Commas in a Series

1. Focus

Explain Commas in a Series

Say: Commas are punctuation marks that are used to separate words in a list, or series of items. A series is three or more things written one after the other. The items may be single words or groups of words. Listen to the series in this sentence: “January, February, and March are all hot months in the Southern Hemisphere.” The series is made up of a list of months, and we need to use commas to separate the names of the months.

Model Using Commas in a Series

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Read the text aloud to students.

He read a book that was filled with essays about freedom, democracy, and abolition.

He read a book that was filled with essays about freedom and abolition.

Modeling Text

Say: The first sentence is hard to read because it doesn’t use commas. I don’t know what types of essays were included in the book. Each item should be separated by a comma. This will help my sentence make more sense. The second sentence uses commas in a series, and I can tell what each of the essays is about.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:
• Identify commas in a series in sentences.
• Practice using commas in a series in sentences.

Preparation

Materials Needed
• Chart paper and markers
• Commas in a Series (BLM 9)
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation
If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the modeling text and practice text (with errors) onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson. If necessary, copy the sentence frames from “Strategies to Support ELs” on chart paper.
2. Rehearse

**Practice Using Commas for Items in a Series**

Display the practice text (with errors) on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

Ask students to work with partners to decide where the commas should go in the practice sentences. Explain that the second sentence contains more than one word to describe each item in the series. Tell them to think carefully about where the commas should go. (Students do not need to copy the sentences.)

1. He was forced to work long hours no matter how hot, cold, or stormy the weather.
2. Frederick spoke about things such as free speech, freedom of the press, and getting a fair trial.

### Practice Text

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

### Strategies to Support ELs

**Beginning**

While other students engage in the partner practice activity, work one on one with beginning ELs to practice making oral sentences using a series. Place three familiar objects on a desk or table (e.g., a pen, a pencil, a marker). Name each object for students. **Say:** I have a pen. I have a pencil. I have a marker. I have a pen, a pencil, and a marker. Ask students to repeat the sentences. Then repeat the sentence frame with other familiar objects (e.g., a book, a ruler, a cup). Write each sentence with a series on chart paper and read it aloud for students. Circle the commas in each sentence.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Pair students with fluent English speakers to complete the practice activities and BLM 9. Use the following sentence frames to help both students in the pairs talk about commas:

- The list of things is ______.
- We need commas ______.

**All Levels**

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: comma/la coma; series/la serie.

Pair students with fluent English speakers to complete the BLM.

### 3. Independent Writing and Conferring

**Say:** We learned that we need to use commas when we list a series of three or more things. The commas make the text easier to read. Remember to use commas in a series when you write your biographies.

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

### 4. Share

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