COMMAS

Exercise 1: Compound Sentences

**Directions**: In the following sentences, insert commas where they are needed.

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| **Example** | I’m interested in sound**,** so I recently read several books about it. |

1. The books were informative but I learned even more in my science class.
2. Big speakers called woofers make low sounds and small speakers called tweeters make high sounds.
3. Sound comes from something moving yet you can’t always see the movement.
4. Air carries vibrations to your ears and then you hear sounds.
5. Most hearing-impaired people can hear some sounds and they can feel the vibrations.

Exercise 2: Introductory Elements

**Directions:** Add introductory commas where they are needed in the following sentences. Can you identify whether the introductory element, if any, is a clause, phrase, or word?

\_\_\_\_ 1. To give Jane a good look at the university Mr. Benson drove up for the Day on Campus.

\_\_\_\_ 2. Since the dog had started to run a way we had to scramble to catch him.

\_\_\_\_ 3. Of course the movie that I had rushed to see didn't start on time.

\_\_\_\_ 4. Her secondhand car was in excellent condition when she bought it.

\_\_\_\_ 5. As I mentioned the rules can be broken occasionally.

\_\_\_\_ 6. Having decided to eat only natural foods he had to give up all of his favorite junk food snacks.

\_\_\_\_ 7. To estimate the costs he consulted a repairman by phone.

\_\_\_\_ 8. To succeed in politics is not necessarily desirable.

\_\_\_\_ 9. Making up his mind quickly Jared ordered lasagna while we were still reading the menu.

\_\_\_\_ 10. However he tried to use the bottle opener it wouldn't work.

Exercise 3: Nonessential Word Groups

**Directions:** Identify the nonessential words, phrases, or clauses in the following sentences and add the appropriate punctuation.

1. Patterson Tower the recently completed office building is a monument to concrete ugliness.

2. The movie that I wanted to see is no longer playing.

3. Each person who enters the contest must send in two box tops.

4. John decided nonetheless not to buy the car.

5. The Mississippi River which once flowed north into Hudson Bay flows south into the Gulf of Mexico.

6. Your cat watching the dog intently walked carefully away.

7. The cat that was watching the dog most intently walked carefully away.

8. TV commercials sometimes the most entertaining parts of a program are essentially flashy corporate propaganda.

9. The dam project which many in the government consider to be a sign of national strength will destroy hundreds of villages and vast areas of wildlife habitat along the river banks.

10. The free-jazz musician Sun Ra claimed to be from Saturn.

Exercise 4: Items in Series

Directions: Use commas to separate items in a series.

1. To make her famous muffins, Paulette bought fresh broccoli baker's chocolate flour sugar and eggs.

2. After Chad clutched his heart swooned and fell to the floor, Mrs. Borglum nudged him with her foot, ordering him to the front of the class to make his speech.

3. When Harold saw his girlfriend Gloria across the crowded airport, he sprinted toward her, leaping over luggage colliding with travelers and dodging potted palms.

4. My dog Floyd bolts under the bed whenever thunder booms strangers knock on the door or I reach for the flea shampoo.

Exercise 5: Quotations

**Directions**: In the following sentences with direct quotations put in commas wherever they are needed.

1. “Mary is trying hard in school this semester” her father said.

2. “No” the taxi driver said curtly “I cannot get you to the airport in fifteen minutes”.

3.”I believe” Jack remarked “that the best time of year to visit Europe is in the spring. At least that's what I read in a book entitled *Guide to Europe*.”

4. She asked “Is *Time* a magazine you read regularly?”

5. When did Roosevelt say “We have nothing to fear but fear itself?”

Apostrophes

Exercise 6

Directions: Punctuate the following sentences with apostrophes according to the rules for using the apostrophe.

1. Whos the partys candidate for vice president this year?

2. The fox had its right foreleg caught securely in the traps jaws.

3. Our neighbors car is an old Chrysler, and its just about to fall apart.

4. In three weeks time well have to begin school again.

5. Whenever I think of the stories I read as a child, I remember Cinderellas glass slipper and Snow Whites wicked stepmother.

6. We claimed the picnic table was ours, but the Smiths children looked so disappointed that we found another spot.

7. Its important that the kitten learns to find its way home.

8. She did not hear her childrens cries.

9. My address has three 7s, and Tims phone number has four 2s.

10. Didnt he say when he would arrive at Arnies house?

11. I found myself constantly putting two cs in the word process.

12. Johns 69 Ford is his proudest possession.

Semicolons

Exercise 7: Independent Clauses

**Directions:** Each of the following sentences needs a semicolon.

1. Many companies make sugar-free soft drinks, which are flavored by synthetic chemicals the drinks usually contain only one or two calories per serving.

2. The artist preferred to paint in oils he did not like watercolors.

3. The computer could perform millions of operations in a split second however, it could not think spontaneously.

4. The snowstorm dumped twelve inches of snow on the interstate subsequently, the state police closed the road.

5. In the first place, it was snowing too hard to see the road in the second place, we had no chains.

Exercise 8: Lists with Commas

**Directions:** Replace commas with semicolons where necessary.

1. There are basically two ways to write: with a pen or pencil, which is inexpensive and easily accessible, or by computer and printer, which is more expensive but quick and neat.

2. I have been to Newcastle, Carlisle, and York in the North, Bristol, Exeter, and Portsmouth in the South, and Cromer, Norwich, and Lincoln in the East.

3. The pirate ship *Dophin’s Revenge* called at Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Nassau, Bahamas, and Kingston, Jamaica.

4. The officers of *Dophin’s Revenge* were Arabela Diaz, Captain, Cedric Cheboi, first mate, and “Pirate Jack” Manninen, cook.

5. All of the dastardly pirates had signed on for the same reasons: to sail the seven seas, especially the seas that were more fun than others, to drink a significant, yet finite, amount of grog, and, more important than anything else, to get rich, partially through stealing treasure chests, but also through clever insider trading and underhanded business practices.

Quotation Marks

Exercise 9

**Directions**: In the following sentences put in quotation marks wherever they are needed.

1. My French professor told me that my accent is abominable.

2. Flannery O'Connor probably got the title of one of her stories from the words of the old popular song, A Good Man Is Hard to Find.

3. It seems to me that hip and cool are words that are going out of style.

4. Yesterday, John said, This afternoon I'll bring back your book *Conflict in the Middle East*; however, he did not return it.

5. Can you believe, Dot asked me, that it has been almost five years since we've seen each other?

6. A Perfect Day for Bananafish is, I believe, J. D. Salinger's best short story.

7. Certainly, Mr. Martin said, I shall explain the whole situation to him. I know that he will understand.