Parenthesis vs Parentheses

- **Parenthesis** (with an i) is singular. It refers to one curved mark: **(**

- **Parentheses** (with an e) is plural. It refers to both curved marks together: **( )**

Parentheses ( )

- Parentheses are used to include supplementary information in a sentence.

- This information may clarify, explain, define, or add context.

Parentheses are commonly used for:

- Adding extra information

- Creating narrative citations

- Defining acronyms

- Referring to tables or figures

- Identifying items in a list

- Adding brief commentary

Things to Consider

1. The Sentence Must Still Make Sense

- If you remove the material inside the parentheses, the sentence should still be grammatically correct and complete.

2. Comma Placement

- If a comma is needed, it goes after the closing parenthesis, not before it.
  - **Example:** The meeting was delayed (due to weather), but everyone stayed.

3. Capitalization and Punctuation

- If the text inside parentheses:
  - **is not a complete sentence**, the punctuation goes outside the parentheses, and the first word is not capitalized.
  - **is a complete sentence**, the punctuation goes inside, and the first word is capitalized.

Should Punctuation Go Inside or Outside?

Outside

- When the information inside the parentheses is not a complete sentence, place the punctuation outside.
  - **Example:** We all can use more reading materials (magazines and newspapers).
  - **Example:** Our daughter has light brown eyes (they are round and soulful) and wavy hair.

Inside

- When the material inside the parentheses is a complete sentence, place the punctuation inside.
  - **Example:** We need your advice (Come the moment you get this message.) as soon as possible.
  - **Example:** At my door, my boss (Isn't that something?) was asking for my help.

APA & MLA Citations

- In both APA and MLA format, the period comes after the parenthetical citation.
  - **APA Example:** (Jones, 2011, p. 131).
  - **MLA Example:** (Jones 131).
- When using a block quote in APA or MLA format, the period comes before the in-text citation.

Parentheses Examples

1. Add Extra Information

- **Example:** Marilyn Monroe (born Norma Jeane Mortenson) was as iconic as her life was tragic.

- **Example:** Amelia Earhart (1897-1937) was a famous aviatrix in the 20th century.

2. Create a Narrative Citation

- **Example:** Cooper (1993) attempted to disprove evolution in her article, "Ain't No Ape."

- **Example:** Hussain and Thomas (2020) insisted that "those involved in the power plant should consider its effects on the environment" (p. 235).

3. Define Acronyms

- **Example:** There was political pushback during the initial proposal of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement).

- **Example:** Douglas (1988) was a strong believer in the personal learning community (PLC).

4. Identify Items in a List or Series

- **Example:** They asked me several questions in the interview: (1) What are my future goals? (2) What are my greatest strengths? (3) Where do I see myself in ten years?

- **Example:** The University of Arendal offers courses in (a) English, (b) biology, (c) theater, and (d) baking.

5. Add Personal Commentary

- **Example**: The newly elected CEO said that things will be different this time. (Isn't that what they all say?)

- **Example:** We saw a small, red bird (a cardinal?) in the tree.

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