



# The Exclamation Point!

From the founder of National Punctuation Day®  
and Punctuation Playtime®

www.PunctuationPlaytime.com    jeff@punctuationplaytime.com  
(877) 588-1212, toll-free number

## National Punctuation Day is September 24

Punctuation Haiku Contest  
highlights 7th Annual  
NPD celebration

**Punctuation marks:  
Commas, colons, periods  
That give words meaning.**

By Jeff Rubin  
Founder  
National Punctuation Day® and  
Punctuation Playtime®

**A**h. It's the essence of punctuation in a simple haiku.

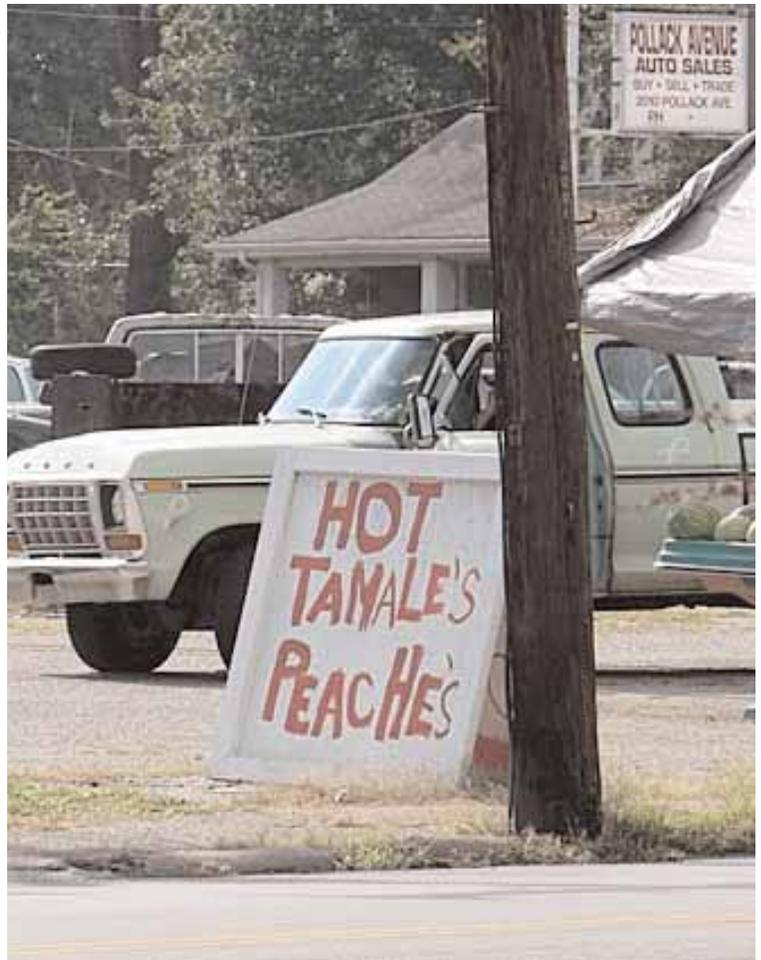
Last year we had a baking contest—and what a delicious exercise that was! This year, to celebrate the 7th annual **National Punctuation Day** (NPD) on September 24, 2010, we're trying something a bit more literary—our first National Punctuation Day® Haiku Contest, with the winners receiving a plethora of punctuation goodies.

It will be a celebration of proper punctuation in traditional Japanese-style verse. Send your best poetry to [Jeff@NationalPunctuationDay.com](mailto:Jeff@NationalPunctuationDay.com) and let the literary games begin!

Haikus must be received by September 30 to be considered for prizes.

National Punctuation Day is the holiday that reminds America that a semicolon is not a surgical

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***Punctuation Man makes it a policy not to patronize roadside merchants selling food out of the back of their trucks, especially when they can't spell the items they are selling. He's afraid the food might be as bad as the punctuation.***

**“We learned more in 45 minutes than I could teach in five hours!”**

— J.G. LAROCETTE, CORONADO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, RICHMOND, CA —

**“Wow! This was truly meaningful and exciting for all!”**

— MRS. TURNER, GOV. GEORGE CLINTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, POUGHKEEPSIE, NY —

# National Punctuation Day is September 24

> **From front page**

procedure. NPD is celebrated in schools and businesses throughout the world with activities, games, programs, and contests. It has inspired people to pay attention not only to their p's and q's, but also their commas, semicolons, and ellipses. NPD reminds us of the importance of proper punctuation for communicating clearly at home, school, or at work.

I founded National Punctuation Day in 2004 to draw attention to the importance of proper punctuation. It's a day for librarians, educators, and parents—people who are interested in teaching and promoting good writing skills to their students and their children. It's also a day to remind business people that they are often judged by how they present themselves.

Successful people have good communication skills, and that includes knowing how to write properly. Punctuation counts. A misplaced comma can alter the meaning of a message.

NPD has received worldwide media attention, with newspaper coverage from Manila to London, from Ghana to Toronto, and from Seoul to Seattle, in addition to broad radio and TV coverage in the United States—including a short segment on *Regis and Kelly* in 2008 and a one-hour online chat on



***Southern University Law Center Associate Professor of Law Gail S. Stephenson, Director of Legal Analysis & Writing, celebrates National Punctuation Day every year with her students. She recently sent us the following link to an essay, [Colonoscopy: It's Time to Check Your Colons.](#)***

***The Washington Post*** website in 2009.

NPD is recognized by ***Chase's Calendar of Events*** and listed in its sister publication, *The Teacher's Calendar*, two directories published by McGraw-Hill.

The NPD website—in addition to highlighting the latest in literacy news and featuring incorrectly punctuated signs from all over the world—serves as a resource that helps educators teach good writing skills and helps students understand the basics of punctuation. Business people worldwide use it as a reference guide.

## **HOW TO CELEBRATE NATIONAL PUNCTUATION DAY®**

Here's how you can participate in National Punctuation Day on September 24:

- 1.** Go to [www.NationalPunctuationDay.com](http://www.NationalPunctuationDay.com) and become familiar with punctuation rules and issues.
- 2.** Organize punctuation activities at your school, library, or office.
- 3.** Share punctuation peeves with me at [Jeff@NationalPunctuationDay.com](mailto:Jeff@NationalPunctuationDay.com).
- 4.** Send photos of incorrectly punctuated signage to me at [Jeff@NationalPunctuationDay.com](mailto:Jeff@NationalPunctuationDay.com).

To learn how schools and companies can participate in National Punctuation Day,

visit [www.NationalPunctuationDay.com](http://www.NationalPunctuationDay.com), call me at (877) 588-1212, or e-mail me at [Jeff@NationalPunctuationDay.com](mailto:Jeff@NationalPunctuationDay.com).

Let's fix the world one apostrophe at a time.

## ARTICLES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

### Waterloo (Canada) Record

#### English skills among first-year university students show signs of trouble

More and more University of Waterloo students are failing the written English test that's required in first year—including some students who have spoken English all their lives and have high school averages in the 90s.

The most common mistakes made by English-speaking students are punctuation errors, she said. Students often don't know how to use a colon or an apostrophe.

<http://news.therecord.com/News/Local/article/576218>

### San Jose (CA) Mercury News

#### SJSU to tell repeating students: Get help elsewhere

San Jose State University has a tough message for the hundreds of students who fail pre-college math or English courses and need to take them again: You're on your own.

Because of a \$41 million state budget cut, the university did not get enough funding to meet the high demand for remedial classes. So, for the first time, it is offering each student one chance to pass.

Of the estimated 1,400 to 1,700 freshmen students who take remedial English each fall, between one-third and one-half typically fail and must repeat the course-work in the spring. Fewer students need to repeat remedial math. <http://www.universitybusiness.com/news-summary.aspx?news=yes&postid=20057>

### Cincinnati Business Courier

#### Let us pause to recognize semicolon's greatness

By Karen Bells, Senior Editor

Hey, I just found yet another reason to become a real FaceBook user (instead of just a "lurker") — The Semicolon Appreciation Society group. Sweet! I have long, long loved the semicolon, and now I've found a place with 1,221 people (as of this writing) who feel the same.

I mean no insult to the period, the comma or even the apostrophe — all great pieces of punctuation — but it's the semicolon that holds the key to my heart. "Stronger



than a comma, but weaker than a period" is the best way to describe the little sucker. The writer wants to signal the reader to take a pause but not quite to stop. Pause ... but don't stop.

[http://cincinnati.bizjournals.com/cincinnati/blog/2009/08/let\\_us\\_pause\\_to\\_recognize\\_semicolons\\_greatness.html](http://cincinnati.bizjournals.com/cincinnati/blog/2009/08/let_us_pause_to_recognize_semicolons_greatness.html)

### Wall Street Journal

#### Fifty years of simplicity as style

Strunk and White perennially remind writers to observe common rules of punctuation and syntax; to be mindful of structure and prefer succinctness to flabbiness; to aim for prose that is concrete, active and clear; and to be sensitive to current word usage. The last chapter of *Elements*, "An Approach to Style," caps the book's argument beautifully by offering a handful of sensible truths about how writers might achieve a style and voice all their own.

[http://online.wsj.com/article/NA\\_WSJ\\_PUB:SB1000142405297020](http://online.wsj.com/article/NA_WSJ_PUB:SB1000142405297020)

[3946904574300342789419418.html](http://online.wsj.com/article/NA_WSJ_PUB:SB1000142405297020)

### Dallas Morning News

#### Students playing catch-up as they hit college

Nelda Contreras stood at the whiteboard and wrote: I like bananas and apples.

"Does this sentence need a comma?" she asked her students.

No, they said.

"What about this sentence?"

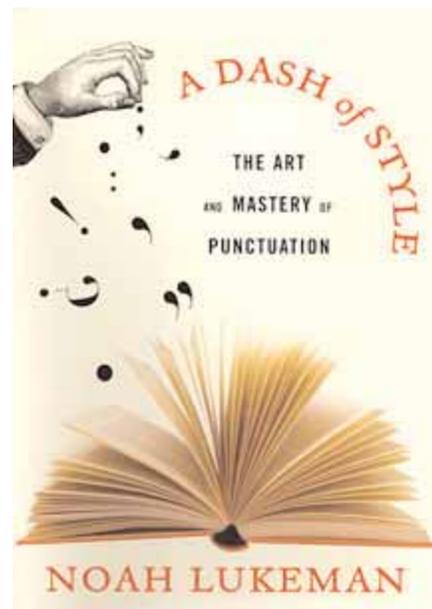
Students learn that punctuation rule in grade school. But this is college. A few months earlier, most of these freshmen graduated from high schools in Dallas, Lewisville, Carrollton and elsewhere. They passed their TAKS exams.

Yet here they were at Brookhaven Community College in Farmers Branch taking remedial writing. Over the semester, they'd review "your" vs. "you're," how to craft a two-page essay, and other fundamentals they should have already mastered. <http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/news/texasouthwest/stories/032110dnmetremedial.417d43c.html>



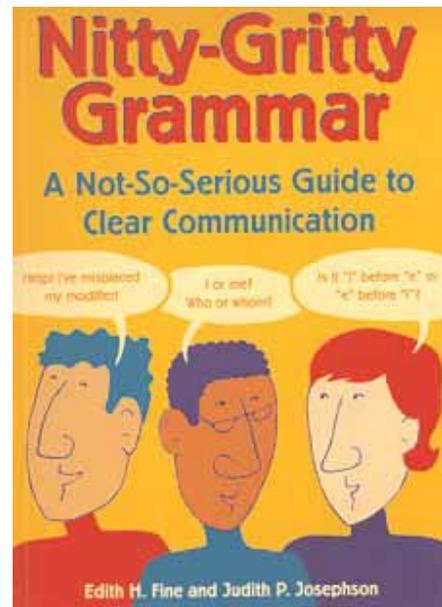
## A DASH OF STYLE:

Noah Lukeman has written the first practical and accessible guide to the art of punctuation for creative writers—fiction, nonfiction, memoir, poetry, and screenplays, and also includes anyone seeking to write well, whether for business, school, or any other endeavor.

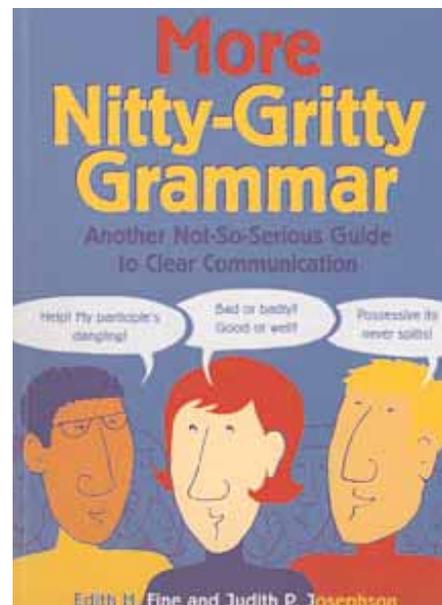
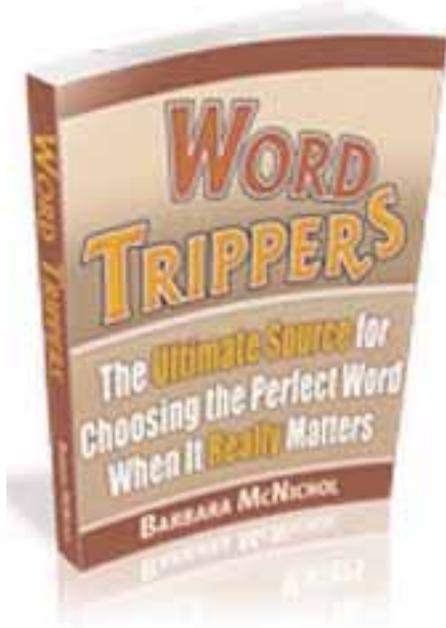


## NITTY GRITTY GRAMMER and MORE NITTY GRITTY GRAMMAR:

Is your participle dangling? Have you misplaced your modifier? Edith H. Fine and Judith P. Josephson use cartoons to teach Nitty-Gritty Grammar, a lighthearted grammar seminar at San Diego State University Extension, businesses, and conferences.

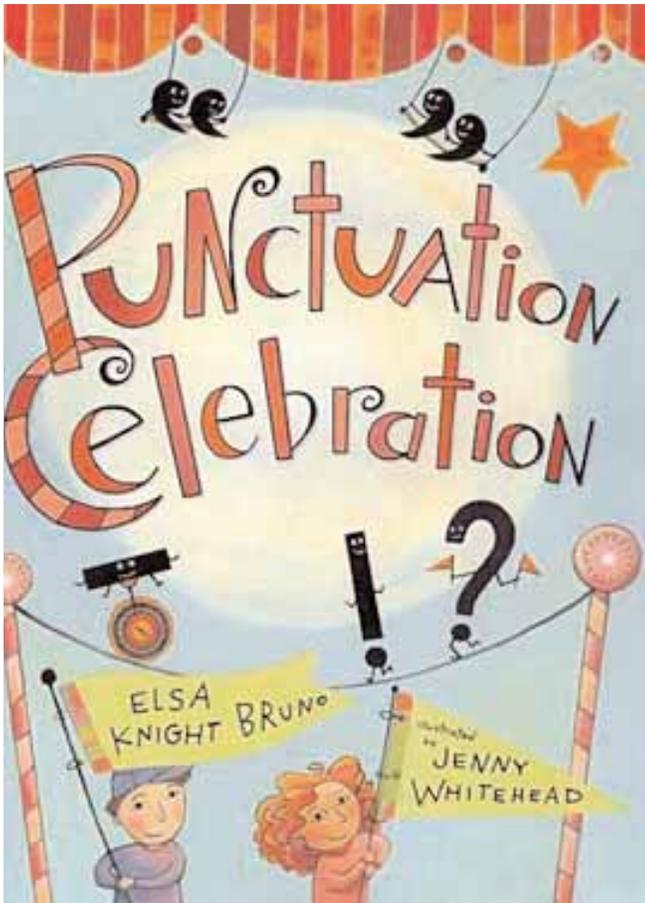


**WORD TRIPPERS:** What's a "word tripper"? It's a pair of similar words with different meanings and spellings that can trip people up! For example: further vs. farther, accept vs. except, less vs. fewer, and affect vs. effect. This book explains how to use each word correctly. Barbara McNichol sees to it that you don't trip up your readers!



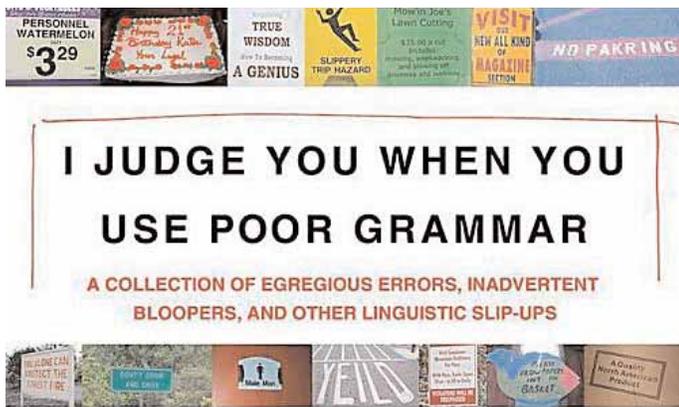
More books on page 5

# Book Nook



## PUNCTUATION CELEBRATION

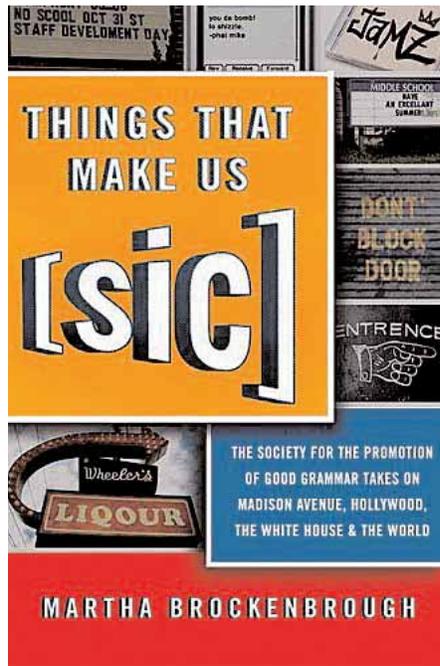
Punctuation marks come alive in this clever children's picture book featuring 14 playful poems by the late Elsa Knight Bruno, who taught kindergarten in Ohio for 29 years.



SHARON ELIZA NICHOLS

## I JUDGE YOU WHEN YOU USE POOR GRAMMAR

Correct grammar and proper spelling can be a challenge, and their absence can be a source of gleeful humor to everyone but the victim of a bad grammar attack. How do you react to sandwich boards, road signs, laminated instructions, and other written missives that are just not exactly what their creator meant?

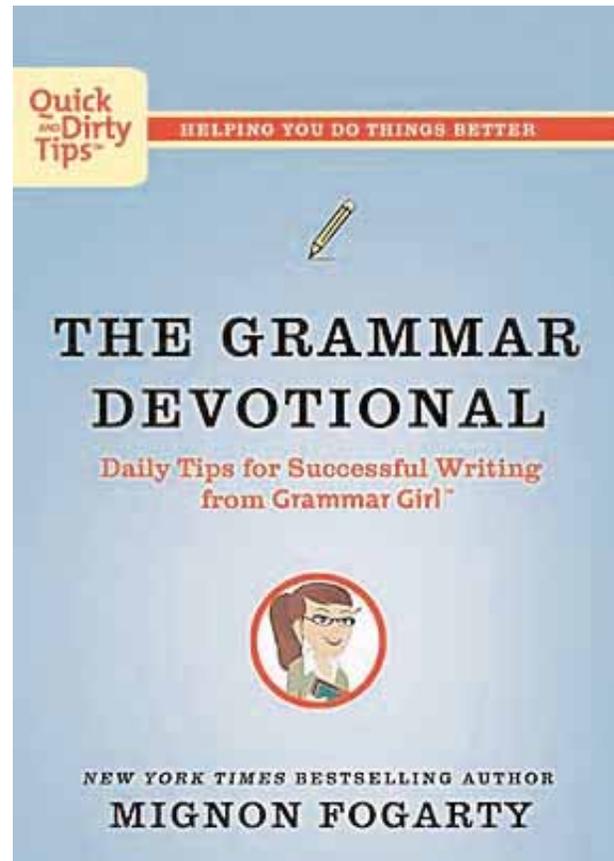


## THINGS THAT MAKE US [sic]

Have you ever wanted to call out a pop star or public official for abusing the English language? Well, the Society for the Promotion of Good Grammar has done it for you. In *Things That Make Us [sic]*, Founder Martha Brockenbrough takes on Madison Avenue, Hollywood, the White House, and the world.

## THE GRAMMAR DEVOTIONAL

Millions of fans around the globe punctuate properly and communicate clearly thanks to Mignon Fogarty's practical and easy-to-remember advice about writing style and word usage. Her first book, *Grammar Girl's Quick and Dirty Tips for Better Writing*, hit the New York Times bestseller list, and her weekly grammar podcast has been downloaded more than 20 million times and hailed by *USA Today* as "authoritative but warm."



— Want to get a good job, a better job ... or any job? —

# Grammar, punctuation, spelling count!

**E**very year as National Punctuation Day approaches I do numerous radio and newspaper interviews. The one question I'm always asked is, "Why is punctuation important?"

Part of my answer always includes comments I receive from HR managers who bemoan the state of resumes they receive from potential employees, resumes

that contain basic grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors.

The article below ran in the *Zanesville (Ohio) Times Recorder* on September 29, 2009.

Pay particular attention to the last two paragraphs.

— **Jeff Rubin**



## Job seekers get makeovers, tips at Y City Style

**By Patricia A. West-Volland  
Correspondent**

ZANESVILLE — Finding a job can be a challenge in a sluggish economy. But some job seekers learned more about hiring and received some pampering during the fourth annual Y City Style held at the Mid-East Career and Technology Center.

Muskingum County Opportunity Center on Main Street and Mid-East co-sponsored the event. About 85 out-of-work women were given makeovers that included haircuts, new hair styles, manicures and makeup.

"It's for active job seekers in our community," Justy Cordray, project coordinator, said. "Most of them have lost their jobs and are unemployed. Some are older and worked at local companies for years. They now must go out into a new workplace, and there's a lot of new technology now."

Theresa Mell of Zanesville was one of the women who attended the event. She worked the same job for 32 years and is now out of a job.

"I'm laid-off from my job; 32 years at Lear," Mell said. "They're closing. I'm not sure what I want to do, go back to school or go back to factory work."

Mell appreciated the free makeover.

"This is very nice. Everyone's been very nice. I think it's nice these people volunteer their time. It'd cost a lot to have this done," she said.

Eight area stylists donated their time and the students in the cosmetology class at Mid-East gave the women manicures. Representatives from Famous Hair North, Great Clips, Lenny's, all located on Maple Avenue, and Saturday's Salon on Northpointe Drive participated.

Victoria Whyde from Great Clips was volunteering her day to style hair. She was a job seeker in the past and found two jobs through the opportunity center. She was glad to be helping others with their search.

"In a time of need when the economy's so bad, the least I could do is give back," Whyde said. "It feels good to make people smile. Hair, makeup, nails are so very important. When an employer sees you for the first time, dress for success. You do better even if you're a nervous wreck."

The opportunity center is not giving up on finding jobs for people either.

"Muskingum County Opportunity Center is passionate about helping our residents develop good skills for

job seeking and want them to put their best foot forward. We know the importance of getting a good job," Cordray said.

Representatives from Muskingum County Human Resources offered suggestions about resume writing, how to apply for a job, how to dress for success, and what to do at a job interview.

"I think the greatest drawback for people who've been at the same job for a long time is they don't know how to list their skills. You are your own PR (public relations) person. No one else is going to market you. Even in a bad economy, you have to keep plugging away at it. Eventually you're going to get a yes," Cordray said.

**Mistakes such as typographical errors, improper punctuation and grammar errors can make a good resume look unprofessional.**

**"People don't take the time to proofread or have someone proofread for them. It (the resume) might have really good stuff on it. But typos and punctuation, that says a lot," Cordray said.**



# NATIONAL PUNCTUATION DAY®



## September 24

### CELEBRATE PROPER PUNCTUATION WITH OUR UNIQUE PRODUCTS

- T-shirts • Latte mugs • Greeting cards •
- Punctuation posters •

### T-SHIRTS AND GREETING CARDS featuring these designs



...An ellipsis is not when the moon moves in front of the sun.

CELEBRATE NATIONAL PUNCTUATION DAY®  
www.NationalPunctuationDay.com



A comma is not a state of being.



It's not possessive.

HONOR THE APOSTROPHE  
CELEBRATE NATIONAL PUNCTUATION DAY®  
www.NationalPunctuationDay.com



A semicolon is not a surgical procedure.

CELEBRATE NATIONAL PUNCTUATION DAY®  
www.NationalPunctuationDay.com



Jesus and the twelve apostrophes

CELEBRATE NATIONAL PUNCTUATION DAY®  
www.NationalPunctuationDay.com



Is there a hyphen in anal-retentive?

HYPHENATE WITH CARE  
CELEBRATE NATIONAL PUNCTUATION DAY®  
www.NationalPunctuationDay.com

### PUNCTUATION POSTERS

Set of 4 full-color posters for teachers and parents, featuring definitions and correct usage of 13 punctuation marks.



### VISIT [WWW.NATIONALPUNCTUATIONDAY.COM](http://WWW.NATIONALPUNCTUATIONDAY.COM) FOR LARGER IMAGES AND ORDERING INFORMATION. WE ACCEPT MAJOR CREDIT CARDS.

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**“Your program completely supports our curriculum content. You have wrapped up the best in teaching to bring to our students. I love the fact that you are not afraid to teach young children great skills!”**

**— SALLY FELDMAN, WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, POINT RICHMOND, CA —**



# **Punctuation Playtime®**

**THE ASSEMBLY PROGRAM THAT TEACHES  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS PUNCTUATION  
IN A FUN AND ENGAGING WAY**

## **Punctuation is FUN!**

**Punctuation is important in helping children  
learn to read and write with clarity**

**L** EARNING IS EASIER WHEN YOU'RE HAVING FUN, AND WE HAVE A LOT OF FUN," says Jeff Rubin, co-creator of Punctuation Playtime®, and founder of National Punctuation Day®.

Jeff and his wife, Norma Martinez-Rubin, facilitate the 45-minute program of non-stop activities, games, and punctuation learning.

Punctuation Playtime® takes a subject that children might roll their eyes at and makes it an engaging, enjoyable, and memorable learning experience.



Jeff and Norma believe that reaching children at the beginning of their scholastic careers is critical in helping them develop the reading and writing skills that will be a key not only to their academic success, but also to their professional success as adults.

Games such as The Punctuation Relay and Pin the Punctuation Mark on the Sentence reinforce the program's important punctuation lessons.

Students learn best when they have FUN! The children will remember this program — and the lessons they learned — for a lifetime!

**JEFF RUBIN, 1517 BUCKEYE COURT, PINOLE, CA 94564  
(877) 588-1212, TOLL FREE**

**JEFF@PUNCTUATIONPLAYTIME.COM**

**WWW.PUNCTUATIONPLAYTIME.COM**



**U**nderstanding the rules of punctuation helps children learn to read and comprehend what they read. Statistics show that students who read well do better in school, get better jobs, earn more money, and live more satisfying and productive lives.”

— JEFF RUBIN, FOUNDER, PUNCTUATION PLAYTIME® —

## Punctuation Playtime® Facilitators



**Jeff Rubin**, founder of Punctuation Playtime® and National Punctuation Day®, is The Newsletter Guy, owner of the Pinole, CA-based newsletter publishing firm of the same name ([www.thenewletterguy.com](http://www.thenewletterguy.com)).

Jeff has written and designed more than 1,800 newsletters for companies in a wide variety of industries since beginning his business in 1981.

Previously, Jeff was a newspaper reporter, columnist, and editor for papers in New York, Connecticut, Illinois, and California. His freelance articles have appeared in *Family Weekly*, *Runner's World*, *Basketball Weekly*, *Consulting Today*, and *Professional Speaker* magazines.

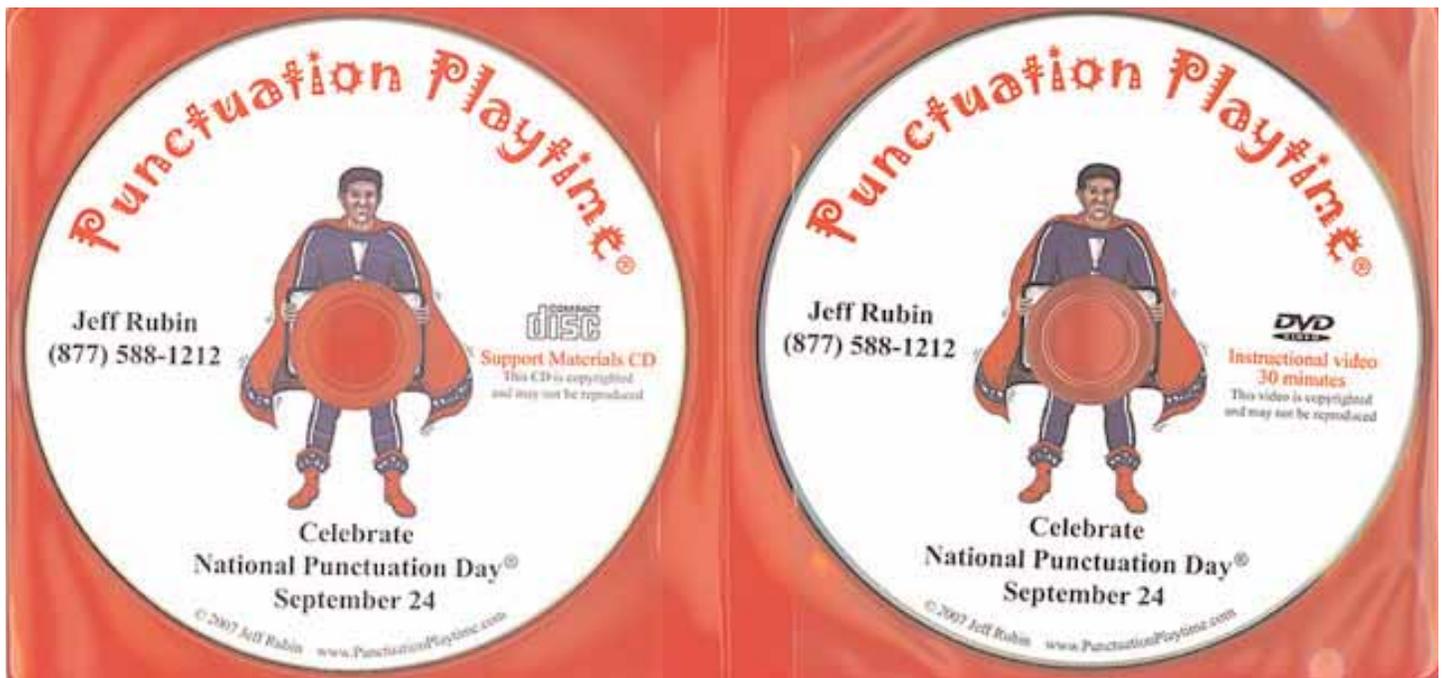
Jeff is a professional speaker ([www.JeffRubinSpeaks.com](http://www.JeffRubinSpeaks.com)) and a former member of the National Speakers Association. He speaks about marketing, integrity, and customer service for owners of small businesses.



**Norma Martinez-Rubin** is a veteran of EAST BAY IMpRoV classes and a born laugh. She has a gentle way with children, dogs, and her husband, Jeff.

Norma holds an MPH from UCLA and an MBA from John F. Kennedy University, in Pleasant Hill, CA.

Norma owns Evaluation Focused Consulting ([www.evaluationfocused.com](http://www.evaluationfocused.com)), which conducts health program evaluations for foundations, health maintenance organizations, and corporations with community benefit interests. She provides a high level of qualitative data that enables her clients to maximize the effectiveness of their community health initiatives.



## Punctuation Playtime® praised by Teachers' Choice Award panel

**W**e entered the Punctuation Playtime® instructional DVD for teachers in the 2008 Teachers' Choice Award competition sponsored by Learning Magazine. While the DVD did not win an award

(only 15% of the entries win), the DVD got very positive comments from the panel of teachers that reviewed it. Here's a sampling of those comments:

### WHAT ASPECTS OF THIS PRODUCT DID YOU LIKE THE MOST?

- I like the reinforcement of punctuation outside of a textbook lesson. Also, the suggestions could easily be used for an observational evaluation of lessons.
- I liked the supplemental materials that came with it. I like the songs.
- Using an assembly program is a cute way of introducing students to a difficult concept.
- I like the idea of using music to introduce the topic of punctuation.
- The students at the assembly seemed to be having a really good time. I liked the interactive games. I liked the two songs that came with the program to teach punctuation. It is certainly a different way to approach a curriculum piece.

### WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THIS PRODUCT?

- I learned that too often I forget to re-teach and enhance lessons with activities. It doesn't take much money or time to follow up a lesson with one of these activities.



- Students can learn about subject matter in different ways. In this case, the use of an assembly program may pique their interest in punctuation.
- The use of games and activities help make teaching the topic of punctuation fun.
- Students were actively engaged with interactive games and activities.

### HOW WILL YOU APPLY INFORMATION FROM THE PRODUCT IN YOUR CLASSROOM?

- I will integrate the punctuation posters with my English series I am already using.

- Many (of this program's) ideas could be used in other curriculum as enhancement and re-teaching. I would use products they can do on their own, at their own desks.
- I will incorporate some of the games demonstrated in the video.

### IF FUNDS WERE AVAILABLE, WOULD YOU RECOMMEND THIS PRODUCT TO A TEACHER AT THE APPROPRIATE GRADE/AGE LEVEL?

- Yes. The ideas presented were good, solid grammar rules.
- If a school/PTA had money to pay for this program it looks like it could be lots of fun for students.
- If a school had extra funds, it would be fun to have Mr. Rubin come and do an assembly program.
- The games and activities provided on the CD could be put to use in the classroom for students in grades 1-6.
- If a PTA had funds to purchase this program, I'd recommend it.

**See page 11 for ordering information.**

# How we help young students learn about punctuation

**L**earning is easier when children are having fun, and they have a lot of fun with **Punctuation Playtime®**. We facilitate a 45-minute program of non-stop activities, games, and punctuation learning. **Punctuation Playtime®** takes a subject that children might roll their eyes at and makes it an engaging, enjoyable, and memorable learning experience.

We believe that reaching children at the beginning of their scholastic careers is critical in helping them develop the reading and writing skills that will be key

not only to their academic success, but also to their professional success as adults.

The children will remember the lessons they learned in this program for a lifetime!

**Punctuation Playtime® meets Language Arts state standards.**

**Book us now for fall 2010 and spring 2011 programs.**

**Call toll-free (877) 588-1212**

## Two ways to get **Punctuation Playtime®**



***Pin the Punctuation Mark on the Sentence—here at Roundout Elementary School, north of Chicago—is one of the most popular Punctuation Playtime® activities.***

**1 Book us for programs**  
We love working with young students. Please call us about coming to your school.  
Call us toll-free at **(877) 588-1212**, or e-mail Jeff at [Jeff@PunctuationPlaytime.com](mailto:Jeff@PunctuationPlaytime.com).

**2 Purchase our instructional DVD**  
We also offer the program to schools and libraries as a training DVD. It takes teachers and facilitators step by step through our activities and learning objectives so they can replicate the program in their classrooms and assemblies.

The DVD can be shared for cooperative teaching. Several grades in one school can learn important writing and literacy skills. Teachers and facilitators can reinforce and support each other. It's a great value!

**With either option, you'll receive a CD with:**

- A Teachers' Activity Kit (12 punctuation activities)
- A Kids' Activity Kit (23 punctuation activities to be done individually and with parents)
- A set of four, 4-color punctuation posters for the teacher to hang in his/her classroom
- The Punctuation Rap® music and lyrics
- The sentences for Pin the Punctuation Mark on the Sentence.

**Order the DVD/CD package for only \$299**

Order online at [www.PunctuationPlaytime.com](http://www.PunctuationPlaytime.com)

We accept Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and Discover credit cards.

If you prefer paying by check, make it payable to "Punctuation Playtime" and mail it to:

**Punctuation Playtime, 1517 Buckeye Court, Pinole, CA 94564**

Price includes shipping in the United States. To Canada or Mexico add \$5; to other countries add \$10.