

Brackets and Dashes

Brackets and dashes are a bit like pairs of commas that contain extra information. They're pretty useful so make sure you get the hang of this page before moving on.

Brackets separate extra information

These are brackets:



Brackets can also be called 'parentheses'.

Brackets go around extra information and keep it separate from the rest of the sentence. They're always used in pairs.

Marco (a farmer) had lost all of his sheep except one.

You could take out the extra information and the sentence would still make sense.



The farmer cried as he walked home (he'd lost his sheep).

These two give an explanation but don't affect how you read the rest of the sentence.



The sheep had escaped from the field (there was a gap in the fence).

If the closing bracket is at the end of a sentence, it goes before the full stop.

Dashes are similar to brackets

A pair of dashes can be used instead of brackets to add extra information:

The dogs — Tess and Bob — loved playing fetch.

This is the extra information.



A single dash can mark a pause in the middle of a sentence. It usually separates two main clauses.

Raul looked over the bridge — there was a huge drop.

dramatic pause



Quick Questions...

For each question, write out the sentence that uses brackets or dashes correctly.

- 1) a) (I couldn't sleep last night) I was nervous. b) I couldn't sleep last night (I was nervous).
- 2) a) The pigs — Milo and Tim — like ants. b) The pigs Milo and Tim — like ants.



Brackets for extra information

4. Rewrite these sentences so that the brackets are used correctly.

Mark tells lots of stories (some of them are true!).

My birthday (the 1st June is always sunny).

The winning ticket (number 452(belonged to an alien.

5. There are three pairs of missing brackets in this paragraph from a postcard. Add the missing brackets so that the paragraph makes sense.

After we left you , the journey took ages the flight was delayed . Straight after breakfast cold meat and rolls , we headed down to the beach . After going sunbathing it was thirty-two degrees ! , we found a little coffee shop and had some cake .

6. Write something in the gaps between the brackets to complete these sentences.

It was in the summer of 1846 (.....) that I first learnt to talk to the animals.

The last day of term (.....) can't come too soon.

Mrs Mox (.....) is sleeping in the corner .

Punctuation Pythons always have a spare pair of brackets in their pockets. Have you? Give yourself a tick.

