

Mastering Parenthesis with Max the Maths-Monkey

Learning objective: To identify, understand, and accurately use parenthesis to add extra information to sentences.

Read the front of each flashcard carefully. Try to recall the rule or function of parenthesis before checking the answer on the back. Use these cards to improve your descriptive writing skills.

What is the definition of 'parenthesis'?

Parenthesis is a word, phrase, or clause inserted into a sentence as an explanation or afterthought that is grammatically complete without it.

Which three punctuation marks can be used to indicate parenthesis?

Parentheses (brackets), commas, and dashes.

How do you check if the extra information is truly 'parenthesis'?

Read the sentence aloud without the information inside the punctuation. If the sentence still makes perfect sense, you have used parenthesis correctly.

Max (our clever monkey friend) loves maths. Why are the brackets used here?

They are used to add extra information about Max without interrupting the main point of the sentence.

Rewrite this sentence using commas for parenthesis: 'The old oak tree stood tall in the garden.' (Add information about its age).

The old oak tree, which was over a century old, stood tall in the garden.

When using dashes for parenthesis, what is the effect on the reader?

Dashes often create a stronger emphasis or a more dramatic pause than commas do.

True or False: A sentence must always contain parenthesis to be grammatically correct.

False. Parenthesis is optional information; the main clause must be able to stand alone.

Explain why we might choose brackets instead of commas for parenthesis.

Brackets are often used for factual, technical, or specific extra details that are clearly separate from the main flow of the sentence.

Identify the parenthesis in this sentence: 'Pip, the curious caterpillar, read five books today.'

the curious caterpillar

Compare and contrast: How does using brackets differ from using dashes for parenthesis?

Brackets suggest the information is an aside or a 'side note', whereas dashes provide a more emphatic, conversational break in the sentence.

What might happen if you forget the closing punctuation mark in a pair of parenthesis?

The reader becomes confused as they cannot tell where the extra information ends and the main sentence resumes.

Justify why writers use parenthesis in non-fiction texts.

Writers use it to provide specific definitions, dates, or technical clarifications to help the reader understand complex information without cluttering the main text.