

Punctuation and essay-writing

A sentence	contains a subject, a verb and it must make full sense
Capitals	open a sentence.
Capitals	are used for the names of people, towns, cities, countries, continents.
Capitals	are used for the names of days, months, religions, courses and book titles.
Capitals	are used for abbreviations, except am, pm, mph and kph.
A capital	is used for I.
Capitals	are not used in the words country, state, county, nation, river, city, university.
Capitals	are not used to draw attention to items . Don't capitalise whole words!
Capitals	are not used for the word <i>doctor</i> or <i>president</i> , unless the name is used.
Capitals	Are used for the first word of quoted speech. He said, ' Y ou should come to class every day.'
Commas	are used to separate items in a list: He was carrying, eggs, cheese, apples and oranges.
Commas	are used to enclose extra information: Mr Mourinho, a man with long hair, is the manager.
Commas	are used after however, nevertheless, therefore.
Commas	are used to signal pauses: While she slept, a thief took her handbag.
The colon	is used to introduce a list. The manager named the team: De Gea, Rooney, Jones, etc
The colon	Is not used to introduce words spoken by people (quotes). He said, 'Go home!'
Semi colons	are used for contrasts: I drive a car; she rides a bike.
Semi-colons	are used to join two sentences that are closely linked: Mike spoke to Ann; he ignored Mary.
Semi-colons	are best avoided. If you are not sure, a comma will always do the job
Inverted	commas are used to mark quoted speech. He said, 'I am going to have some fun today.'
Inverted	commas are placed outside the punctuation at the end of the quote. He said, 'Go home!'
Inverted	commas are not used for book titles. Use italics: A Tale of Two Cities. Underline if handwriting
Double	inverted commas are used for single words: He said, 'Don't say "us". We don't all agree.'
Italics	are used for book titles: A Tale of Two Cities.
Italics	are used for foreign words: The Portuguese word for woman is mulher.
A dash	is used to signal an afterthought. Meet me in the pub tomorrow night – at nine.
A hyphen	is a shorter line used to join to words together. An on-off relationship.
Brackets	are used for extra (not vital) information. Evergreen trees (fir, pine) don't lose leaves in winter
1 apostrophe	followed by "s" is used to show something belongs to one person: The boy's coat.
1 apostrophe	after "s" is used to show something belongs to more than one person: The boys' class.
Apostrophes	are also used in expressions of time in the same way: A week's holiday. Two weeks' holiday.
Writing essays	
In the Introduction	state what you are going to talk about, and how.
In the development	divide the ideas/reasons that you have brainstormed into paragraphs.
Paragraphs	have one essential idea. Every paragraph begins with a head sentence.
The head sentence	states the main idea of the paragraph. Don't put new ideas in that paragraph.
The other sentences	in that paragraph back up the head sentence.
The conclusion	refers back to the introduction and development. You mention what you have said and if you have a ground-breaking conclusion you mention it too.
The use of I and I think	sends people into a panic. You can use both to say how you are going to go about tackling the essay; all top writers do this. What they don't do is use I and I think to make claims they can't back up. If you are asked for your opinion you can, of course, say "I think"

Prepare essay on a table, as in the following

Discussion – one-sided

Title	<i>Cats should be kept indoors, discuss.</i>
Introduction	All cat owners should keep their cats confined to their houses or at least to their gardens. There are many reasons for this and I will mention a few below.
Paragraph 1	Head sentence: <i>The wildlife in the countryside is at risk</i>
Paragraph 2	Head sentence: <i>Cats themselves are at risk</i>
Paragraph 3	Head sentence: <i>Cats are happy inside.</i>
Conclusion	There are many dangers associated with leaving cats outside. The reasons I have put forward above demonstrate that it's time for everyone to take this matter seriously

Now support the head sentences. Don't bring any new ideas into the paragraph

Keeping cats indoors (one-sided)

All cat owners should keep their cats confined to their houses or at least to their gardens. There are many reasons for this and I will mention a few below.

The wildlife in the countryside is at risk. Cats are skilful hunters that sneak up and kill small animals like birds and mice. It's a primary instinct, so they will do it even if they are not hungry. One cat on the loose can *murder* up to ten smaller animals per day. Some owners put a bell around the cat's neck so that the smaller animal will hear the cat coming. But the cat is an evil animal and soon learns to move in ways that stops the bell from ringing.

Cats themselves are at risk. *Your* precious cat is in constant danger of being knocked down. Although the cat is very clever when it comes to smaller animals, it is not so cute at all when it comes to the bigger version: the car. Cats also love to fight with other cats, and when they get injured they get embarrassed and stay away from the house for days and days, spreading infection.

Cats are happy inside. When they get used to it they never want to go out. They become lords and masters of the sofa and the remote control. And sure if you have Sky TV there is no need at all for them to go outside, not even the toilet in the back garden. They can actually be trained to use *your* toilet.

There are many dangers associated with leaving cats outside. The reasons I have put forward above demonstrate fully that it's time for everyone to take this matter seriously. Keep your cat inside!

Keeping cats indoors (two-sided) (head sentences are in bold)

Our community has been debating a problem related to cats over the past few weeks. Should all cat owners keep their cats confined to their houses or let them roam outside? Well, below I look at both sides of the argument. I'll begin by looking at the reasons people put forward for keeping cats indoors.

The wildlife in the countryside is at risk. Cats are skilful hunters that sneak up and kill small animals like birds and mice. It's a primary instinct, so they will do it even if they are not hungry. One cat on the loose can *murder* up to ten smaller animals per day. Some owners put a bell around the cat's neck so that the smaller animal will hear the cat coming. But the cat is an evil animal and soon learns to move in ways that stops the bell from ringing.

Cats themselves are at risk. Your precious cat is in constant danger of being knocked down. Although the cat is very clever when it comes to smaller animals, it is not so cute at all when it comes to the bigger version: the car. Cats also love to fight with other cats, and when they get injured, they get embarrassed and stay away from the house for days and days, spreading infection.

Cats are happy inside. When they get used to it, they never want to go out. They become lords and masters of the sofa and the remote control. And sure if you have Sky TV there is no need at all for them to go outside, not even to the toilet in the back garden. They can actually be trained to use *your* toilet.

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The following are the arguments for letting cats roam outside. **First of all, cats are wild animals and we should let them behave naturally.** If you keep a cat inside you are depriving it of its cathood. It's not ethical. Cats, like all animals, like to go for walks, survey the countryside and of course they like to meet other cats, both of the male and female varieties.

Cats can help keep the vermin population down. Cats are great at killing mice and rats - which are a threat to society in that they spread disease. Rats can usually become immune to any type of poison, except one type: the cat. They never become immune to the cat.

Cats are an essential part of the evolutionary cycle. Cats kill birds. There's no denying that. But what kind of birds do they kill? They kill weak and stupid birds. So if they kill weak and stupid birds it means that the strong and clever birds who survive, procreate and produce a better variety of bird: a pedigree bird!

I have presented above two sides of the debate on whether cats should be kept indoors or left roam outside. Both points of view are valid, and the best thing to do would be to reach some sort of compromise. For example, cats could be allowed to go outside - but on a lead, or perhaps we they could be allowed go out on Saturdays and Sundays.