

Using Commas



Wednesday 19th January 2022

LO: To be able to use commas to make sure the reader understands precisely what is being said.

Recap!

What is a comma?

The **comma** is a punctuation mark used:

- to indicate a **slight pause** between the different part of a sentence
- to mark off **additional information** about the subject of a sentence
- to separate the **names of people** spoken to
- to separate **items in a list**
- to separate two or more adjectives which define the same noun
- to separate the verb of saying from the words spoken in direct speech

Can you think of the reason that commas have been used in each of these example sentences?

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

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

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

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

The artist, smiling intently, 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 or fronted subordinate clause.

To indicate extra information in a sentence (parenthesis).

To demarcate relative clauses and embedded clauses.

Sometimes after direct speech.

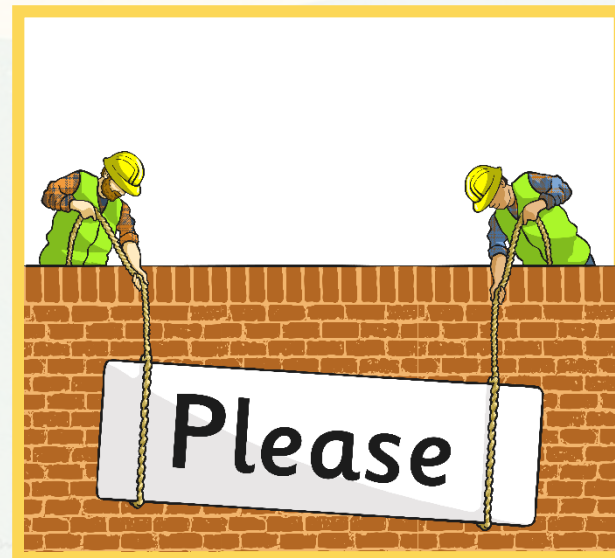
This lesson may call on your knowledge of general comma use but it is primarily about using commas to make the meaning of sentences absolutely clear. On some occasions a comma may be needed even though there is no grammatical rule that requires it.

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

Lower, please!



Lower please!



Slow children crossing!	Slow, children crossing!
Eat Daniel!	Eat, Daniel!
Look at that blue, bearded man.	Look at that blue bearded man.

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!

Meaning of sentences worksheet one

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

Using the worksheet provided, draw pictures to interpret these sentences literally – draw exactly what they say.

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.	

Clarifying the meaning of a sentence Worksheet 2

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.

Now try this!

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. _____

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 'Use commas to clarifying the meaning worksheet 3.'