



Commas

Where do we use them?

Commas separate items in a list.

These items are sometimes real things. For example:

I need some pens, pencils, paper and a calculator before I start my class.

I must buy some eggs, milk, sugar and tea.

These items are sometimes things you do, or places you go.

For example:

Yesterday I went to work, played badminton, had snails for dinner and then went to bed.

I'm going to spend my holiday relaxing sleeping shopping and eating lots of chocolate.

Beware!!!!

- Always use **and** to separate the last two items on your list.
- Make sure you don't use a comma before the word **and** at the end of your list.
- Don't use commas where you should use a full stop. If the words could stand alone as a proper sentence, then you need to put a full stop or a joining word (and, but) and not a comma. For example:

Yesterday I went to work, I walked the dog, I went shopping and I washed the car.



How would we correct this?

Commas mark out the less important part of a sentence.

The car, which was parked by the light, had a dog in the back seat. This sentence is about the car and the dog, not where the car is parked.

Tony, his parents favourite, was given chocolate cake for dinner. This sentence is about how Tony was given chocolate cake for dinner, not that he was his parents favourite child.

A good way to check this use of commas is to see if the sentence still makes sense if you take out the words within the commas. For example:

The car _ had a dog in the back seat.

Tony _ was given chocolate cake for dinner.

Check that the commas are in the right places.

- Eve needed to take wellies, jeans, jumper, and a woolly hat to the firework display.
- Cameron, who smiled a lot, was very good at telling stories.
- When Imogen woke up she brushed her teeth, she washed her face, she got dressed and she ate her breakfast.
- Liam, who was often talking, realised that he needed to listen in order to become a scientist.