4.8 GCSE Punctuation Mastery: 30-minute Pack

about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. In this pack, where a dash is needed to mark off extra information in a sentence, it is printed as a hyphen with a space on each side (-), in line with house style.

1 Add one colon in the correct place in this sentence: 'The recipe needed just four ingredients flour, eggs, milk and a pinch of salt.'

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 Identify and correct the punctuation error in this sentence: 'The manager's were impressed by the waiters' hard work during the busy Christmas period.'

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

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3 Here are eight statements about punctuation. Choose the FOUR statements that are TRUE.

A. A colon can be used to introduce a list that explains what has just been stated.

B. An apostrophe is always required before the 's' in a simple plural noun.

C. A semicolon can join two independent clauses that are closely related in meaning.

D. A dash used for parenthesis must always appear at the very end of a sentence.

E. Commas can be used in pairs to mark off additional, non-essential information within a sentence.

F. An ellipsis is used to correct a spelling mistake.

G. A hyphen can join two words to form a single compound adjective, such as 'well-known'.

H. A comma splice is an acceptable way to join two complete sentences in formal Standard English.

- ☐ A
- ☐ B
- ☐ C
- ☐ D
- ☐ E
- ☐ F
- ☐ G
- ☐ H

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

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4 Rewrite this sentence, adding a pair of dashes (-) to mark the extra information as parenthesis: 'The head teacher who had taught at the school for thirty years announced her retirement.'

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

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5 Identify and correct the punctuation error in this sentence: 'The final result - though nobody could quite believe it, meant the underdogs had won the league.'

(Total for Question 5 is 2 marks)

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6 'I thought I could trust him... but I was wrong.'

Explain one effect of the ellipsis in this sentence.

(Total for Question 6 is 2 marks)

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7 Add the missing punctuation to this sentence so that it correctly shows direct speech, with the reporting clause in the middle of the speech: we should book the tickets now said Kirsty before they sell out

(Total for Question 7 is 4 marks)

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8 Write one sentence of your own for each part below, correctly using the punctuation mark named. Do not copy any sentence used earlier in this pack.

(a) Write a sentence that correctly uses a semicolon to join two independent clauses. **(2)**

(b) Write a sentence that correctly uses a colon to introduce a list or an explanation. **(2)**

(c) Write a sentence that correctly uses a pair of dashes (-) to mark off extra information as parenthesis. **(2)**

(Total for Question 8 is 6 marks)

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9 Write a short paragraph (approximately 90-120 words) for a school website, encouraging new students to join the debate club.
Your paragraph must include: one semicolon, one colon, one pair of dashes (-) used for parenthesis, and one correctly used apostrophe (possessive or contraction). Underline each of these four features clearly in your answer.

(Total for Question 9 is 12 marks)

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Mark scheme · 4.8 GCSE Punctuation Mastery: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

colon placed immediately after 'ingredients', before the list, cao **B1**

Answer: The recipe needed just four ingredients: flour, eggs, milk and a pinch of salt.

Question 2

identifies that 'manager's' wrongly uses an apostrophe for a simple plural subject **B1**

correct rewrite: 'The managers were impressed by the waiters' hard work during the busy Christmas period.', cao **B1**

Answer: The managers were impressed by the waiters' hard work during the busy Christmas period.

Question 3

A selected (true) **B1**

C selected (true) **B1**

E selected (true) **B1**

G selected (true) **B1**

Answer: A, C, E and G are true. B is false (simple plurals never take an apostrophe); D is false (a parenthetical dash can appear anywhere within a sentence, always as a pair); F is false (an ellipsis shows an omission, a trailing off or a pause, never a spelling correction); H is false (a comma splice is a punctuation error, not an accepted join).

Question 4

opening dash (-) correctly placed before 'who had taught at the school for thirty years' **B1**

closing dash (-) correctly placed after 'years', with the sentence still making sense if the dashed section is removed, cao **B1**

Answer: The head teacher - who had taught at the school for thirty years - announced her retirement.

Question 5

identifies that the parenthetical section needs a second dash to close it, not a comma **B1**

correct rewrite: 'The final result - though nobody could quite believe it - meant the underdogs had won the league.', cao **B1**

Answer: The final result - though nobody could quite believe it - meant the underdogs had won the league.

Question 6

identifies an effect, e.g. a pause, hesitation, trailing off or suspense before the second half of the sentence (oe) **B1**

develops the effect with reference to the sentence, e.g. the pause hints at doubt or builds anticipation of the reversal in 'but I was wrong' (oe) **B1**

Answer: The ellipsis creates a hesitant pause before the admission of being wrong; it builds anticipation, so the reversal in 'but I was wrong' lands with more impact.

Question 7

two pairs of inverted commas (single or double) enclosing the spoken words only ('We should book the tickets now' and 'before they sell out') **B1**

capital letter for 'We' at the start of the speech, with 'before' left in lower case **B1**

comma after 'now' placed inside the first closing inverted comma, and a comma after 'Kirsty' **B1**

full stop placed inside the final closing inverted comma, cao **B1**

Answer: 'We should book the tickets now,' said Kirsty, 'before they sell out.'

Question 8

(a) a semicolon is used to join two independent (main) clauses, without a coordinating conjunction directly after it **B1**

(a) both clauses are grammatically complete and closely related in meaning, cao **B1**

(a) Answer: Sample answer (indicative, not the only acceptable response): 'The car park was full; latecomers had to park on the grass verge.'

(b) a colon correctly introduces a list or an explanation of what has just been stated **B1**

(b) the text before the colon forms a complete, sensible statement, cao **B1**

(b) Answer: Sample answer (indicative, not the only acceptable response): 'The kit bag contained everything he needed: boots, a whistle and a spare set of laces.'

(c) a pair of dashes correctly opens and closes a section of extra, removable information **B1**

(c) the sentence still makes complete grammatical sense if the dashed section is removed, cao **B1**

(c) Answer: Sample answer (indicative, not the only acceptable response): 'The old bridge - closed to traffic since the flood - was finally reopened this spring.'

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Question 9

Content and organisation (AO5)

Level 1 Simple, limited description of the debate club with little sense of a persuasive, welcoming register or clear organisation.	**1-2**
Level 2 Some engaging description of the debate club, with a developing sense of audience and purpose; ideas are mostly sequenced clearly.	**3-4**
Level 3 Clear, convincing and well-organised writing that engages a new-student audience, with a consistently appropriate register for a school website.	**5-6**

Technical accuracy (punctuation range) (AO6)

Level 1 One or two of the four required features are present, and these may be used inaccurately.	**1-2**
Level 2 Most of the four required features are present and mostly used accurately, with occasional errors.	**3-4**
Level 3 All four required features are present, clearly marked and used accurately and effectively, alongside a controlled range of other sentence forms and accurate spelling throughout.	**5-6**

Indicative content:

- Welcoming, persuasive tone appropriate to a school website aimed at new students
- A semicolon joins two closely related independent clauses
- A colon introduces a list of benefits, activities or reasons to join
- A pair of dashes marks off extra, removable information as parenthesis
- A correctly used apostrophe shows either possession (e.g. 'the club's trophies') or a contraction (e.g. 'you'll')
- A clear, confident closing sentence inviting new students to get involved

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