

COMMA NOTES

Key

Commas with Expressions That Interrupt

- ✓ Use a comma after words such as *yes, no, well, and why* at the beginning of a sentence.

Example:

No, I did not hear what you said.

- ✓ Use a comma to set apart **appositives**, or a series of nouns identifying a noun or pronoun.

Example:

Mrs. Pratt, my favorite English teacher, loves to ski.

Commas in Compound Sentences

- ✓ Use a comma *before* the conjunction (*and, but, or, for, yet*) that joins the parts of a compound sentence in order to avoid run-on sentences.

Example:

Henry shot the basketball into the hoop, and then pumped his fists with excitement.

Commas in a Series

- ✓ Use commas to separate items in a series.
- ✓ Items may be single words or groups of words.

Example:

Many teachers, parents, and students attended the game.

CHAPTER 20 Punctuation

Commas with Expressions That Interrupt

Expressions that interrupt a sentence include appositives and appositive phrases. An appositive or an appositive phrase is usually set off by commas.

EXERCISE In each of the following sentences, find the appositive or appositive phrase or phrases that interrupt the sentence. Then place a comma or commas where needed.

EXAMPLE: Ms. Emmett, our science teacher, owns a snowmobile.

1. Plankton, the wanderers of the sea, drift along under the influence of ocean currents.
2. Muffy, our Siamese cat, usually sleeps on top of the refrigerator.
3. We saw a collection of photographs by Margaret Bourke-White, a famous photographer.
4. Diamond Head, a volcanic crater in Honolulu, is a popular tourist attraction.
5. The mayfly, a fragile insect, has a very short life.
6. That dog, a beautiful setter, belongs to our neighbors.
7. My mother, a born organizer, is usually in demand as a committee chairperson.
8. The keynote speaker, a former governor, received a standing ovation.
9. The pitcher, a rookie, pitched six perfect innings.
10. Have you read *The Call of the Wild*, a book about the gold rush?
11. Geronimo, a famous Apache chief, became a farmer in Oklahoma.
12. My cousin won a scholarship to William and Mary, the oldest college in the United States.
13. Albany, the capital of New York, is on the Hudson River.
14. First prize a trip to Boston was won by Mrs. Finch, the new English teacher.
15. Mother liked a new medicine, a recent graduate of Dayton High School.
16. Margaret Mitchell, a native of the South, wrote *Gone with the Wind*.
17. Fred Dolder, a balloonist, made several flights across the Alps.
18. Hydrogen, a colorless gas, is the lightest element.
19. The Atacama, the driest desert in the world, is located along the coasts of Peru and Chile.
20. Lima, the largest city in Peru, contains one third of the country's population.

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CHAPTER 20 Punctuation

Commas in Compound Sentences

Use a comma before *and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, *for*, or *yet* when one of these conjunctions joins the parts of a compound sentence. A very short compound sentence is sometimes written without a comma before the conjunction.

EXERCISE Find and underline the conjunction that joins the parts of each of the following compound sentences. Then place a comma where it is needed.

EXAMPLE: Spring is almost here, but the weather is still bitterly cold.

1. The flamingo has a small body, but its long legs give it height.
2. We visited my grandmother, and then we took her out to dinner.
3. The reviewers liked the play, yet it was not nominated for an award.
4. I must return this book to the library, or it will be overdue.
5. The players were tired after the game, yet they celebrated with pizza and lemonade.
6. Signs warn against feeding the bears, but some foolish campers feed them anyway.
7. Puerto Rico once belonged to Spain, and its towns are filled with fine examples of Spanish architecture.
8. The wind whistled through the trees, and the air suddenly became cold.
9. Most bread is made of wheat flour, but other grains can also be used.
10. Our friends left the meeting early, but we stayed until the end.
11. The line for the movie was long, but we reached the box office in time for the first show.
12. My grandfather has retired, but he goes to the office once a week.
13. The soil must be carefully fertilized, or the plants will not grow.
14. That player has a bad knee, yet he rarely complains about it.
15. Senator Jacob Javits is remembered for his many accomplishments, but he is even better remembered for his courage.
16. The country suffered a serious drought, and farm production fell far below normal.
17. I couldn't find my wallet, and I had to borrow lunch money from my teacher.
18. My brother works at the supermarket, yet he never has any money.
19. The car was completely wrecked, but fortunately nobody was seriously injured.
20. The fire spread quickly, and many buildings were destroyed.

CHAPTER 20 Punctuation

Commas with Items in a Series

Use commas to separate items in a series. A series is three or more items written one after the other. The items may be single words or groups of words. When the last two items in a series are joined by *and*, you may omit the comma before the *and* if the comma is not necessary to make the meaning clear. If all items in a series are joined by *and* or *or*, do not use commas to separate them.

EXERCISE In the following sentences, find the items in a series. Then place commas where they are needed. If a sentence is correctly punctuated, write C before its number.

EXAMPLE: Bees, wasps, and ants are all members of the insect family.

1. Tracy made her bed, hung up her clothes, and took out the trash.
2. *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*, *Superfudge*, and *Freckle Juice* are three books by Judy Blume.
3. I can read, eat, and watch television at the same time.
4. The flower show featured herb gardens, terrariums, and hanging baskets.
5. I found two pennies, a key, and a ballpoint pen in the pocket of my jacket.
6. Oregano adds flavor to sauces, tomato juice, and vegetable soup.
- C 7. In Montana, cattle, sheep, and horses graze where buffalo once roamed.
8. On Saturday, I will shop with my mother, or go to the basketball game, or baby-sit for Mrs. Festerman.
9. We had hot dogs, hamburgers, and potato salad at the Fourth-of-July picnic.
10. The plane stops in Atlanta, St. Louis, and Denver.
11. The cherry, the dogwood, and the peach are flowering trees.
12. A combination of oxygen, water, and iron can produce rust.
13. My aunt owns a white, a spaniel, and a golden retriever.
- C 14. What would a county fair be without hand-pieced quilts and prize-winning jellies?
15. Mistletoe is poisonous to cats, cows, and other animals.
16. So far I have built a locomotive, a flatcar, and a caboose for my model railroad.
17. We hiked, swam, and played volleyball.
18. Every night we sang, or danced, or told stories around the campfire.
19. We've planted corn, string beans, and tomatoes in our vegetable garden.
20. Leonardo da Vinci was a painter, a sculptor, and a scientist.