Edit for Commas

1. Focus

Explain Editing for Commas

Say: After revising the drafts of our persuasive letters, we need to focus on editing our writing. One thing we check for when we edit is the correct use of punctuation, especially when we use commas to separate items in a list. Why do you think this is important? (Allow responses.) When we make mistakes in our writing, the reader focuses on our mistakes instead of what we have to say.

Model Editing for Correct Use of Commas

Display the modeling text (with errors) on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Ask students to listen as you read each sentence aloud and look for places where commas are missing.

Modeling Text

1. Birds, squirrels, and mice use trees for their nests.
2. I have math homework on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday.
3. I have three apple trees in my backyard.

After sentence 1. Say: This sentence lists three animals that use trees for their nests: birds, squirrels, and mice. When we have items in a list like this, we need to separate them with a comma. I need to put in a comma after the word birds. I will use a caret to show where I need to insert a comma.

After sentence 2. Say: This sentence also has a list. I need to use a comma after Wednesday and before the word and. I will use a caret to show where I need to insert a comma.

After sentence 3. Say: This sentence does not need commas, so I can leave it as it is.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:
• Learn how to edit a persuasive letter for commas, specifically focusing on lists.
• Edit practice sentences and share their edits with the class.
• Discuss how they can apply this skill to their own independent writing.

Preparation

Materials Needed
• Chart paper and markers
• Persuasive Letters Checklist
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation
If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the modeling and practice texts (with errors) onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson.
2. Rehearse

Practice Editing for Punctuation

Write the practice text (with errors) on chart paper or use the interactive whiteboard resources.

1. My mom, dad, and I pick the apples in the fall.
2. Apples are great for a snack, dessert, or even breakfast.
3. We have gym class on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

Ask students to work with a partner. Have teams write the practice sentences and edit each sentence for correct comma use. Student pairs should write their edited sentences and be prepared to share them with the class and explain how their changes improved each sentence.

Share Practice Edits

Invite volunteers to read aloud their edited sentences and explain the edits they made. Make the changes to the sentences on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources to model how you use proofreading symbols during the editing process. Discuss and support students’ use of proofreading symbols.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We just learned how to edit our persuasive letter for commas. Using commas to separate items in a list helps readers understand our writing. Remember, good writers find and correct errors in their writing. When you leave errors in your persuasive letter, readers focus on your mistakes instead of on your message.

Review the Persuasive Letters Checklist (page 59) and encourage students who are at the editing stage of their independent writing to focus on editing for comma usage and other conventions of good writing. During conferences, use the prompts on your conferencing flip chart to support students’ independent or peer editing.

4. Share

Bring the class together. Invite volunteers to discuss errors they found and were able to correct in their persuasive letters.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Support students’ use of commas in lists. Display several objects on your desk; for example, a pen, a crayon, and a pencil. Point to the objects. Say: I see a pen, a crayon, and a pencil. Write the sentence on chart paper, circling the commas. Repeat with other objects, pointing to them, saying the sentence, and copying the sentence on chart paper. This time, ask students to help you place the commas in the sentence.

Intermediate and Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity. Reinforce students’ use of commas by writing simple sentences that include lists. Have students practice inserting commas in the right places.

All Levels

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: comma/la coma; correct/corregir; edit/editar; punctuation/la puntuación.