



## Punctuation and Link Words

### I- Punctuation

Punctuation is necessary to divide the text into understandable units of meaning. Here is some useful advice to help you make your summary clear.

- a) **Capital letters:** are used to introduce a sentence, but also for **days, months, adjectives of nationality, countries, continents, titles, abbreviations, brand names, institutions ....**  
E.g.: For example, despite earlier detection and improved treatment, deaths from breast cancer, the leading cause of death from cancer in European women, are still rising as population ages.

Every sentence should end with a **full stop (GB)/ period (USA)**, unless you need to use a question mark (?) or an exclamation mark (!).

E.g.: A recent study gives a glimmer of such hope.

- b) **The comma (,)** introduces a pause. It is used to separate items in a list, to give an example, to illustrate a point, and to identify non-defining relative clauses. It is also used after an introductory adverbial or prepositional phrase.  
E.g. Prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment, and palliation all deserve equal attention from the international research community.

However, the budget cut also means that research into rare cancers, such as sarcomas, is likely to be curtailed or stopped altogether.

Although less spectacular, the term disease-free survival is accurate and cautiously optimistic.

- c) **The semi-colon (;)** introduces a longer pause than comma. The two parts of the sentence can be independent from one another, but are closely related. It is also used between items in a series containing internal punctuation.  
E.g. The FDA is planning to produce guidance on the use of such tests; its approval of this particular one, however, may lead to similar tests becoming more widely available.  
I attended several international congresses in the USA last year in Atlanta, Georgia; Detroit, Michigan; and Miami, Florida.
- d) **The colon (☺)** inform the reader that what follows proves, clarifies, explains, or simply enumerates elements of what precedes.  
E.g. **CANCER: SOME REASONS TO BE HOPEFUL** (Title)  
This study enrolled 245 patients: 248 from the large phase 3 study and an additional 6 from the previous safety study.
- e) **Quotations marks or inverted commas (“...”) / (‘...’)** are used to enclose direct speech and quotations.  
E.g. In a recent interview, the Vice-President of the American Society of Oncology said that this approved study was now “on hold”.
- f) **The dash (→)**: usually introduces an afterthought, explanation or comment. It is different from a Hyphen (-), which is used between the elements of compound word.  
E.g. Despite many resources and much attention, one of the main pursuit of medicine - **finding a cure for cancer** - still remains elusive.  
Although less spectacular, the term **disease-free** survival is accurate and cautiously optimistic.

## II- Link words -

In order to show the relationship between the main idea in your summary, it is necessary to use the appropriate link words. They can be conjunctions, adverbial phrases, or prepositional phrases. Here is a selection of useful link words:

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1. **Introducing:** First, firstly, first of all, in the first place, to begin with, to start with...
2. **Sequencing:** Second, secondly, third, thirdly, now, then, after that, so far, up to now, until then...
3. **Concluding:** Finally, lastly, to conclude, in conclusion, all in all, all things considered...
4. **Illustrating:** For example, for instance, such as, namely, that is to say, in other words, i.e., e.g. ...
5. **Adding information:** Moreover, furthermore, beside, in addition, not only ... but also...
6. **Emphasizing:** above all, especially, all the more so as...
7. **Stating the obvious:** obviously, clearly, naturally, needless to say, undoubtedly...
8. **Explaining:** in fact, actually, as matter of fact, indeed...
9. **Contrasting:** However, nevertheless, and yet, whereas, while, contrary to, unlike, in contrast, otherwise, on one hand, on the other hand...
10. **Expressing similarity:** Likewise, similarly, in the same way; by the same token...
11. **Expressing hypothesis or condition:** supposing that, on the assumption that, provided/providing that, on condition that, depending on, in theory, theoretically, on paper...
12. **Conceding:** despite/ in spite of (the fact that), although, even though, though...
13. **Expressing cause:** because, as, since, given that, owing to, on account of, for this reason...
14. **Expressing consequence:** thus, therefore, thereafter, as a result, consequently, as a consequence, so, hence, that's why...
15. **Simplifying:** to put it simply, in simple terms...
16. **Generalizing:** generally speaking, in general, as a rule, on the whole...
17. **Referring:** according to, with regard to, concerning, as far as Dr. Smith is concerned, thanks to...