

# CBS NEWS

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## Happy National Punctuation Day!

By **CBSNews**

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(CBS) Pay special attention when you write today as you end sentences, ask a question or share something in excitement. Sept. 24 is National Punctuation Day, so celebrate each time you use a punctuation mark!

Often underappreciated, misused and misunderstood, punctuation marks are an integral part of any language. They add emotion and can change the entire meaning of a sentence. When used incorrectly, sentences look just plain ugly to anybody with the eye to spot errors. Unfortunately, many people don't have that eye.

Frustrated by the large amount of mistakes he noticed in the newspaper, newsletter publisher and former reporter Jeff Rubin decided to start the holiday in honor of frequently overlooked punctuation marks.

"I would sit at the kitchen table with my red Sharpie ... screaming obscenities, which would upset my wife," Rubin told CNN. "She encouraged me to find another outlet for my aggravation."

So Rubin decided to start National Punctuation Day, which was born in 2004 when he secured a listing in the "Chase's Calendar of Events" reference book. 2010 marks the holiday's seventh year.

The holiday isn't just for punctuation perfectionists. Rubin told CNN he wants to help educators teach students that punctuation still matters in an age of text messages and tweets.

"We are graduating children from high schools now who cannot read and cannot write," he says. "When these kids get out into the real world, they're going to be unemployable."

So how does one celebrate National Punctuation Day? The holiday's website offers a few suggestions:

- Read a newspaper and circle all of the punctuation errors you find (or think you find, but aren't sure) with a red pen.
- Take a leisurely stroll, paying close attention to store signs with incorrectly punctuated words.
- Visit a bookstore and purchase a copy of Strunk & White's *The Elements of Style*.
- Congratulate yourself on becoming a better written communicator.

Can't wait to celebrate another holiday dedicated to the English language? Mark your calendars: National Grammar Day is March 4!