1. Focus

**Explain Commas in a Series**

**Say:** As we already know, the comma is a punctuation mark that separates words or phrases in a sentence. A comma tells us to pause our reading for a very short time. If you have a series of three or more items, the items must be separated by commas.

Display the following sentence on chart paper (without commas) or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

```
I made a map showing my town, street, and house.
```

**Example Text**

**Say:** In this sentence, the words **town**, **street**, and **house** are in a series, so I need to use commas between them. The commas make my sentence easier to read. They tell the reader that the items in the list are separate things. (Insert commas after **town** and **street**.)

**Model Using Commas in a Series**

Display the modeling text (without commas) on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Read the words aloud without pausing where the commas would normally go.

```
All you need is a pad of self-stick notes, a pencil, crayons or markers, and your imagination!
```

**Modeling Text**

**Say:** This sentence is confusing. I can’t tell where one item in the list ends and the next begins. What are pencil crayons? I need to read this again more slowly and figure out where to put commas in the series. The phrase **pad of self-stick notes** seems to be first in the list, so I need to put a comma after it. For the next item, I don’t think **pencil** and **crayons** go together. They are two separate things. So I need to add a comma after **pencil**. The next item is **crayons or markers**. The word **or** tells me that these words go together. So the last comma belongs after **markers**. In a list, the last comma usually goes right before the word **and**. (Reread the sentence with the commas in the series.) That makes more sense! The commas help to separate the words and make the sentence easier to read and understand.
2. Rehearse

Practice Using Commas in a Series

Write the practice text (without commas) on chart paper or use the interactive whiteboard resources.

Make notes or sketches of any landmarks you pass—such as a store, park, office building, or school.

Practice Text

Ask students to work with a partner to read the sentence and discuss where to put commas in the series.

If your class includes English learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

Share Sentences with Commas in a Series

Discuss pairs’ responses. Ask the following questions:

- Which words make up the series of items in this sentence?
- Where do the commas go in the series?
- How did you figure out where to place the commas?
- Why is it important to separate items in a series with commas?

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: When we are writing and have three or more items in a series, we need to use commas to separate the items. This makes our writing easier to read and understand. Without the commas, the words get jumbled up together and may not make sense.

If you would like to give students additional practice recognizing and using commas in a series, have them complete BLM 9.

4. Share

Bring students together. Review and provide corrective feedback based on students’ answers to BLM 9. Ask students to share what they learned about using commas in a series.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Beginning ELs may need additional practice recognizing and understanding how commas are used to separate items in a series. Use concrete objects such as scissors, a book, and a marker. Say: I see scissors, a book, and a marker. Write the sentence on chart paper and circle each comma. Ask a student to tell three things he or she sees in the classroom. Write the following sentence frame on chart paper. Record the student’s name and what he or she sees. Repeat with other students and objects.

[Name of student] sees _____, _____, and _____.

Write your sentence on chart paper. Demonstrate how you separate the items in the list with commas.

Intermediate and Advanced

Provide simple sentences to help ELs use commas in a series. For example:

My lunch is a sandwich an apple and milk.
I have a pen a pencil and paper.
She brought books games and snacks.

Encourage students to talk about how the commas make their sentences easier to read and understand.