

**FUNCTIONAL SKILLS**

English Level 2



**Area: Writing**

Criterion: 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.

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| **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 2 commas. |
| Separating adjectives | The shiny, silver coin was left unattended. | The 2 adjectives to describe the coin, shiny and silver, must be separated by a comma. |
| Before conjunctions, to separate 2 independent clauses | I was hungry, but I skipped lunch. | These are 2 separate sentences that could be joined by the conjunction **but**.This means that a comma must be placed before the conjunction. |
| After fronted adverbials | 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. |

There are several rules for using commas:

**Using the information provided above, answer the following questions.**

**Question 1**

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

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| 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.
Place the missing 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.

**Question 3**

Write a sentence for each comma ‘rule.’

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| --- |
| Separating items in a list:Parenthesis, or separating ‘extra’ information in a sentence:Separating adjectives:Before conjunctions, to separate 2 independent clauses:After fronted adverbials:For separating direct speech from the rest of the sentence: |

**For further practice questions incorporating commas, please see the workbook found under the ‘Punctuation – part 3 (colons)’ video.**

**Answers**

**Commas**

**Question 1**

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

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

The boutique sells shoes, bags, scarves, jewellery and hats.

In the evening, we watched the beautiful, majestic sunset.

**Question 2**

Highfield coffee has a full, rich flavour.

Max said, “I really enjoyed the concert.”

Secondly, I’d like to add that I haven’t yet received a refund.

You need to add flour, eggs, baking powder and milk to the mixture.

They were going to go to the cinema, but they missed the bus.

The flat-pack wardrobe, which came with instructions, was very difficult to build.

**Question 3**

Please note that these are example answers. Learners may have responded in a variety of ways.

Separating items in a list:

Guests could choose between flower arranging, crocheting, pottery design and baking.

Parenthesis, or separating ‘extra’ information in a sentence:

The venue, which was reopened following a recent renovation, has seen a huge increase in sales and customer satisfaction.

Separating adjectives:

The business sells many popular, sought-after products.

Before conjunctions, to separate 2 independent clauses:

Many guests agreed that Alex was the star of the show, but others thought Jamie was the better performer.

After fronted adverbials:

When I eventually checked into the hotel, I was sorely disappointed.

For separating direct speech from the rest of the sentence:

Nicola exclaimed, “I was terrified!”

**Your functional skills exam**

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

* Reading – 60 minutes
* Writing – 60 minutes

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

**Hints and tips**

* 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. Don’t leave it until the last minute.
* Do as many past papers as you can so you are prepared for the day. If possible, try to complete the past 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, don’t revise in bed.
* Don’t stay up all night revising the night before your exam. It’s 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 what maths 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 worked up 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. This will give you an indication of how much working out you must show. For example, 1 mark will need an answer only and more marks will need you to show your working out.
* When you’ve 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.