

Cross-Curricula Drama/Language Arts Activity Example

Kung Fu Punctuation*Punching Home the Art of Punctuation*

Full stops, commas, apostrophes - they can be hard for children to grasp. Good punctuation is vital if a piece of writing is to communicate with any degree of sophistication. In turn, understanding the mechanics of a sentence helps children to become analytical about their writing. Paying particular attention to learning styles, in this case to kinesthetic learners, can help make the rules stick. Enter Kung Fu Punctuation...

It works like this: all the punctuation marks are simply given corresponding Kung-Fu-style actions, accompanied by noises.

- **Full stop:** throw a short, right-handed punch at the air in front of you. Make the noise, Ha!
- **Comma:** with your right arm bent so that your hand is in front of your face, make a short twisting motion at the wrist to signify the comma shape. Make the noise, Shi!
- **Semi-colon:** do the full-stop punch, then the comma shape directly underneath it. Make the noises, Ha! Shi!
- **Colon:** follow the full-stop punch immediately with one directly beneath it. Make the noises, Ha! Ha!
- **Question mark:** separate the curly bit into three cutting movements with the hand: one horizontal left to right, one curved around, and one vertical coming from the bottom of the curved one. Then at the bottom of the shape you have just drawn in the air, bung in a full-stop punch. Make the noises, Shi! Shi! Shi! Ha!
- **Exclamation mark:** a long vertical slash, from top to bottom, followed by a full stop. Make the noises, Shiiiiii! Ha!
- **Speech marks:** stand on one leg, extend your arms diagonally to the skies and wiggle your index and middle fingers in an approximation of speech marks. Make the noise, HaeEEEE!
- **Apostrophe:** with your right arm fully extended to the air, wiggle your index finger. Make the noise, Blubalubaluba! (This is the best I can do to approximate the sound you

can make with your tongue when you flap it up and down against the inside of your lips.)

- **Ellipsis:** three punches along a horizontal line. Make the noises, Ha! Ha! Ha!
- **Brackets:** using your left hand first, draw a curved convex line in the air; use your right hand to do the opposite motion for the closing bracket. Make the noises, Shi! Shi!
- To signify a **capital letter**, simply touch each side of your head with your hands.

Try this with me:

"Where's Papa going with that ax?" said Fern to her mother one morning at breakfast...

Charlotte's Web – E.B. White

"Lord, what will become of me...once I've lost my novelty?"

'Nothing New' – Taylor Swift

"Play it, Sam...play 'As Time Goes By.' If she can stand it, so can I. Play it!"

from the movie Casablanca

'Now We Must Fight!'

A proper bout of Punctuation Kung Fu requires three players; two combatants and a referee. The combatants face each other. The referee says the words, "Now you must fight!" and the opponents bow to each other prior to the referee's starting cue.

The referee then calls out three or more punctuation marks and the players have to put the moves and sounds for these together, in sequence, as quickly as they can. The winner is the one who puts together all three moves and their accompanying sounds correctly in the quickest time.

Phil Beadle

Some Opening Lines in Children's Literature

1. Once upon a time there was a young girl who lived her stepmother and two stepsisters.
2. All children, except one, grow up.
3. I went to sleep with gum in my mouth and now there's gum in my hair. It was a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day!
4. A mouse took a stroll through a deep, dark wood.
5. In a hole in the ground there lived a Hobbit.
6. Alice was getting very tired of sitting by her sister on the riverbank.
7. "Chug, chug, chug. Puff, puff, puff. Ding dong! ding dong!" said the Little Engine That Could.
8. "Where's Papa going with that ax?" said Fern to her mother one morning at breakfast.
9. Rebecca Strand was sixteen the first time she saw her father kill a ghost.
10. If you give a mouse a cookie, he's going to ask for a glass of milk.
11. Marley was dead, to begin with.
12. Once there was a tree, and she loved a little boy.
13. The winters of my childhood were long, long winters. We lived in three place - the school, the church and the skating rink—but our real life was on the skating rink.
14. "I can read that letter for you," Parvana said.

Period • Ha!

Comma , Shi!

Question mark ? Shi! Shi! Shi! Ha!

Exclamation mark ! ShiiiiiiHa!

Speech marks "" Ayeee!

Apostrophe ' Blblblblbl