MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Correspondence Writing Tips

A COMPANION TO THE MCPS CORRESPONDENCE MANUAL series of useful tips



## **Punctuation and Capitalization in Lists**

Below are examples that illustrate the punctuation guidelines for lists. They can be distinguished from one another by the following:

- 1. A complete introductory sentence
- 2. An incomplete introductory sentence

## Example with a complete introductory sentence

When the list items are complete sentences, the following method can be used:

- The introductory sentence ends with a colon or a period, whichever is appropriate.
- Each list item begins with a capital letter.
- Each list item ends with a period.

There is an exception: If the items in the list are relatively short, simple phrases (not sentences), you don't need any ending punctuation. An example of this is the two-item list beginning this writing tip.

## Example with an incomplete introductory sentence

When each item of the list completes the introductory sentence,

- the introductory sentence may end with a comma, semicolon, dash(—), or no punctuation at all, whichever is appropriate;
- the list items can begin with lowercase letters;
- all but the last item end with a comma or semicolon;
- the second-to-last item ends with and; and
- the last item ends with a period.

Taken from *The New York Public Library Writers Guide to Style and Usage*, (c)1994 0800.07 • EDITORIAL, GRAPHICS & PUBLISHING SERVICES • 10.06

Look for morc tips in the near future! E-mail us for a quick response to your grammar and style questions: Donna\_M\_Marks@mcpsmd.org Our Editorial Help Desk also appreciates your phone calls and visits: 301-517-8139 CESC, Room 20 We are also your contact for a copy of the MCPs Correspondence Manual.