

KB CommEntary

KB COMM • SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

Volume 10 Issue 5 • September 2018

Special Edition: National Punctuation Day

Oh happy day! This time let's honor our curvy friends, parentheses.

We use parentheses to set off material that is less closely related to the rest of the sentence than that enclosed in commas or em dashes. One typical use is to enclose examples of whatever we are talking about:

Inert gases (helium, etc.) might have a similar effect.

Here are a few things to remember about using parentheses correctly:

They exist as pairs. There's an opening mark (and a closing mark). Please remember always to use both.

They may enclose both partial and full sentences:

The final sample that we collected (under difficult conditions) contained an impurity.

Hunter's analysis (see chapter 3) is more concise.

Parenthetical matter contained within a sentence should begin with a lowercase letter and conclude with no punctuation, even if it is a complete sentence:

The disagreement between the two (its origins have been discussed elsewhere) destroyed the organization.

Parenthetical matter may also be presented as one or more separate, complete sentences. In such cases, the first word should be capitalized, and the final sentence should conclude with a period, question mark, exclamation point, or quotation mark:

The company decided to launch its new product in the middle of an economic downturn. (The exact reason remains unknown.)

NOTE: Do not follow the closing parenthesis with a period or other punctuation, and never conclude material enclosed within parentheses with a colon, semicolon, or comma.

Some publications—especially in law—permit the use of parentheses within parentheses, usually for bibliographic purposes. However, the preferred treatment for general business communication is to use brackets within parentheses ([]). Please don't use parentheses within brackets.

And please remember, *when it has to be right*, KB COMM is here to help.

Sincerely,

Kathy

Kathy Breuninger

KB COMM

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