

Using Exclamation Marks.

The exclamation mark is used at the end of a sentence, or after an interjection to show strong emotion or emphasis.

Exclamatory sentence: We were stuck at Luton airport for four days!

Strong command: Be home by ten o'clock, or else!

Interjection: Wow!

When an emphatic interjection or direct address begins a sentence, you may use an exclamation mark or a comma, depending on how much emotion you want to indicate.

No, I don't want to go there.

More emotion: No, I don't want to go there!

Even more emphasis: No! I don't want to go there!

An exclamation mark may be used to close questions that are meant to convey extreme emotion.

What on earth are you doing!

Sometimes an exclamation mark is used inside parentheses to show irony. Usually the ironic tone should be clear from the words, but sometimes this extra indication is given to add emphasis. It has very limited use in standard English.

That butcher (!) is a vegetarian.

An exclamation mark will often accompany mimetically produced sounds, as in:

"All day long, the dogs *woof!* in my neighbour's garden" and

"The wolf went *Grr!*, and the little girl ran away."

If it is part of an italicized or underlined title, make sure that the exclamation mark is also italicized or underlined:

My favourite musical is *Oklahoma!*

It is not necessary to add a full stop after a sentence that ends with the title's exclamation mark. The exclamation mark will suffice to end the sentence.

And if it is not part of the title that ends a sentence, do not italicize the exclamation mark:

I've asked you not to sing *la Marseillaise!*

Exclamation marks should be rarely used in academic prose, if at all, and in quality newspaper writing the exclamation mark is virtually nonexistent.

Beware of overusing exclamation marks!!

Using them too often makes them less meaningful!!!