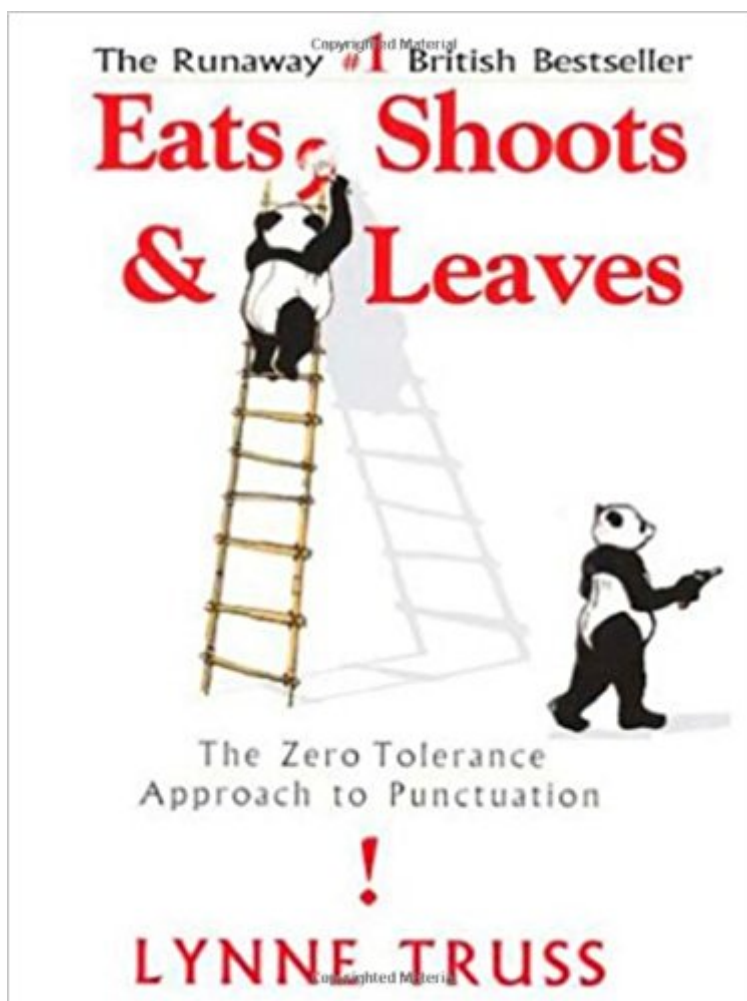


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# Eats, Shoots & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach To Punctuation



## Synopsis

The spirited and scholarly #1 New York Times bestseller combines boisterous history with grammar how-to™s to show how important punctuation is in our worldâ"period. In *Eats, Shoots & Leaves*, former editor Lynne Truss, gravely concerned about our current grammatical state, boldly defends proper punctuation.Â She proclaims, in her delightfully urbane, witty, and very English way, that it is time to look at our commas and semicolons and see them as the wonderful and necessary things they are. Using examples from literature, history, neighborhood signage, and her own imagination, Truss shows how meaning is shaped by commas and apostrophes, and the hilarious consequences of punctuation gone awry. Featuring a foreword by Frank McCourt, and interspersed with a lively history of punctuation from the invention of the question mark in the time of Charlemagne to George Orwell shunning the semicolon, *Eats, Shoots & Leaves* makes a powerful case for the preservation of proper punctuation.

## Book Information

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: Avery; Reprint edition (April 11, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1592402038

ISBN-13: 978-1592402038

Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.6 x 7.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 1,008 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #6,099 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #2 inÂ Books > Reference >

Encyclopedias & Subject Guides > Humor #2 inÂ Books > Humor & Entertainment > Humor >

Language #9 inÂ Books > Reference > Words, Language & Grammar > Vocabulary, Slang & Word Lists

## Customer Reviews

Who would have thought a book about punctuation could cause such a sensation? Certainly not its modest if indignant author, who began her surprise hit motivated by "horror" and "despair" at the current state of British usage: ungrammatical signs ("BOB,S PETS"), headlines ("DEAD SONS PHOTOS MAY BE RELEASED") and band names ("Hear'Say") drove journalist and novelist Truss absolutely batty. But this spirited and wittily instructional little volume, which was a U.K. #1 bestseller, is not a grammar book, Truss insists; like a self-help volume, it "gives you permission to

love punctuation." Her approach falls between the descriptive and prescriptive schools of grammar study, but is closer, perhaps, to the latter. (A self-professed "stickler," Truss recommends that anyone putting an apostrophe in a possessive "its"-as in "the dog chewed it's bone"-should be struck by lightning and chopped to bits.) Employing a chatty tone that ranges from pleasant rant to gentle lecture to bemused dismay, Truss dissects common errors that grammar mavens have long deplored (often, as she readily points out, in isolation) and makes elegant arguments for increased attention to punctuation correctness: "without it there is no reliable way of communicating meaning." Interspersing her lessons with bits of history (the apostrophe dates from the 16th century; the first semicolon appeared in 1494) and plenty of wit, Truss serves up delightful, unabashedly strict and sometimes snobby little book, with cheery Britishisms ("Lawks-a-mussy!") dotting pages that express a more international righteous indignation. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This impassioned manifesto on punctuation made the best-seller lists in Britain and has followed suit here. Journalist Truss gives full rein to her "inner stickler" in lambasting common grammatical mistakes. Asserting that punctuation "directs you how to read in the way musical notation directs a musician how to play," Truss argues wittily and with gusto for the merits of preserving the apostrophe, using commas correctly, and resurrecting the proper use of the lowly semicolon. Filled with dread at the sight of ubiquitous mistakes in store signs and headlines, Truss eloquently speaks to the value of punctuation in preserving the nuances of language. Liberally sprinkling the pages with Britishisms ("Lawks-a-mussy") and moving from outright indignation to sarcasm to bone-dry humor, Truss turns the finer points of punctuation into spirited reading. Joanne Wilkinson Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Hilarious. Well-written. Instructive at times. I can't remember the last time I laughed so hard at a book. She has some really clever insight into grammar without being overcome by cynicism. It is interesting to read about the state of grammar in the UK as well. It really defies the stereotype that many Americans have about Brits being stuffy and proper all the time. Even though it isn't a grammar guide, she does offer some tips on usage. I was pleased she clarified the semicolon and colon issue and included several examples. At the same time this wasn't a "montage" of real-world grammar blunders with her corrects and/or snide comments, either. But if you enjoy reading about

grammar for fun at all, you'll probably enjoy this book. And even if not, you still might appreciate her witty and sardonic style. And yes, she probably would disapprove of me starting my sentences with "and"...

It's refreshing to read a book by an author who has such an obvious love of written language and all its nuances. To make it even better, Ms Truss has infused the entire work with wit and humor. I especially liked the way she was able to weave in a sense of the history of punctuation and its impact on written English, and I share her concern for the future of all these points, stops, and marks. This is a book to savor again and again.

If you have doubts a book about punctuation can be clever, entertaining, funny and educational all at the same time, read this one. I have given it as a gift to many of my reader friends and it has never failed to please. Short example and supposedly true story: A famous writer, on his death bed, uttered the following final six words, "I should have used fewer semi-colons." You gotta love it.

I was taken by the cover art and held hostage by the title. I couldn't imagine enjoying a book on punctuation; Ms Truss' "Eats, Shoots, and Leaves" weaves together the marks, their history and the rules of punctuation with examples, quotes and commentary in a bright and delightful way. Long live punctuation and the practitioners thereof!

This tome deserves high praise indeed. Lynne Truss is excellent and knows her stuff so well that you will feel like a small student at a master's knee. She diligently argues that punctuation should not be placed aside and forgotten. That it makes your words come alive with vibrancy. And her prose is such that you sit up and pay attention. It is not light reading for an afternoon's hour, but deserves to be given your focus so that you too will take on a little of her zeal in the fight to save the tools that make our words sing! Citing many writers and providing examples Truss shows us and reminds us that there is craft to writing, and to using punctuation to elevate your thoughts to better than they are. To make your writing able to be admired for the way you craft it beyond what you say with them. And that the art of this is falling away in our digital text/chat driven society. That we should remember that we who do write are guardians, placed with a sacred trust that when we write and attract many eyes to our tales, it gives us the chance to preach and proselytize to the masses who have become lazy with language. If you are no longer a novice in the art of writing, or do care about what your words should do and be, then this is a book you must add to your library. Not just read it,

but buy it, keep it, and place it in a place of reverence.

I'd been thinking of reading this for a while, but just finally got around to it. The book is mostly funny. It doesn't teach too much in the way of punctuation but does a solid job of showing where we'd be without it. Good for people already well-versed or very interested in grammar.

I chuckled regularly while reading *Eats, Shoots & Leaves* by Lynn Truss. And sometimes I laughed out loud. This from a person not inclined to details and not interested in memorizing rules. But Truss doesn't stress rules. Rather, she uses irony, self-deprecating humor, and other techniques to make apostrophes, commas, full stops (periods), and more interesting. (Really! Check out what she says about brackets/parentheses and exclamation marks!) In fact, she inspires: Her explanation of colons and semi-colons prompted me to play with their usage; I've been experimenting with them ever since. And "cutting a dash? Well, I must stop using them as an easy way to incorporate stream-of-consciousness thinking, but I haven't quite elevated them to an art form. Truss also addresses current changes in punctuation that people like myself find disturbing. Because why would anyone want to change rules once we've finally learned them? But Truss uses history to explain that usage has never been static. Punctuation developed over time to clarify. That is, after all, its purpose. So for goodness sakes, don't miss this book! Or should that be "for goodness' sake?"

Very funny and thought provoking little book. This should be required reading for the "punctuation optional" crowd on the internet and social media.

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