

The lady took me back to her house and sat me down in a worn armchair in a small, cramped sitting-room. (All the furniture was very old-fashioned.) The policeman followed us into the room and stood about awkwardly, not knowing where to look. We sat in silence for a minute. (Her three children had gone upstairs to get changed.) The lady eventually said she would make me some breakfast, and she left me alone with the policeman.

"You understand what's happened, don't you sonny?" he said to me. (I wished they wouldn't keep calling me that!) I nodded my head in reply (though I actually wasn't sure what he was getting at.) "I'm afraid there were no other survivors from the house." I didn't reply. He coughed nervously. "Do you have any other family in the area you can go to?" he asked.

"I want to go back to Mum and Joe now. I've had enough of this!" I blurted out. (This play-acting was really starting to get on my nerves.)

"We've all had enough of this war!" he mumbled. He took out a small notepad, licked the lead of his pencil, and began to ask me some questions which he noted down in his little book. He asked me my name, my address, who I lived with and finally a description of Mum and Joe. I tried telling him that I knew what was going on – that it was just a hoax and I had seen right through it – but he persisted with the play-acting and ignored my remarks. (I supposed he hadn't got any choice if he wanted to get paid – it would be in his contract.) The lady came back in with a mug of hot milk and offered it to me. (I don't normally like hot milk, but it went down a treat!)

"Young Andrew here has been very brave," the policeman told the lady.

"It's not Andrew, it's Drew," I corrected him.

"Yes! But Drew is a shortened version of Andrew and as a policeman I have to record your full name," he answered patronisingly.

"I am definitely not Andrew!" I shouted back – my patience now reaching breaking point.

"Is everything alright, officer?" the lady asked with what appeared to be genuine concern.

"He does understand the situation, doesn't he?"

The policeman lowered his voice a little, as if that would stop me from hearing, even though I was sitting right next to him.

"I'm not sure he has fully comprehended the situation, madam," he replied. "He keeps talking as if this is all some kind of giant game."

"The poor boy is in shock!" the lady said.

"I know Mum and Joe weren't in the house when the bomb exploded," I told them.

"Could he be right?" the lady enquired.

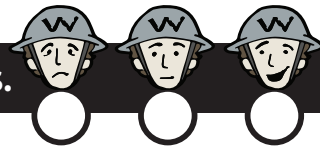
"I'm afraid not, ma'am," replied the policeman.

"The two bodies recovered from the house match the young lad's description of his mum and brother."





## I can use brackets, dashes or commas for parentheses.



**Brackets, dashes and commas** can all be used to separate extra information from the rest of the sentence. It should be possible to take out the information in **parentheses** (in brackets, or between dashes and commas), and the sentence will still make sense.

There are subtle differences between the three types of parentheses.

**Brackets** are often used for an aside or a commentary.

**"Do you understand, sonny?" (I wished they wouldn't keep calling me that!)**

You will find exceptions, but **dashes** are often used for dramatic interruptions.

**"I am definitely not Andrew!" I shouted back – my patience now reaching breaking point.**

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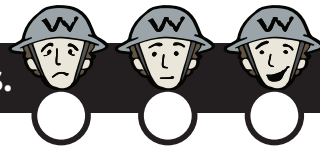
Decide whether the additional information should be enclosed by brackets, dashes or commas. (To help you, one type of parentheses has been underlined, one written in bold and one in italics.)

- 1 "I'll confirm the details **which the lad has given me** when I get back to the station," the policeman informed the lady.
- 2 He asked the lady **who was on the point of crying** if she could look after me until he returned.
- 3 He thanked the lady and promised me he would sort it out for me like I believed that!
- 4 He left, and the lady stroked my hair again! and patted my hand.
- 5 She went upstairs **to one of the children's bedrooms** and came back down with a pile of clothes in her arms.
- 6 She told me that they were Kenneth's I think he was her eldest son, but he had grown out of them so I could have the hand-me-downs.
- 7 "You can't wear your pyjamas all day," she said looking at the picture of Superman **which was on the front of my pyjamas** as if she had never seen a superhero before.
- 8 She stood looking at me sadly before leaving me to get dressed **for a moment I thought I was going to have to get changed in front of her!**
- 9 I laid the clothes out on the small armchair and laughed when I saw what I was supposed to wear **grey knee-length socks, a patterned tank top and a pair of boy's long short trousers!**
- 10 She was right though **I couldn't wear my pyjamas all day** so **checking no one would barge in on me** I quickly changed into the hand-me-downs.

**Extension** Which of the words in the passage could be rewritten in another form of parentheses?



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