

Literacy Moment: Week Beginning 26/09/16



Week 4: Full Stops and Commas

1. Easy one, this. What do you know about full stops and commas? **You have only 30 seconds.**
2. What do you think are the **most common mistakes** when using these pieces of punctuation?

Have you heard of 'comma splicing'? Can you explain what it is?

Week 4: Full Stops and Commas

A full stop is a punctuation mark used at the end of a sentence. It is always followed by a **capital letter**.

Here are the paragraphs from last week...where are the full stops?

I ate an entire pizza. It was absolutely delicious, topped with bubbling melted mozzarella and slices of spicy pepperoni arranged lovingly on top.

After I'd finished, I needed a lie-down. It was one of the greatest things I've ever eaten. And I've eaten a deep-fried Mars bar.

These sentences form a whole paragraph. The full stops show that each sentence gives us more information!

Week 4: Full Stops and Commas

Full stops are **really easy**! I'm sure you covered these at primary school and you're confident with how to use these.

Commas, however, are a little trickier.

Comma (noun; ,): A punctuation mark indicating a pause in a sentence or separating items in a list.

Is this the best definition?

(Hint: is it *technical* enough?)

It's all very well knowing when you should use a certain piece of punctuation, but you should be able to **explain** that to someone else!

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We're often told that commas are used when the reader 'should take a breath'. This is correct, but it isn't specific. Look at this sentence:

After I'd finished, I needed a lie-down.

What does the comma do here?

(Hint: Think of the *technical language* we have used in the past three weeks!)

The comma separates a **subordinate clause** and a **main clause**! Can you remember which is which?

Does this re-ordered sentence make sense?
Why? Why not?

I'd finished, I needed a lie-down.

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No, it doesn't...

This sentence contains two main clauses!

I'd finished, I needed a lie-down.

The two clauses make sense on their own...there should therefore be a **full stop** or a **semi-colon (;)**.

A comma is only used when a **subordinate clause** is involved.

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Separating two main clauses with a comma is called '**comma splicing**'. Examiners really dislike it, so try to avoid it in your work!

Look at these examples:

1. I was tired, so I went to bed.
2. I was tired. I went to bed.
3. I was tired; I went to bed.

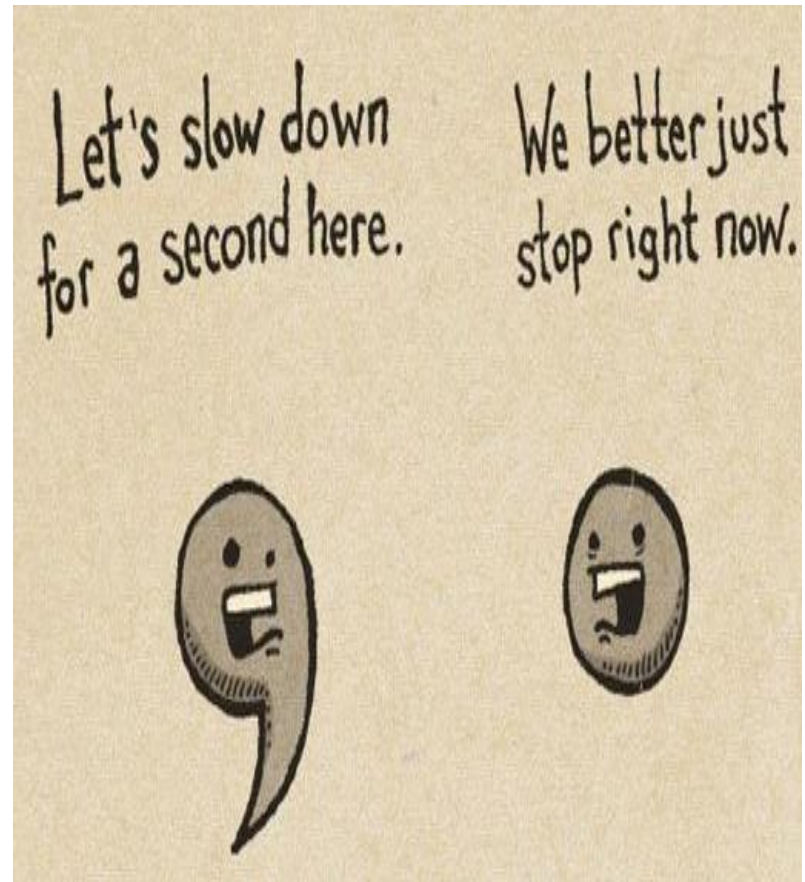
Notice how the **comma** is only used when **the sentence contains a subordinate clause** (often indicated by a connective!).

Week 4: Full Stops and Commas

Practice Tasks!

1. Write a simple sentence.
2. Now, add a subordinate clause to it (at the start or the end is fine).
3. Have you included a connective and got the punctuation right?
4. Now, re-write this sentence as two simple sentences. You'll have to remove the connective!

Challenge: Write a paragraph about your weekend featuring three types of sentences and correct punctuation!



Key Words from Today's Session...

Sentence: The whole system and structure of language

Clause: A part of a sentence containing a verb and other components.

Subordinate clause: A part of a sentence which doesn't make sense on its own.

Paragraph: A series of sentences which are grouped together by theme.

Full Stop: A punctuation mark to indicate the end of a sentence. It should be followed by a capital letter.

Comma: A punctuation mark used to separate a **main clause** and a **subordinate clause**.