

If a person is caught bringing a durian into a hotel, the authorities take three steps: (1) fine the offender; (2) confiscate the fruit; and (3) sneak away to devour the flavourful, but offensive-smelling, item.

If a person is caught bringing a durian into a hotel, the authorities take three steps: first, fine the offender; second, confiscate the fruit; and third, sneak away...

Note: In a vertical list, the opening parenthesis is not used:

- 1) fine the offender;
- 2) confiscate the fruit;

A frequent question with parentheses is how to use other punctuation with them. Unless the information enclosed in parentheses is a complete sentence (with a capital first letter and a period before the closing parenthesis), there should never be a mark of punctuation before the opening parenthesis. Whatever mark of punctuation is required by the text preceding the parenthetical expression is placed after the closing parenthesis. (Look closely at this paragraph for examples of this rule being applied.)

Do not use parentheses inside a parenthetical expression; use an em dash or square brackets.

Brackets

Brackets [] are used sparingly in departmental publications.

Use brackets to indicate parenthetical information within a parenthetical expression.

During a lengthy visit to Argentina, Roberts and an assistant (James Smith, who was later to publish his own monograph on a South American country [Brazil]) spent weeks...

They also indicate an editorial comment within a quotation.

But Masters said, "The population of Kong Hong [sic] has doubled in 10 years."

2.11 Hyphens and dashes

In publications, there are three lengths of dashes:

- hyphen (-),
- en dash (–) and