adverbs

Great Grammar Commas

Grades 5-9



COTV



CREDITS

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|-----------------------|-----------------------|
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About This Guide

Guide Information

Providing students with visual media is an excellent way to take them out of the classroom and into the real world. Our programs offer real-world footage, dynamic graphics, engaging dramatizations, and first-person testimonials that keep students interested and help them visualize difficult concepts. More importantly, they reinforce critical learning objectives shaped by state and national educational standards. However, the learning doesn't begin and end when the program does. You can make the learning experience even more effective by using the materials provided in this Teacher's Guide.

This guide is divided into the following sections:

- Fast Facts are designed to give your students a quick overview of the information presented within the video.
- Before Viewing Activities help identify what students already know about the subject, what they are curious about, and what they hope to learn.
- **During Viewing Activities** may be used during viewing to enhance students' understanding of the video.
- After Viewing Activities help students summarize and draw conclusions from the information that was presented.
- After Viewing Quizzes test students' retention of the information presented in the program and activity sheets.
- Additional Resources are designed to help you extend the information presented in the program into other areas of your curriculum.
- Answer Keys are provided for relevant activities or reproducible pages.
- Script content is provided in an unabridged version for future reference.



Great Grammar Video on Commas

This video is about the proper use of commas in sentences, and it sets the stage by having the viewer imagine he or she is a photographer for a travel magazine. The photographer's assignment is to travel the world and take pictures of exotic locations such as: Belize, London, New York, and Antarctica. However, before these photographs can be turned in to the editor for publication, they must have a descriptive paragraph along with them. Therefore, the proper use of commas is important knowledge to have for this exciting job.

The five general rules for comma usage are introduced. These rules are: use commas in a series, after a dependent clause, after introductory elements, before a conjunction, and with nonessential information. Each rule is discussed separately and several examples are given for the correct use of commas. The video also provides the viewer with strategies to see when a comma is necessary. For example, with coordinating adjectives (adjectives that are interchangeable with each other), the host in the video suggests adding the word and between the two adjectives. If the sentence makes sense with the word and, a comma can be used instead. There are also brief reviews of other grammatical concepts such as conjunctions, dependent clauses, prepositions, and pronouns.

Viewing Objectives

After viewing the DVD/video and utilizing the activities provided in the teacher's guide, the students will be able to:

- Punctuate using commas to separate parts of series
- Punctuate using commas after dependent clauses at the beginning of sentences
- Use commas to punctuate before a conjunction in compound sentences
- Use commas to punctuate after introductory elements in sentences
- Use commas to separate nonessential information in the middle of sentences
- Use commas to set off long phrases and clauses



Commas are an important part of punctuation because they help sentences flow by making them easier to read. They also lend a pause when needed.

- Commas are used to separate a series of nouns, adverbs, and adjectives.
- Do not use a comma after the final noun, adverb, or adjective in a series.
- Use a comma between coordinate adjectives.
- A series of long phrases in a sentence needs to be separated by a comma.
- Use a comma to separate a dependent clause only when it is at the beginning of a sentence.
- Commas are used to separate a list of proper nouns.
- Do not place a comma after the last proper noun.
- Commas should not interrupt the flow of a sentence.
- Commas should be used after an introductory element in a sentence.
- Commas are used before a conjunction that connects two independent clauses.

Common Proofreading Symbols

Use the proofreading marks and add commas where they are needed. Delete the commas that are used incorrectly.

Last Saturday my best friend, and I went on a trail ride. Preparing for the trip, took longer than the actual ride. First we had to pack the trailer. We needed to take hay brushes fly spray saddles pads bridles and a water bucket. Loading the horses, was the last thing we need to do. Once we arrived at the trail sight we began the unloading process so we could finally enjoy our ride. We rode on trails in the woods, in a state park. We saw creeks wild life and other riders. Unfortunately it started to rain so we had to end our ride early. We had a great time and we would like to do it again soon.

| 3 | Insert a comma here | After class we went outside. |
|------------|--|--|
| y | Apostrophe or single quotation mark needed | I couldn't remember where I put the keys. |
| ^ | Insert item here | Inice cream every night. |
| ₩ | Use double quotation marks | My favorite story is "Kuby." |
| 0 | Use a period here | He ate everything on his plate $_{f \odot}$ |
| رو | Delete | She has beautiful clothes. |
| \sim | Transpose elements | Sally only ate the green candies. |
| \bigcirc | Close up this space | I saw a butter fly. |
| # | A space is needed here | I need to domy homework. |
| / | Make letter lowercase | You should Froofread all your work. |
| = | Capitalize letter | My favorite month is april. |
| P | Begin new paragraph | "I love it," I said. "I thought you would," she replied. |

Each sentence below is missing at least one comma. Write in commas where you think they belong.

- 1. I would love to travel to Paris London Greece Italy and Spain.
- When driving in the rain you should turn on your headlights and reduce your speed.
- 3. During our vacation to the beach we want to swim sunbathe and play in the sand.
- 4. I like to ride horses in the summer but the flies are bothersome.
- 5. The beautiful butterfly which was blue and black flew away.
- 6. The dog had a loud obnoxious high-pitched bark.
- 7. If we go to Washington D.C. I want to see the White House the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument.
- 8. We could go to the movies or go out to dinner.
- 9. After jogging three miles Suzy was hot thirsty and tired.
- 10. The trees although beautiful and fast growing do not live very long.

Commas Correct/Incorrect

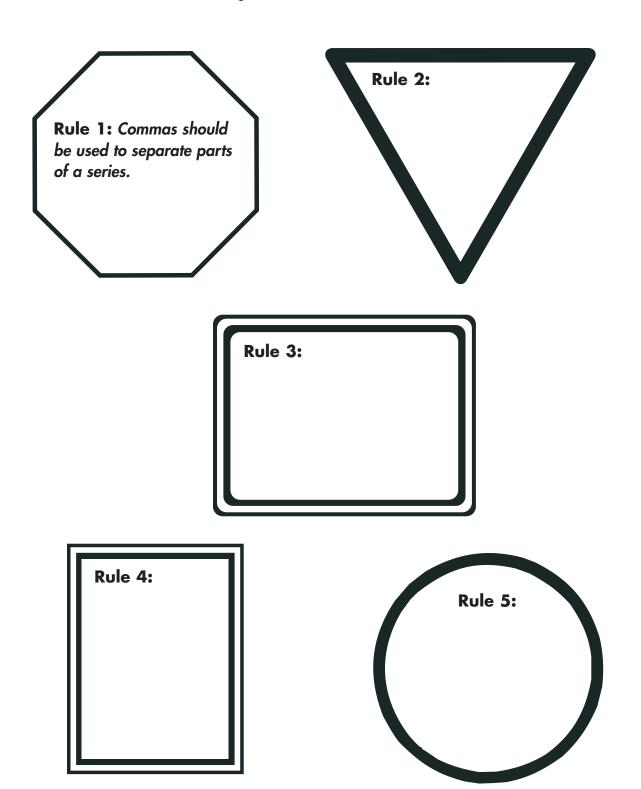
Read each sentence. Decide if the statement is true or false. Think about how you would explain your decision. After the video, decide if any of your original answers need to be changed.

| Befo | re | Viewing | After | View | /ing |
|------|-------|---|-------|------|-------|
| true | false | | | true | false |
| | | When writing a sentence with a list of nouns, adverbs, or adjectives, a comma should be used after each one except the final one. | | | |
| | | Do not place a comma after a dependent clause. | | | |
| | | Commas should be placed after introductory words or phrases. | | | |
| | | Do not use a comma before a conjunction that separates two dependent clauses. | | | |
| | | When nonessential information is placed in the middle sentence, commas on either side should separate the pl | | | |
| | | Commas should be used between coordinate adjectives (adjectives that are interchangeable). | | | |
| | | It is okay to overuse the comma. | | | |
| | | The comma should be used when the reader should pause briefly. | | | |
| | | The comma should not interrupt the flow of a senten | ce. | | |
| | | A comma should separate a series of phrases or clau | ises. | | |



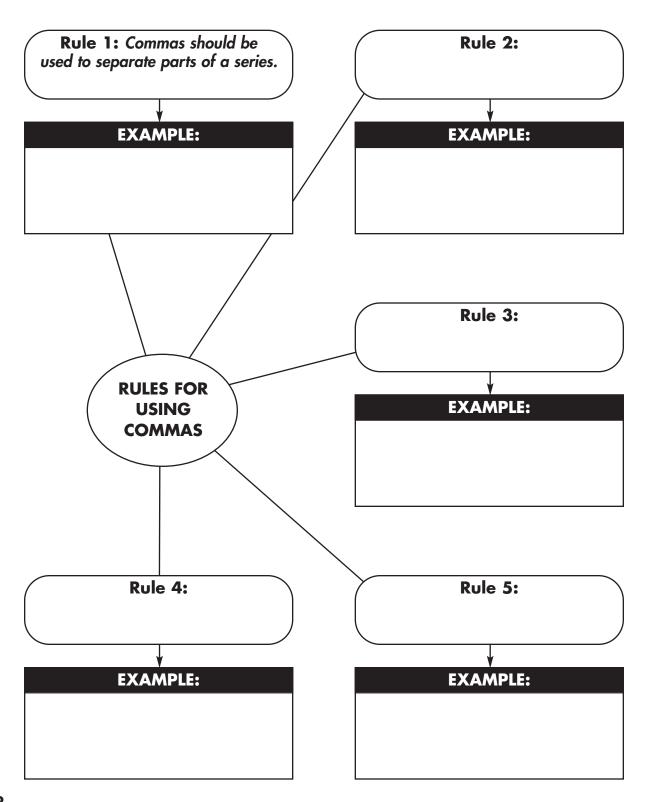
Commas Graphic Organizer

The video tells us that punctuation is used to "direct word...traffic." Fill in each "traffic" sign with one of the five rules for using commas.



Commas Graphic Organizer

Write the rules in the order they are presented in the video in the corresponding boxes. Write an example that demonstrates each rule.



Commas Note Taking

Next to each rule, write an example from the video that demonstrates the use of the rule.

| RULES | EXAMPLE FROM VIDEO | EXAMPLE FROM VIDEO |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Rule 1: Commas should be used to separate parts of a series. | | |
| Rule 2: Commas are used after a dependent clause at the beginning of a sentence. | | |
| Rule 3: Commas are used after introductory elements. | | |
| Rule 4: Commas are used before a conjunction connecting two independent clauses. | | |
| Rule 5: Commas are used to separate non-essential information in the middle of a sentence. | | |

Draw a line to the sentence on the right, which reflects the comma use rule on the left.

| RULES | <u>SENTENCE</u> |
|--|---|
| Use a comma to separate parts of a series. | I wanted to go to a movie, but my homework wasn't done. |
| Use a comma after a dependent clause. | Trolling, a form of fishing, is used to catch large game fish. |
| Use a comma after introductory elements. | I went to the store and bought fruit, flowers, potatoes, and meat. |
| Use a comma before a conjunction. | Having no money left after vacation, I couldn't buy the toy I wanted. |
| Use a comma with nonessential information. | Having no money left after vacation, I couldn't buy the toy I wanted. |
| Don't use a comma when it interrupts the normal flow of conversation. | If we go to the library, we can read many books. |
| Write a paragraph about your dream vacation. Who What would you do? Be creative and write sentence using commas. | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Write the sentences that demonstrate the proper use of commas in table 1. There are five. In table 2, write the sentences that use commas incorrectly. Bonus: Rewrite them using correct comma placement.

Going on vacation with my family is fun, but sometimes I get tired of long drives.

While at the lake, I saw a fish jump out of the water.

Enjoying the movie that was on TV I was upset, that it was time to go to bed.

The movie was very good, but it was also very long.

Even though, ropes and special equipment are used mountain climbing is dangerous.

George, would you like some cake?

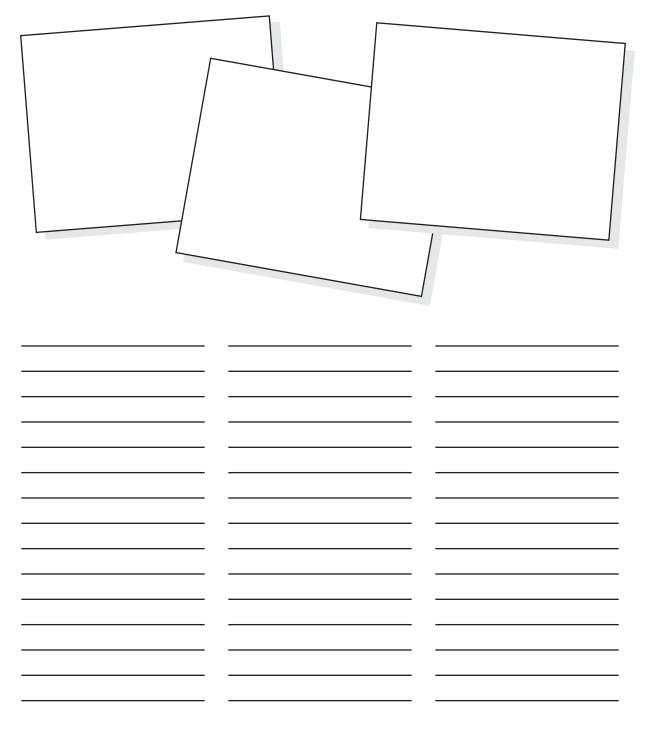
I like to go to a store and play with games, toys, and bicycles.

If Jack finishes his chores, he can play, with his friends.

TABLE 1

TABLE 2

Bring in three photographs from home. Pictures from a vacation would be great. Pretend you are going to submit your pictures for publication in a magazine. Write a descriptive paragraph about each photo. Describe the location, weather, and what the subject in the picture is doing. Add any other details you think are important. Remember your rules for using commas, as well as other grammar rules you've learned so far.



Content Quiz

Write the best answer to each of the following questions about adjectives.

| WORD BANK: | dependent before | introductory | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| | sed to separate parts | | | |
| 2. Commas come | a (| conjunction connecti | ing two independer | nt clauses. |
| 3. Commas should | d be placed between | | adjectives. | |
| 4. Commas should | be placed after | e | lements. | |
| | nt and answer with a | • | | |
| | | | | |
| | e that uses a commo | | clause. | |
| | | | | |
| If the statement is line. | true, write a "T" on | the line. If the state | ment is false, write | an "F" on the |
| 1 A commo | should not interrup | t the normal flow o | f a sentence. | |
| 2 A commo | should be placed a | fter the last noun in | a series. | |
| 3 Use a co | mma every time you | want the reader to | pause. | |
| 4 Conjunct | ions help two indepe | endent clauses sound | d better when we r | ead them. |

Vocabulary Quiz

Fill in the blank with the correct definition.

| independent | |
|-------------------------|--|
| clause | B. adds more detail to a sentence, but the |
| In a | sentence would flow well without it |
| adjective | |
| coordinate | C. a word that modifies a noun or pronoun |
| coordinate adjectives | |
| aajeciives | D. adjectives whose order can be |
| conjunction | interchanged |
| | |
| non-essential | E. a phrase that introduces the main subject |
| information | of a sentence, sometimes begins with a preposition |
| introductory | P - P |
| elements | F. a sentence that stands alone |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| . a word that joins oth | er words or groups of words in a sentence |
| | |

Use the word bank to fill in the missing words.

| | WORD BANK: | adjective | series | adverb | dependent clause |
|----|-----------------------|---------------|--------|--------|--|
| | A complete though | | | | has a subject and a verb, but is not a |
| | A adjectives, phra | ses, or claus | es. | | can be a list of nouns, adverbs, |
| | noun or pronou | | | is | a word that modifies, or describes, a |
| 4. | or another adve | erb. | | is | a word that modifies a verb, an adjective, |

Interdisciplinary Ideas

Grammar

Have students write poems for specific parts of speech. Each poem should describe the job of the part of speech or include several examples of that part of speech.

Have students write riddles based on the functions of parts of speech. Students can read the riddles out loud while the other students guess the part of speech.

Play a grammar game. Give each team of students a set of cards that indicate the various parts of speech studied. Write a sentence on the board. Teams of students each send one player at a time to place a part of speech card below the corresponding word.

Have students color-code sentences. They choose sentences from literature books or contentarea books. Teams or individual students copy sentences, using the following color code:

| nouns — dark blue | pronouns — light blue | action verbs — dark green |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| linking verbs — light green | adjectives — purple | adverbs — orange |
| conjunctions — white | prepositions — tan | interjections — pink |
| | | |

Continue this activity in a different way. Randomly pass out cards to students on which you have written words using the code. Students then build a correct sentence together.

Have students do word sorting. They choose a paragraph from a piece of writing. Then they make a chart of the words of each type of speech they found in the paragraph. Students can then trade charts with another student and check each other's work.

Develop a magazine scavenger hunt. Students can scour magazines and cut out words that fit the parts of speech categories studied.

Play Scrabble on the bulletin board. Assign colors to specific parts of speech and have students add words to the board with each part of speech studied.

Do a poem search. How many of each part of speech can your students find in a poem?

Use the book *Jabberwocky*. What words can students use to replace the nonsense words used? Students can also make their own versions in picture books.

Give each part of speech a cents value. Who can find the sentence worth the most money in a literature book or content area book?

| noun — 25 ¢ | pronoun — 30¢ | verb — 35¢ | adjective — 40¢ |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| adverb — 50¢ | conjunction — 60¢ | preposition — 75¢ | interjection — \$1 |

Make three dice. The first one says noun, noun, verb, verb, adjective, adjective. The second one says N, S, T, L, R, P. The third one says 15 seconds, 20 seconds, 30 seconds, 40 seconds, 50 seconds, 60 seconds. Team members take turns rolling the dice. During the

Interdisciplinary Ideas

Additional Resources

rolled amount of time, each player is to name as many words of the part of speech and letter rolled as possible.

Use yarn to practice prepositions. Students stand in a circle with a loop of yarn being held by one finger of each student. Upon your instructions, students demonstrate being inside the yarn, outside the yarn, on the yarn, above the yarn, etc.

Punctuation

Have students make character creations. They create a character completely from punctuation marks. Then, they write sentences about their character, correctly using the punctuation marks in their sentences.

Listening for punctuation. Assign each punctuation mark that you have studied a specific action. For example, every time students hear a place where a period belongs, they can clap their hands. They might snap their fingers if they hear a place where a comma belongs. This might take some whole group practice with looking at a piece of writing on the overhead. Students will eventually recognize locations where the marks are required and understand the purposes of each mark.

Have students scan advertisements in newspapers, magazines, and junk mail for exclamation points. On their own or with their teammates, they decide on whether the exclamation points are effectively used or overused. Encourage them to rewrite these advertising sentences to convey the emphasis without using the exclamation point for effect.

Help students understand how commas affect understanding by playing court reporter. Ask one or two students to read a passage from their papers or some reading for the class while the other students write what they say. Then have the reporters prepare a transcript of what they heard, inserting punctuation where they think it is needed. Each team should compare the reporters' versions with the originals and solve any disputes over comma use by referring to the appropriate sections of this chapter.

The apostrophe is a messy punctuation mark and is frequently misused. Help students see how popular use is changing the perception of apostrophes by asking students in groups to examine sections of the Yellow Pages or the advertisements in the local newspaper to find examples where expected apostrophes are missing. They can also look for places where apostrophes are overused. Encourage them to notice such misuses and bring them to the attention of the class. Create a bulletin board of samples from the real world.

The most troublesome possessive is *its*, which many students confuse with *it's*. Ask students to keep a list in their journals of places where they see these words confused, including published work and other students' writing. It's hunting makes students learn the its/it's rule and become more aware of how they use these words in their own writing.

Additional Resources

Interdisciplinary Ideas

Have students do a group editing exercise for punctuation. As a student's writing draft is displayed on the overhead, other students raise "road signs" to indicate the punctuation they suggest. For example, a stop sign for a period, a yield sign for a comma, and so on.

Classroom Discussion Prompts

Additional Resources

- 1. Who can give an example of when to use a comma?
- 2. Why are commas important?
- 3. The video cautions about overusing commas. Why?
- 4. Who can give an example where commas are used outside of a sentence?
- 5. Tell something that you learned from this video.
- 6. Can anyone think of a sentence where comma placement would change the meaning of the sentence?



Great Grammar: Commas

Suggested Reading List

- Pulver, Robin. *Punctuation Takes a Vacation.* Holiday House, 2003. This is a fun and entertaining story geared toward younger students (1st 3rd grades). When the punctuation goes on vacation, students learn why it is so important.
- Cottell, Mark, Green, Felice. *Grammar and Punctuation Songs (Learning Beat Series)*. Kidzup, 2002. This teacher's resource contains twelve songs with lyrics and worksheets. The songs help students learn about different grammar rules. This is more for younger students (3rd grade).
- Salzman, Mary Elizabeth. *Comma (punctuation)*. ABDO Publishing Company, 2002. This book is for readers up to age 8. It teaches when to use commas and why.
- Terban, Marvin, Brace, Eric. Punctuation Power: Punctuation and How to Use It. Scholastic, 2002. This book is for grades fourth through ninth. It does a great job of explaining the different rules of punctuation. It is a good reference for students to use when writing.
- Halverson, Jim. Joyful Learning: Punctuation Puzzles and Mazes (Grades 4 8). Scholastic, 2002. This is a great teacher's resource. It provides mini lessons and reproducible puzzles and mazes for students to practice punctuation skills. The activities provided will be fun and interesting for students.
- Halverson, Jim. *Punctuation Puzzles and Mazes: Ready-To-Go Reproducibles*. Scholastic, 2001. This teacher's resource contains over 30 reproducible puzzles and mazes for students in grades fourth through ninth. The activities make learning and practicing punctuation skills interesting.
- Larson, Randy. Commas: Teaching students to use commas correctly, without boring them to tears. Cottonwood Press, 1999. This teacher's resource contains 12 lessons with short, interesting activities that teach students how to use commas correctly. The book also contains practice exercises and quizzes.
- Halverson, Jim. *Grammar Works!* Scholastic, 1999. This book contains 15 reproducible lessons that teach different grammar skills and rules. The lessons are written so that students can use them independently, through guided instruction or cooperatively. There are also puzzles and practice exercises. This is for students in fourth through eighth grades.

Below are a list of sites that you may use to find more information about commas. Due to routine web maintenance, not all of the links will be accurate at the time of access. If the link is not available, try to conduct a search on that topic from the main site or from a search engine.

Skillswise: Commas

This website is geared more toward older students (5th or 6th grades). There are worksheets that you can print, a quiz, and a comma game. This website is good for teacher or student use.

www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/words/grammar/punctuation/commas/

edHelper.com

This website is a teacher resource. The user is able to create worksheets. The user can select worksheets based on grade level. The worksheets you create can be targeted to any grade 1st-6th. The site even allows you to enter your own sentences to use on the worksheets. The wide variety of ways you can customize your worksheets makes this site very appealing. www.edhelper.com/commas.htm

Harcourt School Publishers

This website was created by a major educational publisher and is intended for student use. There is a lesson on using commas and a short quiz. Use of this site does require Shockwave.

www.harcourtschool.com/activity/language_arts/goforgold/content_builder/dswmedia/g4c 31/nadia.htm

Using Commas and Semi-Colons Correctly

This website is for teacher use. There is a lesson plan for teaching the eight rules for using commas, as well as printable worksheets. The site also features hotlinks to pages that provide additional information for teachers and students.

www.cloudnet.com/~edrbsass/edcommas.htm

Grammar Bytes: Interactive Grammar Review

This website is for student use. There is a quiz and a printable hand out. Each question on the quiz is checked instantly for immediate feedback. The clean and easy to understand interface make this site easy to navigate.

chompchomp2.com/gbfree/hotpotatoes/commas04a.htm

Using Commas

This is a kid friendly website that goes over the rules for proper use of commas. At the end of the lesson, there is a quiz. Each question is checked instantly for immediate feedback. www.oswego.org/testprep/ela4/o/usingcommasl.cfm

Test Prep Review: Commas

This is actually a portion of a test review for the SAT. Using individual sections of this review provides great practice for students. It is simply an online quiz with ten questions. The quiz can be checked online for immediate feedback.

www.testprepreview.com/modules/commas.htm

CGP: It's those cranky, crazy, crafty commas!

This is a site for students. It is simply an online quiz with ten questions. The quiz can be checked online for immediate feedback.

www.cgpbooks.co.uk/online rev/ks2/ks2 english 02.htm



Common Proofreading Symbols

Use the proofreading marks and add commas where they are needed. Delete the commas that are used incorrectly.

Last Saturday my best friend, and I went on a trail ride. Preparing for the trip, took longer than the actual ride. First we had to pack the trailer. We needed to take hay brushes fly spray saddles pads bridles and a water bucket. Loading the horses, was the last thing we need to do. Once we arrived at the trail sight we began the unloading process so we could finally enjoy our ride. We rode on trails in the woods, in a state park. We saw creeks wild life and other riders. Unfortunately it started to rain so we had to end our ride early. We had a great time and we would like to do it again soon.

| \$ | Insert a comma here | After class we went outside. |
|----------|--|--|
| y | Apostrophe or single quotation mark needed | I couldn't remember where I put the keys. |
| ^ | Insert item here | Inice cream every night. |
| ♣ | Use double quotation marks | My favorite story is "Kuby." |
| 0 | Use a period here | He ate everything on his plate $_{f \odot}$ |
| رو | Delete | She has beautiful clothes. |
| \sim | Transpose elements | Sally only ate the green candies. |
| \Box | Close up this space | I saw a butter fly. |
| # | A space is needed here | I need to domy homework. |
| / | Make letter lowercase | You should ≠roofread all your work. |
| = | Capitalize letter | My favorite month is april. |
| P | Begin new paragraph | "I love it," I said. "I thought you would," she replied. |

Each sentence below is missing at least one comma. Write in commas where you think they belong.

- 1. I would love to travel to Paris, London, Greece, Italy, and Spain.
- 2. When driving in the rain, you should turn on your headlights and reduce your speed.
- 3. During our vacation to the beach, we want to swim, sunbathe, and play in the sand.
- 4. I like to ride horses in the summer, but the flies are bothersome.
- 5. The beautiful butterfly, which was blue and black, flew away.
- 6. The dog had a loud, obnoxious, high-pitched bark.
- 7. If we go to Washington, D.C., I want to see the White House, the Lincoln Memorial, and the Washington Monument.
- 8. We could go to the movies, or go out to dinner.
- 9. After jogging three miles, Suzy was hot, thirsty, and tired.
- 10. The trees, although beautiful and fast growing, do not live very long.

Commas Correct/Incorrect

Read each sentence. Decide if the statement is true or false. Think about how you would explain your decision. After the video, decide if any of your original answers need to be changed.

| Before Viewing | Aft | er Viewing |
|-----------------------|---|------------|
| true false | | true false |
| adverbs, or adjectiv | entence with a list of nouns, res, a comma should be used e except the final one. | v |
| Do not place a comm | ma after a dependent clause. | |
| | ould be placed after y words or phrases. | v |
| | na before a conjunction that o dependent clauses. | |
| | nation is placed in the middle of a er side should separate the phrase | |
| | e used between coordinate es that are interchangeable). | v |
| It is okay to | overuse the comma. | |
| | should be used when should pause briefly. | |
| The comma should not | interrupt the flow of a sentence. | v |
| A comma should separa | ate a series of phrases or clauses. | V |

Commas Graphic Organizer

The video tells us that punctuation is used to "direct word...traffic." Fill in each "traffic" sign with one of the five rules for using commas.

Rule 1: Commas should be used to separate parts of a series.

Rule 2: Commas are used after a dependent clause at the beginning of a sentence.

Rule 3: Commas are used after introductory elements.

Rule 4: Commas are used before of

used before a conjunction connecting two independent clauses.

Rule 5: Commas are used to separate non-essential information in the middle of a sentence.

Commas Graphic Organizer

Write the rules in the order they are presented in the video in the corresponding boxes. Write an example that demonstrates each rule.

Rule 1: Commas should be used to separate parts of a series.

Rule 2: Commas are used after a dependent clause at the beginning of a sentence.

EXAMPLE:

Answers may vary

EXAMPLE:

Answers may vary

RULES FOR USING COMMAS **Rule 3:** Commas are used after introductory elements.

EXAMPLE:

Answers may vary

Rule 4: Commas are used before a conjunction connecting two independent clauses.

Rule 5: Commas are used to separate non-essential information in the middle of a sentence.

EXAMPLE:

Answers may vary

EXAMPLE:

Answers may vary

Draw a line to the sentence on the right, which reflects the comma use rule on the left.

RULES

Use a comma to separate parts of a series.

Use a comma after a dependent clause.

Use a comma after introductory elements.

Use a comma before a conjunction.

Use a comma with nonessential information.

Don't use a comma when it interrupts the normal flow of conversation.

SENTENCE

I wanted to go to a movie, but my homework wasn't done.

Trolling, a form of fishing, is used to catch large game fish.

I went to the store and bought fruit, flowers, potatoes, and meat.

Having no money left after vacation, I couldn't buy the toy I wanted.

Having no money left after vacation, I couldn't buy the toy I wanted.

If we go to the library, we can read many books.

Write a paragraph about your dream vacation. Where would you go? Describe the location. What would you do? Be creative and write sentences that reflect at least four of the rules for using commas.

Answers may vary

Write the sentences that demonstrate the proper use of commas in table 1. There are five. In table 2, write the sentences that use commas incorrectly. Bonus: Rewrite them using correct comma placement.

Going on vacation with my family is fun, but sometimes I get tired of long drives.

While at the lake, I saw a fish jump out of the water.

Enjoying the movie that was on TV I was upset, that it was time to go to bed.

The movie was very good, but it was also very long.

Even though, ropes and special equipment are used mountain climbing is dangerous.

George, would you like some cake?

I like to go to a store and play with games, toys, and bicycles.

If Jack finishes his chores, he can play, with his friends.

TABLE 1

Going on vacation with my family is fun, but sometimes I get tired of long drives.

While at the lake, I saw a fish jump out of the water.

The movie was very good, but it was also very long.

George, would you like some cake?

I like to go to a store and play with games, toys, and bicycles.

TABLE 2

Enjoying the movie that was on TV, I was upset that it was time to go to bed.

Even though ropes and special equipment are used, mountain climbing is dangerous. If Jack finishes his chores, he can play with his friends.

Content Quiz

Write the best answer to each of the following questions about adjectives.

WORD dependent before

after coordinate introductory series

- 1. Commas are used to separate parts of a _______ series
- 2. Commas come <u>before</u> a conjunction connecting two independent clauses.
- 3. Commas should be placed between <u>coordinate</u> adjectives.
- 4. Commas should be placed after <u>introductory</u> elements.

Read the statement and answer with a complete sentence.

- 1. Write a sentence in which a comma is used incorrectly.

 Answers may vary.
- 2. Write a sentence that uses a comma after a dependent clause.

 Answers may vary.

If the statement is true, write a "T" on the line. If the statement is false, write an "F" on the line.

- 1. _____ A comma should not interrupt the normal flow of a sentence.
- 2. <u>F</u> A comma should be placed after the last noun in a series.
- 4. ______ Conjunctions help two independent clauses sound better when we read them.

Vocabulary Quiz

Fill in the blank with the correct definition.

- <u>F</u> independent clause
- ___ adjective
- <u>D</u> coordinate adjectives
- A conjunction
- B non-essential information
- E introductory elements

- B. adds more detail to a sentence, but the sentence would flow well without it
- C. a word that modifies a noun or pronoun
- D. adjectives whose order can be interchanged
- E. a phrase that introduces the main subject of a sentence, sometimes begins with a preposition
- F. a sentence that stands alone

A. a word that joins other words or groups of words in a sentence

Use the word bank to fill in the missing words.

WORD adject

adjective series adverb dependent clause

- 1. A <u>dependent clause</u> has a subject and a verb, but is not a complete thought.
- 2. A <u>series</u> can be a list of nouns, adverbs, adjectives, phrases, or clauses.
- 3. <u>Adjective</u> is a word that modifies, or describes, a noun or pronoun.
- 4. <u>Adverb</u> is a word that modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb.

| CAST |
|---------------|
| Character |
| AlisonHost |
| ChildNarrator |

SCENE ONE

Alison

Driving through your city or town you'll see all kinds of signs. They help direct traffic on the road. Punctuation also helps us direct traffic, WORD traffic. It lets us know when to stop, when to merge, and even when to pause.

Hi, I'm Alison and today we're travellin' the world to learn all about commas!

SCENE TWO

Alison

Many of you are always on the go—going to school, going to play sports, going out with friends. Your writing may reflect your life...just going and going. We use punctuation to slow things down. And that's where the comma comes in.

Commas are an important part of punctuation. They are used: to separate parts of a series, after a dependent clause at the beginning of a sentence, after introductory elements, before a conjunction connecting two independent clauses, and with words and phrases that express nonessential information or interrupt the flow of the sentence.

It's time for you to see how commas work in the real world. Let's imagine that you're a photographer who's on assignment for a travel magazine to get shots of different

places around the world. You have to describe them to your editor before your pictures can get published. You've got your gear, your laptop, and your tickets...you're at the airport ready to start your next adventure...

Ah, ah, ah...I hate to burst your bubble, but before you get on that plane, you need to brush up on how to use commas in your writing.

I'm going to go over a few rules and examples for correct comma usage. Then we'll check out what you wrote on your journey. Your writing has to be perfectly punctuated before your publisher will accept it, so make sure you know... where the commas go!

SCENE THREE

RULE ONE: Commas are used to separate parts of a series.

Alison

Commas are used quite often to separate parts of a series. A series can be a list of nouns, adverbs, and even adjectives. Each word must be separated by a comma. Let's see an example with a list of nouns.

EXAMPLE ONE: I took sunscreen, a towel, my surfboard, and snacks to the beach.

The commas come after the nouns sunscreen, towel, surfboard. Don't put one after the final noun in the series; in this case, it's the word snacks.

Now let's see commas between a list of adverbs.

EXAMPLE TWO: The seal climbed swiftly, gracefully, and quietly on the rock.

Notice how the commas are placed after the adverbs swiftly and gracefully, but NOT after quietly.

Commas are also used between adjectives. Adjectives modify nouns and pronouns. So if you have several adjectives describing one noun, put a comma after each one except the last one.

EXAMPLE THREE: The strong, fast horses galloped through the desert.



Not all adjectives need a comma between them. We only put commas between COORDINATE adjectives. Coordinate adjectives can appear together and in whatever order the writer decides.

In this sentence, strong and fast can be interchanged without changing the meaning of the sentence.

In this next sentence, the adjectives are not coordinate.

EXAMPLE FOUR: Many old churches are found in this city.

Many and old are the adjectives that describe the noun churches. The order cannot be changed; it wouldn't sound right to say old many churches. So these adjectives are not coordinate adjectives.

One way to test if adjectives are coordinate is to replace the comma with "and." If the sentence flows well with "and," then you can use a comma.

EXAMPLE FIVE: The strong and fast horses galloped through the desert.

This sentence works with the "and", so you can put a comma in between the adjectives.

EXAMPLE SIX: Many and old churches are in this city.

If we add an "and" in this sentence, it doesn't sound natural. So we prove once again that "many and old" are NOT coordinate adjectives and don't need a comma between them.

Those were single words separated by commas. But longer items in a series or list, even phrases or clauses, must also be separated by a comma.

EXAMPLE SEVEN: People traveling to Belize can go bird watching, spend an afternoon canoeing, or take their friends horseback riding through the rainforest.

These longer phrases need commas between them, except for the last one.

Well, now that we've started learning correct comma usage, it's time to begin your journey around the world. Your editor is sending you to London, England and your first assignment is to get shots of the most famous landmarks. Remember what you've just heard about commas and write sentences about those places using the first rule.

Child

EXAMPLE ONE: The Houses of Parliament, Big Ben, and Westminster Abbey are all located nearby.

Alison

In this sentence, the commas separate the proper nouns Houses of Parliament, Big Ben and Westminster Abbey. But you only need them here and here; not after Westminster Abbey, which is the final proper noun in the series.

Child

EXAMPLE TWO: Visitors to Buckingham Palace can see the royal crest on the gates, watch the changing of the guards, and view a statue of Queen Victoria.

Alison

In this sentence, the commas are placed after the phrases. But not after the last phrase.

Child

EXAMPLE THREE: Tower Bridge is a convenient, useful, and historic way to get to the Tower of London.

Alison

And in this last sentence, the commas are placed after the adjectives convenient and useful.

SCENE FOUR

RULE TWO: Commas are used after a dependent clause at the beginning of a sentence.

Alison

Commas are used after a dependent clause at the beginning of a sentence. A dependent clause has a subject and a verb, but it can't stand alone. When it comes before the main verb in the sentence, you must put a comma after the dependent clause.



EXAMPLE ONE: If we visit New York City, we will see many tall buildings.

In this example, "if we visit New York City" is the dependent clause. It has a subject "we" and a verb "visit", but it's not a complete thought; the reader is left wondering what will happen if they visit New York City. So we need to put a comma after the dependent clause.

This rule only applies to a dependent clause at the beginning of a sentence. If you move the dependent clause to the end of the sentence, most of the time you won't need a comma to separate it. So if we take a look at our sentence again...the dependent clause "if we visit New York City" is now at the end and we don't need a comma before it.

It's time for your next assignment. You better pack a heavy coat because this time you're going to Antarctica to photograph the animals.

Child

EXAMPLE TWO: After penguins walk on the frozen ground, they dive into the frigid water for a quick swim.

Alison

Notice how the comma comes after the dependent clause in this sentence.

Child

EXAMPLE THREE: When a baby seal is born, she must spend time close to her mother.

Alison

"When a baby seal is born" is the dependent clause, so the comma is placed after it.

SCENE FIVE

RULE THREE: Commas are used after introductory elements.

Alison

Commas are used after some introductory elements. We usually use a comma after a long introductory phrase that comes before the main subject of the sentence.

EXAMPLE ONE: During our wonderful vacation in the tropics, we filled our days with fun activities.

A comma must be placed after "During our wonderful vacation in the tropics," because the phrase is long and it comes before the subject of the sentence, which is "we".

Look at the word "during." Sometimes introductory phrases begin with a preposition, like this one. Some examples of prepositions are through, after, before, and from, but there are many others. If your sentence begins with a long prepositional phrase, then a comma should be placed at the end of it.

You should also put a comma after introductory words, which help direct the reader's attention. For example, most writers prefer to place a comma after the words: however, moreover, fortunately, first, or on the other hand. Commas are also used after the words yes or no.

EXAMPLE TWO: Yes, we were able to do some shopping during our trip.

EXAMPLE THREE: Unfortunately, we were not able to buy very much because of the exchange rate.

And after the name of a person or group of people when they are used as a form of address.

EXAMPLE THREE: Claudio, did you have fun jumping into the lake?

OK. It's time for you to go on your next assignment. Your editor is sending you to the tropical country of Samoa. You're going to meet the natives and see the lush landscapes of this small island country. Keep rules number two and three in mind as you submit your descriptions.

Child

EXAMPLE ONE: If you would like to learn a Samoan song, then visit the children at this preschool.

EXAMPLE TWO: With its rich green forests and tropical beaches, Samoa offers a variety of ecosystems.

Alison

The first example has a dependent clause before the main clause and the second one has a long introductory phrase. That's why each one is followed by a comma.

SCENE SIX

RULE FOUR: Commas are used before a conjunction connecting two independent clauses.

Alison

Commas are also used before a conjunction connecting two independent clauses. Conjunctions coordinating two independent clauses are words like "or", "but", or "and." They connect two sentences that could also stand alone.

EXAMPLE ONE: I went to Venezuela to see the forest, but I spent more time at the beach.

If we take out the conjunction and make a few other changes, the sentence would now be two separate sentences. I went to Venezuela to see the forest. I spent more time at the beach. But we use conjunctions to tighten up, or even improve, our writing. They help the sentences sound better when we read them.

Now that you know the next rule, it's time to get on the plane again. Your next assignment is to take pictures of the beautiful sights in Germany. Auf Weidersehen!

Child

EXAMPLE TWO: The art in the castle included a golden fountain, but my favorite was the colorful peacock.

EXAMPLE THREE: This Bavarian castle is a well-known destination for foreign visitors, and tourists also enjoy wandering through the medieval towns.

Alison

In these sentences, the comma came before the conjunction. Although we could take out the conjunctions to make two independent clauses, the sentences flow better with the conjunctions in place.

SCENE SEVEN

RULE FIVE: In the middle of a sentence, commas are used with words, phrases, and clauses expressing nonessential information.

Alison

In the middle of a sentence, commas are used with words, phrases, and clauses expressing nonessential information. These phrases or clauses usually add more detail about the subject, but the sentence would still flow well without it.

EXAMPLE ONE: Exploring caves, also known as spelunking, is a great way to find out more about our planet.

In this sentence "also known as spelunking" expresses additional information so the commas appear before and after it. It's not essential to the sentence, but it provides more information to the reader.

One way to find out if the word, phrase or clause should be set off by commas is to remove them. If the sentence reads well without them, then you know you should put commas around it.

In this case "Exploring caves is a great way to find out more about our planet" flows well without "also known as spelunking." So if we keep that group of words in the sentence, we have to put commas around it.

Now let's continue your photo journey around the world. Your last stop is Ethiopia, Africa, where you'll be joining some archeologists on an excavation. Keep the fifth rule in mind as you describe the photos you send to your editor.

Child

EXAMPLE ONE: Scientists excavated the site, a rocky, dusty plain, with the help of several local tribesmen.

EXAMPLE TWO: Ethiopians helped sift, a process which separates loose dirt from the larger rocks or fossils, while the group continued to dig.

Alison

In each sentence, the nonessential information is set off by commas. One comma should come before the phrase or clause and one comma after it. Remember, if the sentence flows without the word or groups of words, then you've got to put commas around it, if you want to include the nonessential information.

SCENE EIGHT

Alison

Now that you know all the comma rules, I've got to tell you one more important thing — don't over use it!

The comma is probably THE most misused and overused punctuation mark around. Some writers use them where they don't belong. So it's very important to know when a comma should be used so that you don't over do it.

In general, commas add a slight pause to a sentence. This pause applies to all the rules we reviewed. But you shouldn't do it every time you want the reader to pause because it may not be the correct place to put a comma! Like in this example... My favorite time is when, I am underwater looking at the incredible sea creatures.

In this case the comma interrupts the normal flow of the sentence. And "my favorite time is when" is not considered an introductory element, so you don't need a comma after it.

SCENE NINE

Alison

Well, your journey around the world is done and because your sentences were perfectly punctuated, the commas all in the right places, your editor will publish your photos and descriptions! Congratulations!

Let's review the rules one more time.

Commas are used: to separate parts of a series, after a dependent clause at the beginning of a sentence, after I introductory elements, before a conjunction connecting two independent clauses, and with words and phrases that express nonessential information or interrupt the flow of the sentence.

If you keep those main rules of comma usage in mind, then there are no limits to where you writing can take you. I'm going to give you a chance to test that theory — find out how well you know your comma rules with this activity!

Pack your bags because it's time for you to take another trip! This time you'll be going to places you've already visited. Try to remember your favorite vacation.

Did you go to the beach? Or spend time snowboarding on the slopes? Write about the best trip you ever had. It'll be a great practice to see if you know...where the commas go!