SYMBOLS OF WRITING

Ellipsis Uses:
An ellipsis is a series of periods printed in sequence (...). They are most often used to shorten a quotation or to let a sentence fade away while using dialogue. When using an ellipsis within one sentence, three periods are used, while four periods denotes an ellipsis that omits two or more sentences. **Do not** use an ellipsis to illustrate a pause. This role is reserved primarily for commas and dashes.

Shortening a quotation:

- Herman Hesse states, “One can call these moments creative, because they seem... fortuitous.”

The original quote reads: “One can call these moments creative, because they seem to give a feeling of union with the creator, and while they last, one is sensible of everything being necessary, even what is seemingly fortuitous.”

Dialogue:

- “Barbara, the world is such a strange place...” Harold sighed.

Note that the ellipsis is being used because Harold fades off, or stops talking. If he were to be interrupted, a dash would be more appropriate.

Parenthetical Expressions:
A parenthetical expression is a word or phrase inserted into a flow of thought. Parenthetical expressions, similar to conjunctions (FANBOYS), may be in the middle of a sentence, or between sentences, but do not deal directly with the topic at hand. Examples include: however, for example, in fact, in other words, therefore, moreover, etc.

- Correct: Basketball is my favorite sport. However, table tennis is where I excel.
- Correct: Basketball is my favorite sport; however, table tennis is where I excel.
- **Incorrect**: Basketball is my favorite sport, however, table tennis is where I excel.

Interrupters:
Information appearing in a sentence, but separate from the primary subject and verb of the sentence is called an interrupter. The phrase set off by commas helps the reader know that the information is not necessary to understanding the sentence; the information works only to further explain.

- Aaron thought that he could see the future, *not the past*, in the wrinkles in his skin.
• My chemistry book, which weighs about 100 pounds, has some great examples.

In all of these examples, the words italicized could be removed, and the sentences would still make sense.

**Hyphens:**

Two words brought together as a compound may be connected using hyphens. Hyphens are used to connect parts of a compound word or the parts of a word divided for any purpose.

• Use hyphens to join two or more words serving as a single adjective before a noun. For example: one-way street or well-known author
  ○ However, when compound modifiers come after a noun, they are not hyphenated. For example: The peanuts were chocolate covered.

• Use a hyphen to avoid confusion or an awkward combination of letters. For example: re-sign a petition (vs. resign from a job) or semi-independent

• Use a hyphen with the prefixes ex- (meaning former), self-, and all-; with the suffix –elect; between a prefix and a capitalized word; and with figures or letters. For example: ex-husband, mid-September, mayor-elect, or T-shirt.