

Teaching Pack

Commas

Cambridge IGCSE™ / IGCSE (9–1)

First Language English






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	Lesson plan
	Teacher's notes
	Lesson resources

Introduction: Commas

This *Teaching Pack* focuses on supporting learners to develop an understanding of the use of commas and to use them correctly in their writing.

The lesson in this pack aims to help learners to use commas effectively in a range of written texts and for different effects. This lesson is designed for learners who have some knowledge of how to punctuate their sentences but who may occasionally use commas instead of full stops at the end of their sentences – known as comma splicing.

This *Teaching Pack* could be used with the *Sentences Teaching Pack* to reinforce learners' understanding of how to punctuate sentences. This may be particularly useful for Paper 2 Directed Writing and Composition or Component 3 Coursework Portfolio components of Cambridge IGCSE First Language English 0500.

In this *Teaching Pack* we have suggested resources you may like to use as well as some worksheets and teacher notes to print off and use in the classroom with your learners.



Lesson plan: Commas

Resources

- **Worksheet 1:** Commas in sentences
- **Worksheet 2:** *Jane Eyre* extract
- **Worksheet 3:** Asian and African elephants
- **Worksheet 4:** Commas quiz

Learning objectives

By the end of the lesson all learners will be able to:

- identify the function of commas in different types of sentences
- use commas effectively and correctly in their own writing for different purposes

Timings

Activity



Starter / Introduction

Task: Distribute [Worksheet 1](#). In pairs learners read the sentences and punctuate them correctly using commas. They can swap their answers with a partner to check their work.

Learners then decide which of their sentences match the purpose e.g:

- commas in lists
- commas to separate clauses in complex sentences
- commas in direct speech
- commas after discourse markers.



Main lesson

Task: Distribute [Worksheet 2](#). Read the text aloud without commas or ask for volunteers to read the text aloud. Learners should work in small groups to decide where the commas should go.

Learners could then join with another group to compare their answers before you reveal the correct answers to the learners. We have included answer sheets to accompany each worksheet. Learners then check their work to see if they are correct.

Encourage a class discussion around the difference between the two texts. Ask learners to consider:


- What was the difference between the first text (without commas) and the second text (with commas) in terms of reading speed?
- Which text was easier to understand? Why?
- What was the effect of the commas on the text?
- Did the commas change the meaning of certain sentences?
- What was the purpose of the commas in the text?



Task: Distribute [Worksheet 3](#). In pairs or small groups, learners read the text and use their knowledge of punctuation to correct the errors.

Lesson plan: *continued*



Timings	Activity
	<p>Plenary</p> <p>Task: Distribute Worksheet 4. Play the comma quiz which allows learners to recap their learning.</p> <p>In pairs, learners record their answers on mini whiteboards to reveal their understanding of how to use commas.</p> <p>or</p> <p>Learners record their answers after each question and then mark another team's answers.</p>



Teacher's notes

Key words / concepts you could highlight during the lesson, or have pre-taught before the lesson:

- **comma splicing** – where commas are used incorrectly in place of full stops at the end of sentences
- **dominant clause** – the main part of a sentence which makes grammatical sense by itself
- **subordinate clause** – a part of a sentence that gives the reader extra information but relies on the dominant clause to make grammatical sense
- **discourse markers** – a word or phrase whose function is to organise writing into segments
- **direct speech** – where the writer records exactly what was said by repeating the actual words of the speaker
- **reported speech** – where the writer reports what was said, usually by summarising the words the speaker says

Text summaries

Jane Eyre is the story of a young orphaned girl who lives with her wicked aunt and cousins. Jane is sent away to a boarding school named Lowood, which is ruled by a cruel principal named Mr. Brocklehurst. Here, her best friend dies after a typhus epidemic but Mr. Brocklehurst also leaves the school as this highlights the poor conditions in the school. After another group of gentlemen take over the school, Jane's life and the school greatly improve and Jane eventually becomes a teacher at the school.

After teaching at the school for two years, Jane is offered a job as a governess at a manor house named Thornfield where she teaches a little girl named Adele. Thornfield is owned by a mysterious man named Mr. Rochester. Jane and Mr. Rochester eventually fall in love and prepare to be married. Whilst Jane and Rochester are in the church, about to become husband and wife, someone who claims that Mr. Rochester is already married interrupts the ceremony.

In this extract, Mr. Rochester takes Jane and the wedding party to the attic where he reveals that his wife is insane and that he has locked her in the attic because she is violent. Bertha (Rochester's wife) is compared to a wild animal to highlight how savage and dangerous she is.

Lesson resources



Worksheet 1: Commas in sentences

Worksheet 2: *Jane Eyre* extract

Worksheet 3: Asian and African elephants

Worksheet 4: Commas quiz



Worksheet 1: Commas in sentences

Exercise 1

Add commas in the appropriate places in the following sentences.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. She scrambled up the slope missed her footing fell heavily on the ground and held her breath. | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;">A and B</div> |
| 2. The main point she kept reminding herself was to concentrate until the competition was over. | <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div> |
| 3. We wanted to go to the concert. Unfortunately there were no more tickets available. | <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div> |
| 4. My friend Harry who is a great swimmer likes to go scuba diving. | <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div> |
| 5. If he could only stay quiet he had a good chance of being ignored by his teacher. | <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div> |
| 6. The wolf scenting its prey scrambled down the slope sending a spray of earth and leaves over the ground. | <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div> |
| 7. The boy knowing it was getting late hurried home. | <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div> |
| 8. If you trust in yourself he explained enthusiastically you will be able to overcome all obstacles. | <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div> |
| 9. The old man who was waiting for the train pulled on his gloves against the cold wind. | <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div> |
| 10. I needed to buy sun-cream sunglasses and sandals for my holiday. | <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div> |

Exercise 2

Now match the correct sentence to the correct purpose, by using the letters below. Think about why the comma was used in the sentence (there may be more than one reason). The first one has been done for you.

- A. The comma separates items in a list.
- B. The comma is used to mark natural pauses in the sentence. This might help the reader to understand the meaning.
- C. The comma is used to mark off a subordinate clause from the dominant clause of the sentence.
- D. The comma marks off a discourse marker from the rest of the sentence.



Worksheet 2: Jane Eyre extract

In this extract from Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre, Jane and Mr. Rochester are due to be married. However, before they can marry one another it is revealed that Mr. Rochester is already married to another woman who he has imprisoned in the attic because she is mentally ill. In this scene, Mr. Rochester reveals his wife to Jane and to the men who have stopped his marriage.

He passed on and ascended the stairs still holding my hand and still beckoning the gentlemen to follow him which they did. We mounted the first staircase passed up the gallery proceeded to the third storey: the low black door opened by Mr. Rochester's master-key admitted us to the tapestried room with its great bed and its pictorial cabinet.

"You know this place Mason" said our guide; "she bit and stabbed you here."

He lifted the hangings from the wall uncovering the second door: this too he opened. In a room without a window there burnt a fire guarded by a high and strong fender and a lamp suspended from the ceiling by a chain. Grace Poole bent over the fire apparently cooking something in a saucepan. In the deep shade at the farther end of the room a figure ran backwards and forwards. What it was whether beast or human being one could not at first sight tell: it grovelled seemingly on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal: but it was covered with clothing and a quantity of dark grizzled hair wild as a mane hid its head and face.

"Good-morrow Mrs. Poole!" said Mr. Rochester. "How are you? and how is your charge to-day?"

"We're tolerable sir I thank you" replied Grace lifting the boiling mess carefully onto the hob: "rather snappish but not 'rageous."

A fierce cry seemed to give the lie to her favourable report: the clothed hyena rose up and stood tall on its hind-feet.

"Ah! sir she sees you!" exclaimed Grace: "you'd better not stay."

"Only a few moments Grace: you must allow me a few moments."

"Take care then sir! — for God's sake take care!"

The maniac bellowed: she parted her shaggy locks from her visage and gazed wildly at her visitors. I recognised well that purple face — those bloated features. Mrs. Poole advanced.

"Keep out of the way" said Mr. Rochester thrusting her aside: "she has no knife now I suppose and I'm on my guard."

"One never knows what she has sir: she is so cunning: it is not in mortal discretion to fathom her craft."

"We had better leave her" whispered Mason.

"Go to the devil!" was his brother-in-law's recommendation.

"Ware!" cried Grace. The three gentlemen retreated simultaneously. Mr. Rochester flung me behind him: the lunatic sprang and grappled his throat viciously and laid her teeth to his cheek: they struggled. She was a big woman in stature almost equalling her husband and corpulent besides: she showed virile force in the contest — more than once she almost throttled him athletic as he was. He could have settled her with a well-planted blow; but he would not strike: he would only wrestle. At last he mastered her arms; Grace Poole gave him a cord and he pinioned them behind her: with more rope which was at hand he bound her to a chair. The operation was performed amidst the fiercest yells and the most convulsive plunges. Mr. Rochester then turned to the spectators: he looked at them with a smile both acrid and desolate.

"That is *my wife*" said he.



Worksheet 3: Asian and African elephants

Read the following text and write in the correct punctuation marks.

African and asian elephants are clearly the same species but there are many differences between them some of these differences include; size: ear shape head shape tusks

The African elephant is significantly larger than the Asian elephant bull or male african elephants can grow up to four metres in height; whereas Asian elephants are never taller than three and a Half metres african elephants are significantly heavier too an asian male elephant weighs between 3000 and 6000 kg whereas an african bull; male; elephant can weigh between 4000 and 7500 kilograms

if you look at the ear shape of the two types of Elephant. you will find significant differences the african elephant has bigger ears which actually look like a map of africa the asian elephant has smaller ears which strangely look rather like a map of india as india occupies a smaller geographical area than africa it seems a freak of nature that the elephants ears not only look like the continents they come from. They also actually correspond to those continents' relative size. With the asian elephant's ears being smaller than their african cousin's

closer examination of the elephants' skulls reveals significant differences the asian elephant has a twin-domed head which has an indentation in the middle the african elephant's head does not have an indentation and in fact the top of the african elephant's skull is a single dome

only some male asian elephants have tusks whereas all african elephants. Male and female. Have tusks the tusks of asian elephants tend to be smaller than those of african elephants

given all these differences the question arises; can asian and african elephants interbreed! In fact. the answer is no because the differences are too great between them there is only one crossbred elephant on record. Which was a bull calf called 'Motty'. Born in Chester Zoo in england in 1978? 'Motty' died aged two weeks old in spite of receiving intensive care and sadly demonstrated that successful interbreeding between asian and african elephants is not possible



Worksheet 4: Commas quiz

Answer **True** or **False** to these statements about the comma:

1. The comma can be used at the end of a sentence as a substitute for a full stop. [True/False]
2. The comma is a long pause. [True/False]
3. The comma is a short pause. [True/False]
4. The comma marks a place where the reader can take a short breath when reading a sentence aloud. [True/False]
5. The comma is used to divide one sentence from the next. [True/False]
6. The comma marks off the main part of a sentence from a subordinate clause. [True/False]
7. The comma helps the reader to see and hear the natural rhythm of a sentence. [True/False]
8. The comma is used in a list to separate items of three or more words in length. [True/False]
9. The comma is used in a list to separate items of one or two words in length. [True/False]
10. The comma is always used within a sentence and can never be used as the final punctuation mark in a sentence. [True/False]



Worksheet 1: Answers

Exercise 1

Add commas in the appropriate places in the following sentences.

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 1. She scrambled up the slope, missed her footing, fell heavily on the ground and held her breath. | A and B |
| 2. The main point, she kept reminding herself, was to concentrate until the competition was over. | C |
| 3. We wanted to go to the concert. Unfortunately, there were no more tickets available. | D |
| 4. My friend Harry, who is a great swimmer, likes to go scuba diving. | C |
| 5. If he could only stay quiet, he had a good chance of being ignored by his teacher. | B and C |
| 6. The wolf, scenting its prey, scrambled down the slope, sending a spray of earth and leaves over the ground. | C |
| 7. The boy, knowing it was getting late, hurried home. | C |
| 8. If you trust in yourself, he explained enthusiastically, you will be able to overcome all obstacles. | C |
| 9. The old man, who was waiting for the train, pulled on his gloves against the cold wind. | C |
| 10. I needed to buy sun-cream, sunglasses and sandals for my holiday. | A |

Exercise 2

Now match the correct sentence to the correct purpose. Think about why the comma was used in the sentence.

- A. The comma separates items in a list.
- B. The comma is used to mark natural pauses in the sentence. This might help the reader to understand the meaning.
- C. The comma is used to mark off a subordinate clause from the dominant clause of the sentence.
- D. The comma separates a discourse marker from the rest of the sentence



Worksheet 2: Answers

In this extract from Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre Jane and Mr. Rochester are due to be married. However before they can marry one another it is revealed that Mr. Rochester is already married to another woman who he has imprisoned in the attic because she is mentally ill. In this scene, Mr. Rochester reveals his wife to Jane and to the men who have stopped his marriage.

He passed on and ascended the stairs, still holding my hand, and still beckoning the gentlemen to follow him, which they did. We mounted the first staircase, passed up the gallery, proceeded to the third storey: the low, black door, opened by Mr. Rochester's master-key, admitted us to the tapestried room, with its great bed and its pictorial cabinet.

"You know this place, Mason," said our guide; "she bit and stabbed you here."

He lifted the hangings from the wall, uncovering the second door: this, too, he opened. In a room without a window, there burnt a fire guarded by a high and strong fender, and a lamp suspended from the ceiling by a chain. Grace Poole bent over the fire, apparently cooking something in a saucepan. In the deep shade, at the farther end of the room, a figure ran backwards and forwards. What it was, whether beast or human being, one could not, at first sight, tell: it grovelled, seemingly, on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal: but it was covered with clothing, and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face.

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"Ah! sir, she sees you!" exclaimed Grace: "you'd better not stay."

"Only a few moments, Grace: you must allow me a few moments."

"Take care then, sir! — for God's sake, take care!"

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"Keep out of the way," said Mr. Rochester, thrusting her aside: "she has no knife now, I suppose, and I'm on my guard."

"One never knows what she has, sir: she is so cunning: it is not in mortal discretion to fathom her craft."

"We had better leave her," whispered Mason.

"Go to the devil!" was his brother-in-law's recommendation.

"Ware!" cried Grace. The three gentlemen retreated simultaneously. Mr. Rochester flung me behind him: the lunatic sprang and grappled his throat viciously, and laid her teeth to his cheek: they struggled. She was a big woman, in stature almost equalling her husband, and corpulent besides: she showed virile force in the contest — more than once she almost throttled him, athletic as he was. He could have settled her with a well-planted blow; but he would not strike: he would only wrestle. At last he mastered her arms; Grace Poole gave him a cord, and he pinioned them behind her: with more rope, which was at hand, he bound her to a chair. The operation was performed amidst the fiercest yells and the most convulsive plunges. Mr. Rochester then turned to the spectators: he looked at them with a smile both acrid and desolate.

"That is *my wife*," said he.



Worksheet 3: *Answers*

African and Asian elephants are clearly the same species but there are many differences between them. Some of these differences include: size, ear shape, head shape, tusks.

The African elephant is significantly larger than the Asian elephant. Bull or male African elephants can grow up to four metres in height whereas Asian elephants are never taller than three and a half metres. African elephants are significantly heavier too. An Asian male elephant weighs between 3000 and 6000 kg whereas an African bull (male) elephant can weigh between 4000 and 7500 kilograms.

If you look at the ear shape of the two types of elephant you will find significant differences. The African elephant has bigger ears which actually look like a map of Africa. The Asian elephant has smaller ears which strangely look rather like a map of India. As India occupies a smaller geographical area than Africa it seems a freak of nature that the elephants' ears not only look like the continents they come from, they also actually correspond to those continents' relative size, with the Asian elephant's ears being smaller than his or her African cousin's.

Closer examination of the elephants' skulls reveals significant differences. The Asian elephant has a twin-domed head, which has an indentation in the middle. The African elephant's head has no such indentation and in fact the top of the African elephant's skull is a single dome.

Only some male Asian elephants have tusks whereas all African elephants, male and female, have tusks. The tusks of Asian elephants tend to be smaller than those of African elephants.

Given all these differences the question arises: can Asian and African elephants interbreed? In fact, the answer is no because the differences are too great between them. There is only one crossbred elephant on record, which was a bull calf called 'Motty' born in Chester Zoo in England in 1978. 'Motty' died aged two weeks old in spite of receiving intensive care and sadly demonstrated that successful interbreeding between Asian and African elephants is not possible.

Worksheet 4: *Answers*



Answer **True** or **False** to these statements about the comma:

1. The comma can be used at the end of a sentence as a substitute for a full stop. [False]
2. The comma is a long pause. [False]
3. The comma is a short pause. [True]
4. The comma marks a place where the reader can take a short breath when reading a sentence aloud. [False]
5. The comma is used to divide one sentence from the next. [False]
6. The comma marks off the main part of a sentence from a subordinate clause. [True]
7. The comma helps the reader to see the natural rhythm of a sentence. [True]
8. The comma is used in a list to separate items of three or more words in length. [True]
9. The comma is used in a list to separate items of one or two words in length. [False]
10. The comma is always used within a sentence and can never be used as the final punctuation mark in a sentence. [True]

Cambridge Assessment International Education
The Triangle Building Shaftsbury Road Cambridge CB2 8EA United Kingdom
t: +44 1223 553554 f: +44 1223 553558
e: info@cambridgeinternational.org www.cambridgeinternational.org

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