

The Colon

With shiny polished buttons on his
front,

The Colon announces the entrance
of each important guest:

"Lady Complex Clause,"

"Lord Complete Sentence" and
their children:

"Master Capital, Mistress
Semicolon, and several young
Commas,"

Focusing our attention on their
entrance and march across the
page.

The Parentheses

Like Doormen before a private
club,

The parentheses face

Each other

Nose to nose

Toe to toe

Tightly guarding their special

Understandings

And protecting them from the

Commonness of

General public knowledge.



The Period

Stop right there. That's it.

Enough's enough.

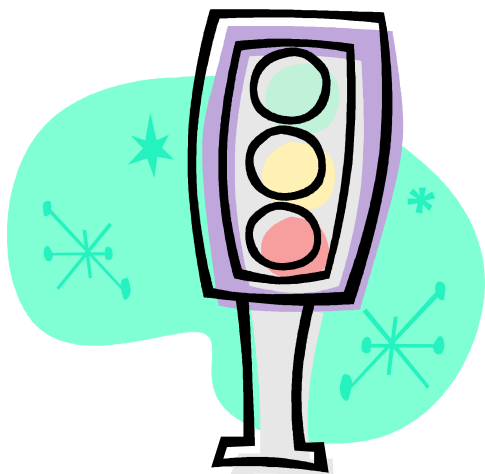
Quit while you're ahead.

Halt. Whoa. No more.

Do not pass go.

Stop right there. That's it.

Period.



The Dash

showed up at a party
completely underdressed.

It had of course
been invited
by the period and
was expected to behave--
it did, after all,
belong with the others.

but here—
here—he was—
sandals and a
tank top
virtually mocking
the entire group
and loving it—

Period

Hold it.

You're not going to run on.

I'm stopping you right here.

There's no green light for you.

It's a red light you're looking at.

You stop right now, sentence.

A period is like a General, stern and
still.

The COMMA

On a blue gray day

a comma sat on the edge of a cliff

staring into the sea

thinking of famous interruptions

it had made.

The Hyphen

A hyphen lets things stay close,
yet not touching.

It separates the vice
from the president

The mother from her in-laws.

It never makes grand entrances,
just squeezes in with the crowd.

The hyphen is a mingler
Not a leader or a follower.

The Ellipsis

The ellipsis is dreaming
Entering a new world
Letting its imagination run wild
Or maybe it's sleeping late
on a rainy day
or a Sunday afternoon.
It's sitting in its brother's chair...
The book slips out of its hand.