

however: reinstate the third point whenever drawing examples from such works.

- An ellipsis at the end of an incomplete sentence is not followed by a fourth full point. When an incomplete sentence is an embedded quotation within a larger complete sentence, the normal sentence full point is added after the final quotation mark:

I only said, 'If we could . . . '.

- When a complete sentence is to be followed by omitted material, the closing full point is set close up to the preceding sentence, followed by the three spaced points of omission. In British English every sequence of words before or after *four* points should be functionally complete. This indicates that at least one sentence has been omitted between the two sentences. If what follows an ellipsis begins with a complete sentence in the original, it should begin with a capital letter:

I never agreed to it. . . . It would be ridiculous.

- Sentences ending with a question or exclamation mark retain these marks, close up, before or after the ellipsis:

Could we . . . ?

Could we do it? . . . It might just be possible . . . !

- An ellipsis can be used to show a trailing off, interruption of, or pause in speech or thought in order to create dramatic, rhetorical, or ironic effects. (A final dash signals a more abrupt interruption.) Use this technique sparingly, as it can smack of melodrama. In such contexts the ellipsis is sometimes referred to as 'points of suspension', although unlike the French *points de suspension* the ellipsis is set spaced out in English, just as points of omission:

The door opened slowly . . .

I don't . . . er . . . understand.

Their champagne was tolerable enough, and yet . . .

- Use an ellipsis, like *etc.*, to show the continuation of a sequence that the reader is expected to infer:

in 1997, 1999, 2001 . . .

the gavotte, the minuet, the courante, the cotillion, the allemande, . . .

- The comma before the ellipsis is optional, though its use in similar contexts should be made consistent within a work.

Rules for ellipses in other languages (e.g. French, Italian, Russian, and Spanish) differ from those in English; see **CHAPTER 11**.