

Fact sheet - Level 1

Exclamation Marks

The exclamation mark may be used at the end of a sentence in the place of a full stop, in order to express a strong emotion, such as excitement, delight, fear, anger or surprise. It should be followed by a capital letter.

e.g. Boo! I got you.

Run! She's after us.

Detention! That is the second time you have forgotten your kit.

Ouch! That hurt.

They may also be used to catch the reader's attention. Compare:

Slow workmen in road.

Slow! Workmen in road.

Do not **overuse** the exclamation mark. It will lose its impact and it can get very **annoying!!!!**

Exclamation Marks ! ! ! !

An exclamation mark usually shows strong feeling, such as surprise, anger or joy. Using an exclamation mark when writing is rather like shouting or raising your voice when speaking. Exclamation marks are most commonly used in writing quoted speech. You should avoid using exclamation marks in formal writing, unless absolutely necessary.

1. Use an exclamation mark to indicate strong feelings or a raised voice in speech:
 - She shouted at him, "Go away! I hate you!"
 - He exclaimed: "What a fantastic house you have!"
 - "Good heavens!" he said, "Is that true?"
 - "Help!"
 - "Shut up!"
 - "Stop!"
2. Many **interjections** need an exclamation mark:
 - "Hi! What's new?"
 - "Oh! When are you going?"
 - "Ouch! That hurt."
3. A non-question sentence beginning with "what" or "how" is often an exclamation and requires an exclamation mark:
 - What idiots we are! (*We are such idiots.*)
 - How pretty she looked in that dress! (*She looked very pretty in that dress.*)
4. In very **informal** writing (personal letter or email), people sometimes use two or more exclamation marks together:
 - I met John yesterday. He is so handsome!!!
 - Remember, don't be late!!
 - I'll never understand this language!!!!

Remember, try to **avoid** exclamation marks in formal writing such as an essay or business letter.