Some User-Friendly Punctuation Rules

Comma:
- Use a comma to mark a shift from introductory material to the main idea of a sentence:
  When her watch broke, she threw it away.
- Use a comma to interrupt the main idea of a sentence with less significant information:
  Mr. Smith, the school custodian, makes certain that the blackboards are kept clean.
- Use commas to separate items in a list:
  The teacher assigned parts to Jim, Sally, and Joe.
- Avoid using comma splices (using commas between complete ideas or sentences):
  The car wouldn’t start this morning, Sam called the tow truck.

Semi-colon:
- Use a semi-colon to connect two complete thoughts if you want to suggest a connection between them:
  The temperature was frigid this morning; black ice was everywhere.

Colon:
- Use a colon when you want to say “details to follow”:
  The professor laid down the following rules on the first day of class: attend class, observe deadlines, and participate in discussions.

Apostrophe:
- Use an apostrophe to indicate a contraction or to suggest possession:
  It’s a very cold day.
  Sally’s car needs a washing.