

Commas in a Series and After Introductory Elements

Name: _____

Date: _____

Score: ____ / 10



Quick Review

Use commas to separate three or more items in a series — including the comma BEFORE the final 'and' (the serial or 'Oxford' comma): apples, bananas, and oranges. Also use a comma after introductory words (Yes,/Well,/First,/Suddenly,) and after introductory phrases or clauses that come before the main part of the sentence (After the storm, ___; If you finish early, ___). Do NOT use a semicolon in place of these commas, and do NOT add a comma BEFORE the very first item in a series.

PRACTICE

Choose the best answer.

- Which sentence uses commas correctly?
 - We packed sandwiches, fruit and water, for the picnic.
 - We packed sandwiches; fruit; and water for the picnic.
 - We packed sandwiches, fruit, and water for the picnic.
 - We packed sandwiches fruit and water for the picnic.
- Which sentence is punctuated correctly?
 - After the storm the children ran outside.
 - After the storm, the children ran outside.
 - After, the storm the children ran outside.
 - After the storm; the children ran outside.
- Which sentence is punctuated correctly?
 - Yes, I will help you with your homework.
 - Yes I will help you with your homework.
 - Yes; I will help you with your homework.
 - Yes I will, help you with your homework.
- Which sentence uses commas correctly?
 - The recipe calls for flour sugar eggs, and butter.
 - The recipe calls for flour, sugar, eggs and butter.
 - The recipe calls for, flour, sugar, eggs, and butter.
 - The recipe calls for flour, sugar, eggs, and butter.



5. Which sentence is punctuated correctly?
- A. If you finish early you may read silently.
 - B. If you finish early, you may read silently.
 - C. If, you finish early you may read silently.
 - D. If you finish early; you may read silently.
6. Which sentence is punctuated correctly?
- A. Suddenly, the lights went out in the gym.
 - B. Suddenly the lights went out, in the gym.
 - C. Suddenly the lights, went out in the gym.
 - D. Suddenly the lights went out in the gym.
7. Which sentence is punctuated correctly?
- A. Our team needs cleats, helmets shin guards, and water bottles.
 - B. Our team needs cleats, helmets, shin guards and water bottles.
 - C. Our team needs cleats, helmets, shin guards, and water bottles.
 - D. Our team needs, cleats, helmets, shin guards, and water bottles.
8. Which sentence is punctuated correctly?
- A. Before going home Marcus stopped at the library.
 - B. Before, going home Marcus stopped at the library.
 - C. Before going home; Marcus stopped at the library.
 - D. Before going home, Marcus stopped at the library.
9. Which sentence is punctuated correctly?
- A. Well I think we should leave now.
 - B. Well, I think we should leave now.
 - C. Well; I think we should leave now.
 - D. Well I, think we should leave now.
10. Rewrite this sentence with all the missing commas in the correct places: 'After lunch we walked the dog fed the cat and watered the plants.'

Answer: _____



Answer Keys

- 1 A B C D
- 2 A B C D
- 3 A B C D
- 4 A B C D
- 5 A B C D

- 6 A B C D
- 7 A B C D
- 8 A B C D
- 9 A B C D
- 10

Explanations

1. C	A series of three or more items needs a comma after each item, including before the final 'and' (the Oxford comma). A omits the Oxford comma AND adds a wrong comma before 'for'. B uses semicolons (only used between full clauses, not list items). D omits all the commas.
2. B	An introductory phrase ('After the storm') needs a comma right after it, before the main part of the sentence begins. A forgets the comma. C puts the comma in the wrong spot, after a single word. D uses a semicolon, which separates full sentences, not an intro phrase from its main clause.
3. A	An introductory 'Yes' or 'No' is set off with a comma. B forgets the comma. C uses a semicolon (wrong — semicolons join two complete sentences). D drops a comma in the middle for no reason.
4. D	A series of four items takes a comma after each one, including the Oxford comma before 'and'. A is missing two of the series commas. B omits the Oxford comma. C wrongly puts a comma BEFORE the first item ('for, flour') — never put a comma before the very first item of a series.
5. B	An introductory dependent clause that begins with 'If' needs a comma at the end of the clause, before the main clause. A forgets the comma. C puts a comma after the single word 'If'. D wrongly uses a semicolon between an intro clause and its main clause.
6. A	A single introductory adverb like 'Suddenly' takes a comma after it. B drops the intro comma and adds an unneeded comma before a prepositional phrase. C splits subject from verb with a comma. D forgets the comma entirely.
7. C	Four items in a series take a comma after each, including the Oxford comma before 'and'. A is missing the comma after 'helmets'. B omits the Oxford comma. D adds a wrong comma before the first item ('needs, cleats').
8. D	The introductory phrase 'Before going home' must be followed by a comma. A forgets the comma. B puts a comma after the single word 'Before'. C wrongly uses a semicolon.
9. B	Introductory words like 'Well', 'Yes', 'No', and 'First' are followed by a comma. A forgets it. C uses a semicolon (wrong — semicolons join two complete sentences). D drops a comma between the subject 'I' and verb 'think', which is never correct.
10.	Answer: After lunch, we walked the dog, fed the cat, and watered the plants. Add a comma after the introductory phrase 'After lunch'. Then add commas to separate the three items in the series — including the Oxford comma before 'and'.

