Good English Punctuation

- ❖ **Commas are generally used to indicate when a pause is to be taken in the text.** They are also often used:
    - **After dates contained in sentences:** On January 3, 2001, he saw a bear for the first time.
    - **After placenames including both the city and state/country:** Salt Lake City, Utah, is the home of the 2002 Winter Games. Copenhagen, Denmark, is a hotbed of sinful excitement.
    - **After suffixes in full names:** Martin Luther King, Jr., was one of the century's great orators. Robert L. Stamper, III, was as well.

    Note also how commas and periods are used in numbers:
    Wrong: 49,5%; 1.253,23
    Right: 49.5%; 1,253.23

- ❖ **Dashes** often indicate longer pauses. Usually computers turn two hyphens typed together (--) into a dash (—) automatically while you're typing, so that your text looks like this:

    Example: I can't believe it—I'm a millionaire!

    If this doesn't automatically happen, you can insert a dash by going to Infoga > Symbol, and selecting the dash. It's also fine to just have two hyphens.

    Example: I can't believe it--she's a millionaire!

    In British English, it's common for a single hyphen with spaces on both sides to be used where a dash would be used in American English.

    Example: I can't believe it – my dog ate your lottery ticket!

    Dashes and hyphens are never used to set off quotes in English, as they often are in Swedish.

- ❖ Use **hyphens** (**-**) sparingly. Generally speaking, we only use hyphens in English . . .
    - in adjective phrases: "the three-hundred-year-old oak tree," "low-level programming," "English-language literature," "computer-related courses"
    - after prefixes and inside compound words (before the words have become so common that they become a single word): "co-worker," "re-elect," "re-establish" (all now commonly written as one word)
    - to break words at the end of a line (most often in works printed by a publisher)
    Wrong:
    - human-being, computer-program (these should all be written as two words)
    - to-day, to-night, boy-friend, air-craft (these should be written as one word)

- ❖ **Colons** are only used as punctuation in sentences in English, never inside words (but they *are* used in time expressions: 3:35 pm [*or* p.m., *or* PM], 10:24 am.)
    Wrong: Leif:s, CD:s, 1970:s, April 24:th, the 23:rd of May.
    Right: Leif's, CDs (or sometimes CD's), 1970s (sometimes 1970's), April 24th, the 23rd of May.

❖ Be sure to **distinguish between accent marks ´ and apostrophes ʼ**.

Accent marks are only used over letters of the alphabet; apostrophes are used in possessives (Fred's book), contractions (they're, he's), and occasionally in plurals (like CD's, also written CDs).

<p style="text-align:center">don´t is incorrect; don't is correct.</p>

This is an extremely common mistake in all forms of Swedish media; you see it on signs, in posters, newspapers, etc. If you have the computer check the spelling of your page, words that incorrectly contain accent marks in place of apostrophes will be pointed out to you.

On Swedish keyboards, the apostrophe is on the same key as the asterisk *, to the left of the enter key. The accent mark key is next to the backspace key. (Apostrophes didn't exist on Swedish typewriters, which may be the root of the confusion.)

❖ Notice that in American English, **quotation marks** are written " (vaguely resembling a **66**) at the beginning of the quote and " (vaguely resembling a **99**) at the end.

<p style="text-align:center">"So an entire quote might look like this."</p>

In American English, single quotation marks, ' and ', are used for quotations inside other quotations.

<p style="text-align:center">"'Come into my parlor,' said the spider to the fly," the grandmother whispered.</p>

In British English it's the opposite:

<p style="text-align:center">Her granddaughter continued: "'Let me get my rifle,' replied the fly.'</p>

In Swedish, the quotation marks look like a 99, ", on both sides, but sometimes a single hyphen is used at the beginning of the quote instead.

Your word processing software should automatically insert the right punctuation marks if you have the language set to English. You can make sure the program treats your text as English by first selecting all the text (*Markera allt*), then going to *Verktyg > Språk > Ange språk* and choosing a regional form of English. You can also set English as the standard language for all documents if you wish.

❖ Do not put quotation marks around the names of companies or musical groups, or around titles that should be *italicized* (see the paper on Formal Writing).

❖ There are **no spaces immediately inside quotation marks** (inverted commas) **or parentheses**, but there are usually spaces outside quotation marks and parentheses. Examples:
- He took a deep breath. **"I don't know what you mean,"** he said.
- Works by these typically southern authors **(Faulkner, Welty, and O'Connor)** are often read in college courses.