

Basic 5: Using commas

| Use commas here | Don't use commas here |
|---|---|
| After an introductory adverbial clause: <i>Although I was tired, I carried on working.</i> | If the main clause comes before the adverbial clause: <i>I carried on working although I was tired.</i> |
| With non-defining relative clauses: <i>My uncle, who spoke fluent Spanish, acted as our interpreter. He also understood Catalan, which was fortunate for us.</i> | With defining relative clauses: <i>He approached a man who was standing outside our hotel. The first thing that I noticed was the scar on his cheek.</i> |
| To introduce direct speech: <i>She said, "There's a good film on at the Odeon." "OK, let's go and see it," I replied.</i> | To introduce indirect speech: <i>I asked if she wanted to eat first. She said that she wasn't feeling hungry.</i> |
| To separate series of words or clauses: <i>We ordered eggs, beans, sausages, mushrooms and fried bread.</i> | When independent clauses are joined by 'and': <i>I told them the news and they were delighted.</i> |
| With multiple adjectives referring to the same noun: <i>It was a wonderful, thrilling, challenging experience.</i> | Before an infinitive phrase: <i>I went to see my bank manager to ask for a loan.</i> |

1 Put a tick ✓ next to the sentences with correct punctuation. Mark all incorrect comma usage and write the correction at the end of the line.

- ☐ 1. The oceanographers reported their findings before they left the Arctic Ocean area. _____
- ☐ 2. They couldn't wait for the excursion to start, fortunately, it was the next day. _____
- ☐ 3. The ice is melting in the Arctic Ocean; average land temperatures are rising; global warming is a reality. _____
- ☐ 4. Environmentalists want to save the polar bears, but it might be too late. _____
- ☐ 5. French, red wines were served at the fundraiser instead of French, white wines. _____
- ☐ 6. Trying to make people aware of the dangers of global warming has been a long, hard struggle. _____
- ☐ 7. People, who are allergic to certain foods, must be vigilant about watching their diets. _____
- ☐ 8. Many voters cling to their prejudices, they refuse to listen to any objections. _____
- ☐ 9. The policeman said to the protesters, "I'm afraid you'll have to accompany us downtown." _____
- ☐ 10. Jack said, that he wanted to make the public aware of the dangers from climate change. _____
- ☐ 11. The President of the United States, who lives in the White House, must entertain many foreign guests. _____
- ☐ 12. There wasn't enough space for all the people who wanted to hear the President's speech. _____
- ☐ 13. Even though the hurricane was coming, people still refused to leave their homes. _____
- ☐ 14. Scientists have been collecting data about global warming for years, and will continue to do so. _____

2 What punctuation is needed – a comma, a semicolon or nothing?

- People should read Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" more often ____ its message is still valid today.
- Voters want honest politicians ____ politicians need money and lobbyists have plenty of money to spend.
- Scientists say ____ that we should prepare ourselves for the effects of global warming.
- All the people ____ that President Obama appointed to his cabinet ____ had to reveal details about their incomes.
- To raise money Obama's campaign staff relied on advertising on radio ____ TV and the Internet.
- John McCain's staff was certain ____ that Obama would choose Hillary Clinton for his vice-president.
- It's been decades ____ since Ronald Reagan was president.
- "Yes we can ____" said Obama's supporters at every rally.
- Most voters can't wait to see ____ if President Obama will be able to fix the economy.
- After the protesters left ____ everyone had to repair the damage that they had caused.
- Barack Obama ____ who took office in 2009 ____ is the 44th President of the United States.

Basic 6: Varying sentence structure → p.82

There are three types of sentence:

• simple sentences

These are made up of an independent clause with one subject and one verb, e.g. *George did too little revision. He failed his physics test. His parents weren't at all pleased.*

• compound sentences

These contain two (or more) independent clauses joined together by a semi-colon or a connecting conjunction/adverb, e.g. *George did too little revision; consequently he failed his physics test and his parents weren't at all pleased.*

• complex sentences

These are made up of an independent clause and at least one subordinate clause. e.g. *Having done too little revision, George failed his physics test, which didn't please his parents at all.*

Use all three types to vary your sentence structure. Don't just use simple sentences. They might help you to make fewer mistakes, but you risk being penalised for poor style. You should at least connect your sentences logically.

1 Study these connectives and use them to complete the sentences below.

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|-------------------------|---|
| • addition: | <i>moreover, furthermore, in addition</i> |
| • contrast: | <i>on the contrary, on the other hand, in contrast, however, nevertheless</i> |
| • emphasis: | <i>indeed, in fact</i> |
| • example: | <i>for example, for instance, in particular</i> |
| • result/effect: | <i>therefore, thus, consequently, as a result</i> |
| • time: | <i>meanwhile, subsequently, thereafter</i> |

- George's final grades weren't very good. _____ he managed to win a scholarship to a college.
- The college has an excellent reputation for sports. _____ it offers a number of sports scholarships.
- George is good at sports. _____ he is the best basketball player in his year.
- His dad is a good sportsman too. _____ he is an excellent golfer.
- He always goes to watch George play. _____ George's mom seldom comes to his games.

2 Study the box, then create complex sentences out of the simple ones below. Try to use a variety of constructions.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| • participle constructions | <i>(Having failed his physics test, George ... Arriving home after the test, he ...)</i> |
| • adverbial clauses of | |
| 1. time | <i>(conjunctions: when, as, after, while, as soon as, before, until/till, since)</i> |
| 2. reason | <i>(conjunctions: as, since, because)</i> |
| 3. condition | <i>(conjunctions: if, even if, unless)</i> |
| 4. concession/contrast | <i>(conjunctions: although, though, even though, while, whereas)</i> |
| 5. purpose/result | <i>(conjunctions: so (that), so/such ... that)</i> |
| • relative clauses | <i>(defining: The college which George attends is in New Jersey; non-defining: George, whose parents aren't rich, won a scholarship there; commenting: He landed on his feet, which was more than he deserved.)</i> |

- My sister isn't allowed to drive. She borrowed Dad's car. She caused an accident.

- She left school. She didn't go to the university. She joined the army.

- One day she stole a car. She got caught. She went to jail. Mom was devastated.

- It started to rain. I didn't want to go out any more. I stayed in. I watched a movie on TV.

- Mr Jack wants me to try for Yale. He is my history teacher. He thinks I'm good enough to get in.

- I entered the bank. I spotted a man. His strange behaviour told me that something was wrong.
