Question Marks, Exclamations and Periods, Oh My!

Preschool children can be introduced to punctuation marks, so they are familiar with them before they start reading by themselves. Basic punctuation marks are the best place to start.

- As you are reading books together you can point to the period (.) at the end of the sentence and say its name. You can explain that when you see a period, you stop reading for a second, and then start again.

- When you see an exclamation point (!), raise your voice to show that it means you are excited. The more exclamation marks there are, the more excited you get.

- Question marks (?) are easy to identify, and can be demonstrated by using a different tone of voice to suggest that you need more information.

Other punctuation marks will be taught as your child learns reading skills in kindergarten. It is fun for children to notice and identify different types of print as they are out in the community. Encourage them to notice traffic signs, business logos, billboards and other types of print as you are out and about. Being familiar with punctuation marks will give your child confidence as they learn to read.

Featured Book

Don’t Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! by Mo Willems

Though the bus driver has warned us, “Don’t let the pigeon drive the bus!” the determined blue pigeon uses every trick in the book from whining to temper tantrums, to convince us, the readers, to let him do just that. Will your child let Pigeon drive the bus?

Author/illustrator Mo Willems received a Caldecott Honor for Don’t Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus, as well as two other books, Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale and Knuffle Bunny, Too: A Case of Mistaken Identity. He was also awarded the Theodor Seuss Geisel Medal and/or Honor Medal for four books in his Elephant and Piggie series.

Kinds of books that teach punctuation:

Yo! Yes? by Chris Raschka

Froggy Gets Dressed, by Jonathon London

More Bears! by Kenn Nesbitt

Dear Deer: A Book of Homophones, by Gene Barretta

Potato Joe, by Keith Baker
**Fingerplay**
(five fingers up, bend down a finger for each pigeon that flies away)

Five little pigeons, flying around our door,
The blue one flew away, and then there were four.

Four little pigeons sitting in a tree,
The yellow one flew away, and then there were three.

The little pigeons didn’t know what to do,
So the red one flew away, and then there were two.

Two little pigeons sitting in the sun,
The brown one flew away, and there was one.

The little green pigeon felt so all alone,
He/she flew away, and then there were none.

Later on that very day,
five little pigeons came back to play.

---

**The Wheels on the Bus**

The wheels on the bus go round and round,
*(roll hands over each other)*
Round and round, round and round.
The wheels on the bus go round and round,
All through the town.

*Additional verses:*
The people on the bus bounce up and down
*(bounce in place)*
The doors on the bus go open/shut
*(move hands away from each other and back)*
The babies on the bus go “Wah! Wah! Wah!”
*(make crying motions)*
The mommies on the bus go “Shhh! Shhh! Shhh!”
*(making shhh-ing motion)*
The driver on the bus says “Move on back!”
*(motion behind over shoulder)*