Punctuation was created to aid readers. Without it, ideas run together and your reader may misinterpret your ideas. Here are guidelines for use on these pieces of punctuation: commas, semicolons and colons.

**COMMAS**

Use a comma when joining two complete sentences with a conjunction such as “but” or “and.”

**Example:** I ate dinner, but I did not eat dessert.

**Example:** I ate dinner, and I ate dessert.

Do not use a comma if the second group of words is not a complete sentence.

**Example:** I ate my dinner and also ate dessert.

Use a comma after an introductory phrase or word.

**Example:** Because I am a college student with no money, I ate dinner at home.

Use a comma between items in a list.

**Example:** My dinner consisted of a sandwich, soup, and salad.

Use a comma to separate words that interrupt the flow of a sentence or modify a noun.

**Example:** Casey, my dog, ate the dinner right off my plate!

**Example:** Without hesitation, my mother scolded Casey for eating my dinner.

Use a comma when introducing quotations.

**Example:** My mother yelled, “Dinner time!”
SEMICOLONS

Use a semicolon to join two complete sentences that are related. If a period, which allows a breath when reading aloud, seems unnecessary, replace it with a semicolon.

**Example:** My mother made dinner; the dinner tasted delicious.

Use a semicolon with words like “however” or phrases like “for example.”

**Example:** I ate dinner; however, I was hungry an hour later.

Use a semicolon to clarify a list of items that already contains punctuation.

**Example:** My favorite foods are Italian, like spaghetti and lasagna; Mexican, especially nachos and burritos; and French pastries, like chocolate éclairs.

COLONS

Use a colon to introduce a list.

**Example:** My dinner consisted of the following: grilled chicken, rice, fruit salad, and steamed vegetables.

Use a colon for further explanation with two sentences.

**Example:** My dinner reminds me of a garden: both have wonderful smells and vibrant colors.

**DROP-IN HOURS**

Monday – Thursday: 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Friday: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Sunday: 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.