

Grades
5-9

All About
Punctuation

THE COMMA





THE DARING ENGLISH TEACHER

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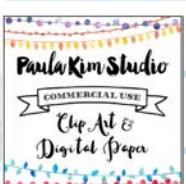
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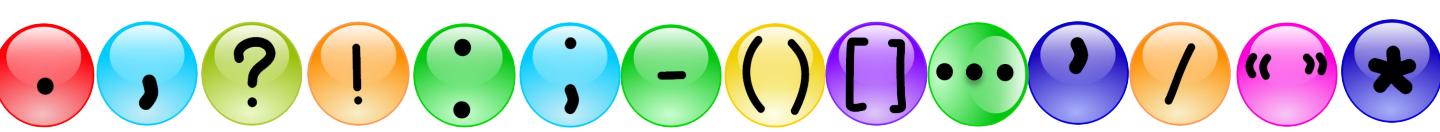
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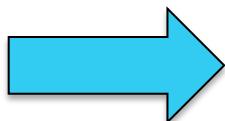
Student Reference Sheets

HANDOUTS



There are two reference sheets/handouts in this resource.

1. The first handout is an 8.5 x 11 color poster for your classroom.
2. The second reference sheet is a chart that contains comma rules and examples. Encourage students to keep this handout in their notebook.
3. **NEW:** Student reference bookmarks.
4. **NEW:** Student doodle note page. Have students complete these doodle notes as they review the presentation.



Teaching Tip:

Before displaying the poster or handing out the student reference sheet, you might want to administer the pretest to assess your students' prior knowledge.

COMMA RULES

1. Separate items in a list or series

I want to play soccer, baseball, and basketball.

2. Set apart dialogue from narration

She said, "I like you."

3. Set apart dependent and independent clauses.

When the alarm goes off, it is time to wake up.

4. Conjoin two independent clauses when used with a coordinating conjunction

She likes tomatoes, but she doesn't like ketchup.

5. Set apart parenthetical elements

My friends, Laura and Amy, are visiting today.

6. Set apart coordinating adjectives

They traveled down the long, lonely path.

7. Used in numerals and dates

July 4, 1776

1,000,000

A Student's Guide to **THE COMMA**

Symbol	Rule	Example
,	Separate items in a list or series	I want to play soccer, baseball, and basketball.
,	Set apart dialogue from narration	She said, "I like you."
,	Set apart dependent and independent clauses	When the alarm goes off, it is time to wake up.
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,	Set apart coordinating adjectives	They traveled down the long, lonely path.
,	Used in numerals and dates	July 4, 1776 1,000,000

WARNING!

Don't use a comma to join two independent clauses. This is a comma splice.

INCORRECT: It is getting late, we need to go home.

CORRECT: It is getting late. We need to go home.

CORRECT: It is getting late; we need to go home.

CORRECT: It is getting late, so we need to go home.

The Comma BOOKMARK

Rule

Example

• Separate items in a list or series	I want to play soccer, baseball, and basketball.
• Set apart dialogue from narration	She said, "I like you."
• Set apart dependent and independent clauses	When the alarm goes off, it is time to wake up.
• Conjoin two independent clauses when used with a coordinating conjunction	She likes tomatoes, but she doesn't like ketchup.
• Set apart parenthetical elements	My friends, Laura and Amy, are visiting today.
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• Separate items in a list or series	I want to play soccer, baseball, and basketball.
• Set apart dialogue from narration	She said, "I like you."
• Set apart dependent and independent clauses	When the alarm goes off, it is time to wake up.
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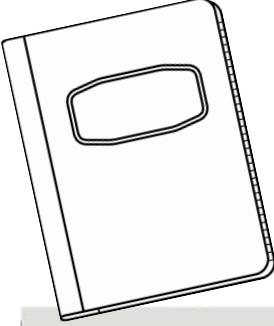
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Doodle Notes

THE COMMA

Directions: As you learn about commas, add your notes to this page.

Why do we punctuate?

What does a comma do?

The RULES

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Make the
CORRECTION

He stayed out, I went home.

1.

2.

3.

Student Work Sheets

HANDOUTS

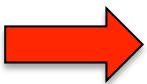
There are 8 different student handouts in this resource.

1. Tests: The first two handouts are tests. There is a pretest and a test. These tests are identical so that you can see how much your students learn throughout the course of this unit. The answer key for these tests is located at the end of this resource.
2. Worksheets: There are 6 worksheets in this unit. All of the worksheets have answer keys located at the end of this resource.
 1. Comma Rules Organizer
 2. Identifying Correct Punctuation
 3. Punctuating with Commas
 4. Comma and Coordinating Adjectives
 5. The Comma Splice
 6. Rewriting Comma Splices



Teaching Tip:

- For the “Write Your Own Sentences” activity on page 8, have students work together in groups. Each group needs to come up with X amount of sentences for each example. Have students write the sentences on the board and vote for the winners.
- On an overhead projector, show students real-life writing examples (textbook excerpts, newspaper articles, short stories) and have them identify the commas and which comma rule each one follows.
- You can turn many of these worksheets into collaborative work by grouping students together to complete the task.
- Encourage a healthy discussion about punctuation by reviewing the answers aloud with students.
- As an extension activity, have students peer review past assignments (quick writes, essays, and so on) to assess if the commas were placed correctly.



Teaching Tip:

- You can turn many of these worksheets into collaborative work by grouping students together to complete the task.
- Encourage a healthy discussion about punctuation by reviewing the answers aloud with students.
- As an extension activity, have students peer review past assignments (quick writes, essays, and so on) to assess if the commas were placed correctly.

All About Punctuation

Comma Pretest

Part I: True/False

Directions: Write TRUE next to statements that are true and FALSE next to statements that are false.

1. _____ A comma is used to separate items in a list or series.
2. _____ A comma is used to separate narration and dialogue.
3. _____ A comma is used to join two independent clauses together.
4. _____ A comma is used to join together an independent and dependent clause.
5. _____ A comma is used to punctuate the end of a sentence.
6. _____ A comma is used to separate coordinating adjectives.
7. _____ A comma is used to set apart parenthetical elements.
8. _____ A comma is used with a conjunction to join two independent clauses.
9. _____ A comma is used to show possession.
10. _____ A comma is used to punctuate numerals and dates.

Part 2: Which Sentence is Correct?

Directions: Place a checkmark in the box that indicates which sentence is punctuated correctly.

11. She is bringing candy, soda, and chips to the party.
 She is bringing candy, soda, and, chips to the party.
12. It is already noon. I need to eat some lunch.
 It is already noon, I need to eat some lunch.
13. "Let's go to the arcade today," Jennifer suggested.
 "Let's go to the arcade today", Jennifer suggested.
14. Brussels sprouts are my favorite vegetable, but I only like them roasted.
 Brussels sprouts are my favorite vegetable, I only like them roasted.
15. After he shot the winning soccer, goal he flung his arms up to celebrate.
 After he shot the winning soccer goal, he flung his arms up to celebrate.
16. Angela exclaimed to your younger brother, "Don't do that, Sam!"
 Angela exclaimed to your younger brother, "Don't do that Sam!"
17. The disheveled unorganized, student lost the homework.
 The disheveled, unorganized student lost the homework.

All About Punctuation Comma Test

Part I: True/False

Directions: Write TRUE next to statements that are true and FALSE next to statements that are false.

1. _____ A comma is used to separate items in a list or series.
2. _____ A comma is used to separate narration and dialogue.
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 Angela exclaimed to your younger brother, "Don't do that Sam!"
17. The disheveled unorganized, student lost the homework.
 The disheveled, unorganized student lost the homework.

A Student's Guide to **THE COMMA**

Write Your Own Sentences

Directions: For each comma rule listed below, write your own sentence that demonstrates your ability to accurately punctuate a sentence with a comma.

Symbol	Rule	Example
,	Separate items in a list or series	
,	Set apart dialogue from narration	
,	Set apart dependent and independent clauses	
,	Conjoin two dependent clauses when used with a coordinating conjunction	
,	Set apart parenthetical elements	
,	Set apart coordinating adjectives	
,	Used in numerals and dates	

All About Punctuation

The Comma

The **comma** indicates a pause between parts of a sentence or separates items in a list

Examples: I enjoy reading, writing, and drawing.

Before we go inside, we need to make sure all of the pool toys are picked up.

Is The Comma Used Correctly?

Directions: Read each sentence. Are the commas used correctly? Write "C" for correct or "I" for incorrect on the space provided. Then, rewrite incorrect sentences using the comma correctly.

Example: I She went to the store, bank, gas station, and, bowling alley.

She went to the store, bank, gas station, and bowling alley.

1. _____ My brother, and my best friend are going to the lake today.

2. _____ I need to clean up my room, take out the trash, and water the flowers.

3. _____ In the beginning of the story the main character forgets who she is.

4. _____ Our English teacher just assigned us an essay, but it isn't due for another week.

5. _____ My best friends, who are all going to the movies tonight, invited me to go with them.

6. _____ The lake is really pretty this time of year, the water is crystal clear and warm.

7. _____ Michelle asked „When is dinner tonight?”

8. _____ “I want to go ice skating,” Jenna said.

9. _____ She studied all night for her test but she still failed.

10. _____ Once upon a time in a land far away, there lived a princess, goat and troll.

All About Punctuation

The Comma

The **comma** indicates a pause between parts of a sentence or separates items in a list

Examples: I enjoy reading, writing, and drawing.

Before we go inside, we need to make sure all of the pool toys are picked up.

Punctuate with Commas

Directions: The sentences below are missing all of their commas. Punctuate each sentence by correctly adding in the commas.

1. I really wanted to see the meteor shower but the sky was too hazy in Los Angeles.
2. My mom sent me to the store to buy three things: bread milk and butter.
3. I like to watch movies read graphic novels and draw wildflowers but what I enjoy most is napping.
4. Although Emma practiced for her recital every night she still made a couple mistakes in her routine.
5. Kyle shouted at the bully “leave her alone!”
6. Sophia completed her essay on time but her printer was all out of ink.
7. Over the winter break the Lewis family went skiing ice fishing and whale watching.
8. The fire fighter who was battling the blaze called for backup.
9. Unfortunately the thief managed to escape.
10. I need to buy new tires for mine are old and worn.
11. My favorite television show is about ghosts but I am actually terrified of the thought of them.
12. The football team lost its game so the school won’t make it to playoffs this year.
13. Clara Larry and Nicole all RSVP’d yes to the fundraiser but Amy Aiden and Melissa can’t make it.
14. My brother’s birthdate is June 23 1997.
15. “This is the best tablet ” remarked John.
16. “We can’t go to the water park today ” Adam said “because it is raining.”
17. When the contractor started the bulldozer the entire neighborhood could hear its engine roar.
18. You don’t have to come but you can if you want.

All About Punctuation

The Comma

The **comma** is used to separate coordinate adjectives when two or more adjectives modify a single noun the same way. HINT: You can switch the adjectives and the sentence still makes sense.

Examples: The **dark, lonely** road looked rather ominous. (Add a comma)

The **lonely, dark** road looked rather ominous. (Add a comma)

The **brown dog** house is outside. (No comma is needed)

~~The dog brown house is outside.~~ (These adjectives are not coordinating)

Part 1: Place a Comma

Directions: Read each sentence below. Then decide if a comma is needed between the coordinate adjectives. If a comma is needed, write one in the box.

1. My quick beautiful horse is competing in a jumping competition.

2. The billionaire just purchased three race horses to add to his collection.

3. Her new engagement ring has five sparkling diamonds.

4. The drooling slobbering dog gave the visitor a big kiss on the face.

5. A strong odor came from the large messy trash can.

6. Elvis liked to sing about his blue suede shoes.

7. Three disorganized shoulder bags were left carelessly on the floor.

Part 2: Is the Sentence Correct?

Directions: Decide if the comma (or lack thereof) is used correctly in the sentence. Write "C" for correct or "I" for incorrect. Then, rewrite the incorrect sentences correctly.

8. _____ The small young puppies enjoy a game of fetch.

9. _____ They traveled down the bumpy, dirt road.

10. _____ A strong winter storm wreaked havoc on the coastal city.

11. _____ The red sports car quickly drove by us on the freeway.

12. _____ She spilled her soda on the clean, kitchen counter.

All About Punctuation

The Comma Splice

A **comma splice** occurs when you conjoin two independent clauses with a comma. The comma is not strong enough to hold the two independent clauses together. You will need something stronger!

INCORRECT: It was too late, she missed the bus.
CORRECT: It was too late; she missed the bus.

CORRECT: It was too late. She missed the bus.

CORRECT: It was too late, and she missed the bus.

Is There a Comma Splice?

Directions: Place an “X” next to the sentences that contain comma splices and rewrite those sentences correctly. If the sentence is grammatically correct, write “C” for correct on the line.

1. _____ My brother is running late, as usual.

2. _____ The two girls are here, they are early.

3. _____ She wondered what happened, was it something horrible?

4. _____ Running on the field, she tripped on her shoelace.

5. _____ After an exhausting drive home, she fell asleep.

6. _____ It was a short nap, he is still tired.

7. _____ She took all of her money to the bank, for she is saving for a new car.

8. _____ Looking at the stars, he wondered what was out there.

9. _____ It was hot, they went swimming.

10. _____ Get my phone, it's on the table.

All About Punctuation

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INCORRECT: It was too late, she missed the bus.
CORRECT: It was too late. She missed the bus.
CORRECT: It was too late; she missed the bus.

Is There a Comma Splice?

Directions: Correct the sentence containing a comma splice by writing it correctly three different ways.

EXAMPLE:

INCORRECT: It is early, she is tired.

(period) It is early. She is tired.

(semicolon) It is early; she is tired.

(comma conjunction) It is early, so she is tired.

1. INCORRECT: I want a bike for Christmas, I like red ones.

(period) _____

(semicolon) _____

(comma conjunction) _____

2. INCORRECT: She was at the park, the swings were her favorite.

(period) _____

(semicolon) _____

(comma conjunction) _____

3. INCORRECT: The teacher gave us an essay, it is due tomorrow.

(period) _____

(semicolon) _____

(comma conjunction) _____

4. INCORRECT: The new tablet is out, I really want one.

(period) _____

(semicolon) _____

(comma conjunction) _____



Answer

KEYS



All About Punctuation

The Comma

ANSWER KEY

The **comma** is indicated a pause between parts of a sentence or separating items in a list

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Example: I She went to the store, bank, gas station, and, bowling alley.

She went to the store, bank, gas station, and bowling alley.

1. I My brother, and my best friend are going to the lake today.

My brother and my best friend are going to the lake today.

2. C I need to clean up my room, take out the trash, and water the flowers.

3. I In the beginning of the story the main character forgets who she is.

In the beginning of the story, the main character forgets who she is.

4. C Our English teacher just assigned us an essay, but it isn't due for another week.

5. C My best friends, who are all going to the movies tonight, invited me to go with them.

6. I The lake is really pretty this time of year, the water is crystal clear and warm.

The lake is really pretty this time of year. The water is crystal clear and warm.

7. I Michelle asked "When is dinner tonight?"

Michelle asked, "When is dinner tonight?"

8. C "I want to go ice skating," Jenna said.

9. I She studied all night for her test but she still failed.

She studied all night for her test, but she still failed.

10. C Once upon a time in a land far away, there lived a princess, goat and troll.

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7. Over the winter break the Lewis family went skiing, ice fishing, and whale watching.
8. The fire fighter, who was battling the blaze, called for backup.
9. Unfortunately, the thief managed to escape.
10. I need to buy new tires, for mine are old and worn.
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12. The football team lost its game, so the school won’t make it to playoffs this year.
13. Clara, Larry, and Nicole all RSVP’d yes to the fundraiser, but Amy, Aiden, and Melissa can’t make it.
14. My brother’s birthdate is June, 23 1997.
15. “This is the best tablet,” remarked John.
16. “We can’t go to the water park today,” Adam said, “because it is raining.”
17. When the contractor started the bulldozer, the entire neighborhood could hear its engine roar.
18. You don’t have to come, but you can if you want.

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ANSWER KEY

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The **lonely, dark** road looked rather ominous. (Add a comma)

The **brown dog** house is outside. (No comma is needed)

~~The dog brown house is outside.~~ (These adjectives cannot be switched)

Part 1: Place a Comma

Directions: Read each sentence below. Then decide if a comma is needed between coordinate adjectives. If a comma is needed, write one in the box.

1. My quick beautiful horse is competing in a jumping competition.

2. The billionaire just purchased three race horses to add to his collection.

3. Her new engagement ring has five sparkling diamonds.

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5. A strong odor came from the large messy trashcan.

6. Elvis liked to sing about his blue suede shoes.

7. Three disorganized shoulder bags were left carelessly on the floor.

Part 2: Is the Sentence Correct?

Directions: Decide if the comma (or lack thereof) is used correctly in the sentence. Write "C" for correct or "I" for incorrect. Then, rewrite the incorrect sentences correctly.

8. I The small young puppies enjoy a game of fetch.

The small, young puppies enjoyed a game of fetch.

9. I They traveled down the bumpy, dirt road.

They traveled down the bumpy dirt road.

10. C A strong winter storm wreaked havoc on the coastal city.

11. C The red sports car quickly drove by us on the freeway.

12. I She spilled her soda on the clean, kitchen counter.

She spilled her soda on the clean kitchen counter.

All About Punctuation

The Comma Splice



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INCORRECT: It was too late she missed the bus.

CORRECT: It was too late; she missed the bus.

CORRECT: It was too late. She missed the bus.

CORRECT: It was too late, and she missed the bus.

Is There a Comma Splice?

Directions: Place an X next to the sentences that contain comma splices and rewrite the sentence correctly. If the sentence is grammatically correct, write C for correct on the line.

Answers will vary for the rewritten sentences. Here are possible answers.

1. C My brother is running late, as usual.

2. X The two girls are here, they are early.

The two girls are here. They are early.

3. X She wondered what happened, was it something horrible?

She wondered what happened. Was it something horrible?

4. C Running on the field, she tripped on her shoelace.

5. C After an exhausting drive home, she fell asleep.

6. X It was a short nap, he is still tired.

It was a short nap, and he is still tired.

7. C She took all of her money to the bank, for she is saving for a new car.

8. C Looking at the stars, he wondered what was out there.

9. X It was hot, they went swimming.

It was hot, so they went swimming.

10. X Get my phone, it's on the table.

Get my phone. It's on the table.

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(semicolon) It is early; she is tired.

(comma conjunction) It is early, so she is tired.

1. INCORRECT: I want a bike for Christmas, I like red ones.

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2. INCORRECT: She was at the park, the swings were her favorite.

(period) She was at the park. The swings were her favorite.

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3. INCORRECT: The teacher gave us an essay, it is due tomorrow.

(period) The teacher gave us an essay. It is due tomorrow.

(semicolon) The teacher gave us an essay; it is due tomorrow.

(comma conjunction) The teacher gave us an essay, and it is due tomorrow.

4. INCORRECT: The new tablet is out, I really want one.

(period) The new tablet is out. I really want one.

(semicolon) The new tablet is out; I really want one.

(comma conjunction) The new tablet is out, and I really want one.

All About Punctuation Comma Pretest/Test

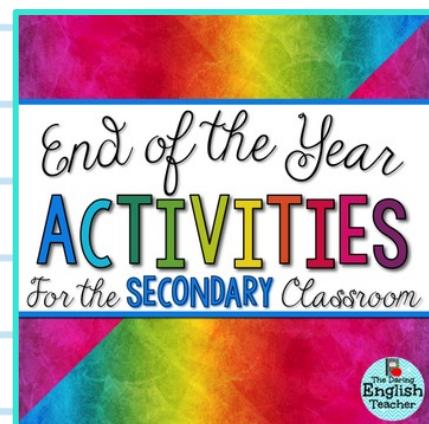
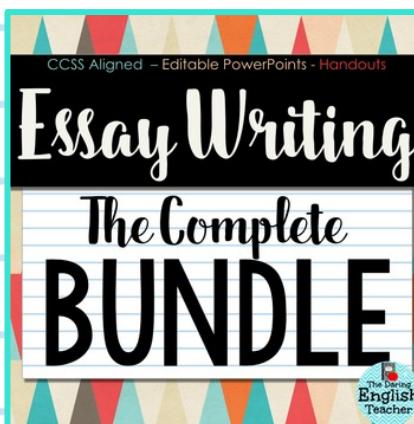
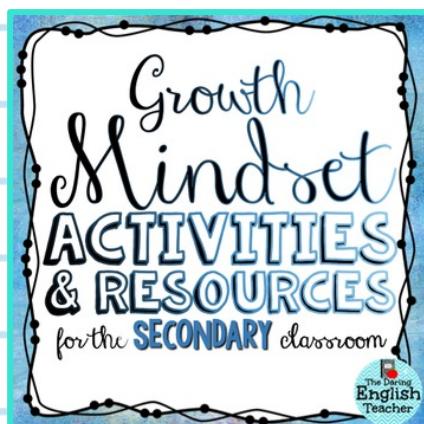
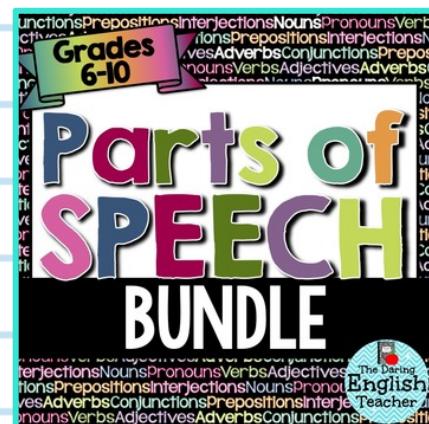
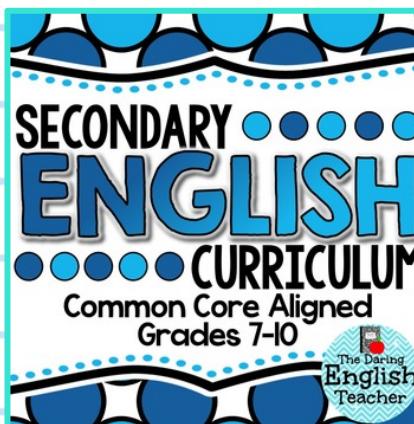
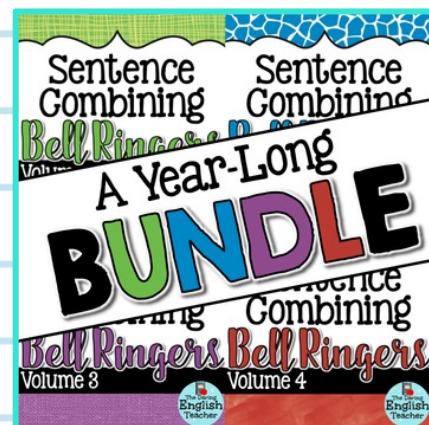
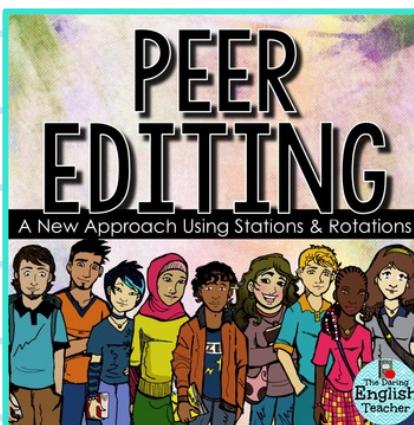
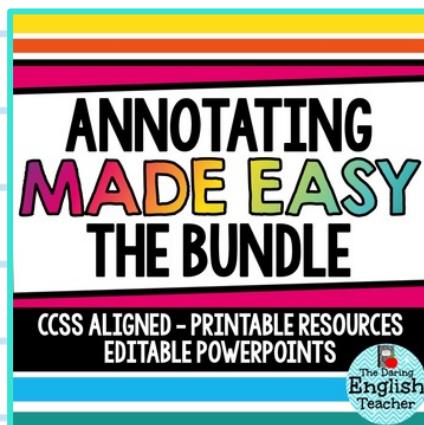
Directions: Write TRUE next to statements that are true and FALSE next to statements that are false.

1. True A comma is used to separate items in a list or series.
2. True A comma is used to separate narration and dialogue.
3. False A comma is used to join two independent clauses together.
4. True A comma is used to join together an independent and dependent clause.
5. False A comma is used to punctuate the end of a sentence.
6. True A comma is used to separate coordinating adjectives.
7. True A comma is used to set apart parenthetical elements.
8. True A comma is used with a conjunction to join two independent clauses.
9. False A comma is used to show possession.
10. True A comma is used to punctuate numerals and dates.

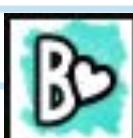
Directions: Place a checkmark in the box of the sentence that is punctuated correctly.

11. She is bringing candy, soda, and chips to the party.
 She is bringing candy, soda, and, chips to the party.
12. It is already noon. I need to eat some lunch.
 It is already noon, I need to eat some lunch.
13. "Let's go to the arcade today," Jennifer suggested.
 "Let's go to the arcade today", Jennifer suggested.
14. Brussels sprouts are my favorite vegetable, but I only like them roasted.
 Brussels sprouts are my favorite vegetable, I only like them roasted.
15. After he shot the winning soccer, goal he flung his arms up to celebrate.
 After he shot the winning soccer goal, he flung his arms up to celebrate.
16. Angela exclaimed to your younger brother, "Don't do that, Sam!"
 Angela exclaimed to your younger brother, "Don't do that Sam!"
17. The disheveled unorganized, student lost the homework.
 The disheveled, unorganized student lost the homework.

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