1. Focus

Explain Commas After Sequence Words

Say: Many procedural texts use words that signal the order of steps. These words usually introduce a sentence and are called sequence words. When we write sequence words like first, next, then, or last, we put a comma after those words. Sequence words are important when following directions so that we know exactly what to do first, second, third, and so on.

Display the following text from page 12 of the mentor text on chart paper or use the interactive whiteboard resources.

First, pour your favorite cereal into a bowl. Next, add some freshly washed grapes to the bowl. After that, peel a banana and slice it with a table knife.

Example Text

Say: After each sequence word in these sentences, the writer used a comma to set off the sequence words. This not only helps me understand the steps, but it makes it easier for me to see which things come first, second, and so on.

Model Using Commas After Sequence Words

Display the modeling text (without commas) on chart paper or use the interactive whiteboard resources and read it aloud to students.

How to Make a Card

First, fold a piece of paper in half. Next, get your favorite colored crayons. Then, draw a picture on the front of the folded paper. After that, open up the folded paper and write a greeting.

Modeling Text

Say: I wrote this without using any commas. I can make it easier to read if I add commas after the sequence words. The first sequence word is first. I should add a comma after it to show the reader that this is the first step. I’ll add commas after the words next and then in the following sentences to let the readers know they should do these steps next. I’ll add a comma after the words after that, so readers know this is the next thing they need to do. Read the sentences aloud, pausing after each sequence word.
2. Rehearse

Practice Using Commas After Sequence Words

Display the practice text (without commas) on chart paper or use the interactive whiteboard resources. Ask students to form pairs and invite them to discuss where the commas should go in the directions.

First, drive to the end of the block. Then, turn right onto Powell Street. Go three blocks on Powell. Then, turn left onto Oak Street. After that, drive for nine blocks to the corner of Oak and Bell. My house is the brown house on the corner. Finally, you are there.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: When we write procedural text or any directions, it’s important to use words that help us know the order in which something happens. When we write a procedure using sequence words, we need to remember to put a comma after those words. This helps the reader understand the order.

If you would like to give students additional practice recognizing and using commas after sequence words, have them complete BLM 9.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to share their answers to BLM 9. Provide corrective feedback as necessary.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning
Help beginning ELs understand the meaning of sequence words. Write the words first, next, after that, and last on word cards. Select four students and give each student one of the word cards. Help them read their word cards. Line up the students in order by their word cards. Say: [Child’s name] is first. Next is [child’s name]. [Child’s name] is after [child’s name]. [Child’s name] is last. Have students repeat. Ask students to change word cards and line up again. Repeat the exercise as often as necessary for students to understand the meaning of the sequence words.

Intermediate and Advanced
Pair students with fluent English speakers. Encourage them to work together to orally complete sentence frames that explain the sequence of what they do when they first get up in the morning.

First, I ______.
Next, I ______.
After that, I ______.
Last, I ______.

All Levels
If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share the following English/Spanish cognates: comma/la coma; sequence/la secuencia.