Parentheses

USE PARENTHESES [( )]

Parentheses [( )] enclose important words that would interrupt the flow of the .

Parentheses are used to

1. Set off an explanatory sentence within a sentence.
2. Set off words that specify.
3. Enclose brief definitions.
4. Enclose numbers or letters that mark items in a list.

NOTE: Parentheses are always used in pairs.

SETTING OFF AN EXPLANATORY SENTENCE

Ishmael (he is the speaker in Melville's <u>Moby Dick</u>) takes his name from a biblical character who was cast into the desert.

In this case, the words within parentheses form a complete sentence.

SETTING OFF WORDS THAT SPECIFY

Five countries (Somalia, Kenya, Sudan, Eritrea, and Djibouti) border Ethiopia.

Somalia, Kenya, Sudan, Eritrea, and Djibouti name the five countries.

ENCLOSING BRIEF DEFINITIONS

The Egyptians practiced embalming (the preservation of a corpse through chemical treatment).

ENCLOSING NUMBERS OR LETTERS THAT MARK ITEMS IN A LIST

Before becoming president, George Bush was (1) a member of the House of Representatives, (2) U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, (3) chief liaison officer to China, (4) director of the CIA, and (5) vice president.

<u>Sample Quiz questions</u>:

1. Choose the sentence that demonstrates the correct use of parentheses.
   a. My brother finally succeed we always believed in him (in earning his Ph. D. from Princeton University)
   b. My brother finally succeeded we always believed in him (in earning his Ph.D.) from Princeton University.
   c. My brother finally succeeded (we always believed in him) in earning his Ph.D. from Princeton University.

Answer: c. My brother finally succeeded (we always believed in him) in earning his Ph.D. from Princeton University.

2. Choose the sentence that demonstrates the correct use of parentheses.
    a. Jupiter (easily the largest planet in the solar system) was named after the Roman king of the gods.
    b. Jupiter easily the largest planet (in the solar system) was named after the Roman king of the gods.
    c. Jupiter (easily) the largest planet in the solar system was named after the Roman king of the gods.

Answer: a. Jupiter (easily the largest planet in the solar system) was named after the Roman king of the gods.