Commas – Exercise 1

This handout accompanies Exercise 1 of Grammar Bytes! Get the answers by doing the interactive version of the exercise at this address: http://chompchomp.com/exercises.htm

Directions: Choose the option that will fix the comma error.

1. During lunch, at the campus cafeteria, Mildred noticed the dirty tables, the overworked cashiers, and the exorbitant price for a watery soda.
   A. Should you remove the comma after lunch?
   B. Or should you remove the comma after cashiers?

2. Melissa couldn't study for her comma quiz, because she was joy riding on the Enterprise with Mr. Spock, whom the US Air Force chased with its fastest jets.
   A. Should you remove the comma after quiz?
   B. Or should you remove the comma after Mr. Spock?

3. The slimy smelly lettuce on my burrito made me ask the manager to return my 99 cents.
   A. Should you add a comma after slimy?
   B. Or should you add a comma after burrito?

4. Sitting in the atrium, Marcus chatted pleasantly with a pretty student from his chemistry class, but then he had to leave suddenly, because he noticed that he had only thirty seconds to get to Professor Spottke’s English class on time.
   A. Should you remove the comma after atrium?
   B. Or should you remove the comma after suddenly?

5. To study for his calculus midterm, Brian drank seven cups of strong Turkish coffee which kept him wide awake for the all-nighter.
   A. Should you remove the comma after midterm?
   B. Or should you add a comma after coffee?

6. "Don't eat that pizza," warned Lisa. "It's over two weeks old", she then explained.
   A. Should the comma after pizza follow the quotation marks?
   B. Or should the comma after old precede the quotation marks?

7. Fifteen uncooked popcorn kernels, and a few grains of salt littered the front of Robert's shirt as he slouched in the theater seat.
   A. Should you add a comma after fifteen?
   B. Or should you remove the comma after kernels?
8. Swinging at the fast **ball**, Bobbie **heard**, the satisfying crack of the home run that he had just hit.
   A. Should you remove the comma after **ball**?
   B. Or should you remove the comma after **heard**?

9. Karen wasn't sure if she needed a comma or **not** so she drew in a smudge that could pass for a **comma or** a stray pen mark.
   A. Should you add a comma after **not**?
   B. Or should you use a comma after **comma**?

10. Maricarmen bought a new **dictionary**, so that she could proofread for spelling **errors on** her next in-class essay.
    A. Should you remove the comma after **dictionary**?
    B. Or should you add a comma after **errors**?

11. Last weekend, Brenda had time to wash clothes. The dishes, **however were** piled all over the kitchen **counter and** in the sink.
    A. Should you add a comma after **however**?
    B. Or should you add a comma after **counter**?

12. "Don't give me that **look** Marlin," warned **Mrs. Clemmons**, who held his paycheck in her hand.
    A. Should you add a comma after **look**?
    B. Or should you remove the comma after **Mrs. Clemmons**?

13. Winning the **lottery** would create more headaches than the money is **worth but** Fred still buys a ticket every week.
    A. Should you add a comma after **lottery**?
    B. Or should you add a comma after **worth**?

14. Thumbing through the **s** section of the dictionary, Harold tried to **find**, the correct spelling of **psychology**, but the word eluded him despite his careful search.
    A. Should you remove the comma after **find**?
    B. Or should you remove the comma after **psychology**?

15. Oreo, a "barkless" **basenji will** scream like a human **child if** we don't feed her pizza crust quickly enough.
    A. Should you add a comma after **basenji**?
    B. Or should you add a comma after **child**?

16. Coffee brewed on the counter **top and** bacon fried on the stove. Snuggling under the covers for a few more moments of **sleep**, Clyde relished his first Saturday free from work.
    A. Should you add a comma after **top**?
    B. Or should you remove the comma after **sleep**?
17. At the bakery where she worked, Denise happily took one order after another, enjoying the fast pace of Sunday afternoon. Orville, on the other hand had a killer headache from the constant noise and flood of hungry customers.

A. Should you remove the comma after another?
B. Or should you add a comma after hand?

18. Christine removed her glasses, so that the world would dissolve into a blur. If she couldn't see the mound of homework before her, she could pretend that it didn't exist.

A. Should you remove the comma after glasses?
B. Or should you remove the comma after her?

19. David looked in his cereal bowl and gasped in surprise. When his mother came running from the kitchen, David explained "Something just dove under the flakes!"

A. Should you remove the comma after kitchen?
B. Or should you add a comma after explained?

20. Deepa slaved over her essay so she expected a good grade when Ms. Richards returned the papers. The A on the last page confirmed for Deepa that hard work does pay off.

A. Should you put a comma after essay?
B. Or should you put a comma after page?
Commas – Exercise 2

This handout accompanies Exercise 2 of Grammar Bytes! Get the answers by doing the interactive version of the exercise at this address: http://chompchomp.com/exercises.htm

Directions: Choose the option that corrects an error in the underlined portion(s). If no error exists, choose “No change is necessary.”

1. In the crevices between the bathroom tiles, mold sprouts as opportunistically as A weeds do in the cracks, of sidewalks. B C
   A. crevices, between
   B. tiles mold
   C. cracks of
   D. No change is necessary.

2. Diane couldn’t concentrate on General Hospital, because Santana, her beagle who had A B been cooped up in the house all day, wanted to take a long walk around the lake. C
   A. General Hospital because
   B. Santana her
   C. day wanted
   D. No change is necessary.

3. The blue, creamy frosting from the cupcake hung like A a stalactite at the tip of poor George’s B nose, causing Michelle to giggle uncontrollably. C
   A. blue creamy
   B. hung, like
   C. nose causing
   D. No change is necessary.

4. Anthony wanted fried chicken for lunch, but the cafeteria offered only greenish A meatballs with overcooked noodles, and B crispy meatloaf with lumpy mashed potatoes. C
   A. lunch but
   B. meatballs, with
   C. noodles and
   D. No change is necessary.
5. To clean up the kitchen more **quickly, Maria** let Romeo, the family’s German shepherd prewash the dishes with his **fat, pink** tongue.

A. quickly Maria  
B. shepherd, prewash  
C. fat pink  
D. No change is necessary.

6. “Don’t let the cat **out**, warned my roommate Beatrice. “Yesterday, he brought home another dead **squirrel,” she then explained to me.**

A. out,” warned  
B. squirrel”, she  
C. explained, to  
D. No change is necessary.

7. An unswept **driveway and** overgrown lawn make the **house on** the corner look **deserted but** the truth is that the family living there loathes yard work.

A. driveway, and  
B. house, on  
C. deserted, but  
D. No change is necessary.

8. Swimming in cloudy **water, the** goldfish peered through the **dirty, aquarium** glass, hoping that today Fred would **remember to** sprinkle some food into the tank.

A. water the  
B. dirty aquarium  
C. remember, to  
D. No change is necessary.

9. Simon needed a dollar for a **soda but** discovered that his wallet was **empty, so** he gave the machine a hard kick, hoping to dislodge a **bottle for** free.

A. Pepsi, but  
B. empty so  
C. bottle, for  
D. No change is necessary.
10. Rhonda **remembered to** grab a jacket before she left the **house, so** that she wouldn’t freeze **for** fifty **minutes in** College Algebra.

A. remembered, to  
B. house so  
C. minutes, in  
D. No change is necessary.

11. **Five, steaming** bowls of squid eyeball stew sat on the buffet table. Cassandra didn’t want **A** to be a **pig, but** the smell was so **appetizing that** she took two just for herself.**  

B. **A. Five steaming**  
C. **pig but**  
D. **appetizing, that**  
D. No change is necessary.

12. “Take that comma **out,” whispered** Crystal, who saw **Tamara making** a mistake on the quiz. “You need to put it after the next **word**” she then advised.  

B. **out,” whispered**  
C. **Tamara, making**  
D. **word,” she**  
D. No change is necessary.

13. Dr. Grayson, who enjoys belittling **students pointed a long, bony** finger at Charlotte and began to explain why Charlotte’s comment about the French Revolution was **hopelessly and** completely wrong.**  

C. **students, pointed**  
D. **long bony**  
D. **hopelessly, and**  
D. No change is necessary.

14. Larry’s **crumpled smelly** laundry piled on the **chair caused** his neat-freak sister **Samantha so much frustration that** she washed the clothes for her lazy brother.**  

C. **crumpled, smelly**  
D. **chair, caused**  
D. **frustration, that**  
D. No change is necessary.
15. After I saw a **cockroach peeking** out of my burrito, one **restaurant that** I no longer recommend is Tito’s Taco **Palace on** West Summerland.

A. cockroach, peeking  
B. restaurant, that  
C. Palace on  
D. No change is necessary.

16. Ricky stuffed his wad of money in a **sock hidden** in the **hamper, so** that Mark, his freeloading **roommate, wouldn’t** start begging for a “loan.”

A. sock, hidden  
B. hamper so  
C. roommate wouldn’t  
D. No change is necessary.

17. Hair clung to all the seat **cushions, and** dog snot smeared the glass of the living room windows. Bones, stuffed **toys, and** tennis balls littered the floor. Exhausted from their day of play, **Oreo, and Skeeter** slept soundly on the loveseat, waiting for their owners to return.

A. cushions and  
B. toys and  
C. Oreo and  
D. No change is necessary.

18. “**Sweetheart, you** better get your girlfriend a better Valentine’s gift than that cheap box of **chocolates,” warned Mrs. **Smith, Clarence’s** mother.

A. Sweetheart you  
B. chocolates”, warned  
C. Smith Clarence’s  
D. No change is necessary.

19. Louisa had to go food **shopping for** her cat had nothing to **eat except** the expensive canned **tuna that** Louisa didn’t want to waste on a pet.

A. shopping, for  
B. eat, except  
C. tuna, that  
D. No change is necessary.
When Sam saw the zero at the top of his comma quiz, he scratched his head in puzzlement, because he had studied for hours. Then he realized the problem—he had forgotten to use pencil to mark the bubble sheet!

A. quiz he
B. puzzlement because
C. pencil to
D. No change is necessary.
Commas – Exercise 3

This handout accompanies Exercise 3 of Grammar Bytes! Get the answers by doing the interactive version of the exercise at this address: http://chompchomp.com/exercises.htm

Directions: Read the items below. If you believe a comma belongs in a box, then add a comma. If you believe no punctuation is necessary, put an X in the box.

1. "Don't worry honey " said Mom. "If Rocky doesn't come home we'll go to the humane society and pick out another cat."

2. If you need a memo typed in a hurry you should take it to Sharon who has the fastest fingers of anyone in the office.

3. After catching enough trout for both dinner and breakfast we let Bobby scale and gut the fish because he doesn't mind the dirty job.

4. The difficult calculus problems made Setha's head hurt so badly that the aspirin she took did little to relieve the throbbing.

5. Desperate for a snack to take to school Willie put a ripe mushy banana in his book bag but soon discovered that it soaked his dictionary with sweet-smelling slime.

6. Sophia a conscientious student spent two hours every day studying for the algebra midterm. Marvin on the other hand wrote all of the important formulae on his thigh before the exam.

7. Arden wanted to give his old crutches to Kathy who had sprained an ankle after a misstep on the stairs but his wife was using them to stake tomatoes in the garden.

8. The fire alarm began to whine startling everyone in the room but Mr. Chambless continued to lecture about economic theory ignoring the possibility that flames might be licking the hallway walls.
9. Even though Cornelius had spent the entire evening practicing his speech in front of a mirror he had less confidence than Beatrice whose theater experience prepared her for performing in front of an audience.

10. After the ride on the fast terrifying roller coaster Deirdre decided to avoid eating any other heavy greasy foods at the fair.

11. Valerie spent hours vacuuming and dusting the interior of her new car. All the while she knew the chores were useless since Toby her big and hairy mutt insisted on riding everywhere with her.

12. Sitting at the sticky crumb-covered cafeteria table Luther and Ruth carefully studied their chemistry notes so that Dr. Wilson's next tricky test wouldn't confuse them.

13. Starving after three hours of basketball practice Julius went straight to his sister's bathroom for he knew Annette kept a bag of corn chips hidden behind the toilet paper underneath the sink.

14. Unable to sleep in the hot room Robert grabbed his pillow and blanket went outside and stretched out on a lawn chair to enjoy the evening breeze.

15. Allowing even a small dog to sleep on the bed can cause problems for in the night the animal will slowly uncurl and steal more than its fair share of pillows blanket and mattress.

16. Tasting the air with its tongue the snake lay on the warm concrete enjoying the mild spring day and meaning no one any harm.

17. Diane promised herself that she would eat only three caramel candies but her fingers kept digging into the bag pulling out another treat unwrapping the cellophane and popping the chewy square into her mouth.

18. Stacked on the desk huge piles of books and printed web pages lay ignored by Josephine who should have turned in her research paper two days ago.
19. Because Shawn is so tall, he must keep the driver's seat almost fully reclined so that his head doesn't bump the roof of his small car. When he can afford it, he plans to buy a convertible so that he doesn't have to worry about a roof at all.

20. Despite three cups of coffee, Danny could not keep his eyes open for another one of Dr. O'Sullivan's long, dreary lectures on Egyptian pharaohs. So he doodled in his notebook wishing that he had chosen a different class to satisfy his history requirement.
This handout accompanies Exercise 4 of *Grammar Bytes!* Get the answers by doing the interactive version of the exercise at this address: [http://chompchomp.com/exercises.htm](http://chompchomp.com/exercises.htm)

**Directions:** Read the sentences below. If you believe a comma belongs in a box, then add a comma. If you believe no punctuation is necessary, put an X in the box.

1. Chad hopes to play professional football □ in the future □ so he regularly works out at the gym where he lifts weights, runs laps, drinks vitamin-enriched smoothies □ and ogles pretty girls □ as he gets strong □ and fast for tryouts.

2. "Quickly □ Annabelle □ put your notes away □ “ □ warned Ms. Simmons as she passed out the quiz. Annabelle did as she was asked □ for she had all of the comma rules written on her wrists.

3. On the way □ to American Lit □ Drew saw Marc □ the most handsome man in calculus □ so she risked missing the lecture □ to chat with him in the cafeteria.

4. Whenever Maria needs to study □ she sits in the garage. She cannot study □ in the house □ because her children watch television with the volume on high. In addition □ the phone rings constantly with new □ juicy gossip from her sisters.

5. "Well done □ " □ said Professor Bekas □ who had just finished grading Samilia's comma quiz. With the extra credit points □ that Samilia had earned in class □ she scored a 117.

6. Perched on the seats like human passengers □ seven □ fat sheep accompanied a farmer to market. Joe □ sitting across the aisle □ wished that he had biked to downtown Manila instead of riding the overcrowded □ smelly bus.

7. To get an A □ on his biology quiz □ Francisco drew and labeled frog parts □ on his wrist □ so that he could surreptitiously check his answers □ when Dr. Keiper wasn't looking.
8. Because Sarah has chemistry at the other end of campus, she must run to her 10 a.m. class, ignoring all of her friends who try to greet her on the way.

9. My friend Harry, who lives alone, only goes food shopping if a hurricane is about to hit the area or if he's down to using dish soap as shampoo.

10. Whenever Maria is housecleaning, she tunes the radio to her favorite salsa station, sings and dances while she dusts and vacuums.

11. Laverne knows that she is in big trouble because she has turned in neither of her essays for Mr. Beane, who has no patience for late work excuses or apologies.

12. To get on Mrs. Markham's good side, Jason brought his teacher her favorite dish, delicious chocolate-broccoli muffins with green cream cheese frosting.

13. On a dare, Michael spent the night in the Finklestein's abandoned house, which has inspired stories of ghosts who will suck out a person's eyes and eat them like grapes.

14. Oreo, my black and white basenji puppy, loves to chase the cat around the house and lick dry the legs of anyone stepping out of the shower.

15. Because Gloria is such a picky housekeeper, she inspects any dishwashing that her roommate Delores does, checking, for example, that all the lipstick has been removed from the rims of cups and glasses.

16. Ignoring his burning tongue and fingers, Frankie sipped the steaming sugar-loaded coffee as he tried to warm up after four hours of snow skiing in subzero weather.

17. Dustin loves internet auctions so he spends hours on eBay where he bids on comic books, antique milk bottles and unicorn figurines to add to his collections.

18. Lying on the coffee table were Casey's school books, the ones he needed to complete his homework. Unfortunately, the TV remote also lay beside them so Casey spent the evening channel surfing instead of preparing for his Tuesday classes.
19. Nancy discarded one dress after another as she prepared for her first date with Ray. Across town Ray threw on a wrinkled dirty T-shirt and old jeans completely unconcerned about the first impression he would make.

20. Baking in the hot sun Rachel swatted biting mosquitoes wiped sweat from her face and rubbed her sore arms as she cleared the overgrown thorny bushes along the fence line.
Commas – Exercise 5

This handout accompanies Exercise 5 of *Grammar Bytes!* Get the answers by doing the interactive version of the exercise at this address: [http://chompchomp.com/exercises.htm](http://chompchomp.com/exercises.htm)

**Directions:** Put the parts of the sentence in order. You must use all words and punctuation marks. Write your answer on the lines provided.

1. Tom won’t eat in the cafeteria, baked under the cheese of his pizza, because he found a cockroach.

2. Take out the trash, before the dog gets in it, "Mom ordered.

3. that the roof doesn’t blow off, Tina sits on the sofa, and hopes, when a thunderstorm is crashing overhead.
4. loves and my dog Oreo unfortunately shredding magazines, chewing on sofa arms

5. Joe! out of your nose get those straws

6. my friend Maggie has decided to sell her stove to buy textbooks, who microwaves all her meals

7. with her boyfriend Ernest a nose picker and his little sister Shaccara went to Red Lobster
8. but found Mario’s car already parked in the driveway, to beg forgiveness.
   Alex drove to his girlfriend Nadia’s house.

9. Elliot decided to eat at Tito’s Taco Palace, searching for money.
   of his roommate’s awful tuna casserole, so that he could avoid another evening.

10. as her cat purred on her lap, Olivia enjoyed an hour of television, sipping hot tea.

11. from Jerrid, who loved to stomp the poor reptiles flat, scampering off the hot sidewalk, the lizards found safety.
for she had once broken a leg, in a fall from that very same oak.

Beverly warned her brother Tim to get out of the tree.

Began meowing like a mother cat and Maurice opened a can of tuna fish to entice the kitten off the roof.

Melissa did not realize the poor impression that she was making on Justin her date slurping spaghetti noisily.

Dante brought brownies to Mrs. Mauzy who loved any combination of chocolate and nuts.

to get an extension on his research essay his instructor who loved any combination of chocolate and nuts.
that was holding one ear piece in place
Tiffany took off her glasses, so that Michael would notice her beautiful eyes instead of the tape, before flashing a smile.

Barry, please try to sit still while I trim your bangs.

Spider webs snatched at her hair, and as Karen searched the abandoned house, insects scurried from her path.

Bought a can of tuna fish, distracted as usual, Judith, but forgot the mayonnaise jar was empty.
scanning his inbox 
Gloria
Harold hoped to find an email from

his girlfriend

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