

## Commas with Compound Sentences

- 14h.** Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction (*and, but, for, nor, or, so, or yet*) when it joins independent clauses in a compound sentence.

**REMINDER** ▶ An *independent clause* is a group of words that a) has a subject and a verb and b) can stand alone as a sentence.

**EXAMPLE** Mr. Suzuki played the piano. [*Mr. Suzuki* is the subject, and *played* is the verb. The clause can stand alone as a sentence.]

A *compound sentence* is made of two or more independent clauses.

**EXAMPLES** Mr. Suzuki played the piano, **and** Jacob and Sarah played guitars and sang. [The compound sentence consists of two independent clauses joined by a comma and the word *and*.]

Michael usually plays with the group, **but** he was sick on the day of the performance. [The compound sentence consists of two independent clauses joined by a comma and the word *but*.]

We could go to a movie tonight, **or** we could stay home and listen to CDs. [The compound sentence consists of two independent clauses joined by a comma and the word *or*.]

**EXERCISE A** Add commas where they are needed in each of the following compound sentences.

- Examples**
- The forest was dark and damp, but we found a clearing for our campsite. [The first independent clause, *The forest was dark and damp*, and the second independent clause, *we found a clearing for our campsite*, are joined by a comma and the word *but*.]
  - We couldn't gather wood, so we cooked dinner on a small campstove. [The first independent clause, *We couldn't gather wood*, and the second independent clause, *we cooked dinner on a small campstove*, are joined by a comma and the word *so*.]
- My dad can usually repair anything but a minor leak turned into a major crisis. [Where does the first independent clause end and the second begin?]
  - The kitchen faucet had been dripping for a week so he drove to the hardware store for supplies. [Where does the first independent clause end and the second begin?]
  - He turned off the water supply first and then he began to loosen the faucet with a wrench.
  - Unfortunately, the old faucet was rusted and it broke in half.
  - Dad did not want to drive back to the hardware store nor did he want to spend money on a new faucet.
  - The store was closing yet the owner helped Dad find the parts.
  - Dad installed the new faucet carefully for it had cost a lot of money.

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8. He opened the cabinet and turned on the water and then disaster struck.
9. Water shot out of the pipe but Dad quickly turned it off.
10. Dad was frustrated and soaking wet so he called a plumber.

**EXERCISE B** Add commas where they are needed in each of the following compound sentences.

- Examples**
1. I always order soup or noodles at my favorite restaurant, and I am never disappointed. [The first independent clause, *I always order soup or noodles at my favorite restaurant*, and the second independent clause, *I am never disappointed*, are joined by a comma and the word *and*.]
  2. I have learned to hold a spoon in my left hand and chopsticks in my right hand, but sometimes I still feel awkward. [The first independent clause, *I have learned to hold a spoon in my left hand and chopsticks in my right hand*, and the second independent clause, *sometimes I still feel awkward*, are joined by a comma and the word *but*.]
11. My sister orders chicken with broccoli but she doesn't like sticky rice. [Where does the first independent clause end and the second begin?]
  12. Leo makes wonderful enchiladas yet he never uses a cookbook. [Where does the first independent clause end and the second begin?]
  13. Melba is a vegetarian so she always brings her lunch to school.
  14. Thomas enjoys Italian food and his favorite dish is eggplant parmesan with extra garlic.
  15. Roderick and his four-year-old sister Tara would not eat the shrimp so they had second helpings of rice and vegetables.
  16. Should I choose pork with cabbage or should I try the chicken with snow peas?
  17. The chicken baked with curried rice tasted wonderful yet it was easy to prepare.
  18. He didn't have a snack this afternoon for he wanted to save his appetite for dinner.
  19. The desserts look tempting but I'd rather have a piece of fruit.
  20. We could sit at the table near the window or we could eat outside on the patio.

# Commas with Sentence Interrupters and Introductory Elements

## Sentence Interrupters

**14i.** Use commas to set off an expression that interrupts a sentence.

Interrupters often add extra information to a sentence. Some interrupters come at the beginning of a sentence; some come in the middle; and some come at the end. Interrupters are separated from the rest of the sentence with commas.

**EXAMPLES** **Karla,** can you hear thunder in the distance? [The word *Karla* interrupts the rest of the sentence, so it is followed by a comma.]

Jennifer, **who always does her homework,** did well on the final exam. [The added information *who always does her homework* interrupts the sentence. A comma is placed before and after the interrupter.]

I promised the dentist that I would floss my teeth more, **of course.** [The added information *of course* interrupts the sentence. A comma is placed before the interrupter.]

**EXERCISE A** The following sentences contain sentence interrupters. Punctuate the interrupters correctly by adding the necessary commas.

**Examples** 1. The cat, happy to be inside, curled up to sleep. [The added information *happy to be inside* interrupts the sentence, so it is set off by commas.]

2. Mrs. Vo, my math teacher, was voted teacher of the year! [The added information *my math teacher* interrupts the sentence, so it is set off by commas.]

1. Beverly chose to write about politics her favorite topic. [What extra information about politics interrupts the sentence?]
2. Of course this will be your last opportunity. [What words interrupt the sentence?]
3. Tammy who is only five feet tall scored the final points.
4. The old elevator the one with polished brass doors rattled as it descended.
5. John F. Kennedy the thirty-fifth president of the United States was assassinated on November 22, 1963.
6. My plan however is to become a doctor.
7. The Japanese art of flower arranging *ikebana* requires study and practice.
8. Are you going to the store Phillip?
9. Craig a master archer took careful aim.
10. The trees have been infected by oak wilt a deadly fungus.

## Introductory Elements

### 14j. Use a comma after certain introductory elements.

Introductory elements are always at the beginning of a sentence, and they are set off from the rest of the sentence by a comma. An introductory element may be a word, a phrase, or a clause.

**EXAMPLES** **Oh,** I would really like to see that movie! [The introductory word *Oh* is followed by a comma.]

**In front of all her friends and family,** Sonya played her solo perfectly. [The introductory phrase *In front of all her friends and family* is followed by a comma.]

**Looking out the window,** she saw a rainbow in the sky. [The introductory phrase *Looking out the window* is followed by a comma.]

**After you take out the trash,** please wash your hands. [The introductory clause *After you take out the trash* is followed by a comma.]

**EXERCISE B** The following sentences contain introductory elements. Punctuate the sentences correctly by adding necessary commas.

- Examples** 1. Splashing and shouting with joy, the children ran into the waves. [The introductory phrase *Splashing and shouting with joy* is followed by a comma.]
2. Before we went to the library, we ate lunch at home. [The introductory clause *Before we went to the library* is followed by a comma.]
11. No I don't think you should paint your room dark purple. [Where does the introductory material end?]
12. After a long day at school I sometimes like to take a short nap. [Where does the introductory material end?]
13. Eager to meet the new girl in class Crystal pretended to need a pencil.
14. In one part of the city the houses are more than one hundred years old.
15. To finish the project on time Jody worked all weekend.
16. Whenever Jack goes to the swimming pool he always puts on sunscreen.
17. Why I didn't know you would be in this class, too!
18. When the rain started Carol realized her book was still outside.
19. Before we looked at the exhibits the curator told us about the museum's collections.
20. Yes everyone has turned in a permission slip.

# Semicolons and Colons

## Semicolons

- 14l.** Use a semicolon between independent clauses in a sentence when they are not joined by *and*, *but*, *for*, *nor*, *or*, *so*, or *yet*.

**EXAMPLE** I enjoy swimming; my brother likes bicycle riding.

Independent clauses should be joined by a semicolon only if they are closely related. If the clauses are not closely related, then they should remain separate sentences.

**EXAMPLES** I got a new tennis racket for my birthday; my twin brother got a new bike. [These two sentences can be joined with a semicolon because they are closely related. Both sentences identify birthday presents.]

I like to play tennis. My brother borrowed my new tennis racket. [These two sentences should not be joined with a semicolon. Even though they both mention tennis, the sentences are not about the same thing.]

**EXERCISE A** Decide if the independent clauses are closely related and can be joined by a semicolon in each of the following sentences. If the sentences can be joined by a semicolon, insert a semicolon on the line between the two clauses. If the clauses should not be joined by a semicolon, insert a period on the line.

**Example 1.** Our rowing team won first place \_\_\_\_\_; the soccer team came in dead last. [The two sentences are closely related and can be joined by a semicolon.]

- I like tea \_\_\_\_\_ I don't like coffee. [Are the sentences closely related? Do they provide the same kind of information?]
- Rory likes biographies \_\_\_\_\_ LaCresha prefers mysteries.
- LaCresha likes mysteries \_\_\_\_\_ Rory lost his book.
- Thor is the Norse god of thunder \_\_\_\_\_ Neptune is the Roman god of the sea.
- Neptune is the Roman god of the sea \_\_\_\_\_ Jonathan likes mythology.

## Colons

- 14o.** Use a colon before a list of items, especially after expressions like *as follows* or *the following*.

**EXAMPLE** Tommy has four items in his pocket: a note from his teacher, two rocks, and a cricket. [The colon introduces a list of the items in Tommy's pocket.]

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**EXERCISE B** Insert colons where they are needed in the following sentences.

**Example 1.** The members of the crew are as follows: captain, co-pilot, and flight attendants.

[The expression *as follows* and the colon introduce the list of the crew members.]

6. I bought the following items at the grocery store milk, bread, lettuce, and avocados. [Where does the list begin?]
7. Michael shopped for new school supplies a binder, pens, a calculator, and a package of notebook paper.
8. Here's a list of things to do on a rainy day read, take a nap, go to the library, clean your room.
9. Among the plants in Virginia's garden are the following tomatoes, onions, peppers, and beans.
10. Everyone needs to bring one of these food items to the potluck dinner vegetables, fruit, dessert, salad, bread, or a casserole.

**14r.** Use a colon in certain conventional situations.

Whenever you write the time, always use a colon between the hour and the minute.

**EXAMPLES** 5:30 P.M.      10:00 A.M.

Use a colon after the salutation of a business letter.

**EXAMPLES** Dear Representative Jones:      To Whom It May Concerns:

Use a colon between chapter and verse in Biblical references and between titles and subtitles.

**EXAMPLES** Proverbs 11:28 [11 is the chapter number, and 28 is the verse.]

*What Einstein Didn't Know: Scientific Answers to Everyday Questions* [What Einstein Didn't Know is the title. *Scientific Answers to Everyday Questions* is the subtitle.]

**EXERCISE C** Insert colons where they are needed in the following items.

**Example 1.** The computer class starts at 10:45 A.M. [A colon separates the hour and the minutes in expression of time.]

11. Dear Ms. Kline [What should follow the salutation of a business letter?]
12. *An Anthropologist at Work Writings of Ruth Benedict*
13. Dear Sir or Madam
14. I usually wake up by 6 30 A.M.
15. Today's first reading is Genesis 9 12–17.