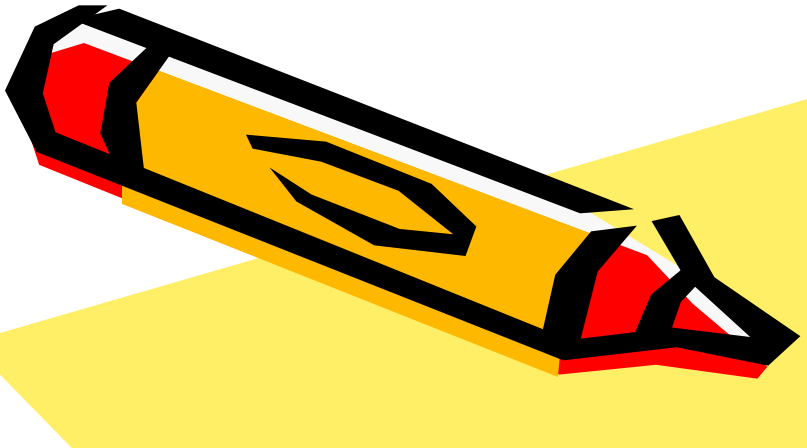
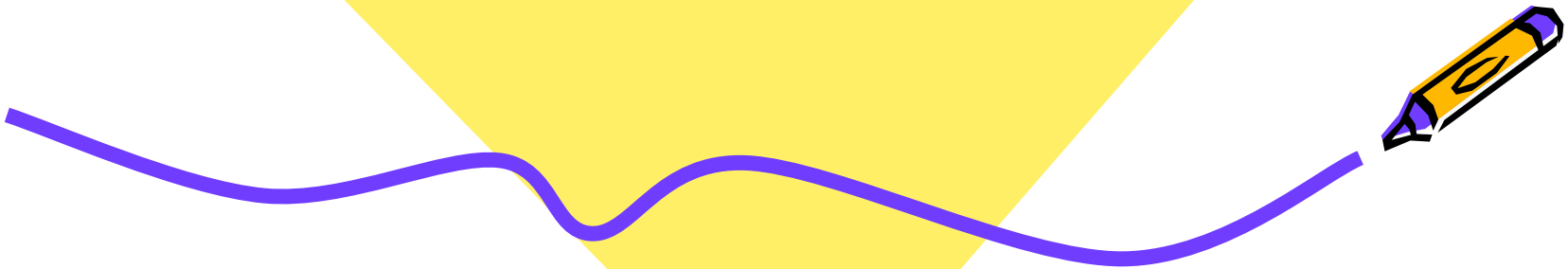
"Let's eat Grandma!"

"Let's eat, Grandma!"

PUNCTUATION SAVES LIVES.

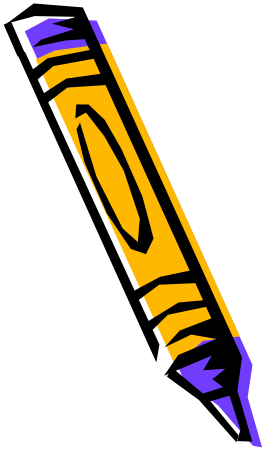


Commas



Commas are used…

1)…to separate items in a list



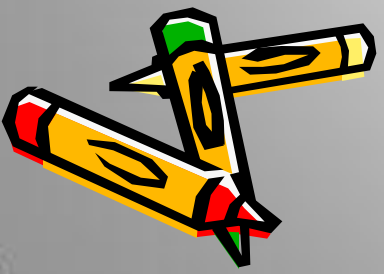
For example:

- We will need hammers, nails and a saw.
- She stopped, stared and ran.
- Sam frightened the cat, terrorised the guinea pig, teased the dog and annoyed the neighbours.

Remember that the last two items in a list are usually joined with the word 'and' (or sometimes 'or') instead of a comma.

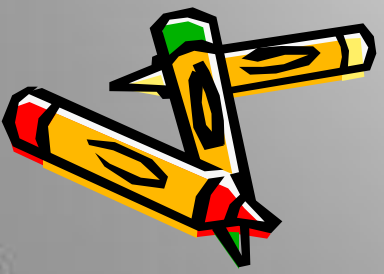
Write out the following, putting in all the commas for lists:

1. I like red green blue and orange.
2. Kate Kim and Abbey joined the team.
3. Don't forget to empty the rubbish vacuum the carpet and clean the windows!
4. Students should concentrate listen and try hard to succeed
5. Would you rather have pizza pasta chips or hot dogs?



Were you right?

1. I like red, green, blue and orange.
2. Kate, Kim and Abbey joined the team.
3. Don't forget to empty the rubbish, vacuum the carpet and clean the windows!
4. Students should concentrate, listen and try hard to succeed
5. Would you rather have pizza, pasta, chips or hot dogs?



2)…to separate main clauses from subordinate clauses

Commas are used to break up longer sentences into smaller parts to make sense by separating main clauses from subordinate clauses.

Clauses

A **main clause** is a sentence that must include a subject and a verb and makes sense on its own, for example:

Susan called loudly.

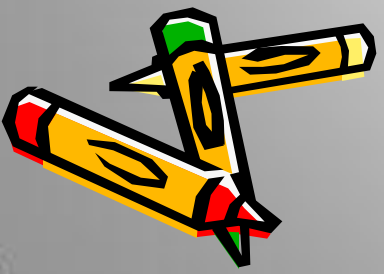
A **subordinate clause** adds extra information to a sentence but would not make sense on its own, for example:

Susan called loudly, ***but no-one could hear her.***

The comma in this sentence separates the two clauses.

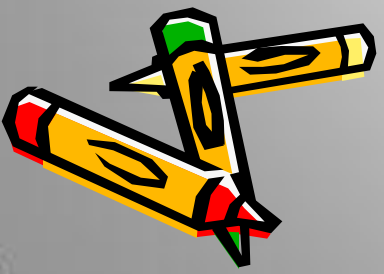
Use commas to separate the clauses in these sentences

- *When he saw the pirate ship on the horizon* the captain gave the alarm.
- *If they are not here by seven* we shall start without them.
- I am *as you can probably see* very unhappy about this.
- Katie ran to her lesson hoping that she wouldn't be told off for arriving late.
- Hoping he looked smart enough Nathan waited nervously for his interview to begin.



Were you right?

- When he saw the pirate ship on the horizon, the captain gave the alarm.
- If they are not here by seven, we shall start without them.
- I am, as you can probably see, very unhappy about this.
- Katie ran to her lesson, hoping that she wouldn't be told off for arriving late.
- Hoping he looked smart enough, Nathan waited nervously for his interview to begin.



3) …to separate two adjectives when the word *and* could be inserted between them

For example:

- He was a strong, healthy man
- The wild, cunning fox crept stealthily through the farmyard

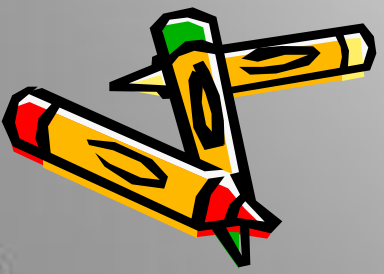
4) …to separate extra information, such as asides or terms of address, from the main part of the sentence

For example:

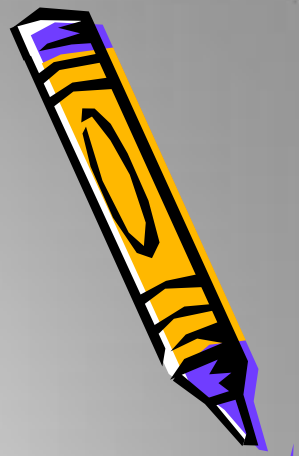
- Paul Mann, our star player, broke his leg in the match on Saturday.
- It's very cold today, isn't it?
- "My dears, I'm delighted to see you."
- "I regret to say, ladies and gentlemen, that our play tonight is cancelled."

Over to you…

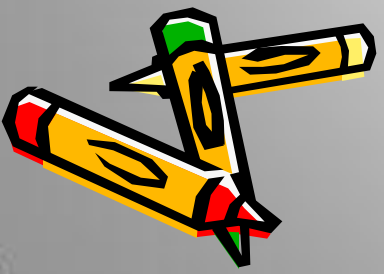
1. Yes I like the car.
2. No it's not too red.
3. I shouldn't eat the cake should I?
4. Well then shall we sign the papers?
5. Oh what a beautiful day!
6. That's a bit harsh isn't it?
7. He said he would arrive today however I don't believe him.
8. Still I can't believe it!
9. The man fell to the floor and as you can well imagine he found himself in considerable pain.
10. I was of course disgusted by his behaviour.



Were you right?



1. Yes, I like the car.
2. No, it's not too red.
3. I shouldn't eat the cake, should I?
4. Well then, shall we sign the papers?
5. Oh, what a beautiful day!
6. That's a bit harsh, isn't it?
7. He said he would arrive today, however I don't believe him.
8. Still, I can't believe it!
9. The man fell to the floor, and as you can well imagine, he found himself in considerable pain.
10. I was, of course, disgusted by his behaviour.



Commas can change the meaning in a sentence:

Write out this sentence using commas:

The old lady collected all sorts of things: silver paper hats clocks and tablecloths.

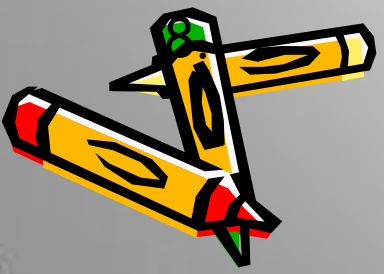
Where did you add your commas?

- The old lady collected all sorts of things: silver, paper, hats, clocks and tablecloths.
- The old lady collected all sorts of things: silver paper, hats, clocks and tablecloths.
- The old lady collected all sorts of things: silver, paper hats, clocks and tablecloths.

Any of these sentences could be correct, depending on what you intended to say.

Applying your knowledge

1. There is nothing absolutely nothing a man cannot forget except himself.
2. "Will you Kate take this man to be your lawfully wedded husband?"
3. Despite being tired Carly stayed up to watch her favourite film.
4. Do you hate running? Well things could change.
5. You may be required to bring a sleeping bag pans warm clothing and a torch.
6. I can go can't I?
7. She was a calm sophisticated lady
8. After we left Grandma Dad and I went to the cinema.



Were you right?

1. There is nothing, absolutely nothing, a man cannot forget except himself.
2. "Will you, Kate, take this man to be your lawfully wedded husband?"
3. Despite being tired, Carly stayed up to watch her favourite film.
4. Do you hate running? Well, things could change.
5. You may be required to bring a sleeping bag, pans, warm clothing and a torch.
6. "I can go, can't I?"
7. She was a calm, sophisticated lady
8. After we left, Grandma, Dad and I went to the cinema.

OR

After we left Grandma, Dad and I went to the cinema.

Summary

Commas:

- indicate a brief pause within a sentence;
- separate items in a list;
- separate adjectives and additional information in sentences;
- break up longer sentences into smaller parts by separating main and subordinate clauses;
- make your meaning clear.