to the turntables, which were suspended from the ceiling by chains.
(The New Yorker, 2004)

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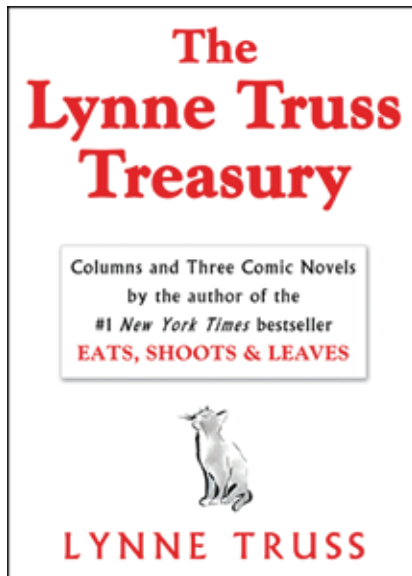
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