Apostrophes (’)

**Contraction**
We’re trying to negotiate the contract.

**Possession**
This year’s sales are good.
The meeting will be held at the New Orleans’ convention center.

Colons (:)

**Lists**
I need to buy several things at the grocery store: milk, bread, oranges, and cheese.

**A clause that explains the first clause**
Selling is simple: Give people the service they need, and they will come back with more orders.

Dash (–)

**Emphasize a break in thought**
You have the chance to travel abroad– take advantage of it!

Hyphen (−)

**Compound adjectives**
We need one-inch binders for the project.
Order five computer-prepared images.
Commas (,)

**Introductory or non-essential clauses (more info)**
My car, while old, still gets me to work each day.

**Compound sentence with a conjunction (and, but, yet)**
I will collect reports next week, and we will meet to discuss your findings.

**Items in a series of three or more**
I need to buy curtains for the living room, kitchen, and office.

Parentheses ( )

**To set off words used to explain or comment**
A savings is possible by varying the fabric used (nylon, cotton, rayon) or the type of paper used.

**Numbers presented in both words and figures**
Construction must be completed within two (2) years of the date of the contract.

Semicolon (;)

**To join two closely related independent clauses**
We will do our best to fill your order promptly; however, we cannot guarantee a delivery date.

**To separate items in a series containing commas**
The three students selected for the honor society were Joe Smith, senior; Jill Nelson, junior; and Bob Robinson, senior.