



# Periods

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# Periods

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Periods have two main uses:

1. Periods show where a sentence ends.
2. Periods are used to indicate abbreviations (such as etc. instead of et cetera or P. O. instead of Post Office).

# Periods

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Periods separate two complete sentences from each other.

1. Remember a complete sentence has to have a subject (who or what the sentence is about), a verb (what the action is that is taking place), and sometimes a “completer,” a word or phrase that finishes out a thought.
2. You have to be able to find the beginnings and endings of sentences in order to put periods in the right spots.
3. The next few slides show you some examples.

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Here is an example:

**Not all people are fans of going out on New Years eve.**

Subject: Who or what are we talking about? Who or what is the focus on the sentence?

**Not all people**

Verb: What about these people? What are they doing? Not all people **are**



Completer: Not all people are what? This sentence needs something to finish it off, to make it a complete thought: Not all people are **fans of going out on New Years eve.**

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Here is another example: **Angela dropped.**

Subject: Who or what are we talking about? Who or what is the focus of the sentence?  
**Angela**

Verb: What about this person? What is she doing? Angela **dropped.**

Completer: Angela dropped what? This sentence is not yet complete because we need to know what Angela dropped. A vase? A picture frame? A puppy?

Or, as one of my students said in class once, Angela dropped.....dead. That one made me laugh. And then it made me nervous. Anyway, this sentence needs something to finish the thought.

Angela dropped **an expensive music box.**

Angela dropped **a frozen turkey on her foot (true: I'm accident prone).**

Angela dropped **\$75 on a new purse (not true: I'm cheap).**

Angela dropped **by the library to pick up the latest David Sedaris book.**

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Here is a final example:

**The Wahlert High School choir performed.**

Subject: Who or what are we talking about? Who or what is the focus of the sentence? **The Wahlert High School choir**

Verb: What about choir? What is it doing? The Wahlert High School choir **performed.**

Completer: This is actually a complete sentence on its own. For example, you could see something like this in a newspaper review:

Last Friday night, audience members were in for a real treat. Soprano Amy Dolan sang a medley of swing band numbers backed by the Wahlert High School band. The Wahlert High School choir performed.

You could add additional information, such as the Wahlert High School performed **a tribute to Broadway musicals.** This additional information makes the sentence more specific, but it isn't *necessary* to have a complete grammatical sentence.

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You can mentally walk your way through a sentence asking these questions:

For Christmas this year, **my brother Steve**  
**wrapped up a 50-pound bag of bird seed.**  
**I laughed.**

Who or what is the sentence about: **my brother Steve**  
What about Steve? What did Steve do? **wrapped up**  
My brother Steve wrapped up what? **a 50-pound bag**  
**of bird seed**  
**>>>>>You now have a complete thought.**

Who: **I**

What about "I"? What did "I" do? **I laughed**

This is a complete thought, so nothing needs to be added. Again, additional information could be added to make the sentence more clear or detailed, but that information isn't necessary for a complete sentence.

**I laughed at what a terrible job my brother did wrapping but am very grateful my birds will eat this winter.**



# Periods

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Another use for the period is to show an abbreviation.

Your best bet in determining where to put the period is to consult a dictionary. Here is a list of common abbreviations:

abbr. – abbreviation  
admin. – administration  
anon. – anonymous  
blvd. – boulevard  
capt. – captain  
chron. – chronology  
def. – definition  
Dr. – Doctor  
esp. – especially  
gov. – governor

in. – inch, inches  
Inc. – incorporated  
jr. – junior  
math. – mathematics  
Mr. – Mister  
n.d. – no date of publication  
par. – paragraph  
pgs. – pages

For a helpful directory of abbreviations , please click on [this link.](#)

# Do You Still Have Questions?

If you still have questions, please stop by the Writing Lab (DI20).

