Parentheses ( )

Parentheses are used to enclose nonessential or supplemental information in a sentence. Parentheses are always used in pairs; you must have both an opening and a closing parenthesis.

**Rule #1:**

Use parentheses around nonessential information or abrupt changes in thought. When the words in parentheses form a complete sentence, place the period inside the closing parenthesis. When the words in parentheses are not a complete sentence, place the period outside the closing parenthesis. Always place commas, semicolons, and colons outside the closing parenthesis.

**Examples of Rule #1:**

- No personal phone calls are allowed on company time. (Refer to the policy manual.)
- The meeting will be held next year (in March).

**Rule #2:**

If the information in parentheses requires a question mark or an exclamation mark, use the mark inside the parentheses only if the sentence ends with a different mark.

**Examples of Rule #2:**

- Richard Bender (remember him?) stopped by to see me yesterday.
- Do you remember Richard (think you can remember back that far) from the bank?

**Rule #3:**

Use parentheses to clarify preceding words.

**Example of Rule #3:**

- Next week we will study the hydrologic cycle (also known as the

**Rule #4:**

Use parentheses for references or documentation of sources.

**Examples of Rule #4:**

- Fifty contracts were issued this year. (See Table 1.)
- The U.S. leads the world in Internet use (Leslie 89).

**Rule #5:**

Use parentheses around an abbreviation or an acronym when it is used with the spelled-out word.
Example of Rule #5:

Please submit the Student Aid Report (SAR).

Rule #6:

Use parentheses in a horizontal list of items that uses either letters or numbers.

Examples of Rule #6:

I need three items from the store: (1) apples, (2) bread, and (3) milk. The following information must be included: (a) name, (b) address, and (c) driver’s license number.

Rule #7:

Capitalize the first word in parentheses if it is a proper noun or the beginning of a complete sentence.

Example of Rule #7:

Verify all items. (Check the boxes.)

Rule #8:

Use parentheses around numerals used with a spelled-out number.

Example of Rule #8:

I have ninety (90) dollars left from my paycheck.

Rule #9:

Use parentheses for minor subdivisions in alphanumeric outlines.

Examples of Rule #9:

I.
   A.
   B.
   1.
   2.
   a.
   b.
   (1)
   (2)
   (a)
   (b)
II.