

“The Rules of Punctuation”

Sung to the melody of Simon and Garfunkel’s
“The Sound of Silence”

Semicolons

Semicolon, you don't bend

To use you, I must end

A statement and begin another

Perhaps with "therefore" or "however."

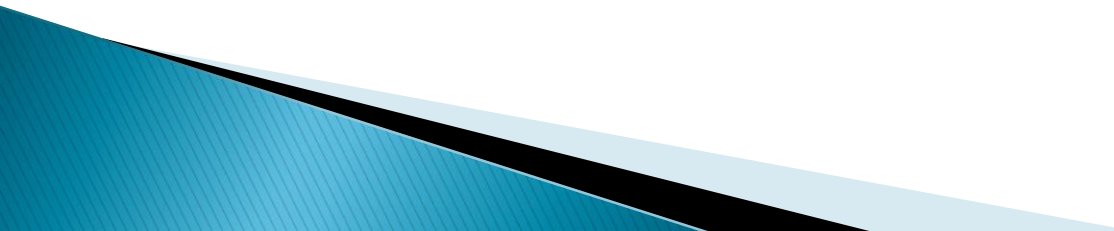
A soft period, you balance two main thoughts

Like a see-saw

Or sometimes items, in a complex list.

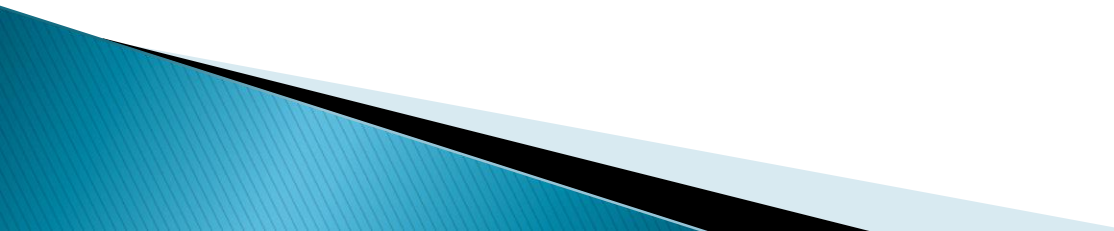
Colons

And a colon, where you go
A statement I must throw
And then a list or a quotation
Or just a bit of explanation.
You point ahead
Declaring what I'll say
Showing the way
Introducing information.



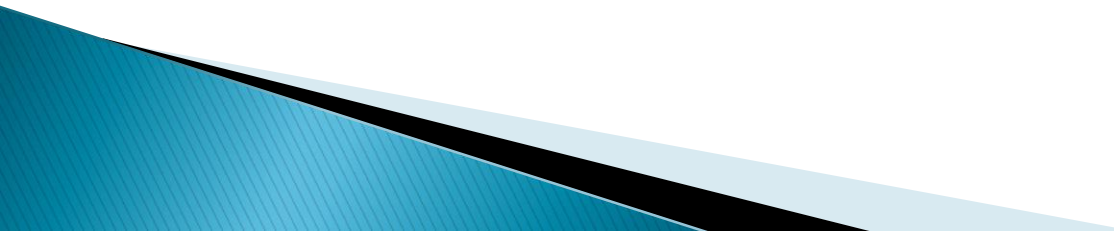
Commas

And you commas, little signs
Of where to rest within the lines
Before a “but,” after “However,”
Right after “Although” almost never.
Before an “and” that leads to a second thought,
A comma’s sought
To slow the reader, pace the reader.



Dashes

To use a dash, a daring mark,
Two little hyphens must embark
To stress unnecessary information,
Perhaps with “i.e.,” an abbreviation,
Or to end a statement with a dramatic little
thought,
I have been taught,
Type two hyphens, but no spaces.



Parentheses and Brackets

Parentheses, you have succeeded

To set off info that's not needed

To add a detail or clarification,

Some non-essential information.

But when I add you to a quote, you change
your shape

To a bracket

To show the reader, my addition.

Punctuation

Oh, punctuation, all you rules
Have stymied all us fools,
But now that I can sing your functions,
I can use you without compunction.
Like road signs, little guides, you show me how
to read
And so we need
Punctuation, punctuation.

