English makes liberal use of punctuation marks. In fact, written English would hardly make sense if no punctuation marks were used. Here are some common mistakes in the use of punctuation marks.

A sentence must end with a full stop, a question mark or an exclamation mark.

She is a lovely girl.

Is that your sister?

How sweet!

A new sentence that follows a question mark, a full stop or an exclamation mark has a capital letter.

Incorrect: I looked out of the window. it was raining again.

Correct: I looked out of the window. It was raining again.

The punctuation mark should come immediately after the last letter of the word followed by a space.

Incorrect: He is tall, dark and handsome.

Correct: He is tall, dark and handsome.

When you list items separate them with a comma. A comma is not usually used with and between the last two items unless these are long.

I went to Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong. (GB)

In American English, a comma can be used between the last two items.

I went to Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, and Hong Kong. (US)

We do not put full stops, question marks or interrogation marks before or after grammatically incomplete sentences.


Correct: I helped him because I liked him.