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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.

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

**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.