

Meeting 1: Punctuation

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What is punctuation and why should you care about it?

- Punctuation marks: periods (.), commas (,), semicolons (;), and colons (:)
- Why care about punctuation?

The curious case of the Maine dairy workers, overtime pay, and the missing Oxford comma

According to Maine state law, workers are not entitled to overtime pay for:

“The canning, processing, preserving, freezing, drying, marketing, storing, **packing for shipment or distribution of:** (1) Agricultural produce; (2) Meat and fish products; and (3) Perishable foods.”

➤ Are dairy truck drivers entitled to overtime pay?

What is punctuation and why should you care about it?

The design accommodates the needs of all users of streets and roads, including pedestrians, bicyclists, persons with disabilities, seniors, children, motorists, public transportation users and operators, **drivers of goods and emergency responders**.

- (a) The design accommodates the needs of all users of streets and roads, including pedestrians, bicyclists, persons with disabilities, seniors, children, motorists, public transportation users and operators, [drivers of [goods] and [emergency responders]].
- (b) The design accommodates the needs of all users of streets and roads, including pedestrians, bicyclists, persons with disabilities, seniors, children, motorists, public transportation users and operators, [drivers of goods] and [emergency responders].

The comma

3 major uses of the comma

- In coordination
- After introductory elements
- With non-restrictive and non-essential elements

Example:

Over the past 10 years, there has been a notable increase in emphasis on Complete Streets, building on previous concepts of traffic calming, safe routes to school, and context-sensitive principles to name a few.

1. Comma in coordination

Coordination	2 elements	3 or more elements
Words or word groups/phrases	X and Y X or Y X but Y	X, Y, and Z X, Y, or Z
Clauses/sentences	X, and Y X, or Y X, but Y	X, Y, and Z X, Y, or Z

1.1 Conjoining 2 words or word groups

- Green provides civil **and** structural engineering services.
- We identified and assessed the types of alternatives to address the particular need **or** deficiency.
- The proposed work includes a complicated **but** comprehensive stormwater management design.
- A repair bracket was installed but has since propagated.

1. Comma in coordination

Coordination	2 elements	3 or more elements
Words or word groups/phrases	X and Y X or Y X but Y	X, Y, and Z X, Y, or Z
Clauses/sentences	X, and Y X, or Y X, but Y	X, Y, and Z X, Y, or Z

1.2 Conjoining 3 or more words or word groups

- Green provides civil/site, structural, transportation, **and** water resources engineering services.
- The design included a new sub-drain system and closed drainage system along the entire length of the roadway to eliminate the frost reaction underneath the pavement, efficiently and safely remove stormwater runoff, **and** prevent ice build-up on the roadway.
- Planning and design for bicycle and pedestrian facilities typically involves evaluating the safety and physical conditions of an area, route, **or** crossing.

1. Comma in coordination

Coordination	2 elements	3 or more elements
Words or word groups/phrases	X and Y X or Y X but Y	X, Y, and Z X, Y, or Z
Clauses/sentences	X, and Y X, or Y X, but Y	X, Y, and Z X, Y, or Z

1.3 Conjoining two (independent/main) clauses

- The design has been completed, **and** the project is currently under construction.
- Green assisted the Town in applying for construction funding to begin implement the plan, **and** the Town was recently awarded \$399,000.
- Since the last inspection, the north half of the bridge has been demolished, **and** the westbound traffic has been redirected onto portions of the new structure north of the existing bridge.

1. Comma in coordination

Coordination	2 elements	3 or more elements
Words or word groups/phrases	X and Y X or Y X but Y	X, Y, and Z X, Y, or Z
Clauses/sentences	X, and Y X, or Y X, but Y	X, Y, and Z X, Y, or Z

1.4 Conjoining 3 or more (independent/main) clauses

- Construction of the first project has been completed, the second is nearing completion, **and** the third is currently on hold.
- The lower parking lot associated with the main building on the campus was in deteriorated condition, the aisle widths were too narrow along, the parking stalls were too small, **and** the adjacent sidewalks were not ADA/MAAB-compliant.
- The sidewalks were revised to meet ADA/MAAB standards, new site lighting was installed, **and** a subdrain was installed between the upper and lower lot to prevent groundwater from entering the pavement section.

1. Comma in coordination

More on conjoining 2 independent/main clauses: FANBOYS

Coordination	2 elements	3 or more elements
Words or word groups/phrases	... and or but, ..., and, ..., or ...
Clauses/sentences	..., for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so, ..., and, ..., or ...

1. Comma in coordination

More on conjoining 2 independent/main clauses: FANBOYS

- Since the last inspection, the north half of the bridge has been demolished, **and** the westbound traffic has been redirected onto portions of the new structure north of the existing bridge.
- During inspection, it was found that the bridge weight posting sign at the east approach is missing, **but** the post remains.
- The parking lot is used heavily by visitors going to the hospital, **so** there was a tight construction schedule that had to be adhered to.

1. Comma in coordination

Correct or incorrect? Comma or no comma?

- The civil/site design for the project included site grading, drainage, stormwater management, utilities, and bituminous and cement concrete pavements.
- Green performed the site utility, driveway and sidewalk restoration design within the project limits, and supplemental survey to verify existing conditions.
- The roadway pavement was in poor condition, having deteriorated due to repeated forces from frost action, and lack of maintenance.
- Green was responsible for performing topographic field survey and base mapping and completing feasibility study, schematic design, design development, construction documents, bid assistance, and construction administration services.

2. Comma after introductory elements

2.1 After transition/linking words and phrases

- Green evaluated and prepared conceptual design plans for a new grease trap outside the building. **However**, it was then decided to install the grease traps inside the building.
- The scope of work included design services for full-depth pavement replacement of the asphalt area and the expansion of the parking limits. **In addition**, the sidewalks were revised to meet ADA/MAAB standards.
- If vacuum excavation is required, additional subcontractor costs as well as project oversight and police detail costs will be incurred. **Therefore**, we have provided an estimated cost to conduct vacuum excavation at all test boring locations for consideration.

2. Comma after introductory elements

2.2 After introductory phrases specifying manner, place, or time

- **Before reconstruction,** the roadway pavement was in poor condition, having deteriorated due to repeated forces from frost action, and lack of maintenance.
- **In addition to the poor pavement conditions,** roadside safety, width, and alignments made driving on the road extremely dangerous.
- **Because of existing site constraints,** the new lift platform size of 30" x 41.5" required a variance from MAAB.
- **As part of the project,** Green was responsible for utility coordination and relocation for gas, cable, traffic conduits, telephone, and street lighting to accommodate the proposed drains.

2. Comma after introductory elements

2.2 After introductory phrases specifying manner, place, or time

- **For the Commission's consideration,** we offer an additional optional scope item.
- **Due to the geometric offsets and close distance between A Street and B Street,** the traffic signal system was designed such that both intersections would function as a single signalized intersection.
- **Prior to conducting a field exploration program at pipe locations identified to be replaced,** the team will conduct a review of existing utility and subsurface documentation within and adjacent to the proposed project sites.
- **Based on the findings of the preliminary review,** a geotechnical field program will be prepared.

2. Comma after introductory elements

2.3 After introductory subordinate/dependent clauses specifying manner, place, or time

- **After the 90% Design was submitted**, MWRA separated the contract into three construction packages.
- **When a deficiency is found on a bridge during inspection**, the inspection of that portion of the structure cannot be considered complete until we inspect “up” to determine the cause of the deficiency and the effect of that deficiency, until we reach the source of the problem.
- **Where shallow and/or variable bedrock is anticipated**, rock coring may be conducted at select test boring locations to confirm the presence and quality of the bedrock.
- **If impacted soils are encountered during drilling**, work at the particular location will be stopped, the borehole secured, and the Commission notified of the findings.
- **Once a Complete Streets Policy is adopted**, communities become eligible for a Tier 2 planning grant up to \$50,000 to fund the development of a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan.

3. Commas with non-restrictive and non-essential information

3.1 Commas with non-restrictive relative clauses

	Relative pronouns	Punctuation
Restrictive relative clauses	who which that	No commas
Non-restrictive relative clauses	who which that	Use commas.

Compare:

[In case a Licensed Site Professional (LSP) is needed, ...]

Our team includes an LSP **who** can perform such services.

Our team includes an LSP, **who** can perform such services.

3. Commas with non-restrictive and non-essential information

3.1 Commas with non-restrictive relative clauses

Restrictive or non-restrictive? Comma or no comma?

Green was responsible for all the design and construction phase services for the Peabody project **which was completed six months ahead of schedule and on budget.**

Green was responsible for all the design and construction phase services for the Peabody project, **which was completed six months ahead of schedule and on budget.**

A Complete Street is defined by many as a street **which considers the movements and needs of all users of streets and roads.**

A Complete Street is defined by many as a street, **which considers the movements and needs of all users of streets and roads.**

3. Commas with non-restrictive and non-essential information

3.1 Commas with non-restrictive relative clauses

- Use *that* only in restrictive relative clauses.

Compare:

- Green designed a retaining wall **that/which the client was very pleased with.**
- Green designed a retaining wall at one side of the parking lot where a steep slope existed and was able to raise the grade and achieve flatter slopes, ~~that~~**which the client was very pleased with after construction was completed.**

3. Commas with non-restrictive and non-essential information

3.2 Commas with non-restrictive *-ing* and *-ed* phrases

Restrictive or non-restrictive? Comma or no comma?

The award will be used to construct a new sidewalk and repair an existing sidewalk **providing a new, safe connection to the middle and elementary schools.**

The award will be used to construct a new sidewalk and repair an existing sidewalk, **providing a new, safe connection to the middle and elementary schools.**

Thirty (30) communities have developed and submitted the Tier 2 Prioritization Plans, and the program has now awarded Tier 3 implementation grants to 26 communities **totaling approximately \$10 million.**

Thirty (30) communities have developed and submitted the Tier 2 Prioritization Plans, and the program has now awarded Tier 3 implementation grants to 26 communities, **totaling approximately \$10 million.**

3. Commas with non-restrictive and non-essential information

3.2 Commas with non-restrictive *-ing* and *-ed* phrases

Restrictive or non-restrictive? Comma or no comma?

Test boring logs **recording the subsurface conditions encountered, drilling methods used, and samples collected** will be prepared.

Test boring logs, **recording the subsurface conditions encountered, drilling methods used, and samples collected,** will be prepared.

Further examples

The bridge weight posting sign at the west approach is missing, and an 11" high stub remains, **posing a trip hazard.**

Since the last inspection, **dated December 23, 2016,** the bridge has been partially demolished.

3. Commas with non-restrictive and non-essential information

3.3 Commas with other non-restrictive phrases modifying a preceding noun

Mr. Engineer was the Project Engineer **responsible for developing an existing conditions base map, including underground utility plotting in support of the sewer separation design project.**

Mr. Engineer was the Project Engineer, **responsible for developing an existing conditions base map, including underground utility plotting in support of the sewer separation design project.**

Juli Riemenschneider, **Green's Senior Landscape Architect**, was in attendance at the unveiling of the Horace Mann statue in the Franklin pocket park she designed as part of the redevelopment of the parcel.

Today, Ko Ishikura, **President**, and Erik Atkins, **Project Manager**, proudly presented Peabody Mayor Edward J. Bettencourt Jr. with a framed photo commemorating the completion of the Peabody Square Improvements project.

3. Commas with non-restrictive and non-essential information

3.4 Commas to set off other non-restrictive or non-essential information

A Complete Street is defined by many, **including** the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), as one that considers the movements and needs of all users of streets and roads, **including** pedestrians, bicyclists, persons with disabilities, seniors, children, motorists, public transportation users and operators, drivers of goods, and emergency responders.

Alternative solutions may include additional trenchless rehabilitation methods, **including CIPP short liners**, to help minimize dig work, **especially in locations on heavy traffic**.

3. Commas with non-restrictive and non-essential information

3.4 Commas to set off other non-restrictive or non-essential information

The stormwater management design uses several low-impact stormwater techniques, **such as** porous pavement, rain gardens, and subsurface infiltration systems.

But:

Actions eligible for funding include items **such as** new or repaired sidewalks, ADA-compliant ramps, pedestrian crossing signals, bicycle lanes, transit shelters, bicycle storage equipment, driver speed display feedback signs, and place-making components.

3. Commas with non-restrictive and non-essential information

3.4 Commas to set off other non-restrictive or non-essential information

Building codes have changed dramatically since the 1970s. The Massachusetts code, **for example**, is more stringent than most, and older structures typically fall short of meeting the requirements.

The east bascule and west bascule piers are labeled Piers 1 and 2, **respectively**, and the abutments are designated as east and west.

The Comma: Summary

3 major uses of the comma

- In coordination
- After introductory elements
- With non-restrictive and non-essential elements

When not to use commas

- Not with restrictive relative clauses and other restrictive elements
- Never before clauses starting with *because, if, or that*.
- Not between subject and verb or between verb and object:

Our proposed PACP-certified project engineer, will apply her significant sewer rehabilitation experience to evaluate the preliminary recommendations.

Unsuitable soils may include, loose or soft soils, organic soils, or miscellaneous/ urban fill soils.

When not to use commas

- Not before *and* when coordinating two constituents smaller than the clause level (words or word groups):

Boreholes will be backfilled with soil cuttings and asphalt patched at the completion of work, and in accordance with City of Boston requirements.

Where access soil cuttings remain, the cuttings will be drummed, and transported to a facility designated by BWSC for the disposal by BWSC.

In order to maintain pedestrian and automobile traffic, and provide safe working conditions for the drilling team, appropriate traffic management sign and cones will be utilized at each drilling site.

When not to use commas

- Not before *as well as*

Exception:

Green was responsible for the civil/site design for the project, including stormwater management, as well as water system and sewer system designs.

Mr. Engineer was responsible for preparing and entering of detailed engineer's cost estimates for each contract area, including a breakdown of items eligible for I&I funding, as well as overseeing and coordinating the preparation of the record plans. All contracts were completed in 2015.

Green's work included emergency sewer repairs in Lynn, MA, as well as QA/QC review for studies and reports on wastewater overflows in Braintree, MA, and on new cured-in-place repair lining techniques.

When not to use commas

- Not between cumulative adjectives

The proposed work for the beach includes the construction of a **new composite wooden** walkway with a landing at the bottom to provide storage for a wheelchair made for sand to be used by the public.

The proposed work for the elementary school includes the demolition of the **existing non-ADA compliant exterior** ramp at the rear of the elementary school and the construction of a **new ADA-compliant composite wooden** ramp with foundations and rails.

The proposed work for the middle school includes the construction of a **new ADA-compliant bituminous concrete** walkway from the school down to the athletic fields.

The semicolon

Three major uses

- between two contrastive independent clauses
- between two independent clauses linked by a transition word or phrase in the second
- between items in a list that themselves contain commas (for clarity)

The Semicolon

1. Semicolon between two contrastive independent clauses

We **anticipate** that vacuum excavations may be completed at a rate of approximately 2 excavations per day, and test boring drilling may be completed at a rate of approximately 2 test borings per day; **actual** production rate will depend on the subsurface conditions encountered, work hours, traffic, and borehole accessibility.

➤ Alternatively, use a period.

The Semicolon

2. Semicolon between two independent clauses linked by a transition word or phrase in the second

Groundwater level measurements will be collected at the time of drilling; **however**, no groundwater monitoring well are proposed to be installed.

All soil samples will be screened with a Photo Ionization Detector during drilling; **however**, no soil samples or groundwater samples will be collected for analytical analysis.

The project is located within the Belle Isle Salt Marsh, which is also designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC); **therefore**, several environmental permits were required prior to construction for this project.

The proposed project will result in more than an acre of disturbance; **therefore**, a Soil Erosion & Sediment Control Plan (SESC) is required.

➤ **Alternatively, use a period.**

The Semicolon

3. Semicolon between items in a list that themselves contain commas (for clarity)

Compare:

We have offices in Westford, MA, Clinton, RI, and ...

We have offices in Westford, MA; Clinton, RI; and ...

Green led a highly qualified team of specialty consultants and contractors that included CDM Smith, Inc., Corrosion Probe, Inc., Echologics LLC, J. D'Amico, Inc., BSI Engineering, Inc., and ABC Soils, Inc.

Green led a highly qualified team of specialty consultants and contractors that included CDM Smith, Inc.; Corrosion Probe, Inc.; Echologics LLC; J. D'Amico, Inc.; BSI Engineering, Inc.; and ABC Soils, Inc.

When not to use a semicolon

- to introduce an appositive or list (where a colon is needed):

Green provides comprehensive engineering services through our four Engineering Groups; Transportation Engineering, Structural Engineering, Water Resources Engineering, and Civil/Site Engineering.

At the request of the City, the project was divided into two separate construction contracts; a roadway construction contract, which included roadway work, sidewalk construction and signal conduit installation, and a traffic signal contract, which included the installation of traffic signal mast arms, poles, controllers, signal wiring and loop detectors.

When not to use a semicolon

- with subordinate clauses (comma needed):

We will prepare a Geotechnical Data Report; which will include a summary of the test boring program, subsurface conditions, boring location plan showing all field explorations, test boring logs, and geotechnical laboratory test results.

- before main/independent clauses starting with *for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, *yet*, *so* (comma needed)

Beware...

... of inconsistent use of commas and semicolons:

Safety and traffic flow improvements included reducing the roadway from two lanes in each direction to one lane in each direction with a center left-turn lane or median; design of “bump-outs” and accented crosswalks to reduce speeds, improve motorist awareness and increase pedestrian safety.

RIDOT engaged Green to design traffic calming measures along Fruit Hill Avenue to reduce speeding; a roundabout to improve intersection capacity and safety at Olney Avenue, and new traffic signals at College Avenue.

Let's revise

- Green will allow employees to leave work early to participate, however it will be on their own time (make up times, vacation, or personal day).
- One item of note; however, is that if reportable soil conditions are encountered via the sampling effort, a Licensed Site Professional (LSP) would be needed.
- Our team includes an LSP who can perform such services, however it is difficult to estimate the total services required not knowing the sampling outcome.

The colon

Use a colon **only after a full clause** and to introduce

- a list:

Green provides comprehensive engineering services through our four Engineering Groups: Transportation Engineering, Structural Engineering, Water Resources Engineering, and Civil/Site Engineering.

- an appositive:

Green performed an extensive traffic and safety evaluation and analysis for the intersection and developed two options: roundabout and traffic signalization.

Two types of inspection are performed for the bridge: a routine inspection and a special member inspection.

The colon

- a summary or explanation:

The site presented many challenges: it was significantly altered by the partial construction for a residential development, and it has multiple wetland areas.

- a quotation:

Pavement markings in the left two lanes at both bridge approaches read: “No Trucks No Buses.”

When not to use a colon

Do not use a colon in the middle of a sentence

- after *include(s)/including, such as, or for example*:

The project includes: a multi-use turf field, two basketball courts, open green space, a playground, and other necessities.

- after *is/are*:

Some of the low-impact stormwater techniques used in the design are: porous pavement, rain gardens, and subsurface infiltration systems.

- after *consist(s) of*:

The low-impact stormwater design for this project consists of: porous pavement, rain gardens, and subsurface infiltration systems.

Summary of punctuation

The comma: 3 major uses

- In coordination
- After introductory elements
- With non-restrictive and non-essential elements

The semicolon

Only to make things clearer if there are too many commas

The colon

Only after a full clause and to introduce a list or quotation

The question mark

Only one thing to remember: never with embedded questions

The exclamation mark

- Only one legitimate use: Congratulations!
- Not: Green is the proud recipient of the 2016 BSCES Large Employer Recognition Award!