

KS3 English Quiz - Punctuation (Commas to Separate Clauses) 01 (Questions)

Commas act as a "pause for breath" in English and help give structure to sentences. Use commas to separate clauses from the rest of the sentence. Clauses which appear at the beginning of a sentence should be followed by a comma, for example: "When I phoned him, he read me his shopping list." If we were to reorder that sentence, the comma would no longer be necessary: "He read me his shopping list when I phoned him." These types of clauses are known as subordinate or dependent clauses and often begin with words such as "although", "while", "when" and "despite", among many other examples.

Sometimes clauses or phrases appear in the middle of a sentence and then a pair of bracketing commas is necessary, for instance: "The rain, which had poured incessantly since Monday, stopped without warning and the sun shone brilliantly." As you can see, the basic sentence would be "The rain stopped without warning and the sun shone brilliantly." By using a pair of bracketing commas, you can add extra information in a way that makes sense to your reader.

Practise your punctuation skills with this quiz on commas.

1. Select the correctly punctuated sentence.
When I telephoned him he read me his shopping list.

- When I telephoned him he read me, his shopping list.
- When I telephoned him, he read me his shopping list.
- When I telephoned, him he read me his shopping list.
- When, I telephoned him he read me his shopping list.

2. Select the correctly punctuated sentence.
When the bell rang the pupils left the school quickly.

- When the bell rang the pupils, left the school quickly.
- When the bell rang, the pupils left the school quickly.
- When the bell, rang, the pupils left the school quickly.
- When, the bell rang the pupils left the school quickly.

3. Select the correctly punctuated sentence.
Grey clouds now filling the sky we decided to move on.

- Grey clouds now filling the sky we decided to move on.
- Grey clouds now filling the sky we decided, to move on.
- Grey clouds now filling the sky, we decided to move on.
- Grey clouds, now filling the sky we decided to move on.

4. Select the correctly punctuated sentence.
While the choir rehearsed I listened to the singing.

- While the choir rehearsed I listened to the, singing.
- While the choir rehearsed I listened, to the singing.
- While the choir rehearsed, I listened to the singing.
- While, the choir rehearsed I listened to the singing.

5. Select the correctly punctuated sentence.
The player who joined the club today won the game.

- The player who joined the club today won the game.
- The player who joined the club today won, the game.
- The player, who joined the club today won the game.
- The player, who joined the club today, won the game.

6. Select the correctly punctuated sentence.
Although I hit the ball hard I was beaten by him.

- Although I hit the ball hard, I was beaten by him.
- Although I hit the ball, hard I was beaten by him.
- Although I hit, the ball hard I was beaten by him.
- Although, I hit the ball hard I was beaten by him.

7. Select the correctly punctuated sentence.

When I have practised consistently I win games too.

- When I have practised consistently I win, games too.
- When I have practised consistently, I win games too.
- When I have practised, consistently I win games too.
- When, I have practised consistently I win games too.

8. Select the correctly punctuated sentence.

The black dog which had brown ears caught the ball.

- The black dog which had brown ears caught the ball.
- The black dog, which had brown ears caught the ball.
- The black dog, which had brown ears caught, the ball.
- The black dog, which had brown ears, caught the ball.

9. Select the correctly punctuated sentence.

The tall man who wore spectacles dropped the ball.

- The tall man, who, wore spectacles dropped the ball.
- The tall man who wore, spectacles dropped the ball.
- The tall man, who wore spectacles dropped the ball.
- The tall man, who wore spectacles, dropped the ball.

10. Select the correctly punctuated sentence.

When I looked out of the window earlier it was sunny.

- When I looked out of the window earlier it was sunny.
- When I looked out of the window earlier, it was sunny.
- When I looked, out of the window earlier it was sunny.
- When, I looked out of the window earlier it was sunny.

KS3 English Quiz - Punctuation (Commas to Separate Clauses) 01 (Answers)

1. **Select the correctly punctuated sentence.**
When I telephoned him he read me his shopping list.

- When I telephoned him he read me, his shopping list.
- When I telephoned him, he read me his shopping list.
- When I telephoned, him he read me his shopping list.
- When, I telephoned him he read me his shopping list.

It helps to read the sentence aloud!

2. **Select the correctly punctuated sentence.**
When the bell rang the pupils left the school quickly.

- When the bell rang the pupils, left the school quickly.
- When the bell rang, the pupils left the school quickly.
- When the bell, rang, the pupils left the school quickly.
- When, the bell rang the pupils left the school quickly.

"When the bell rang" is an adverbial clause adding information

3. **Select the correctly punctuated sentence.**
Grey clouds now filling the sky we decided to move on.

- Grey clouds now filling the sky we decided to move on.
- Grey clouds now filling the sky we decided, to move on.
- Grey clouds now filling the sky, we decided to move on.
- Grey clouds, now filling the sky we decided to move on.

Separate the clause from the rest of the sentence with a comma

4. **Select the correctly punctuated sentence.**
While the choir rehearsed I listened to the singing.

- While the choir rehearsed I listened to the, singing.
- While the choir rehearsed I listened, to the singing.
- While the choir rehearsed, I listened to the singing.
- While, the choir rehearsed I listened to the singing.

"While the choir rehearsed" is an example of a subordinate clause

5. **Select the correctly punctuated sentence.**
The player who joined the club today won the game.

- The player who joined the club today won the game.
- The player who joined the club today won, the game.
- The player, who joined the club today won the game.
- The player, who joined the club today, won the game.

The phrase "who joined the club today" adds extra information describing the player

6. **Select the correctly punctuated sentence.**
Although I hit the ball hard I was beaten by him.

- Although I hit the ball hard, I was beaten by him.
- Although I hit the ball, hard I was beaten by him.
- Although I hit, the ball hard I was beaten by him.
- Although, I hit the ball hard I was beaten by him.

A comma should always follow subordinate clauses which begin sentences

7. **Select the correctly punctuated sentence.**
When I have practised consistently I win games too.

- When I have practised consistently I win, games too.
- When I have practised consistently, I win games too.
- When I have practised, consistently I win games too.
- When, I have practised consistently I win games too.

The comma separates the subordinate clause from the rest of the sentence

8. **Select the correctly punctuated sentence.**
The black dog which had brown ears caught the ball.

- The black dog which had brown ears caught the ball.
- The black dog, which had brown ears caught the ball.
- The black dog, which had brown ears caught, the ball.
- The black dog, which had brown ears, caught the ball.

"Which had brown ears" is a phrase describing the dog

9. Select the correctly punctuated sentence.
The tall man who wore spectacles dropped the ball.

- The tall man, who, wore spectacles dropped the ball.
- The tall man who wore, spectacles dropped the ball.
- The tall man, who wore spectacles dropped the ball.
- The tall man, who wore spectacles, dropped the ball.

The bracketing commas separate "who wore spectacles" from the rest of the sentence

10. Select the correctly punctuated sentence.
When I looked out of the window earlier it was sunny.

- When I looked out of the window earlier it was sunny.
- When I looked out of the window earlier, it was sunny.
- When I looked, out of the window earlier it was sunny.
- When, I looked out of the window earlier it was sunny.

"When I looked out of the window earlier" adds information to "it was sunny".