

Application and Reasoning

Step 2: Recognising Commas to Avoid Ambiguity

National Curriculum Objectives:

English Year 5: (5G5.6a) [Using commas to clarify meaning or avoid ambiguity in writing](#)

Differentiation:

Questions 1, 4 and 7 (Reasoning)

Developing Explain how adding a comma to avoid ambiguity changes the meaning of a simple, single clause sentence.

Expected Explain how adding a comma to avoid ambiguity changes the meaning of a single clause sentence with adverbials.

Greater Depth Explain how adding a comma to avoid ambiguity changes the meaning of a multi-clause sentence that also contains other forms of punctuation for parenthesis.

Questions 2, 5 and 8 (Reasoning)

Developing Identify and explain whether a comma is needed to avoid ambiguity in a simple sentence. 2 boxes given.

Expected Identify and explain whether commas are needed for ambiguity, or otherwise, in a multi-clause sentence. 3 boxes given.

Greater Depth Identify and explain whether commas are needed for ambiguity, or otherwise, in a multi-clause sentence. 3 boxes given.

Questions 3, 6 and 9 (Application)

Developing Select the true statement about a sentence which uses commas to avoid ambiguity. Rewrite the sentence with an alternative meaning. Simple sentence used.

Expected Select the true statement about a sentence which uses commas to avoid ambiguity. Rewrite the sentence with an alternative meaning. Sentence including various adverbials.

Greater Depth Select the true statement about a sentence which uses commas to avoid ambiguity. Rewrite the sentence with an alternative meaning. Multi-clause sentence that also contains other forms of punctuation for parenthesis.

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Recognising Commas to Avoid Ambiguity

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1a. Explain how the comma changes the meaning of the sentences below.

You need to tidy up, Rachel.

You need to tidy up Rachel.



R

1b. Explain how the commas change the meaning of the sentences below.

Shall we eat grandad?

Shall we eat, grandad?



R

2a. Label the boxes A, B or C where A means a comma should be used, B means a comma could be used and C means a comma should never be used.

Julian loves cooking his family and



watching television.



Convince me.



R

2b. Label the boxes A, B or C where A means a comma should be used, B means a comma could be used and C means a comma should never be used.

Max loves his friends reading



comics dogs and computer games.



Convince me.



R

3a. Look at the sentence below.

Julie saw a giraffe, holding a pink balloon.

Which statement is true?

- A) Julie was holding a pink balloon.
- B) The giraffe was holding a pink balloon.

Rewrite the sentence so the other statement is true.



A

3b. Look at the sentence below.

There was a man carrying a little girl wearing pyjamas.

Which statement is true?

- A) The man was wearing pyjamas.
- B) The girl was wearing pyjamas.

Rewrite the sentence so the other statement is true.



A

Recognising Commas to Avoid Ambiguity

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4a. Explain how the comma changes the meaning of the sentences below.

On a whim, I invited my parents, David and Anne, for lunch at the weekend.

On a whim, I invited my parents, David and Anne for lunch at the weekend.



R

4b. Explain how the commas change the meaning of the sentences below.

On Tuesday, Mike bought a pie, that he ate on his way home, so he didn't want any lunch.

On Tuesday, Mike bought a pie that he ate on his way home so he didn't want any lunch.



R

5a. Label the boxes A, B or C where A means a comma should be used, B means a comma could be used and C means a comma should never be used.

If you leave your shoes on the floor I

will trip over mum.

Convince me.



R

5b. Label the boxes A, B or C where A means a comma should be used, B means a comma could be used and C means a comma should never be used.

The little girl Katie saw a monkey

eating an ice-cream.

Convince me.



R

6a. Look at the sentence below.

Despite being told time and time again, Helen, said her mother, is in a lot of trouble.

Which statement is true?

- A) Helen is in a lot of trouble.
- B) Helen's mother is in a lot of trouble.

Rewrite the sentence so the other statement is true.



A

6b. Look at the sentence below.

In her spare time, Yasmin enjoys watching television, writing stories, and fairy-tales.

Which statement is true?

- A) Yasmin enjoys writing stories and fairy-tales.
- B) Yasmin enjoys writing stories.

Rewrite the sentence so the other statement is true.



A

Recognising Commas to Avoid Ambiguity

Recognising Commas to Avoid Ambiguity

7a. Explain how the comma changes the meaning of the sentences below.

Despite everything, my friends, Joe and Carrie (who lived in London) were always welcome.

Despite everything, my friends, Joe and Carrie, (who lived in London) were always welcome.



R

7b. Explain how the commas change the meaning of the sentences below.

When he finally got home (it was already dark outside), he started making batches of chilli and rice.

When he finally got home (it was already dark outside), he started making batches of chilli, and rice.



R

8a. Label the boxes A, B or C where A means a comma should be used, B means a comma could be used and C means a comma should never be used.

"Please can I have ice water juice and a cup of tea?" shouted Molly (a little louder).

↑ ↑
□ □

↑
□

Convince me.



R

8b. Label the boxes A, B or C where A means a comma should be used, B means a comma could be used and C means a comma should never be used.

As she watched the game (and the clock) she realised that she loved people who play football better than Dave.

↑ ↑
□ □

↓

Convince me.



R

9a. Look at the sentence below.

After the meeting, the CEO (in her pin-striped suit) finished her hotdog smothered in ketchup.

Which statement is true?

- A) The CEO was smothered in ketchup.
- B) The hot dog was smothered in ketchup.

Rewrite the sentence so the other statement is true.



A

9b. Look at the sentence below.

When I was walking home from school, I noticed a small girl walking a dog with floppy ears.

Which statement is true?

- A) The girl had floppy ears.
- B) The dog had floppy ears.

Rewrite the sentence so the other statement is true.



A

Application and Reasoning Recognising Commas to Avoid Ambiguity

Developing

1a. In the first sentence, Rachel needs to tidy up; she is being spoken to. In the second sentence, the subject of the sentence needs to tidy up Rachel; Rachel needs to be tidied up.

2a. The first box is B. If Julian likes cooking his family, there does not need to be a comma. However, if he likes cooking and his family separately, there needs to be a comma to separate them in the list. The second box is C because this is the middle of a clause.

3a. A. Julie saw a giraffe holding a pink balloon.

Expected

4a. In the first sentence, my parents are called David and Anne. In the second sentence, David and Anne are additional guests to my parents.

5a. The first box is C because this is the middle of a clause. The second box is A because a comma should be used here to separate the subordinate and main clauses. The third box is B. A comma could be used here to show that the sentence is directed towards mum. If 'mum' is the thing that will be tripped over, a comma is not needed.

6a. A. Despite being told time and time again, Helen said her mother is in a lot of trouble.

Greater Depth

7a. In the first sentence, my friends plus Joe and Carrie were welcome. In the second sentence, Joe and Carrie are the friends that were welcome.

8a. The first box is B. If Molly is requesting ice and water separately, a comma is needed to separate the items in the list. If Molly wants ice water, a comma is not needed. The second box is A because 'water' and 'juice' are two items a list so need to be separated with a comma. The third box is C because this is the middle of a clause.

9a. B. After the meeting, the CEO (in her pin-striped suit) finished her hotdog, smothered in ketchup.

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Developing

1b. In the first sentence, grandad is the meal. In the second sentence, grandad is being asked a question.

2b. The first box is B. If 'his friends' and 'reading comics' are separate items in the list, a comma is needed. If 'his friends reading comics' is a phrase, a comma is not needed. The second box is A because 'comics' and 'dogs' are two items a list so need to be separated with a comma.

3b. B. There was a man carrying a little girl, wearing pyjamas.

Expected

4b. In the first sentence, Mike didn't want any lunch because he can eaten the pie. In the second sentence, the reason that Mike bought the pie was so that he didn't want any lunch.

5b. The first box and second boxes are A 'Katie' is an embedded clause. The third box is B. If the girl is eating an ice-cream, a comma is needed. If the monkey is eating an ice-cream, the comma is not needed.

6a. B. In her spare time, Yasmin enjoys watching television, writing stories and fairy-tales.

Greater Depth

7b. In the first sentence, the batches included both chilli and rice. In the second sentence, he made batches of chilli but the rice was separate.

8b. The first box is C because this is the middle of a clause. The second box is A because a comma should be used here to separate the subordinate and main clauses. The third box is B. If she is comparing 'people who play football' and 'Dave', a comma is needed. If she is comparing their football ability, a comma is not needed.

9b. B. When I was walking home from school, I noticed a small girl walking a dog, with floppy ears.