A. COMMAS

1. Are used with coordinating conjunctions (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) to join two independent clauses:

   - Oswald’s socks are too tight, and Herman’s pants are too short.
   - We knew Oswald and Herman were inside, yet nobody answered our knock on the door.

   Exception: If the independent clauses are short and there is no danger of misreading, you may omit the comma:

   - He saw his chance and he took it.

2. Are used to separate members of a series of three or more:

   - On Monday, Herman and Oswald had sardines, liverwurst, persimmons, and lollipops for lunch.
   - On Tuesday, they had peanut butter and ham, banana and sauerkraut salad, and broccoli cream pie.

3. Are used to set off introductory elements from the main clause:

   - Although Herman had a stomachache, he wanted another mocha banana lollipop.
   - Discovering that Oswald had eaten the last lollipop, Herman hit him with a piece of liverwurst.

   Exception: Some writers omit the comma after introductory elements if the element is short and does not seem to require a pause after it. If in doubt, put in the comma.

4. Are used in pairs to set off nonessential (qualifying or additional) information that is inserted into a simple sentence:

   - Herman, large and awkward, lumbered over to the table.
   - Herman and Oswald, who were in a tearing hurry, drove straight into a deep mud hole.

   Remember: You will need either a pair of commas or none at all between subject and verb. Never separate subject and verb with a single comma.

B. CORRECT PUNCTUATION FOR JOINING TWO INDEPENDENT CLAUSES

1. IC, coordinating conjunction IC.

   - The tractor would not start, so Oswald decided to push it.

   (continued)
2. IC; IC

- Lightning suddenly flashed through the sky; Herman and Oswald hid under the car.

3. IC; conjunctive adverb, IC.

Some conjunctive adverbs:

- accordingly
- besides
- consequently
- conversely
- for example
- for instance
- furthermore
- however
- in addition
- in fact
- instead
- moreover
- nevertheless
- similarly
- suddenly
- then
- therefore
- thus

- They had forgotten about the mud hole; therefore, they were surprised to feel the mud on their faces.

C. SEMICOLONs

1. Are used to separate two independent clauses in which the thoughts are closely related, as in examples B2 and B3.

2. Provide coherent separation of the member of a series when each member contains a comma.

- Herman and Oswald's guests included Eleanor, the tightrope-walker; Irma, Eleanor's sister; Louise, the clown; Orville, the flea trainer; and Elbert, the exterminator.

D. COLONS

1. Are used after an independent clause to introduce a list:

- Oscar's daily routine includes the following: five candy bars, three bags of potato chips, and two milk shakes.

Do not use a colon before a list unless the list is preceded by an independent clause. Do not put a colon between verb and object or complement, or between preposition and object.

Not: Oswald's problems are: poor taste, poor nutrition, and poor choice of friends.

Not: Oswald's diet consisted of: five candy bars, three bags of potato chips, and two milk shakes.

Not: Some of the reasons include: no friends, no money, and no hope.

Not: Oswald's friends from his childhood include characters such as: Donald Duck, Minnie Mouse, and Goofy.

2. Are used after an independent clause to introduce an explanation or an appositive:
(continued)
- Oswald had but one choice: to throw up.
- We are all on our own when it comes to understanding Oswald: your experiences won't help me, nor mine you.

3. Are used to introduce a quotation preceded by an independent clause:

- Consider the words of Oswald's mother: "I gave up a long time ago"
- She repeatedly asks herself why she deserves this fate: "Why me?"

E. QUOTATION MARKS

1. Are used to indicate duplication of exact words or spoken speech:

- Herman said, "Oswald, would you like another piece of liverwurst?"

2. Are NOT used for indirect quotations:

Wrong: Oswald said, "that he did not expect ever in his life to want another piece of liverwurst."

F. PUNCTUATION WITH QUOTATION MARKS

1. Punctuation that is part of quoted material belongs INSIDE the quotation marks:

- "What will we do when we get out of the mud hole?" asked Oswald.

2. Periods and commas always go inside the quotation marks:

- "I don't believe," said Herman, "that we will ever get out."
- Then Oswald called Herman a "turkey."

(UNLESS PAGE NUMBERS ARE LISTED PARENTHETICALLY AT THE END OF THE SENTENCE)

- Mark Twain believes Herman and Oswald are "more interesting than Tom and Huck" (Matthews 50).

3. All other punctuation (exclamation point, question mark, semicolon, colon) not part of the quoted material belongs outside the quotation marks:

- Why would Oswald call Herman a "turkey"?
- Herman said, "I'm not speaking to you"; then he hit Herman in the face.