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Part A

Commas for Items in a Series

Use commas to separate the items in a series:*

1. You need *bolts, nuts, and screws*.
2. I will be happy to *read your poem, comment on it, and return it to you*.
3. *Mary paints pictures, Robert plays the trumpet, but Sam just sits and dreams*.

Do not use commas when all three items are joined by *and* or *or*:

4. I enjoy *biking and skating and swimming*.

* For work on parallelism, see Chapter 20, "Revising for Consistency and Parallelism," Part C.

finally took their story to the press; the publicity won them lifelong pensions. (20)

The two mens long struggle had ended with success.



Exploring Online

http://webster.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/apostrophe_quiz2.htm
Graded practice: Apostrophe or no apostrophe? This is the question.

PRACTICE 1 Punctuate the following sentences:

1. At the banquet, Ed served a salad of juicy red tomatoes crunchy green lettuce and stringless snap beans.
2. As a nursing assistant, Reva dispensed medication disinfected wounds and took blood samples.
3. Ali visited Santa Barbara Concord and Berkeley.
4. Hiking rafting, and snowboarding are her favorite sports.
5. The police found TV sets blenders and blow dryers stacked to the ceiling in the abandoned house.
6. I forgot to pack some important items for the trip to the tropics: insect repellent sunscreen and antihistamine tablets.
7. Don't eat strange mushrooms walk near the water or feed the squirrels.
8. Everyone in class had to present an oral report write a term paper and take a final.
9. We brought a Ouija board a Scrabble set and a Boggle game to the party.
10. To earn a decent wage make a comfortable home and educate my children—those are my hopes.

Part B

Commas with Introductory Phrases, Transitional Expressions, and Parentheticals

Use a comma after most introductory phrases of more than two words:*

1. *By four in the afternoon*, everybody wanted to go home.
2. *After the game on Saturday*, we all went dancing.

* For more work on introductory phrases, see Chapter 21, "Revising for Sentence Variety," Part C.

Use commas to set off transitional expressions:

3. Ferns, *for example*, need less sunlight than flowering plants.
4. Instructors, *on the other hand*, receive a lower salary than assistant professors.

Use commas to set off parenthetical elements:

5. *By the way*, where is the judge's umbrella?
6. Nobody, *it seems*, wants to eat the three-bean salad.

- *By the way* and *it seems* are called parenthetical expressions because they appear to be asides, words not really crucial to the meaning of the sentence. They could almost appear in parentheses: (*By the way*) where is the judge's umbrella?

Other common parenthetical expressions are *after all*, *actually*, *as a matter of fact*, and *to tell the truth*.

PRACTICE 2 Punctuate the following sentences:

1. Frankly I always suspected that you were a born saleswoman.
2. All twelve jurors by the way felt that the defendant was innocent.
3. On every April Fools' Day he tries out a new, dumb practical joke.
4. In fact Lucinda should never have written that poison-pen letter.
5. Close to the top of Mount Washington the climbers paused for a tea break.
6. To tell the truth that usher needs a lesson in courtesy.
7. Near the end of the driveway a large lilac bush bloomed and brightened the yard.
8. He prefers as a rule serious news programs to the lighter sitcoms.
9. To sum up Mr. Choi will handle all the details.
10. During my three years in Minnesota I learned how to deal with snow.

Part C

Commas for Appositives

Use commas to set off appositives:*

1. Yoko, *our new classmate*, is our best fielder.
2. *A humorous and charming man*, he was a great hit with my parents.
3. This is her favorite food, *ketchup sandwiches*.

- Appositive phrases like *our new classmate*, *a humorous and charming man*, and *ketchup sandwiches* rename or describe nouns and pronouns—*Yoko*, *he*, *food*.

4. The poet *Shelley* wrote "Ode to the West Wind."
5. Shelley's wife, *Mary*, wrote *Frankenstein*.

- A one-word appositive is not set off by commas when it is essential to the meaning of the sentence. Without the appositive *Shelley*, we do not know which poet wrote the ode.
- A one-word appositive is set off by commas when it is not essential to the meaning of the sentence. The name *Mary* does not affect the meaning of the sentence.

PRACTICE 3 Punctuate the following sentences.

1. The Rock the popular wrestler and actor starred in movies and made a video with musician Wyclef Jean.
2. Long novels especially ones with complicated plots force me to read slowly.
3. David a resident nurse hopes to become a pediatrician.
4. I don't trust that tire the one with the yellow patch on the side.
5. Tanzania a small African nation exports cashew nuts.
6. Watch out for Phil a man whose ambition rules him.
7. Sheila a well-known nutritionist lectures at public schools.

* For more work on appositives, see Chapter 21, "Revising for Sentence Variety," Part D.

8. A real flying ace Helen will teach a course in sky diving.
9. We support the Center for Science in the Public Interest a consumer education and protection group.
10. My husband Bill owns two stereos.

Part D

Commas with Nonrestrictive and Restrictive Clauses

A **relative clause** is a clause that begins with *who*, *which*, or *that* and modifies a noun or pronoun. There are two kinds of relative clauses: **nonrestrictive** and **restrictive**.*

A **nonrestrictive relative clause** is not essential to the meaning of the sentence:

1. Raj, *who is a part-time aviator*, loves to tinker with machines of all kinds.

- *Who is a part-time aviator* is a relative clause describing *Raj*. It is a nonrestrictive relative clause because it is not essential to the meaning of the sentence. The point is that *Raj loves to tinker with machines of all kinds*.
- Commas set off the nonrestrictive relative clause.

A **restrictive relative clause** is essential to the meaning of the sentence:

2. People *who do their work efficiently* make good students.

- *Who do their work efficiently* is a relative clause describing *people*. It is a restrictive relative clause because it is *essential* to the meaning of the sentence. Without it, sentence 2 would read, *People make good students*. But the point is that certain people make good students—*those who do their work efficiently*.
- Restrictive relative clauses *do not* require commas.

PRACTICE 4 Set off the nonrestrictive relative clauses in the following sentences with commas. Note that *which* usually begins a nonrestrictive relative clause and *that* usually begins a restrictive clause. Remember: Restrictive relative clauses are *not* set off by commas. Write a C after each correct sentence.

* For more work on nonrestrictive and restrictive clauses, see Chapter 21, "Revising for Sentence Variety," Part D.

1. Olive who always wanted to go into law enforcement is a detective in the Eighth Precinct.
2. Employees who learn to use the new computers may soon qualify for a merit raise.
3. Polo which is not played much in the United States is very popular in England.
4. A person who always insists upon telling you the truth is sometimes a pain in the neck.
5. Statistics 101 which is required for the business curriculum demands concentration and perseverance.
6. Robin who is usually shy at large parties spent the evening dancing with Arsenio who is everybody's favorite dance partner.
7. This small shop sells furniture that is locally handcrafted.
8. His uncle who rarely eats meat consumes enormous quantities of vegetables, fruits, and grains.
9. Pens that slowly leak ink can be very messy.
10. Valley Forge which is the site of Washington's winter quarters draws many tourists every spring and summer.

Part E

Commas for Dates and Addresses

Use commas to separate the elements of an address. Note, however, that no punctuation is required between the state and ZIP code if the ZIP code is included.

1. Please send the books to *300 West Road, Stamford, CT 06860.*
2. We moved from *1015 Allen Circle, Morristown, New Jersey, to Farland Lane, Dubuque, Iowa.*

Use commas to separate the elements of a date:

3. The sociologists arrived in Tibet on *Monday, January 18, 1999*, and planned to stay for two years.
4. By *June 20, 2007*, I expect to have completed my B.A. in physical education.

Do not use a comma with a single-word address or date preceded by a preposition:

5. John DeLeon arrived *from Baltimore in January* and will be our new shortstop this season.

PRACTICE 5 Punctuate the following sentences. Write a C after each correct sentence.

1. The last few decades have seen the growth of an ancient Native American custom—the *powwow*, a gathering where tribal members dance to celebrate the circle of life.
2. At hundreds of powwows across the United States and Canada families and friends reaffirm their heritage, socialize, and compete for prize money.
3. Thirty-three powwows and festivals were held in September 2002 alone, for example, each one with singing, chanting, drumming, and dancing.
4. On Saturday September 28 2002 the Permian Basin Intertribal Powwow began in Odessa Texas.
5. On the weekend of September 6 to September 8 2002 Native Americans and visitors could choose between the Great North Winds Powwow in Manistique Michigan and the Stillwater Powwow in Redding California.
6. The Indian Summer Festival was held in the Community Center Bartlesville Oklahoma on September 13 14 and 15 2002.
7. Some families even spend June to September going from powwow to powwow or traveling “the Red Road.”

8. The Red Road is a path of commitment to living without alcohol and drugs and embracing a healthier lifestyle.
9. Each year, thousands attend the powwows to dance admire the spectacular traditional costumes meet interesting people, or just feel part of the circle of life.
10. For more information on powwows, you can contact the American Indian Heritage Foundation 6051 Arlington Blvd. Falls Church VA 22044.

Part F

Minor Uses of the Comma

Use a comma after answering a question with *yes* or *no*:

1. *No, I'm not sure about that answer.*

Use a comma when addressing someone directly and specifically naming the person spoken to:

2. *Alicia, where did you put my law books?*

Use a comma after interjections like *ah*, *oh*, and so on:

3. *Ah, these coconuts are delicious.*

Use a comma to contrast:

4. *Harold, not Roy, is my scuba-diving partner.**

* For help using commas with coordinating and subordinating conjunctions—and help avoiding run-ons, commas splices, and fragments—see Chapters 25 and 26.

PRACTICE 6 Punctuate the following sentences.

1. Yes I do think you will be famous one day.
2. Well did you call a taxi?
3. The defendant ladies and gentlemen of the jury does not even own a red plaid jacket.
4. Cynthia have you ever camped in the Pacific Northwest?
5. No I most certainly will not marry you.
6. Oh I love the way they play everything to a salsa beat.
7. The class feels Professor Molinor that your grades are unrealistically high.
8. He said "March" not "Swagger."
9. Perhaps but I still don't think that the carburetor fits there.
10. We all agree Ms. Crawford that you are the best jazz bassist around.

PRACTICE 7 REVIEW

Proofread the following essay for comma errors—either missing commas or commas used incorrectly. Correct the errors above the lines.

The Pyramids of Giza

(1) The pyramids of Giza, Egypt a wonder of the ancient world still inspire awe. (2) Built nearly 5,000 years ago the largest of these tombs, was ordered by Khu-fu, a powerful pharaoh of ancient Egypt. (3) The two smaller pyramids nearby belonged to his successors his son Khafre and his grandson Menkaure. (4) The three pyramids—together with the Sphinx many temples and causeways—comprised a ceremonial complex for the dead not far from the Nile River.

(5) We marvel today at the ability of this ancient people to build such colossal structures without the benefit of work animals or machinery not even the wheel. (6) The Great Pyramid for instance is 750 square feet and 480 feet high, roughly the size of Shea Stadium filled in with solid rock to a height of forty stories. (7) More than 100,000 workers, who were probably peasants forced into service

cut two-and-a-half-ton limestone blocks from quarries on the other side of the Nile ferried them across the river, and then dragged them up ramps to be fitted exactly in place. (8) Experts estimate that 2.3 million blocks had to be moved over a period of more than twenty years, to complete the project.

(9) Perhaps the greatest wonder, however is that these structures have lasted.

(10) Countless other buildings statues, and monuments have been constructed and admired, yet they have fallen into ruin while these magnificent structures remain. (11) The pyramids are considered all but indestructible. (12) It has been said, in fact that they could withstand a direct hit by an atomic bomb.



Exploring Online

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/g_commaEX1.html
Paper quiz with answers: Revise for commas.

http://webster.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/commas_fillin.htm
Interactive quiz: Where have all the commas gone?

