# Punctuation Hierarchies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FUNCTIONAL MARK</th>
<th>DEGREE OF SEPARATION</th>
<th>FUNCTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>. ? ! sentence final</td>
<td>maximum</td>
<td>separates independent clauses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>; semicolon</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>separate independent clauses, OR non-independent elements from independent clauses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[&quot;and&quot;]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>: colon</td>
<td>medium (anticipatory)</td>
<td>[&quot;namely&quot; or &quot;here it comes&quot;]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-- dash</td>
<td>medium (emphatic)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>, comma</td>
<td>minimum</td>
<td>separates non-independent clause elements from independent clauses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no punctuation</td>
<td>none</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Patterns**

I \[\text{[word/phrase/clause]} + \text{punctuation}\? + \text{Billy laughed aloud.}\]

II \[\text{Billy laughed aloud} + \text{punctuation}\? + \text{[word/phrase/clause]}.\]

III \[\text{Billy} + \text{punctuation}\? + \text{[word/phrase/clause]} + \text{punctuation}\? + \text{laughed aloud.}\]

**Choices**

I (for Pattern I) \[\text{Comma, dash, or colon are permissible.}\]

II (for Pattern II) \[\text{All marks are permissible.}\]

III (for Pattern III) \[\text{Paired marks (commas, dashes, and parentheses) are permissible.}\]