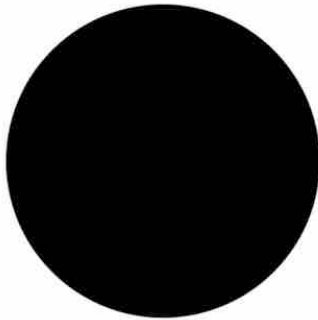


Young people say full stop is intimidating

27th August, 2020



In British English it is the full stop; in American English the period. This punctuation mark has been used for centuries to end sentences or in abbreviations. It seems that with the younger generation today, its use is changing. A

report from Binghamton University in New York shows the humble full stop is "intimidating" to young people because they view it as a sign of anger. This is especially so on social media, where many youngsters largely forego the use of punctuation, except for a liberal use of exclamation marks. Linguist Professor David Crystal said: "Usage of full stops is being 'revised in a really fundamental way'. People simply do not put full stops in, unless they want to make a point."

Linguistics experts studied the effect of technology on the way we use language. Dr Lauren Fonteyn said: "If you send a text message without a full stop, it's already obvious that you've concluded the message." She suggested that finished messages with full stops are perceived of by young people as being insincere. Journalist Victoria Turk wrote: "In a messaging conversation, a period is simply not necessary. It's clear when you've finished your thought, so what function does the period fulfill? As a result, using a period in messaging...can come across as if you're quite cross or annoyed." She added full stops are being used after every word in a sentence. She gave the example: "Just. Look. How. Emphatic. This. Is."

Sources: [dailymail.co.uk](https://www.dailymail.co.uk) / [scotsman.com](https://www.scotsman.com) / [nypost.com](https://www.nypost.com)

Writing

Punctuation rules should always be followed, even on social media. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

British English / American English / full stop / period / abbreviations / punctuation / linguistics / experts / technology / text / messaging / annoyed / sentence / emphatic

True / False

- a) The word 'full stop' in US English is 'full period'. T / F
- b) The full stop is used in abbreviations. T / F
- c) The article says young people view the full stop as a sign of anger. T / F
- d) A linguist said people now use full stops to make a point. T / F
- e) A linguistics expert said we need full stops in text messages. T / F
- f) Young people think using a full stop shows sincerity. T / F
- g) A journalist said it is clear when a sentence in a text message has ended. T / F
- h) The journalist said people now use full stops after every word. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| 1. full stop | a. modest |
| 2. seems | b. clear |
| 3. humble | c. basic |
| 4. forego | d. irritated |
| 5. fundamental | e. period |
| 6. experts | f. categorical |
| 7. obvious | g. fake |
| 8. insincere | h. appears |
| 9. annoyed | i. drop |
| 10. emphatic | j. specialists |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) How does technology change the way we use language?
- c) Is a full stop necessary in a one-sentence text message?
- d) What is insincere about not using a full stop?
- e) How would you show anger or annoyance in your writing?
- f) How does punctuation help people read aloud?
- g) Do you think the full stop is doomed?
- h) What questions would you like to ask a linguist?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1. punctuation | a. the message |
| 2. used for | b. of anger |
| 3. the younger | c. word in a sentence |
| 4. they view it as a sign | d. being insincere |
| 5. revised in a really fundamental | e. centuries |
| 6. obvious that you've concluded | f. you're quite cross |
| 7. perceived of by young people as | g. way |
| 8. a period is simply | h. mark |
| 9. come across as if | i. not necessary |
| 10. full stops are being used after every | j. generation |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of punctuation in English?
- What is punctuation like in your language?
- Which is the best term - full stop or period?
- What is a full stop for?
- What happens if you don't use a full stop?
- Is punctuation necessary in text messages?
- Why might young people be intimidated by a full stop?
- Is social media damaging or enhancing language?

Spelling

- uctauptnoin mark
- used for nrcrutiees
- sentences or in irbvatabienos
- the younger rneaieitgon today
- youngsters largely oerfgo the use
- revised in a really dfeamnntual way
- igusiltncis experts
- rpiecveed of by young people
- being sninciree
- what function does the period ulfifill
- if you're quite cross or onnyaed
- Look. How. mhEtapic. This. Is.

Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. h	3. a	4. i	5. c
6. j	7. b	8. g	9. d	10. f

Role Play

Role A – Punctuation

You think punctuation is the most important thing to learn in English. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): pronunciation, spelling or knowing slang.

Role B – Pronunciation

You think pronunciation is the most important thing to learn in English. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): punctuation, spelling or knowing slang.

Role C – Spelling

You think spelling is the most important thing to learn in English. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): pronunciation, punctuation or knowing slang.

Role D – Knowing Slang

You think knowing slang is the most important thing to learn in English. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): pronunciation, spelling or punctuation.

Speaking – English

Rank these with your partner. Put the most important areas to master at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| • Reading | • Punctuation |
| • Writing | • Pronunciation |
| • Listening | • Spelling |
| • Speaking | • Vocabulary |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	T	e	F	f	F	g	T	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.