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**FUNCTIONAL SKILLS**

English Level 2 – Writing



**20. Punctuate writing correctly using a wide range of punctuation markers (e.g. colons, commas, inverted commas, apostrophes and quotation marks)**

**Commas**

The comma is an important punctuation marker to get right as it helps to make your writing easier to read.

There are several rules for using commas:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Comma rule** | **Example** | **Explanation** |
| Separating items in a list | The bookshop sells thrillers, autobiographies and comedies. | The comma separates the items in the list, however, there is no comma before the last item. Instead, there is an **and** or an **or**. |
| Separating ‘extra’ information in a sentence | Natalie, who was a science teacher, liked to plant trees. | The extra information ‘who was a science teacher’ does not make sense on its own but adds more detail to the sentence. Therefore, it must be placed between two commas. |
| Separating adjectives | The shiny, silver coin was left unattended. | The two adjectives to describe the coin, shiny and silver, must be separated by a comma. |
| Before conjunctions, to separate 2 independent clauses | I wasn’t hungry, so I skipped lunch. | These are two separate sentences that could be joined by the conjunction **so.** This means that a comma must be placed before the conjunction. |
| After a fronted adverbial | Later that morning, she sat down for breakfast. | A fronted adverbial shows time or place at the start of a sentence (later that morning), so must be followed by a comma. |
| For separating direct speech from the rest of the sentence | The boy shouted, “I don’t want to go to bed!” | A comma must be placed before the quotation marks to separate the direct speech from the rest of the sentence. |
|  |  |  |

**Using the information provided on page 2, answer the following questions.**

**Question 1**

Look at the following sentences and select which one uses commas correctly.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Josh Jones, who was my best friend, never made it to the party. |  |
| 1. Josh Jones who was my best friend, never made it to the party. |  |
| 1. Josh Jones, who was my best friend never made it to the party. |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Kieran and Kaz were going to Manchester but they missed the train. |  |
| 1. Kieran and Kaz were going to Manchester, but they missed the train. |  |
| 1. Kieran and Kaz, were going to Manchester, but they missed the train. |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. The boutique sells shoes, bags, scarves, jewellery, and hats. |  |
| 1. The boutique sells shoes bags scarves jewellery and hats. |  |
| 1. The boutique sells shoes, bags, scarves, jewellery and hats. |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. In the evening we watched the beautiful majestic sunset. |  |
| 1. In the evening, we watched the beautiful majestic sunset. |  |
| 1. In the evening, we watched the beautiful, majestic sunset. |  |

**Question 2**

Look at the following sentences. There are commas missing from each one.   
Can you place the commas in the correct places?

1. Highfield coffee has a full rich flavour.
2. Max said “I really enjoyed the concert.”
3. Secondly I’d like to add that I haven’t yet received a refund.
4. You need to add flour eggs baking powder and milk to the mixture.
5. They were going to go to the cinema but they missed the bus.
6. The flat-pack wardrobe which came with instructions was very difficult to build.

**Apostrophes**

Apostrophes are used to show that something belongs to someone or something (**possession**). They are also used to shorten words and replace the missing letters (**omission**).

**Possession**

When something belongs to someone, we usually add an apostrophe and an **s.** For example:

The book belonging to Jason Jason’s book

However, if the name already ends in an **s**, then only an apostrophe is needed. For example:

The motorbike belonging to Charles Charles’ motorbike

When using plurals, the same rules apply. For example:

The women’s toilets were out of order.

The chickens’ eggs were stolen.

**Omission**

Words can be shortened to make them less formal. This can be done by removing some letters and replacing them with an apostrophe. For example:

They are they’re

We are we’re

Could not couldn’t

Did not didn’t

**Its and It’s**

You must not use an apostrophe for possession when writing **its.** For example:

The dog chewed its bone.

You can only use an apostrophe when writing **it’s** if it is short for **it is.**

**Using the information provided on page 4, answer the following questions.**

**Question 1**

Re-write the sentences to show the correct use of apostrophes.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sentence | Answer |
| The computer belonging to Stephen. | Example: Stephen’s computer. |
| The headphones belonging to Lucas. |  |
| The toys belonging to the children. |  |
| The beds belonging to the dogs. |  |
| The ladder belonging to Leon. |  |

**Question 2**

Rewrite these sentences to include apostrophes.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sentence | Answer |
| They are not going to the park. | Example: They’re not going to the park. |
| It is very dark outside. |  |
| They had not thought about bringing an umbrella. |  |
| Fabian did not want to go to Davids party. |  |
| I have not seen my Aunt for quite some time. |  |
| He would not want us to be there. |  |
| We are all going to Susans house after work. |  |
| It is not a good idea. |  |

**Inverted commas and quotation marks**

Inverted commas are very similar to apostrophes, except they come in pairs. We use inverted commas to indicate a reference to something such as a book, film or event.

For example:

The castle held an event called ‘Medieval Madness’.

Have you seen ‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream’?

Quotation marks are used to indicate when someone has directly said something. For example:

He said, “I hope you’re going to pay for that!”

The founder of the company said, “It really is an exciting new venture.”

**Colons**

Colons can be used to introduce information in a list, either in the form of a sentence or bullet points. For example:

You will need: asparagus, lemons, Parma ham and rosemary.

You will need:

* asparagus
* lemons
* Parma ham
* rosemary

Colons can also be used to join two sentences together when the second sentence explains something in the first (much like using **because**). For example:

Jessica doesn’t want to come: she isn’t a fan of big crowds.

Stanley was soaked: he had forgotten his umbrella.

**Using the information provided on page 6, answer the following questions.**

**Question 1**

Look at the following sentences and select which ones use inverted commas, quotation marks and colons correctly.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. I am really excited for Highfield’s Jolly Jully event. |  |
| 1. I am really excited for Highfield’s ‘Jolly July’ event. |  |
| 1. I am really excited for ‘Highfield’s’ Jolly July event. |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. David said, ‘I think you’re wrong.’ |  |
| 1. David said, I think “you’re wrong.” |  |
| 1. David said, “I think you’re wrong.” |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. At the festival, I bought: sandals, sunglasses and suncream. |  |
| 1. At the festival: I bought sandals, sunglasses and suncream. |  |
| 1. At the festival, I bought sandals: sunglasses and suncream. |  |

**Question 2**

Look at the job advertisement below. Can you add in the missing colons, inverted commas and quotation marks?

|  |
| --- |
| Highfield Environmental Team  We are looking for a new member of staff for our Environmental Team. The ideal candidate must be enthusiastic, hard-working, driven and passionate.  The Environmental Team would like to hold an event called Waste Busters, where the candidate will host a variety of activities including recycling talks, park clean up, climate change studies and Cycle to Work scheme recruitment.  We pride ourselves on our ability to make a real difference to the environment, and live by the words of Sir David Attenborough  *People must feel that the natural world is important and valuable and beautiful and wonderful and an amazement and a pleasure.*  Together we can make a real difference and the ideal candidate will support that difference.  To apply, you must  Contact the Environmental Team via email  Attach your CV  Let us know your availability for interview |

**Using the information provided throughout the booklet, answer the following question.**

**A learner was given the following mock question to answer.**

You discover this article in your local newspaper.

**Highfield Community Centre to Close**



After an announcement today on the council’s website, Highfield Community Centre will close to make way for a new multi-storey car park. The community centre has been at the forefront of all major events in the town over recent years and provides a wide range of community activities every week for local residents including mother and baby classes and children’s martial arts classes. Residents must now travel up to 35 miles to access any of the activities that the community centre provided, despite a lack of regular public transport out of the area. However, some residents are in favour of the plans to build a car park, as not only could it reduce parking issues in the town, but also could provide more jobs for locals, such as car park security and parking attendants. Not only this, local businesses are looking forward to the influx of new business in the area, with the addition of a new car park.

Write a **report** for the council highlighting the issues raised in the article and making any recommendations for the council’s plans.

You should take approximately **30 minutes** to complete this task. ***(27 marks)***

The learner has written a report, but has not included all of the punctuation needed. Using the information in this booklet, add the correct punctuation to the student’s answer where it is needed.

|  |
| --- |
| Proposal for Multi-Storey Car Park in Town Centre  Stephen Jones  This report will look at the effect that the proposed car park will have on the local community its residents and the environment.  Advantages  The following have been identified as advantages of the new car park   * more visitors to the area * more revenue for businesses * more jobs in the area   These have been identified by residents when asked about the proposed plans for the area.  Disadvantages  There are also many disadvantages to the new car park including a loss of community activities particularly for children and the elderly losing a sense of community losing a safe space for vulnerable residents and more people becoming reclusive.  There would also be an end to the local communities events calendar with activities such as Highfield Wellness Festival and the popular weekly childrens event Wonder Wednesdays.  Recommendations and Conclusion  Due to the significant loss to residents it doesnt seem a good idea to replace the community centre with a car park. Although there are some advantages these are outweighed by the disadvantages. Residents will have nowhere to go in their spare time and the loss to community spirit will be massive. |

**Your functional skills exam**

Your functional skills exams will consist of 2 papers.   
These papers will take place over the following time periods:

* Reading exam – 60 minutes
* Writing exam – 60 minutes

Further information on the format that your test will take can be obtained from your training provider.

**Hints and tips for writing**

* Find out what format your exam will be in. It may be paper-based or   
  on-screen.
* Plan what you are going to revise in advance. Do not leave it until the last minute.
* Do as many mock papers as you can so you are prepared for the day. If possible, try to complete the mock papers following the same format as the actual exam.
* Find a quiet place to study and revise. It helps to sit at a table or a desk.   
  Do not revise in bed.
* Do not stay up all night revising the night before your exam. It is important to have a good rest, so you feel refreshed and ready to go.
* Read the question 3 times. The first time to ensure you understand what is being asked, the second time to get an understanding of what you need to do and a third time to figure out exactly which English techniques you should be applying.
* If you are struggling with a question, skip it and come back to it later. Try not to sit getting stressed about a difficult question, it will only waste exam time. Move on and come back to it after you have answered the other questions.
* Take note of the number of marks available. 27 marks should give you an indication of how much information you should give in your answer.
* When you have finished the exam, go back and check your answers. If you still have time remaining, use it to check your answers and when you have checked your answers check them again.