

Grammar Practice: Commas

Introductory Words & Phrases: Put a comma after a word or phrase that introduces a sentence or clause.

Examples:

On the weekend before my final, I studied for two days straight.

Accordingly, I got an A on my exam

I did not expect to get the extra-credit question right; however, I did.

Interrupters: Put commas around words or phrases that interrupt the natural flow of the sentence.

Examples:

I hope, of course, that I get an A on my exam.

A grade of A, the teacher explained, has to be earned.

I will, therefore, have to study even harder.

Names: Set off the name of a person spoken to with commas.

Examples:

Yes, Joe, I'd love to go to the movies with you.

Jenny, did you finish your essay yet?

Modifiers: Modifiers that are not essential to the meaning of the sentence should be set off with commas.

Example:

Tell the students, who failed the example, that they will have to retake the course. (All students failed the example and all my retake the course.)

Modifiers that are essential do not require commas.

Example:

Tell the students who failed the exam that they will have to retake the course. (Only the students who failed must retake the course.)

Dates: When two numbers or words appear together in a date, separate them with commas. When a date with a year is in a sentence that continues, put a comma after the year.

Example:

Tuesday, April 26, 2005

Tuesday 26 April 2005

On April 26, 2005, you will take your final exam.

Series: Use commas to separate three or more items in a series (list). Remember, there should always be a comma before the final “and.”

Example:

Next semester, I plan to take French, English, and biology.

Place Names: Put a comma between a city and state or a city and country. If the sentence continues, also put a comma after the state or country.

Example:

Orlando, Florida, is a great place to live.

Compound Sentences: Put a comma before a **coordinating conjunction (cc)** when it is joining two independent clauses (IC).

IC, cc IC

Complex Sentences: Put a comma after a **dependent clause (DC)** when the dependent clause *begins* a sentence.

DC, IC

*For more information on compound and complex sentences, please see the handout on **Coordination and Subordination**.*

Practice

Directions: Add commas to the following sentences using the guide above.

1. When I move to Chicago Illinois I will visit Al Capone’s restaurant.
2. I have four cats named Whiskers Gus Pumpkin and Shawn.
3. No Grandma the air conditioning is not broken.
4. Because the avocado turned brown I cannot eat it.
5. The mailman who also happened to be a retired police officer noticed the window of the house had been shattered.
6. Eventually the howling wind subsided and the old woman fell asleep.
7. The day was Friday October 13 1980.
8. Jenny would of course take the trash out before night fall.

Answer Key: 1. Place Names and Complex Sentence 2. Series 3. Names 4. Complex Sentence 5. Modifier 6. Introductory Word 7. Date 8. Interrupters

Read the choices below, and choose the answers with the corrected use of commas for the underlined portions of each sentence. If the sentence has no error, choose "No change is necessary."

1. From the balcony, Ellen could see ^Asparrows picking ^Bup, seeds, ^Cberries, and insects.
 - a. sparrows, picking
 - b. up seeds,
 - c. berries and
 - d. No change is necessary

2. After ^Aseeing a re-run of Twister on ^BTV, Andy looked up ^C"tornado," on the Internet.
 - a. seeing, a
 - b. TV Andy
 - c. "tornado" on
 - d. No change is necessary

3. ^AJosh, have ^Byou, seen the beautiful ^Ccollection of African masks in the campus gallery?
 - a. Josh have
 - b. you seen
 - c. collection, of
 - d. No change is necessary

4. ^AMrs. Quinones, Carla's second grade ^Bteacher, began ^Creading, *The Wizard of Oz* today.
 - a. Mrs. Quinones Carla's
 - b. teacher began
 - c. reading *The*
 - d. No change is necessary

5. The Rocky ^AMountains, I assure ^Byou, are one of the best places to ^Chike, and fish.
 - a. Mountains I
 - b. you are
 - c. hike and
 - d. No change is necessary

6. Franco's parents ^Amoved to the United ^BStates on June 11, ^C1984, and bought a house.
 - a. moved, to
 - b. States, on
 - c. 1984 and
 - d. No change is necessary

7. Brenda's check was ^Asent to 112 Avalon ^BCourt, Casselberry and should ^Carrive today.
 - a. sent, to
 - b. Court Casselberry, and
 - c. arrive, today
 - d. No change is necessary

8. ^AHal loves to relax in the ^Bbackyard and read Emily ^CDickinson his favorite poet.
 - a. Hal, loves
 - b. backyard, and

- c. Dickinson, his
d. No change is necessary
9. As a matter of ^Afact, David both ^Bbahaia and ^CSt. Augustine grass require much care.
a. fact, David, both
b. bahaia, and
c. St. Augustine, grass
d. No change is necessary
10. ^AZeus, father of many of the Greek ^Bgods, was the brother of ^CPoseidon, god of the sea.
a. Zeus father
b. gods was
c. Poseidon god
d. No change is necessary
11. Mohammed grew ^Aup in ^BTehran Iran where he learned to play ^Csoccer, golf, and tennis.
a. up, in
b. Tehran, Iran, where
c. soccer, golf and tennis
d. No change is necessary
12. The best ^Adriver, Michael ^BCalahan, jammed his car into ^Cgear, and raced down the track.
a. driver Michael
b. Calahan jammed
c. gear and
d. No change is necessary
13. His left ^Acheek twitching as ^Busual, he sat there in ^Csilence and waited for her to stop talking.
a. cheek, twitching
b. usual he
c. silence, and
d. No change is necessary
14. Our ^Afamily, always seeking new places to ^Beat decided to try a new Thai ^Crestaurant in Longwood.
a. family always
b. eat, decided
c. restaurant, in
d. No change is necessary
15. ^ALincoln, the sixteenth ^BPresident, freed the slaves by signing the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, ^C1862 but it didn't take effect until January 1, 1863.
a. Lincoln the
b. President freed
c. 1862, but it
d. No change is necessary

Answer Key:	1.	B
	2.	C
	3.	B
	4.	C
	5.	C
	6.	C
	7.	D
	8.	C
	9.	A
	10.	D
	11.	B
	12.	C
	13.	D
	14.	B
	15.	C