



Adding Commas

I can add commas to clarify the meaning of a sentence.



Read the sentences as an editor and decide if you think commas need to be added. If you decide to add commas, explain your reason for doing so.

Sentence

Explain your reason for adding commas or leaving the sentence as it is.

The rabbit had long sharp pointy teeth.

As the campers sat round the fire eating the bear stayed in the bushes.

Lucy wanted a biscuit but she couldn't have one.

David who was 10 wore glasses.

Hetty dressed and performed for the packed audience.

There was lots to do at the fair including face painting and a raffle.

While the onions were cooking soup was brought from the shop.

If you have got everything you need then we are ready to go!

Hanging out the washing is one of the most boring things in the world.

He was cold without his jacket even though the sun was shining.



Adding Commas

I can add commas to clarify the meaning of a sentence.



Read the sentences as an editor and decide if you think commas need to be added. If you decide to add commas, explain your reason for doing so.

Sentence

Explain your reason for adding commas or leaving the sentence as it is.

The rabbit had long sharp pointy teeth.

While the campers sat round the fire eating
the bear crouched just metres away in the
bushes.

Lucy wanted a biscuit but she couldn't have one.

David who was in year six had lots to say
about most subjects.

Hetty dressed and performed for the packed
audience.

There were a lot of different activities at the fair
including face painting and a raffle.

At the same time as the onions were
cooking soup was being bought from the
shop.

If you have got everything you need then we
are ready to go!

Hanging out washing is one of the most boring
things in the world.

He was cold without his jacket even though
the sun was shining.



Read the sentences as an editor and decide if you think commas need to be added. If you decide to add commas, explain your reason for doing so.

| Sentence | Explain your reason for adding commas or leaving the sentence as it is. |
|---|---|
| The rabbit had long, sharp, pointy teeth. | <i>Commas do not change or clarify the meaning in this sentence so there is no correct answer. Commas can be added to provide the reader with mini pauses or left out altogether at the discretion of the author.</i> |
| As the campers sat round the fire eating, the bear stayed in the bushes. | <i>A comma is needed here to separate the subordinate clause from the main clause and to make it clear that the campers are not eating the bear!</i> |
| Lucy wanted a biscuit, but she couldn't have one. | <i>In a compound sentence like this, a comma is often used before the conjunction, but it can be written without.</i> |
| David, who was 10, wore glasses. | <i>Commas are needed here to surround the embedded clause so that the sentence is read correctly.</i> |
| Hetty dressed, and performed for the packed audience. | <i>The comma in this sentence clarifies the meaning. Without it, it sounds as though Hetty getting dressed is part of the show!</i> |
| There was lots to do at the fair, including face painting and a raffle. | <i>Although this sentence is correct without a comma, using a comma to signify adding additional information seems to help it read with an extra focus on the individual examples of activity.</i> |
| While the onions were cooking, soup was bought from the shop. | <i>A comma is needed in this complex sentence to divide the opening subordinate clause from the main clause to avoid confusion – the onions are not cooking soup!</i> |
| If you have got everything you need, then we are ready to go! If you have got everything you need then, we are ready to go! | <i>A comma is needed here to separate the opening subordinate clause from the main clause in this complex sentence. There are two places where the comma could go and each of them would contribute a slightly different meaning to the sentence. The second one suggests that it has taken some time to get everything together!</i> |
| Hanging out the washing is one of the most boring things in the world. | <i>This is just a simple sentence which does not require commas - no ambiguity and no further clarification necessary.</i> |
| He was cold without his jacket even though the sun was shining. | <i>This sentence doesn't need a comma to clarify meaning.</i> |



Read the sentences as an editor and decide if you think commas need to be added. If you decide to add commas, explain your reason for doing so.

In these case there may be no clear correct answer but the matter of including commas or not is a suggestion and open to debate and discussion.

| Sentence | Explain your reason for adding commas or leaving the sentence as it is. |
|---|---|
| The rabbit had long, sharp, pointy teeth. | <i>Commas do not change or clarify the meaning in this sentence so there is no correct answer. Commas can be added to provide the reader with mini pauses or left out altogether at the discretion of the author.</i> |
| Whilst the campers sat round the fire eating, the bear crouched just metres away in the bushes. | <i>A comma is needed here to separate the subordinate clause from the main clause and to make it clear that the campers are not eating the bear!</i> |
| Lucy wanted a biscuit, but she wasn't allowed to have one. | <i>In a compound sentence like this, a comma is often used before the conjunction, but it can be written without.</i> |
| David, who was in year six, had lots to say on most subjects. | <i>Commas are needed here to surround the embedded clause so that the sentence is read correctly.</i> |
| Hetty dressed, and performed for the packed audience. | <i>The comma in this sentence clarifies the meaning. Without it, it sounds as though Hetty getting dressed is part of the show!</i> |
| There were a lot of different activities at the fair, including face painting and a raffle. | <i>Although this sentence is correct without a comma, using a comma to signify adding additional information seems to help it read with an extra focus on the individual examples of activity.</i> |
| At the same time the onions were cooking, soup was being bought from the shop. | <i>A comma is needed in this complex sentence to divide the opening subordinate clause from the main clause to avoid confusion – the onions are not cooking soup!</i> |
| If you have got everything you need, then we are ready to go! If you have got everything you need then, we are ready to go! | <i>A comma is needed here to separate the opening subordinate clause from the main clause in this complex sentence. There are two places where the comma could go and each of them would contribute a slightly different meaning to the sentence. The second one suggests that it has taken some time to get everything together!</i> |
| Hanging out the washing is one of the most boring things in the world. | <i>This is just a simple sentence which does not require commas - no ambiguity and no further clarification necessary.</i> |
| He was cold without his jacket even though the sun was shining. | <i>This sentence doesn't need a comma to clarify meaning.</i> |



Adding Commas

I can add commas to clarify the meaning of a sentence.



Read the sentences as an editor and decide if you think commas need to be added. If you decide to add commas, explain your reason for doing so.

| Sentence | Explain your reason for adding commas or leaving the sentence as it is. |
|---|---|
| The rabbit had long sharp pointy teeth. | |
| As the campers sat round the fire eating the bear stayed in the bushes. | |
| Lucy wanted a biscuit but she couldn't have one. | |
| David who was 10 wore glasses. | |
| Hetty dressed and performed for the packed audience. | |
| There was lots to do at the fair including face painting and a raffle. | |
| While the onions were cooking soup was brought from the shop. | |
| If you have got everything you need then we are ready to go! | |
| Hanging out the washing is one of the most boring things in the world. | |
| He was cold without his jacket even though the sun was shining. | |



Adding Commas

I can add commas to clarify the meaning of a sentence.



Read the sentences as an editor and decide if you think commas need to be added. If you decide to add commas, explain your reason for doing so.


| Sentence | Explain your reason for adding commas or leaving the sentence as it is. |
|---|---|
| The rabbit had long sharp pointy teeth. | |
| While the campers sat round the fire eating the bear crouched just metres away in the bushes. | |
| Lucy wanted a biscuit but she couldn't have one. | |
| David who was in year six had lots to say about most subjects. | |
| Hetty dressed and performed for the packed audience. | |
| There were a lot of different activities at the fair including face painting and a raffle. | |
| At the same time as the onions were cooking soup was being bought from the shop. | |
| If you have got everything you need then we are ready to go! | |
| Hanging out washing is one of the most boring things in the world. | |
| He was cold without his jacket even though the sun was shining. | |

★ Read the sentences as an editor and decide if you think commas need to be added. If you decide to add commas, explain your reason for doing so.

| Sentence | Explain your reason for adding commas or leaving the sentence as it is. |
|--|---|
| The rabbit had long, sharp, pointy teeth. | <i>Commas do not change or clarify the meaning in this sentence so there is no correct answer. Commas can be added to provide the reader with mini pauses or left out altogether at the discretion of the author.</i> |
| As the campers sat round the fire eating, the bear stayed in the bushes. | <i>A comma is needed here to separate the subordinate clause from the main clause and to make it clear that the campers are not eating the bear!</i> |
| Lucy wanted a biscuit, but she couldn't have one. | <i>In a compound sentence like this, a comma is often used before the conjunction, but it can be written without.</i> |
| David, who was 10, wore glasses. | <i>Commas are needed here to surround the embedded clause so that the sentence is read correctly.</i> |
| Hetty dressed, and performed for the packed audience. | <i>The comma in this sentence clarifies the meaning. Without it, it sounds as though Hetty getting dressed is part of the show!</i> |
| There was lots to do at the fair, including face painting and a raffle. | <i>Although this sentence is correct without a comma, using a comma to signify adding additional information seems to help it read with an extra focus on the individual examples of activity.</i> |
| While the onions were cooking, soup was bought from the shop. | <i>A commas is needed in this complex sentence to divide the opening subordinate clause from the main clause to avoid confusion – the onions are not cooking soup!</i> |
| If you have got everything you need, then we are ready to go! | <i>A comma is needed here to separate the opening subordinate clause from the main clause in this complex sentence. There are two places where the comma could go and each of them would contribute a slightly different meaning to the sentence. The second one suggests that it has taken some time to get everything together!</i> |
| Hanging out the washing is one of the most boring things in the world. | <i>This is just a simple sentence which does not require commas – no ambiguity and no further clarification necessary.</i> |
| He was cold without his jacket even though the sun was shining. | <i>This sentence doesn't need a comma to clarify meaning.</i> |

Using Commas to Clarify Meaning

Answers

 Read the sentences as an editor and decide if you think commas need to be added. If you decide to add commas, explain your reason for doing so.

In these case there may be no clear correct answer but the matter of including commas or not is a suggestion and open to debate and discussion.

| Sentence | Explain your reason for adding commas or leaving the sentence as it is. |
|---|---|
| The rabbit had long, sharp, pointy teeth. | <i>Commas do not change or clarify the meaning in this sentence so there is no correct answer. Commas can be added to provide the reader with mini pauses or left out altogether at the discretion of the author.</i> |
| Whilst the campers sat round the fire eating, the bear crouched just metres away in the bushes. | <i>A comma is needed here to separate the subordinate clause from the main clause and to make it clear that the campers are not eating the bear!</i> |
| Lucy wanted a biscuit, but she wasn't allowed to have one. | <i>In a compound sentence like this, a comma is often used before the conjunction, but it can be written without.</i> |
| David, who was in year six, had lots to say on most subjects. | <i>Commas are needed here to surround the embedded clause so that the sentence is read correctly.</i> |
| Hetty dressed, and performed for the packed audience. | <i>The comma in this sentence clarifies the meaning. Without it, it sounds as though Hetty getting dressed is part of the show!</i> |
| There were a lot of different activities at the fair, including face painting and a raffle. | <i>Although this sentence is correct without a comma, using a comma to signify adding additional information seems to help it read with an extra focus on the individual examples of activity.</i> |
| At the same time the onions were cooking, soup was being bought from the shop. | <i>A commas is needed in this complex sentence to divide the opening subordinate clause from the main clause to avoid confusion – the onions are not cooking soup!</i> |
| If you have got everything you need, then we are ready to go! | <i>A comma is needed here to separate the opening subordinate clause from the main clause in this complex sentence. There are two places where the comma could go and each of them would contribute a slightly different meaning to the sentence. The second one suggests that it has taken some time to get everything together!</i> |
| Hanging out the washing is one of the most boring things in the world. | <i>This is just a simple sentence which does not require commas – no ambiguity and no further clarification necessary.</i> |
| He was cold without his jacket even though the sun was shining. | <i>This sentence doesn't need a comma to clarify meaning.</i> |

Make Two Meanings

I can use commas to give a sentence two different meanings.



Can you use commas in the following sentences to ensure there are two different ways to read them? Some sentences may just need to be left without commas.

1. The view I imagined was amazing.
The view I imagined was amazing.
2. When the lightning turned incredibly bright yellow people began to get scared.
When the lightning turned incredibly bright yellow people began to get scared.
3. The girl who didn't like spiders was terrified.
The girl who didn't like spiders was terrified.
4. He brought home some old folders and a donut which he ate as soon as he got hungry.
He brought home some old folders and a donut which he ate as soon as he got hungry.
5. Hurry up and shoot grandad.
Hurry up and shoot grandad.
6. David said the astronaut was scared.
David said the astronaut was scared.
7. When she's not working she loves eating her dog and her family.
When she's not working she loves eating her dog and her family.
8. She found to her horror films were boring.
She found to her horror films were boring.
9. Compared to a giant star wars seemed so tiny and small.
Compared to a giant star wars seemed so tiny and small.
10. All the time machines were getting more intelligent and powerful.
All the time machines were getting more intelligent and powerful.

Can you use commas in the following sentences to ensure there are two different ways to read them? Some sentences may just need to be left without commas.

1. The view I imagined was amazing.
The view, I imagined, was amazing.
2. When the lightning turned incredibly bright yellow, people began to get scared.
When the lightning turned incredibly bright, yellow people began to get scared.
3. The girl who didn't like spiders was terrified.
The girl, who didn't like spiders, was terrified.
4. He brought home some old folders, and a donut which he ate as soon as he got hungry.
He brought home some old folders and a donut, which he ate as soon as he got hungry.
5. Hurry up and shoot, grandad.
Hurry up and shoot grandad.
6. David, said the astronaut, was scared.
David said the astronaut was scared.
7. When she's not working she loves eating, her dog, and her family.
When she's not working she loves eating her dog and her family.
8. She found to her horror, films were boring.
She found to her, horror films were boring.
9. Compared to a giant, star wars seemed so tiny and small.
Compared to a giant star, wars seemed so tiny and small.
10. All the time, machines were getting more intelligent and powerful.
All the time machines were getting more intelligent and powerful.

Make Two Meanings

I can use commas to give a sentence two different meanings.



Can you use commas in the following sentences to ensure there are two different ways to read them? Some sentences may just need to be left without commas.

1. The view I imagined was amazing.
The view I imagined was amazing.
2. When the lightning turned incredibly bright yellow people began to get scared.
When the lightning turned incredibly bright yellow people began to get scared.
3. The girl who didn't like spiders was terrified.
The girl who didn't like spiders was terrified.
4. He brought home some old folders and a donut which he ate as soon as he got hungry.
He brought home some old folders and a donut which he ate as soon as he got hungry.
5. Hurry up and shoot grandad.
Hurry up and shoot grandad.
6. David said the astronaut was scared.
David said the astronaut was scared.
7. When she's not working she loves eating her dog and her family.
When she's not working she loves eating her dog and her family.
8. She found to her horror films were boring.
She found to her horror films were boring.
9. Compared to a giant star wars seemed so tiny and small.
Compared to a giant star wars seemed so tiny and small.
10. All the time machines were getting more intelligent and powerful.
All the time machines were getting more intelligent and powerful.

Can you use commas in the following sentences to ensure there are two different ways to read them? Some sentences may just need to be left without commas.

- 1.** The view I imagined was amazing.
The view, I imagined, was amazing.
- 2.** When the lightning turned incredibly bright yellow, people began to get scared.
When the lightning turned incredibly bright, yellow people began to get scared.
- 3.** The girl who didn't like spiders was terrified.
The girl, who didn't like spiders, was terrified.
- 4.** He brought home some old folders, and a donut which he ate as soon as he got hungry.
He brought home some old folders and a donut, which he ate as soon as he got hungry.
- 5.** Hurry up and shoot, granddad.
Hurry up and shoot granddad.
- 6.** David, said the astronaut, was scared.
David said the astronaut was scared.
- 7.** When she's not working she loves eating her dog and her family.
When she's not working she loves eating, her dog, and her family.
- 8.** She found to her horror, films were boring.
She found to her, horror films were boring.
- 9.** Compared to a giant, star wars seemed so tiny and small.
Compared to a giant star, wars seemed so tiny and small.
- 10.** All the time machines were getting more intelligent and powerful.
All the time, machines were getting more intelligent and powerful.



Sentence Draw

I can suggest different meanings a sentence



Can you show the huge difference one comma makes to the meaning of these sentences by illustrating each version or explaining the difference in words? Use colour in your illustrations!

Slow children crossing!

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Slow, children crossing!

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Eat Daniel!

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Eat, Daniel!

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Look at that blue, bearded man.

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Look at that blue bearded man.

| |
|--|
| |
|--|



Sentence Draw

I can suggest different meanings a sentence



Can you show the huge difference one comma makes to the meaning of these sentences by illustrating each version or explaining the difference in words? Use colour in your illustrations!

Most of the time travellers take the bus.

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Most of the time, travellers take the bus.

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Edward tickled the boy with a bunch of carrots.

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Edward tickled the boy, with a bunch of carrots.

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Now blow up the pipe!

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Now blow, up the pipe!

| |
|--|
| |
|--|



Sentence Draw

I can suggest different meanings a sentence could have.



Can you show the huge difference one comma makes to the meaning of these sentences by illustrating each version or explaining the difference in words? Use colour in your illustrations!

Slow children crossing!

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Slow, children crossing!

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Eat Daniel!

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Eat, Daniel!

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Look at that blue, bearded man.

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Look at that blue bearded man.

| |
|--|
| |
|--|



Sentence Draw

I can suggest different meanings a sentence could have.



Can you show the huge difference one comma makes to the meaning of these sentences by illustrating each version or explaining the difference in words? Use colour in your illustrations!

Most of the time travellers take the bus.

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Most of the time, travellers take the bus.

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Edward tickled the boy with a bunch of carrots.

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Edward tickled the boy, with a bunch of carrots.

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Now blow up the pipe!

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Now blow, up the pipe!

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Application Activity

I can use commas to clarify the meaning of a sentence.



1. Can you insert commas into the following passage wherever they are needed to clarify the meaning of the sentences so the passage makes sense?

One day a motorist was driving along humming singing and talking. As he looked out of the window he noticed a sign. 'Slow - Children crossing' it said. "Careful children!" said his wife who was sitting alongside him. Outside he saw clouds a school and children everywhere. Some were already eating friends walking alongside them.

"It's going to be a good day break can't be far off," he said.

"They're off home work to do," she replied.

"They know schools out here in the country," said his wife.

2. Can you make up some sentences that might need commas to clarify their meanings?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Using Commas to Clarify Meaning

Answers

1. Can you insert commas into the following passage wherever they are needed to clarify the meaning of the sentences so the passage makes sense?

One day, a motorist was driving along, humming, singing and talking. As he looked out of the window, he noticed a sign. 'Slow – Children crossing' it said. "Careful, children!" said his wife, who was sitting alongside him. Outside, he saw clouds, a school and children everywhere. Some were already eating, friends walking alongside them.

"It's going to be a good day, break can't be far off," he said.

"They're off home, work to do," she replied.

"They know schools, out here in the country," said his wife.

2. Multiple possible answers.

Name:

Date:

10
total marks

Using Commas to Clarify Meaning Mini Test

1. Tick the sentences with meanings which could be changed with the addition of a comma.

- a) She found a mouse trap and cheese all in the bucket as planned.
- b) David had said he didn't care.
- c) The weather was horrible all day so they stayed in.
- d) He asked for money and Lego for his birthday.
- e) Don't risk it Grandma.

4 marks

2. How do commas affect the meaning of these sentences? Explain briefly for each pair.

- a) As the sun shone orange, people looked desperately for shade.
As the sun shone, orange people looked desperately for shade.

- b) When he saw the pirate ship on the horizon, the captain sounded the alarm.
When he saw the pirate ship, on the horizon the captain sounded the alarm.

2 marks

total for
this page

Using Commas to Clarify Meaning Test

3 marks

3. Add or remove commas to give these sentences the required meaning.

a) Writing, clearly, isn't easy.

Can you add or remove commas in that sentence to make it mean that 'writing so everyone can understand isn't easy'?

b) Jess likes baking cats and doing ballet.

Can you add commas in the sentence so it shows that Jess has three hobbies.

c) Debbie's heroes are her parents, Spiderman, and Catwoman.

Can you add or remove commas so that the sentence suggests that Debbie's parents *are* Spiderman and Catwoman.



END OF TEST

total for
this page

| | |
|---|---------|
| <p>1 Tick the sentences with meanings which could be changed with the addition of a comma.</p> <p>a) She found a mouse, trap and cheese all in the bucket as planned. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>b) David had said, he didn't care. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>c) The weather was horrible all day so they stayed in. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>d) He asked for money, and Lego for his birthday. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>e) Don't, risk it Grandma. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> | 4 marks |
| <p>2 How do commas affect the meaning of these sentences? Explain briefly for each pair.</p> <p>a) As the sun shone orange, people looked desperately for shade. As the sun shone, orange people looked desperately for shade. <i>In the first sentence, the sun is orange. In the second sentence it is the people that are orange.</i></p> <p>b) When he saw the pirate ship on the horizon, the captain sounded the alarm. When he saw the pirate ship, on the horizon the captain sounded the alarm. <i>In the first sentence, the captain sees the pirate ship on the horizon. In the second sentence, the captain is on the horizon himself.</i></p> | 2 marks |
| <p>3 Add or remove commas to give these sentences the required meaning.</p> <p>a) Writing, clearly, isn't easy. Can you add or remove commas in this sentence to make it mean 'writing so everyone can understand isn't easy' <i>Writing clearly isn't easy.</i></p> <p>b) Jess likes baking cats and doing ballet. Can you add commas in that sentence so it shows that Jess has three hobbies. <i>Jess likes baking, cats and doing ballet.</i></p> <p>c) Debbie's heroes are her parents, Spiderman, and Catwoman. Can you add or remove commas so that the sentence suggests that Debbie's parents are Spiderman and Catwoman. <i>Debbie's heroes are her parents, Spiderman and Catwoman.</i></p> | 3 marks |

Using Commas to Clarify Meaning

Commas can be used to ensure that sentences are clear in their intention and meaning as one sentence without comma/s or with comma/s in a different position can have very different meanings.

Can you think how commas could change the meaning of this sentence?



**Josephine was a
pretty tall girl.**

Here the absence of a comma invites us to read pretty tall as an adjectival phrase so we only find out that Josephine is relatively tall.

Josephine was a



Josephine was a pretty tall girl.

pretty, tall girl.

Here the comma separates two adjectives describing Josephine so we know she is pretty and tall.

It is well known that commas can also save lives:

Hurry up and shoot, Grandpa!

Without a comma in this sentence it becomes...

Hurry up and shoot Grandpa!



Using Commas to Clarify Meaning

Commas can be used to ensure that sentences are clear in their intention and meaning as one sentence without comma/s or with comma/s in a different position can have very different meanings.

Can you think how commas could change the meaning of this sentence?



Regent Studies | www.regentstudies.com

**Josephine was a
pretty tall girl.**

Here the absence of a comma invites us to read pretty tall as an adjectival phrase so we only find out that Josephine is relatively tall.

Josephine was a



Josephine was a pretty tall girl.

pretty, tall girl.

Here the comma separates two adjectives describing Josephine so we know she is pretty and tall.

It is well known that commas can also save lives:

Hurry up and shoot, Grandpa!

Without a comma in this sentence it becomes...

Hurry up and shoot Grandpa!



Using Commas to

Commas can be used to ensure that
and meaning as one sentence with
different position can hav

Can you think how commas could
change the meaning of this
sentence?



Clarify Meaning

sentences are clear in their intention
out comma/s or with comma/s in a
e very different meanings.

**Josephine was a
pretty tall girl.**

Here the absence of a comma
invites us to read pretty tall as an
adjectival phrase so we only find
out that Josephine is relatively tall.

Josephine was a



Josephine was a pretty tall girl.

It is well known that commas can also

Hurry up and shoot, Grandpa

Without a comma in this sentence it

Hurry up and shoot Grandpa

pretty, tall girl.

Here the comma separates two adjectives describing Josephine so we know she is pretty and tall.

so save lives:

ndpa!

becomes...

ndpa!



Using Commas to Clarify Meaning

Commas can be used to ensure that sentences are clear in their intention and meaning as one sentence without comma/s or with comma/s in a different position can have very different meanings.

Can you think how commas could change the meaning of this sentence?



Josephine was a pretty tall girl.

Josephine was a pretty tall girl.

Here the absence of a comma invites us to read pretty tall as an adjectival phrase so we only find out that Josephine is relatively tall.

Josephine was a pretty, tall girl.

Here the comma separates two adjectives describing Josephine so we know she is pretty and tall.

It is well known that commas can also save lives:

Hurry up and shoot, Grandpa!

Without a comma in this sentence it becomes...

Hurry up and shoot Grandpa!



Using Commas to Clarify Meaning

Commas can be used to ensure that sentences are clear in their intention and meaning as one sentence without comma/s or with comma/s in a different position can have very different meanings.

Can you think how commas could change the meaning of this sentence?



Josephine was a pretty tall girl.

Josephine was a pretty tall girl.

Here the absence of a comma invites us to read pretty tall as an adjectival phrase so we only find out that Josephine is relatively tall.

Josephine was a pretty, tall girl.

Here the comma separates two adjectives describing Josephine so we know she is pretty and tall.

It is well known that commas can also save lives:

Hurry up and shoot, Grandpa!










Without a comma in this sentence it becomes...

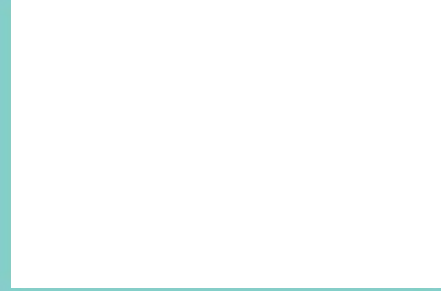
Hurry up and shoot Grandpa!



SPaG: Using Commas to Clarify Meaning

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Aim: Using commas to clarify meaning and avoid ambiguity.</p> <p>I can use commas to make sure the reader understands precisely what I am trying to say.</p> | <p>Prior Learning: Using commas to separate items on a list. Using commas to indicate direct speech. Using commas after fronted adverbials. Using commas to indicate parenthesis.</p> | <p>Resources: Lesson Pack Colouring Pencils</p> |
| <p>Success Criteria: I can tell when the meaning in a sentence is unclear. I can suggest different meanings a sentence could have. I can add or remove commas to clarify the meaning of a sentence.</p> | <p>Key/New Words: Comma, clarify, ambiguity.</p> | <p>Preparation: Draw the Sentence Activity Sheet per child Adding Commas Activity Sheet per child Make Two Meanings Activity Sheet 1 per child Mini Test Activity Sheet 1 per child Application Activity Sheet as required</p> |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
|  | <p>Introductory Activity Show the children a list of sentences that have been punctuated with commas. Ask them to talk to a partner and decide why each comma has been used in each sentence. The last sentence contains a comma that is only needed to clarify the meaning of the sentence. Share and discuss the answers on the next slide. Check that the children have the required prior learning for this lesson and that they are familiar with the main functions of a comma within a sentence. Check to see if children make any suggestions about the comma in no. 6 being needed to clarify meaning.</p> | |
|  | <p>Independent Focused Activity Children use the differentiated Sentence Draw activity to explore visually the difference commas can make to the meaning of a sentence. Check that children understand how the emphasis in the sentence changes as a result of the comma.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div>  Children to complete the Sentence Draw Activity Sheet independently. </div> <div>  Children to complete the more challenging Sentence Draw Activity Sheet independently. </div> </div> | |
|  | <p>Review Activity Children use the differentiated Adding Commas activity sheet to read like an editor and decide whether the meaning in a sentence needs making clearer through the addition of commas. Can the children see how to use commas to place different emphasis on the words and therefore alter the meaning of the sentence?</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div>  Children to complete the Adding Commas Activity Sheet independently. </div> <div>  Children to complete the more challenging Adding Commas Activity Sheet independently. </div> </div> | |
|  | <p>Consolidation Activity Make Two Meanings Activity Sheet. Children use commas to make the same words in a sentence carry two distinct meanings. Check that the children can comment on the different meaning of the sentence they have created.</p> | |
|  | <p>Assessment The children complete the Mini Test in order to test their understanding. The children complete the Application Activity as required.</p> | |



Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

Using Commas to Clarify Meaning.



Using Commas to Clarify Meaning

Using Commas to Clarify Meaning





Using Commas to Clarify Meaning

Introductory Activity

Independent Focused Activity

Review Activity

Consolidation Activity

Assessment

Aim

- I can use commas to make sure the reader understands precisely what I am trying to say.

Success Criteria

- I can tell when the meaning in a sentence is unclear.
- I can suggest different meanings that a sentence could have.
- I can add or remove commas to clarify the meaning of a sentence.



Introductory Activity



Can you give the reason that commas have been used in each of these example sentences? Discuss your thinking with a partner.

Max had bought cheese, pears, sausage rolls and pickle, especially for the picnic.

Artem, who was only 9 years old, was a better piano player than many students twice his age.

The rain was certainly heavy, but the Sun was suggesting it hadn't gone for good.

"I was amazed at how much I had got done in the day," she said.

When they finally reached their destination, they realised he had been right all along!

The artist, who was a bit of a dreamer, sat and painted the sea.



You may have already learned about using commas in these situations:

To separate items in a list.

After a fronted adverbial.

To indicate extra information in a sentence.

After direct speech.

This lesson may call on your knowledge of general comma use but it is primarily about using commas to make the meaning of sentences absolutely clear. On some occasions a comma may be needed even though there is no grammatical rule that requires it.



Sometimes a comma can make a huge difference to the meaning of a sentence. Consider these two interpretations...

Lower, please!



Lower please!





Independent Focused Activity



★ **Sentence Draw**

I can suggest different meanings a sentence could have.

Can you show the huge difference one comma makes to the meaning of these sentences by illustrating each version or replacing the difference in words? Use colour in your illustrations!

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Slow children crossing! | Slow, children crossing! |
| For Don't! | For, Don't! |
| Look at that blue, bearded man. | Look at that blue bearded man. |

★★★ **Sentence Draw**

I can suggest different meanings a sentence could have.


Can you show the huge difference one comma makes to the meaning of these sentences by illustrating each version or replacing the difference in words? Use colour in your illustrations!

| | |
|---|---|
| Most of the time travellers take the bus. | Most of the time, travellers take the bus. |
| Edward filled the bag with a bush of carrots. | Edward filled the bag with a bush of carrots. |
| Now blow up the pipe! | Now, blow up the pipe! |

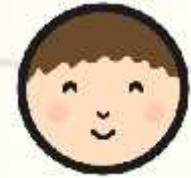
Draw the sentence Activity Sheet.

Can you see how the meaning of some sentences can depend on punctuation?

Use the drawings to interpret these sentences literally – draw exactly what they say.



Review Activity



Adding Commas

I can add commas to clarify the meaning of a sentence.

Read the sentences or an editor and decide if you think commas need to be added. If you decide to add commas, explain your reason for doing so.

| Sentence | Explain your reason for adding commas or leaving the sentence as it is. |
|--|---|
| The robot has long sharp pointy teeth. | |
| As the computer scanned the fire eating the bear stayed in the bushes. | |
| Larry wanted a truck but she couldn't have one. | |
| Doris who was 70 wore glasses. | |
| Henry dressed and performed for the packed audience. | |
| There was lots to do at the fair including jazz painting and a raffle. | |
| While the onions were cooking soap was brought from the shop. | |
| If you have got everything you need then we are ready to go! | |
| Hangng out the washing is one of the most boring things in the world. | |

Adding Commas

I can add commas to clarify the meaning of a sentence.

Read the sentences or an editor and decide if you think commas need to be added. If you decide to add commas, explain your reason for doing so.

| Sentence | Explain your reason for adding commas or leaving the sentence as it is. |
|---|---|
| The robot has long sharp pointy teeth. | |
| When the computer scanned the fire eating the bear remained just metres away in the bushes. | |
| Larry wanted a truck but she couldn't have one. | |
| Doris who was 70 year old had lots to say about robot surgery. | |
| Henry dressed and performed for the packed audience. | |
| There were a lot of different activities at the fair including jazz painting and a raffle. | |
| At the same time as the onions were cooking soap was being bought from the shop. | |
| If you have got everything you need then we are ready to go! | |
| Hangng out the washing is one of the most boring things in the world. | |

Adding Commas Activity Sheet.

Can you decide for yourself if a sentence is unclear or not?
Read these sentences carefully and add commas if you think they are needed to make the meaning clearer.



Consolidation Activity



Make Two Meanings

I can use commas to give a sentence two different meanings.

Can you use commas in the following sentences to ensure there are two different ways to read them? Some sentences may just need to be left without commas.

1. The view I imagined was amazing.
The view I imagined was amazing.
2. When the lightning turned incredibly bright yellow people began to get scared.
When the lightning turned incredibly bright yellow people began to get scared.
3. The girl who didn't like spiders was terrified.
The girl who didn't like spiders was terrified.
4. He brought home some old folders and a donut which he ate as soon as he got hungry.
He brought home some old folders and a donut which he ate as soon as he got hungry.
5. Hurry up and shoot grandad.
Hurry up and shoot grandad.
6. David said the astronaut was scared.
David said the astronaut was scared.
7. When she's not working she loves eating her dog and her family.
When she's not working she loves eating her dog and her family.
8. She found to her horror films were boring.
She found to her horror films were boring.

Make Two Meanings Activity Sheet.

Experience the power of punctuation by altering the meaning of these sentences armed only with commas!

© Using Commas to Clarify Meaning



Assessment

Assessment Activity



Name: _____ Date: _____

Using Commas to Clarify Meaning Mini Test

1. Take the sentences with meanings which could be changed with the addition of a comma.

- a) She found a mouse trap and cheese all in the bucket as planned.
- b) David had said he didn't care.
- c) The weather was horrible all day so they stayed in.
- d) He asked for money and Lego for his birthday.
- e) Don't risk it Grandma.

2. How do commas affect the meaning of these sentences? Explain briefly for each pair.

- a) The man dropped the bullet in his mouth.
The man dropped, the bullet in his mouth.

- b) Save him, not kill him.
Save him not, kill him.

Using Commas to Clarify Meaning Test

3. Add or remove commas to give these sentences the required meaning.

- a) Writing, clearly, isn't easy.
Can you add or remove commas in that sentence to make it mean that 'writing to everyone can understand isn't easy'?

- b) The criminal said the judge was an idiot.
Can you add commas in that sentence so it says the criminal is an idiot?

- c) Debbie's heroes are her parents, Spiderman, and Catwoman.
Can you add or remove commas so that the sentence suggests that Debbie's parents are Spiderwoman and Catwoman.

==END OF TEST==

Can you demonstrate your ability to use commas to make the meaning of sentences clearer and decide whether sentences can mean more than one thing or not.
Work on your own to complete the **Using Commas to Clarify Meaning Mini Test Activity Sheet**.

Application Activity



Application Activity

I can use commas to clarify the meaning of a sentence.

1. Can you insert commas into the following passage whenever they are needed to clarify the meaning of the sentences in the passage make sense?

One day a motorist was driving along humming singing and talking. As he looked out of the window he noticed a sign. Slow children crossing it said "Careful children!" said his wife who was sitting alongside him. Outside he saw clouds schools and children everywhere. Some were already eating friends walking alongside them.

"It's going to be a good day break can't be far off!" he said.
"That's off him work to do," she replied.

2. Can you make up some sentences that might need commas to clarify their meanings?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Can you apply what you have learned about using commas to make the meaning clearer within a paragraph and are you able to dream up some sentences of your own which could mean more than one thing? Work on your own to complete the [Application Activity Sheet](#).

Using Commas to Clarify Meaning

Aim

- I can use commas to make sure the reader understands precisely what I am trying to say.

Success Criteria

- I can tell when the meaning in a sentence is unclear.
- I can suggest different meanings a sentence could have.
- I can add or remove commas to clarify the meaning of a sentence.



SPaG | Using Commas to Clarify Meaning

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| I can use commas to make sure the reader understands precisely what I am trying to say. | | |
| I can tell when the meaning in a sentence is unclear. | | |
| I can suggest different meanings a sentence could have. | | |
| I can add or remove commas to clarify the meaning of a sentence. | | |

SPaG | Using Commas to Clarify Meaning

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| I can use commas to make sure the reader understands precisely what I am trying to say. | | |
| I can tell when the meaning in a sentence is unclear. | | |
| I can suggest different meanings a sentence could have. | | |
| I can add or remove commas to clarify the meaning of a sentence. | | |

SPaG | Using Commas to Clarify Meaning

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| I can use commas to make sure the reader understands precisely what I am trying to say. | | |
| I can tell when the meaning in a sentence is unclear. | | |
| I can suggest different meanings a sentence could have. | | |
| I can add or remove commas to clarify the meaning of a sentence. | | |

SPaG | Using Commas to Clarify Meaning

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| I can use commas to make sure the reader understands precisely what I am trying to say. | | |
| I can tell when the meaning in a sentence is unclear. | | |
| I can suggest different meanings a sentence could have. | | |
| I can add or remove commas to clarify the meaning of a sentence. | | |

SPaG | Using Commas to Clarify Meaning

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| I can use commas to make sure the reader understands precisely what I am trying to say. | | |
| I can tell when the meaning in a sentence is unclear. | | |
| I can suggest different meanings a sentence could have. | | |
| I can add or remove commas to clarify the meaning of a sentence. | | |

SPaG | Using Commas to Clarify Meaning

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| I can use commas to make sure the reader understands precisely what I am trying to say. | | |
| I can tell when the meaning in a sentence is unclear. | | |
| I can suggest different meanings a sentence could have. | | |
| I can add or remove commas to clarify the meaning of a sentence. | | |

SPaG | Using Commas to Clarify Meaning

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| I can use commas to make sure the reader understands precisely what I am trying to say. | | |
| I can tell when the meaning in a sentence is unclear. | | |
| I can suggest different meanings a sentence could have. | | |
| I can add or remove commas to clarify the meaning of a sentence. | | |

SPaG | Using Commas to Clarify Meaning

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| I can use commas to make sure the reader understands precisely what I am trying to say. | | |
| I can tell when the meaning in a sentence is unclear. | | |
| I can suggest different meanings a sentence could have. | | |
| I can add or remove commas to clarify the meaning of a sentence. | | |