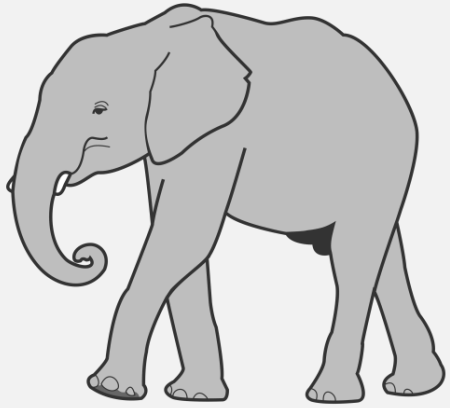
Commas







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Investigate and define

A comma is a punctuation mark which helps you pause during reading.

Commas are used to:



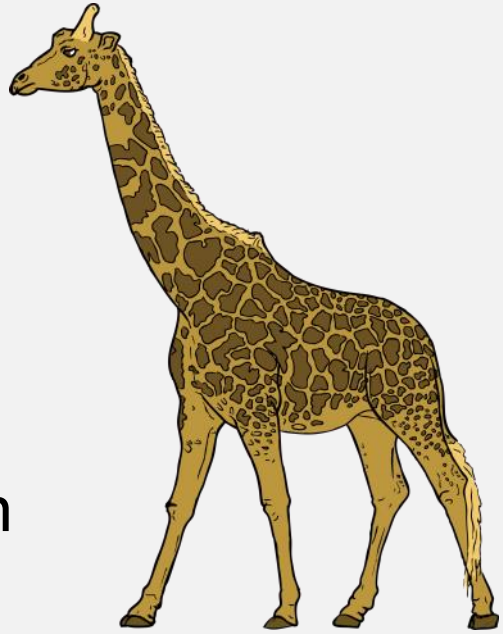
- separate items in a list
- add extra information
- separate direct speech from reporting clauses
- break up longer sentences, so as to clarify meaning or avoid ambiguity
- break up numbers into thousands.

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Investigate

Add commas to the following sentences, and explain how the commas are used.



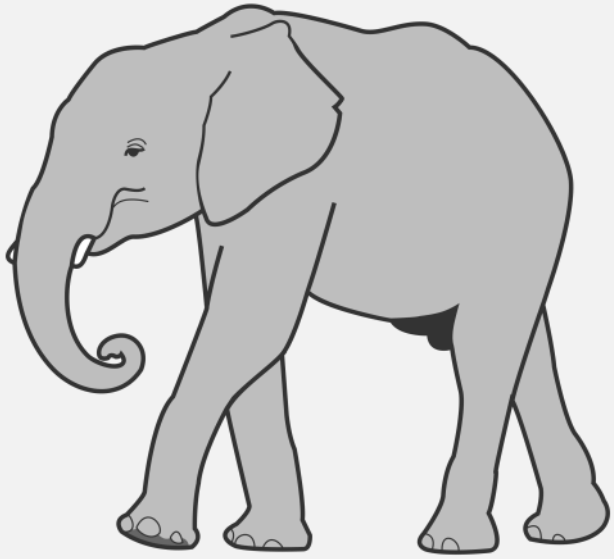
- I will she replied.
- They saw tigers lions giraffes and a huge elephant.
- Her Majesty The Queen Buckingham Palace London SW1A 1AA.
- Mrs Coggins who was a short lady with a large smile had made a decision.

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Investigate - answers

- Speech: **“I will,” she replied.**
- In a list: **They saw tigers, lions, giraffes and a huge elephant.**
- In an address:
  Her Majesty the Queen, Buckingham Palace, London, SW1A 1AA.
- Adding extra information: **Mrs Coggins, who was a short lady with a large smile, had made a decision.**



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The Oxford comma

They served all kinds of cakes: Victoria sandwich, lemon, banana and walnut, and toffee.



If there was no Oxford comma in the sentence above, or if the sentence was rewritten, then there would be more than one possible meaning:

- They served all kinds of cakes: Victoria sandwich, lemon, banana and walnut and toffee.
- They served all kinds of cakes: Victoria sandwich, banana and walnut, lemon and toffee.

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What's wrong?

Add punctuation to these sentences to give the most appropriate or likely meaning.

- Let's eat Grandma.
- Tom walked on his dog following a short way behind.
- Polly said her mother was immature.



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What's wrong? Answers

- Let's eat, Grandma.
- Tom walked on, his dog following a short way behind.
- "Polly," said her mother, "was immature."



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Clause or phrase?

- In the middle of the night,
- The moonlight shone through the cascading water,
- Although they both understood,
- A little further ahead,
- The most beautiful waterfall in the area,
- After Kyle had eaten,
- Through the scratching branches,



Next, have a go at writing your own clause and phrase.

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Clause or phrase? Answers

- In the middle of the night, **(phrase)**
- The moonlight shone through the cascading water, **(main clause)**
- Although they both understood, **(subordinate clause)**
- A little further ahead, **(phrase)**
- The most beautiful waterfall in the area, **(phrase)**
- After Kyle had eaten, **(subordinate clause)**
- Through the scratching branches, **(phrase)**



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Commas in compound sentences

for nor or so

and but yet

Add a comma and another main clause after each of these clauses, to add information.

- The experiment was a success.
- The dog barked loudly.
- They had not eaten lunch.

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Commas in complex sentences

- Since
- Once
- Although
- Provided
- Just in case
- As
- While

Add a subordinate clause and a comma before each of these main clauses.

- He was riding a bike.
- She visited her grandparents.
- They won the competition.



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Relative clauses and noun phrases

who

which

Add extra information to these sentences.



- The soldier marched to war.
- The new building was in London.
- The lady had fallen unwell.
- The boy ran to the shop.
- The house was at the top of the hill.
- The ladybird buzzed around the light.

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Fronted adverbials

Who? | When? | How? | Why?

Add a fronted adverbial and a comma to each of the following clauses

- The girl rode her bike.
- The teacher laughed.
- The elephant charged.



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More adverbials

However, | Anyway, | Nevertheless, | Still,

Subsequently, | Therefore, | Similarly,

Add an adverb (from those above) and a comma before each of these sentences.

- The investigation was a success.
- No one is quite sure if life exists on other planets.
- Many people do like apple pie.

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