

FOR THE QUIZ: Know the rules! You will be asked to complete a similar exercise!

EXERCISE 1

Directions: Insert a comma where needed in the following sentences. Then, explain why the commas you inserted were necessary in the space below each sentence. "Because it sounds like there should be a comma," is not a good enough reason. You need to know the rule!

1. The kids' Halloween bags were full of quarters, peanuts, gum, and candy bars.

Commas separate items in a list.

2. Opal has evening classes on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

Commas separate items in a list.

3. Carrying her popcorn, Sylvia looked for an empty seat in the theatre.

Commas set off introductory phrases (introductory participle phrase)

4. After she read the Harry Potter books, Yoki began calling her young brothers and sisters muggles.

Commas set off introductory clauses (dependent clause)

5. That pizza, the one with the broccoli and mushroom toppings, is the best I have ever eaten.

Commas set off non-essential information (appositive phrase)

6. Mata Hari, a famous spy, reportedly charged at least \$7,500 per job.

Commas set off non-essential information (appositive phrase)

7. My father wanted to attend college, but his family did not have enough money.

Commas come before coordinating conjunctions that connect two sentences.

8. Bad weather destroyed much of last year's orange crop, so the price of orange juice is high this year.

Commas come before coordinating conjunctions that connect two sentences.

9. "You look as if you've seen a ghost," my brother remarked when he saw the scared expression on my face.

Commas set off dialogue tags.

10. "All I want," said Jeff wearily, "is to crawl into bed and stay there for a week."

Commas set off dialogue tags

EXERCISE 2

Directions: Correct the comma errors in the paragraph below. You may need to insert commas and remove unnecessary commas to correct the paragraph.

Edgar Allan Poe, the famous American short story writer, died in 1849. He was drunk, alone, and friendless at his death. His family purchased a tombstone for him, but it was smashed on its way to the cemetery by a runaway freight train. Because his family could not afford another tombstone, Edgar Allan Poe was buried in an unmarked grave. A group of Baltimore teachers decided to raise money for a tombstone. They held fundraisers and asked for donations. After ten long years, they had finally raised the \$1,000 they needed. When the press found out about the fundraiser, H. L. Mencken, a writer for the *NY Times*, wrote, "During all this time, not a single American author of position gave the project any financial aid." The Baltimore teachers made it possible for teachers, students, or anyone who admires Poe's work to visit his grave. Twenty-six years after his death, Edgar Allan Poe finally had a tombstone bearing his name and honoring his memory.