



Exclamation Points

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Exclamation Points



Exclamation points have one main use, to indicate when the writer is making a dramatic statement or an outburst.

Think of using an exclamation point this way. If you were saying the exact same words out loud, would you be shouting them? An exclamation point has the effect of shouting at your reader.

Think of this quotation by F. Scott Fitzgerald: “Cut out all those exclamation marks. An exclamation mark is like laughing at your own jokes.”


Exclamation Points



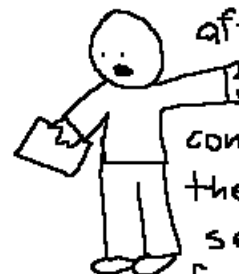
Exclamation points are used very rarely in academic writing. Occasionally, they are used in creative writing if you are quoting someone who is shouting.

A writing teacher of mine said that writers use exclamation points when their own writing is boring. Ouch!

What's wrong with my essay?



Well, there are too many exclamation points after each word... You might consider restricting them to the ends of sentences. I just found it a little too exciting.



Exclamation Points



Exclamation points are sometimes used with quotation marks and sometimes not. It can get confusing where to put the exclamation point, but there is a pretty clear rule:

If the entire sentence is an exclamation, put an exclamation point after the quotation marks.

If the entire sentence is not an exclamation but only the direct quotation contains an exclamation, put an exclamation point before the quotation marks.

Please see the next slide for examples.

Exclamation Points



My brother was backing up in the parking lot, but I shouted, **“Mark, stop!”** because he was going to hit a little old lady and her grocery cart.

>>>>> This is a sentence that contains the exclamation “Mark, stop!” The exclamation point only applies to that specific quote, so it goes inside the “quotation marks.”

“You and your brother clean up this mess right this second”!

>>>>> This entire sentence is an exclamation (can you blame the parent encountering this home decorating project?) Therefore, the exclamation point goes outside of the “quotation marks.”

