

Pesky Apostrophes? Elusive Ellipses? Here's Help.

By Lauren Barack
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If you're a teacher or librarian who feels like a last guardian of the semicolon, there's a holiday tailored just for you.

The sixth annual National Punctuation Day arrives September 24, a chance for anyone enamored with commas and ellipses to celebrate these cornerstones of grammar, and perhaps help those who feel a bit challenged.

"It has struck a chord," says Jeff Rubin (pictured), founder of the holiday and a journalist who had

grown so frustrated by the number of grammar and punctuation errors he found in his line of work that he thought maybe he could bring some order back to the printed page.

Since starting the holiday, Rubin has heard from educators all over the country thanking him. Students have created games to help celebrate the day, fans have developed a punctuation meat loaf recipe, and Rubin himself launched a baking contest this year, offering prizes for those who send a photo of their punctuation-themed baked goods.

Rubin believes it's easy to get students inspired by good grammar and even breaks into his own rendition of "Frère Jacques," entitled "Punctuation, Punctuation," as an example of a way to excite younger students. In these days of text messaging and email shorthand, he believes encouraging students to use proper grammar is more critical than ever.

"There's a lot of controversy," says Rubin. "Some teachers don't care what [students are writing] as long as they're writing. But I feel like there's a right way and a wrong way. If you let them slide, then they're taking remedial English in college."