

# WORKING WITH COMMAS

## Series

A comma is used to separate words in a series. (I bought stamps, envelopes, and some paper.) No comma is needed if the words in a series are already separated with word such as *or* and *and*.

A. Write commas as they are needed in the following sentences. Underline the series in each sentence.

1. Glass clay straw wooden and paper butterflies were sold at the craft show.
2. Mrs. Green donated two cakes ice cream milk biscuits and fudge.
3. Esther or Toni or Sally will sing dance and perform tumbling acts.
4. Bad habits not worth acquiring are smoking drinking and overeating.
5. Paper clips straight pins and erasers are useful but simple inventions.
6. Fillmore Pierce Buchanan and Polk were all presidents of the United States.
7. Jogging running a mile skipping rope and swimming are all good exercises.
8. The motorcycle race started in the town headed up the hill wound down by the river and ended in the mud flats.

B. Follow the instructions for each of the sentences.

1. Change this sentence by using commas in a series. Apples or pears or peaches can be used to make jam.

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2. Write a sentence using the names of at least three students in your class. The sentence must use commas in a series.

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## Introductory Words And Phrases

Commas are used after introductory words and phrases in a sentence. The comma separates the introductory word or phrases from the rest of the sentence. (Oh, it's you.)

A. Place commas where they are needed in the following sentences. Underline any introductory words or phrases.

1. All right everyone turn to page 45 in your workbook.
2. Yes you may go to Robin's house if you promise to return by 10:00.
3. After sinking the ball for a point Marcia was cheered loudly.
4. Paul will you take this to Mr. Turner and ask for a refund?
5. No I do not wish to subscribe to any of these magazines.
6. Before driving home Mr. Lynch checked his tires.
7. Shouting loudly Michael tried to warn his brother that the ice was too thin.
8. Having completed her work Sherry locked the cash register and shut up the store.
9. Traveling by boat Mrs. Davis arrived five days after the rest of her family.
10. Slushing through rain and snow the postman had a difficult time on his route.

B. Follow the individual instructions for each of the exercises.

1. Write at least five introductory words not included on this page.

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2. Write three introductory phrases.

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### **Non-Essential Words And Phrases**

Commas are used to separate nonessential words and phrases in sentences. (Tessa, working the night shift, fell asleep on the job.) Nonessential words and phrases are word groups that are not necessary to the meaning of the sentence.

A. Put commas where they are needed in the following sentences. Underline the nonessential words and phrases.

1. Pam Choy wearing number 27 competed in the grueling marathon.
2. Veronica protected by a shield pounded the red hot steel.
3. Mrs. Duncan supervising the dance took time out to perform a waltz.
4. The moon represented in many old myths and legends has fascinated writers for thousands of years.
5. Sarah driving in the demolition derby for the first time surprised her brother last year's winner by coming in first.

6. *My Darling! My Hamburger!* written for teenagers accurately portrays the joy--and the pain-- of being fourteen.
7. President Andrew Jackson traveling by coach took three weeks to get to Washington, D.C., from his home in Tennessee.
8. In the morning Mr. Adututu waking slowly noticed something unusual.

B. Follow the individual instructions for each of the exercises below.

1. Write a sentence that includes a nonessential word group.

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2. Use the nonessential phrase *wearing my favorite hat* in a sentence.

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### **Appositive And Parenthetical Expressions**

A parenthetical expression is a word group inserted in a sentence. Parenthetical expressions include *I am sure*, *I believe*, *for example*, and *on the other hand*. Parenthetical expressions are separated from the rest of the sentence by commas. (Joe is, I believe, a true friend.)

Insert commas to separate the parenthetical expressions in each of the following sentences. Underline the parenthetical expression.

1. Sharon is in my opinion the person who deserves the English prize.
2. Walking briskly is considered I understand a good form of exercise.
3. Marge for example does not plan to participate because of the high fee.
4. It goes without saying of course that Emily's parents were very proud.

An appositive is a word or word group that adds more information, describes or explains something about a noun or pronoun. (Debbie Chin, who is my cousin, went to the concert.) Commas are used to separate an appositive from the rest of a sentence.

Insert commas to separate the appositive in each of the following sentences. Underline the appositive and draw an arrow to the noun or pronoun it describes, explains, or tell more about.

1. Queen Elizabeth who rules England is a popular monarch.
2. Dan enjoys the paintings Picasso an artist who was born in Spain.
3. St. Louis which is in the Midwest is known as the Gateway City.

4. Speaking to our club, Mr. Paulson the well-known photographer showed and discussed some of his pictures.
5. My father who was eighty-six stills skis at Bromley our local ski slope.
6. The Daytona 500 one of the most famous car races id held once a year.

### **Independent Clauses**

An independent clause is a group of words that can stand alone and still make sense. (He is alone.) Two independent clauses joined by a connective, such as *and, or, for, nor, yet, but*, are separated by a comma. The comma comes before the connective. (He is alone, *and* I am alone.)

A. Insert comma where they are needed in the following sentences. Underline each independent clause. Circle the connective in each sentence.

1. Ginny hopes to become a doctor yet she can not stand the sight of blood.
2. The puzzle had 1000 pieces but I solved it anyway.
3. He does not plan to go to Toledo nor will he visit Chicago.
4. Washington Irving wrote a book about Rip Van Winkle and he also created the popular story about the headless horseman.
5. The common black ant is considered relatively harmless but the red army ant is often called the "Killer Ant."
6. Most fires can be put out with water but a grease fire should be extinguished with a chemical substance or baking powder.
7. I enjoy hiking and knitting and I also enjoy doing nothing.
8. Richard Wright's *American Hunger* was written in 1934 as part of his book *Black Boy* yet *American Hunger* was not published until 1974.

### **Dates, Friendly Letters, Names**

A comma is used in dates to separate the day from the year (September 15, 1906). A Comma is used in friendly letters in the address, the date, the greeting, and the closing. A comma is used between a last name and the abbreviation that follows it (B.W. Ward, Sr.).

A. Insert commas where they are needed in the following letter. Remember, commas are used in a series and with introductory words and phrases.

225 South Bridge Street  
Knob Fork West Virginia 26579  
April 21 1941

Dear Allan and Kathi

Well I finally got your letter which arrived on April 1 1941. I was surprised to hear that Mr. Gerald Marinade Sr. had sold the business to Gerald Jr. Will wonders ever cease?

Esther Susan and Paul are leaving here on May 8 1941 to go to Jenkinstown for about a month. They will return on June 10 1941. Traveling by bus and car will be tedious but worth the effort, I think.

No I did not see Joe Jr. when he was here. I was up on the farm and missed him. Luckily Pop was here and saw him.

Love  
Jenny

B. Follow the instructions for the following exercises.

1. Write your full birthdate and the birthdates of a relative and a friend.

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2. Write the dates of two historical events.

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3. Write your full address

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