

I. Commas with coordinating conjunctions

Words like “so,” “or,” “but,” and “and” (“SOBA”s) are often used as coordinating conjunctions, meaning with a comma, they can pull together two full sentences.

Use commas to pull together two full sentences with a coordinating conjunction:

- “I write books, and I write plays.”
- “Did you eat breakfast, or did you eat lunch?”
- “She walked to school, but she was late.”
- “We already ate, so we saved some time.”

Remember--do not use commas to separate two items in a series:

- “I write books and plays.”
- “Did you eat breakfast or lunch?”
- “She walked to school but was late.”

The trick: Use your finger to cover the “SOBA” (“so,” “or,” “but,” and “and”) then ask yourself if you have two full sentences. If you do have two sentences, then you do need a comma before the coordinating conjunction. If you don’t have two full sentences, you don’t need a comma.



II. Commas with interrupting elements

An “interrupting element” is a break in the sentence—an unnecessary part of the sentence:

- “An advisor, who is usually a faculty member , will guide students as they choose their classes.”
- “Time management, an important skill for all students , is taught at many colleges.
- “I already told you, Tom , that I’d be away.”

Use commas before and after interrupting elements. You need two of them to work as a pair. Like parentheses, they work together to separate the interrupting element from the rest of the sentence:

- “Time management classes, while not exactly fun, are necessary for some students to succeed.”
- “Sometimes, without even admitting it to themselves , students use time-management strategies they’ve learned in class.”
- “College, while expensive , is a valuable part of most people’s educational plans.”

Spelling: INNOCENCE



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ELMO Practice: Insert commas where necessary.

1. After school today even though I was tired I went to school to the bank and to the store.

2. Although I didn't eat much last night I still wasn't very hungry this morning this afternoon or tonight.

3. Last night even though I wasn't tired I went to bed closed my eyes and counted sheep.

4. For example when I said "You're late" he didn't even look at me talk to me or stop walking.

5. In fact no matter how late you are you should approach the teacher make eye contact and apologize for being late.

6. She said "Well if you're going to stay late even a little while you can wash dishes and dry them."



Conventions 10: Commas with coordinating conjunctions, commas with interrupting elements, “innocence”

Name _____

Conventions Workshop: Commas with Coordinating Conjunctions and Interrupting Elements

“So,” “or,” “but,” and “and” are commonly used to pull together two full sentences. When they do, we call them “SOBA”s (or “coordinating conjunctions”), and we put a comma before them.

BUT, these words are **NOT ALWAYS** used as coordinating conjunctions. Sometimes they’re used to create lists, like this: “I went to the bank, to the school, and to the store.” In this case, we use commas to separate three or more items in a series—**NOT** because the “and” is used as a coordinating conjunction. Similarly, commas are not necessary in this sentence: “I went to the bank but got there too late.” In this sentence, “but” is not used as a coordinating conjunction because it’s not used to pull together two full sentences.

Commas are also needed before and after an interrupting element in a sentence, which is an unnecessary part of the sentence. In this case, you need two commas to work as a pair, setting off the interruption from the rest of the sentence: “Attending class regularly, which is always a good idea, is even more important in college.”

Directions: Insert commas where necessary. Remember that commas are necessary . . .

- 1) to separate three or more items in a list,
- 2) after introductory phrases,
- 3) before and after interrupting elements,
- 4) before words like “so,” “or,” “but,” and “and” (“SOBA”s) when these words are used to pull together two full sentences.

1. She said “The American flag is red white and blue.”
2. In fact orange yellow and blue are my favorite colors.
3. Well I stopped looked and listened to the television yesterday.
4. In other words after lunch will you go to school work or home?
5. He said “Next I plan to arrive on time take some pictures and rush home.”
6. New tires while expensive are necessary when tread wears down on the old ones.



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7. New tires are expensive but can be purchased from discount stores.
8. In fact new tires while expensive can be purchased from discount stores but they shouldn't be purchased without seeing them.
9. However new tires while expensive can be purchased from discount stores but should not be purchased sight-unseen.
10. Can you walk and talk at the same time?
11. Can you walk talk and chew gum but not fall down?
12. Can you walk and talk at the same time and can you listen, too?
13. Write a sentence with commas separating three or more items in a list.

14. Write a sentence with a comma after an introductory phrase AND a comma before a coordinating conjunction like “and,” “but,” “or,” or “so.”

15. Write a sentence using “and” or “but” as something other than a “SOBA” or “coordinating conjunction.” (In other words, use “and” or “but” in a sentence NOT needing a comma.)

16. Write a sentence with commas before and after interrupting elements. Include this week's spelling word in your sentence. (It's the opposite of “guilt.”)

Name _____

Commas: Coordinating Conjunctions (“SOBAs” or “FANBOYS”)

Add commas before coordinating conjunctions (“SOBA”s: So, Or, But, And). Be careful—So, Or, But, and And are NOT always used as coordinating conjunctions. They are only coordinating conjunctions when they pull together two full sentences. When they DO pull together two full sentences, DO insert a comma before the SOBA.

- 1. Today, I’ll go to school and learn a lot.**
- 2. Today, I’ll go to school and I’ll learn a lot.**
- 3. Do you eat sandwiches for lunch or gazpacho soup?**
- 4. Either I eat soup for lunch or I go home after second period.**
- 5. We watch lots of movies but don’t talk about them.**
- 6. We watch lots of movies but we don’t talk about them.**
- 7. Tito didn’t stay late so he didn’t need a ride home.**
- 8. Tito was so late that he needed a ride home.**
- 9. They stay after school quite a bit and ride the activity bus home.**
- 10. They stay after school and don’t like to ride the activity bus home.**
- 11. They stay after school but they don’t like to ride the activity bus home.**



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Directions: Insert commas where necessary.

1. In fact I understand the material however difficult but I failed the test.
2. Indeed the boy is a thief although not a good one and his father is one too.
3. Sadly she will not attend class unless it's English and she won't study.
4. However I like cooking and it allows me to express my creativity explore new menus and delight my family.
5. Well they want to go even if it's expensive but they can't afford the airfare.
6. Obviously you don't know when to come although I've told you twice so just come on Thursday.
7. Strangely Tom an expressive man doesn't want to show affection but he will hug his family.
8. For some reason Elisa who has always been a good student refuses to read the book and she will certainly fail the exam.
9. As a matter of fact she won't read it at all or write about it.
10. In fact she won't read it or write about it no matter how much we beg but she has seen the movie.
11. I mean she must either read the book however boring or she'll fail.
12. Like I said she isn't worried about failing the class her favorite but she should be.
13. However I hope she passes so please encourage her whatever it takes to read it!



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Name _____

Comma Exercise 3

Add commas as needed in the sentences below. If the sentence is correct as it is, write C on the line.

1. ____ He left the scene of the accident and tried to forget that it had happened.
2. ____ Oil which is lighter than water rises to the surface.
3. ____ "Nice" is a word with many meanings and some of them are contradictory.
4. ____ The contractor testified that the house was completed and that the work had been done properly.
5. ____ Some people refuse to go to the zoo because of pity for creatures that must live in small cages.
6. ____ Taxicabs that are dirty are illegal in some cities.
7. ____ The closet contained worn clothes old shoes and dirty hats.
8. ____ For example the uninvited guest wore a tweed suit but didn't wear it well.
9. ____ After surviving this ordeal the trapper felt relieved.
10. ____ The field was safe enough wasn't it?
11. ____ He replied "I have no idea what you mean."
12. ____ After a good washing and grooming the pup looked like a new dog.
13. ____ Because they oppose institutions that force creatures to live in captivity some people refuse to go to the zoo.
14. ____ Men who are bald are frequently the ones who are the most authoritative on the subject of baldness.
15. ____ Vests which were once popular have been out of fashion for several years.
16. ____ As a celestial goddess she regulated the course of the heavenly bodies and controlled the alternating seasons.



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Name _____ (first and last names)

Conventions Quiz 10

Directions: Fill in the blanks with the correct word or punctuation.

1. By now, _____ are _____ of conventions _____ remember.
there/they're/their a lot / alot to/two/too
2. _____ turn to change the oil, _____ get groceries.
It's / Its you're / your than / then
3. _____ skipping school _____, but _____ going with them?
There/They're/Their every day / everyday whose / who's
4. Did those three _____ give the papers to my friend and _____?
woman / women all ready / already I / me
5. Yesterday, I was _____ sick to go, but today, I feel _____, _____.
to/two/too all right / alright mom / Mom
6. My _____ belt is getting too _____ because it has _____
every day / everyday lose / loose fewer / less
holes _____ it should have.
than / then
7. We could _____ eaten _____ lunches, but we _____ full.
of / have to/two/too were / where
8. _____ not going to be _____ to the _____, are you?
Your / You're defiant/definite principle / principal
9. They have a plan, but _____ plan is _____ not going to work.
there/they're/their defiantly / definitely
10. That tall _____ has a new car, but _____ headlights don't work.
woman / women it's / its
11. _____ are the students _____ _____ to leave class early yesterday?
Were / Where who / that chose / choose
12. _____ is standing outside right now?
Who's / Whose mom / Mom

Score _____ / 34



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PUNCTUATION SENTENCES, CONVENTIONS 10 QUIZ

23. For example I didn't like to read long poems or write stories Mom but I did like to read novels.

24. I said "Tom will you read books to me and stories to your nieces your students and your kids?"

25. In fact freshmen sometimes not the most mature do have a lot to learn so we want them to listen.

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