

National Punctuation Day | Celebrate Your Own Way

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By Elizabeth Fairchild, your National Punctuation Day news source



Apostrophes, colons and dashes, oh my!

National Punctuation Day is a holiday like no other. Unlike most holidays that are invented seemingly out of the blue, National Punctuation Day wasn't created as a business promotion.

It's sort of like Talk Like a Pirate Day. It doesn't make anybody any money. It doesn't spread publicity for a business. It is simply there for people to celebrate something they love. You don't need an unsecured personal loan or any other form of financing to celebrate National Punctuation Day.

Either you're in, or you're out

National Punctuation Day simply exists to encourage writers, editors, other types of wordsmiths and lovers of the printed word to celebrate properly used punctuation, rather than complaining about, correcting and berating others for incorrect punctuation. Of course, they will still do that, too. They can't help it. But today, we celebrate as well.

You see, some humans are afflicted with a very real condition that causes them to feel extreme anxiety when they see misplaced punctuation. This may manifest itself through a physical reaction, such as tightening of the chest or gritting of the teeth. Similarly, some with this condition will go to great lengths to remove the offending punctuation from their sight or alter it if possible. Others exhibit auditory responses, such as heavy sighs, general angry noises or yelling punctuated with profanity.

Then there is everyone else — the "normal" people. They do not even notice improperly used punctuation and often misuse it themselves.

More manifestations of condition

I have a "friend" who once stopped following her acquaintance's Twitter account because he *purposely* misused both "your" and "you're" in the one tweet. He clearly does not understand the seriousness of this condition. She was so angry she decided to stop following him. She didn't even tell him.

That friend later realized, as much as she hated to admit it, that apostrophe misuse was not worth ending a friendship over. This same friend once saw a sandwich board sign on the sidewalk that had a misplaced apostrophe. Fortunately for the business owners, the wording on the sign was made of stickers, so she simply peeled off the offending apostrophe and continued in her travels feeling relieved and lighthearted.

Celebrate National Punctuation Day

Some grammarians may choose to celebrate National Punctuation Day in this manner, correcting any improper usage of punctuation they can reach. However, many people who have the above described condition do things like this on a regular basis. The same friend who peeled the sticker off the sign once altered every copy of a poster in her favorite bar because they were missing apostrophes.

None of these incidents happened on National Punctuation Day. Being offended, angered, saddened and irritated by incorrect punctuation is an everyday occurrence, especially as communication becomes more and more text-based, thanks to Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, text messaging and instant messaging. Thus, I think National Punctuation Day should be a day of celebrating correctly used punctuation, something we grammarians often take for granted.

Celebrating good punctuation

For instance, my friend once wrote a Facebook status that contained a semicolon. In response, one her her friends commented: "Way to go with using a semi-colon. I don't think I could do that to save my life!"

I think this is an excellent way to celebrate National Punctuation Day. So just for today, pay extra attention to your own punctuation. Also, seek out proper usage of punctuation and give compliments, preferably in a public forum such as a Facebook wall or MySpace comments. Also visit The "Blog" of "Unnecessary" Quotation Marks, and have a good laugh.



Improper punctuation can be dangerous.
Image from Flickr.com.