

# TEN-MINUTE GRAMMAR

## COMMA RULES: Lesson One

### OBJECTIVES:

1. Students should understand that...
  - a. Three or more items in a **list** should be separated by **commas**.
  - b. **Two adjectives** that describe a noun **may or may not** be separated by a comma. If there is an obvious order (for example “**big red**”) to the adjectives, no comma is needed. If you can put them in any order (for example “**stinky, ugly**” or “**ugly, stinky**”), they are called “**equal adjectives**” and you do separate them with a comma.
  - c. When a speaker addresses someone by name, which is called a “**direct address**,” the name should have commas around it.
  - d. When a **full date** is written out, there should be a comma between the day and the year, as well as after the year if the sentence continues afterwards.
  - e. When an **address or location** is written out, there should be a comma after the street name, after the city, *and* after the state *if* the sentence continues afterwards.
2. Students should be able to...
  - a. Correct sentences and passages that contain comma-use errors with lists, equal adjectives, direct addresses, dates, and locations.
  - b. Write sentences that correctly use commas with lists, equal adjectives, direct addresses, dates, and locations.

### LITERATURE:

This unit contains example selections from the novel *Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy* by Gary D. Schmidt.

Identify the comma errors in each of the following sentences (where do commas need to be added?):

1. I went to the store to buy a bag of chips a can of soda and a box of Twinkies.
2. My neighbor has a hideous stinky pet dog.
3. I don't know what to tell you John.
4. My brother was born on July 4 1997 so we always light fireworks for his birthday party.
5. The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame is located at 1100 Rock and Roll Boulevard Cleveland Ohio.

Read the following example sentences from Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy by Gary D. Schmidt. Find the missing commas in each sentence:

6. Turner Buckminster had lived in Phippsburg Maine for almost six whole hours.
7. The ball dropped onto the granite plate bounced up against his knee plopped back onto the plate and rolled still against his ankle.

**Wordplay – Just for fun!**

- **EIGHT BALL:** Create as many words as you can using three or more of the letters below (at least one eight-letter word is possible):

N U S E T Q A I

In your own words, write a comma rule that explains the following corrections (Your rule could start with “You should use a comma / commas to ...”):

1. I'd like eggs, pancakes, and a glass of orange juice.
2. Lizzie, stop texting me!
3. The world will end on December 21, 2012, according to the Mayans.
4. My friend Freddie's address is 1313 Elm Street, Eerie, Indiana, which is kind of freaky.

“Equal adjectives” are two or more adjectives that describe a noun in a similar or equal way, and they should be separated by a comma. You know adjectives are “equal” if it sounds correct to put an “and” between them.

Decide whether the two bold adjectives need a comma between them (answer YES or NO):

5. I try to stay away from that **danger-filled crime-ridden** part of town.
6. We built a clubhouse in the **old elm** tree behind our house.
7. Grandpa is a **friendly generous** man.
8. Your friend is an **obnoxious inconsiderate** person.

Wordplay – Just for fun!

- **DESCRAMBLER:** Try to sort out the five scrambled words below:  
GYLU    EOMLN    ORWDTA    ESDEAIS    RENNDEWO

In the last two days, you have learned several comma rules. Create your own example sentence for each of the following rules:

1. Separate three or more items in a list with commas.
2. Separate two equal adjectives with a comma.
3. With dates, use a comma between the day and the year *and* after the year *if* the sentence continues.
4. With addresses or locations, use a comma after the street name, after the city, *and* after the state *if* the sentence continues.

A “direct address” is when a speaker addresses or speaks to a person and calls that person by name. Separate a direct address with commas.

Decide whether the bold name needs commas before or after it (answer YES or NO):

5. I need to talk to you about your video game addiction **Jason**.
6. **Jason** needs to stop playing video games so much.
7. I think **Hilary** should stop being so rude to my sister.
8. Listen **Hilary** you can't talk about my sister like that.

Wordplay – Just for fun!

- **RHYME THYME:** Time to think like a rapper. How many rhymes can you come up with for the following word?

HAIR

Read the following excerpts from Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy by Gary D. Schmidt. Then answer the questions afterward:

(a) The house perched on its raft as though it were trying not to be sick. (b) Its roof beams sagged in the middle its shingles clung loosely and the chimney pipe swayed with each wave.

1. Where do two commas need to be added in sentence (b) and why?

(c) Lizzie's grandfather looked like a white-haired fiery-eyed Old Testament prophet without the robes.

2. Where does sentence (c) need a comma and why?

(d) "Turner no one on that island is fit company for a minister's son.

(e) Not a single one. (f) Heaven only knows what goes on over there."

3. Where does sentence (d) need a comma and why?

4. Which sentence is NOT an independent clause: (d), (e), or (f)?

Using the proper proofreading marks, correct the six errors in this excerpt:

The bote seemed like a lithe living thing and if Turner had been in some other moment and not being tuded along behind like a reluctant dog he might have let his self marvel at the soundless beauty of it all.

**Wordplay – Just for fun!**

➤ **CATALOG CREATOR:** The prefix “**auto-**” means “self” and sounds like “otto.” How many words can you list that contain this prefix?

**REVIEW FOR TODAY'S QUIZ:**

1. Where should commas be used in a list?
2. What are “equal adjectives”?
3. What is a “direct address”?
4. Where do commas go when you write out a date?
5. Where do commas go when you write out an address?
6. Where should commas be added in the following sentences:
  - a. I went to the store to buy a bag of chips a can of soda and a box of Twinkies.
  - b. My neighbor has a hideous stinky pet dog.
  - c. I don't know what to tell you John.
  - d. My brother was born on July 4 1997 so we always light fireworks for his birthday party.
  - e. The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame is located at 1100 Rock and Roll Boulevard Cleveland Ohio.

In each of the following sentences, decided where a comma needs to be **ADDED**:

1. Eric you really need to get to work on that essay.
2. On July 4, 1776 fifty-six men signed the Declaration of Independence.
3. To play the game, you need a baseball a bat, and a glove.
4. The Empire State Building is located at 350 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, New York City  
New York.
5. A dark filthy apartment was the scene of the crime.

In each of the following sentences, decided where a comma needs to be **DELETED**:

6. Mark, thinks *Star Wars* is lame, so he won't watch it with me.
7. Whose birthday is on April, 1, 2000?
8. You are a very, rude girl, Jennifer.
9. I want to see the surf shops, and the beaches on our trip to Pensacola,  
Florida.

**Wordplay – Just for fun!**

- **ANAGRAM:** Rearrange the letters in the nonsense phrase below to create new words that actually make sense.

ABUNDANT RAMP NAMES

(Hint: caped crusaders)

Read the following paragraph and answer the four questions below:

(a) The crime happened on March, 12, 2011, in Los Angeles California. (b) An old, mysterious notebook was the only evidence they found. (c) On the notebook, someone had written an address: 352 Park Avenue Las Vegas Nevada. (d) So Officers Johnson, Jacobs, and Jordan headed to Vegas to investigate.

1. What two comma corrections are needed in sentence (a)?
2. Why is there a comma after “old” in sentence (b)?
3. Sentence (c) is missing two commas. Where should they go?
4. Why are there commas after “Johnson” and “Jacobs” in sentence (d)?

Using the proper proofreading marks, correct the six errors in this excerpt from Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy by Gary D. Schmidt:

Turner, screamed as he fell backward in to the snow. He scuttled to the edge of the ledges felt his hand miss pulled himself back and tried to get his legs under him. “You’re all right boy. Nobodys going to hurt you.”

**Wordplay – Just for fun!**

- **FIXER-ROOTER:** How many words can you think of that have the same prefix, suffix, or root as the multisyllabic word below?

SUBMERGENCE      SUB / MERGE / ENCE

(the act of placing or plunging under water)



Read the following excerpt from Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy by Gary D. Schmidt. Then answer the four questions below:

(a) He never could time the descent of the ball. (b) It always seemed to cheat on him. (c) In Boston Massachusetts baseball was honest. (d) Here, no matter how he timed the thing, he was always off and the most he could manage was a weasel of a hit that looped back to the pitcher's glove.

(e) "Good, Turner. (f) You got it back to me" said Willis.

1. Is sentence (a) an independent clause or a subordinate clause?
2. Sentence (c) needs two commas. Where should they go?
3. Where should a comma be added in sentence (d)?
4. Is sentence (d) a compound sentence or a complex sentence?
5. Why is there a comma after "Good" in sentence (e)?
6. Where should a comma be added in sentence (f)?

**Wordplay – Just for fun!**

- **FOUR-LETTER WORDS:** Take the four-letter word below and change one letter to make a new four-letter word (keep it clean!) Then take *that* word and change one letter to make a new word. Then take *that* word and... You get the picture.

PANT

DAY  
FOUR

COMMA RULES ONE

Name:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

The bote seemed like a lithe living thing and if Turner had been in some other moment and not being tugged along behind like a reluctant dog he might have let his self marvel at the soundless beauty of it all.

DAY  
FOUR

COMMA RULES ONE

Name:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
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FOUR

COMMA RULES ONE

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- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

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DAY  
SIX

COMMA RULES ONE

Name:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Turner, screamed as he fell backward in to the snow. He scuttled to the edge of the ledges felt his hand miss pulled himself back and tried to get his legs under him. "You're all right boy. Nobodys going to hurt you."

DAY  
SIX

COMMA RULES ONE

Name:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

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SIX

COMMA RULES ONE

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NAME:

PERIOD:

**EQUAL ADJECTIVES** – When you use two adjectives to describe a noun in a similar way, put a comma between them. You know the adjectives are equal if it makes sense to put “and” between them.

*Do the example sentences follow correct comma rules (answer YES or NO)?*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ He’s a fast, athletic football player.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ We are moving to a large well-decorated house with an old, maple tree in the back yard.

*In each sentence, add commas where they are needed:*

3. A confident educated candidate is more likely to get the job.
4. Stay away from the mysterious dangerous island on the old pirate map.

*Now write your own example sentence that contains two EQUAL ADJECTIVES:*

**DIRECT ADDRESS** – When a speaker is talking to a person and calls that person by name, put commas before and after the name.

*Do the example sentences follow correct comma rules (answer YES or NO)?*

5. \_\_\_\_\_ When, Mike, gets done batting, you’re up next Juan.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Rachel, what happened to your hair?

*In each sentence, add commas where they are needed:*

7. Listen Hilary you need to start paying more attention when I talk to you.
8. Give John his video game back Derrick.

*Now write your own example sentence that contains a DIRECT ADDRESS:*

**DATES** – When you write out a date, put a comma between the day and the year—and after the year if the sentence continues afterward.

*Do the example sentences follow correct comma rules (answer YES or NO)?*

9. \_\_\_\_\_ February 14, 2011, was the best Valentine’s Day ever!

10. \_\_\_\_\_ I graduated from high school on June, 1 2009.

***In each sentence, add commas where they are needed:***

11. I was born on December 28 1999 so my birthday always comes during a vacation from school.

12. September 11 2001 is a date that will be long remembered in America.

***Now write your own example sentence that contains a DATE:***

**ADDRESSES AND LOCATIONS – When you write out an address or location, always put a comma between the street address and the city as well as between the city and state. Put a comma after the state if the sentence continues afterward.**

***Do the example sentences follow correct comma rules (answer YES or NO)?***

13. \_\_\_\_\_ Mail the thank-you letters to 1800 West Main Street, Gooding, Idaho.

14. \_\_\_\_\_ The Sears Tower is located at 233, South Wacker Drive, Chicago Illinois.

***In each sentence, add commas where they are needed:***

15. To get to the party, drive to 453 Sycamore Avenue Springfield Massachusetts and then go to the back yard.

16. 925 North Collins Street Arlington Texas is the address of the Dallas Cowboys' football stadium.

***Now write your own example sentence that contains an ADDRESS:***

**LISTS – When your sentence contains a list of three or more things, you need a comma between each item in the list but NOT after the last item in the list. The items in a list could be single words, small phrases, or even complete clauses.**

***Do the example sentences follow correct comma rules (answer YES or NO)?***

17. \_\_\_\_\_ Clams, shrimp, and crabs, all live on the seafloor.

18. \_\_\_\_\_ My list of nightly chores includes washing the dishes, cleaning my room, and doing my homework.

***In each sentence, add commas where they are needed:***

19. Lily Mike and Dori are coming over this afternoon to study.

20. Jake played the drums Kimball played the bass and Preston played the guitar.

***Now write your own example sentence that contains a LIST:***

## QUIZ

## COMMA RULES ONE

NAME:

PERIOD:

Which answer gives the best way to correct the sentence?

1. My obnoxious little brother was born on February, 1, 2003.  
**A.** Delete the comma after "February"  
**B.** Add a comma after "obnoxious"  
**C.** NO CHANGE
2. I'm sorry Jake, but we're moving to Seattle, Washington.  
**A.** Delete the comma after "Seattle"  
**B.** Add a comma before "Jake"  
**C.** NO CHANGE
3. Sara wants a bike, an iPod, and new clothes for her birthday.  
**A.** Delete the comma after "bike"  
**B.** Add a comma after "Sara"  
**C.** NO CHANGE

Add one comma in each sentence:

4. I have cooking woodshop, and economics this trimester.
5. John Lennon died on December 8 1980, and music fans were very sad.
6. She lives in an old worn-down house.
7. I'll meet you at 230 Buffalo Street, Tulsa Oklahoma, and we'll go to the airport together.
8. Jack you shouldn't make fun of people like that.

## QUIZ

## COMMA RULES ONE

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PERIOD:

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4. I have cooking woodshop, and economics this trimester.
5. John Lennon died on December 8 1980, and music fans were very sad.
6. She lives in an old worn-down house.
7. I'll meet you at 230 Buffalo Street, Tulsa Oklahoma, and we'll go to the airport together.
8. Jack you shouldn't make fun of people like that.

**In each sentence, circle the comma that should be deleted:**

9. Grandma died in, Portland, Oregon, on May 2, 2006.
10. Somebody poisoned the old, oak tree, and it died.
11. Jackson, needs to find his shoes, socks, and coat so we can get ready to leave.
12. That ugly, flea-ridden dog down the street was lost, but someone returned him on December, 24.
13. I live at 496, Harbor Avenue, San Francisco, California.

**Write your own example sentences that follow correct comma rules and contain the following items:**

14. A list of three or more things
15. A direct address (calling someone by name)

16. Equal adjectives

17. An address or location

18. A calendar date

**In each sentence, circle the comma that should be deleted:**

9. Grandma died in, Portland, Oregon, on May 2, 2006.
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15. A direct address (calling someone by name)

16. Equal adjectives

17. An address or location

18. A calendar date





**In each sentence, circle the ONE comma that should be deleted:**

9. Grandma died in, Portland, Oregon, on May 2, 2006.
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on December, 24.
13. I live at 496, Harbor Avenue, San Francisco, California.

**Write your own example sentences that follow correct comma rules and contain the following items:**

14. A list of three or more things
15. A direct address (when you're talking to someone and you call them by name)
16. Equal adjectives (when two adjectives describe a noun in a similar way)
17. An address or location (with a street number, city, and state)
18. A calendar date (with the month, day, and year)

NAME:

PERIOD:

As you review for the unit quiz, remember the five rules we've learned:

- Separate three or more items in a list with commas.
- Separate two equal adjectives with a comma.
- Use commas around a direct address, or when you are speaking to someone and you call them by name.
- With dates, use a comma between the day, after the year, *and* after the year *if* the sentence continues.
- With addresses or locations, use a comma after the street name, after the city, *and* after the state *if* the sentence continues.

*Which answer gives the best way to correct the sentence?*

1. Tom exercises daily, eats right, and practices a lot because he wants to be a strong, athletic guy.
  - A. Delete the comma after "strong"
  - B. Add a comma after "Tom"
  - C. NO CHANGE
2. I'm sorry Mrs. Jensen, but I couldn't finish the essay because I was in Portland, Oregon, all weekend.
  - A. Delete the comma after "Oregon"
  - B. Add a comma before "Mrs."
  - C. NO CHANGE
3. My awesome best friend was born on October, 1, 1999.
  - A. Delete the comma after "October"
  - B. Add a comma after "awesome"
  - C. NO CHANGE
4. If you go to 1 East 161<sup>st</sup> Street, Bronx, New York, you could watch the Yankees play baseball.
  - A. Delete the comma after "New York"
  - B. Add a comma after "East"
  - C. NO CHANGE
5. Travis, would you go buy Doritos hot wings, and Pepsi for the party?
  - A. Delete the comma after "Travis"
  - B. Add a comma before "Doritos"
  - C. NO CHANGE

**Add one comma in each sentence:**

6. I have Freshman English Algebra II, and Freshman World History this trimester.
7. Abraham Lincoln was assassinated on April 15 1865, and the country mourned.
8. He comes from a dangerous gang-filled neighborhood.
9. I'll meet you at 584 Washington Avenue, Idaho Falls Idaho.
10. Mary you'll make the team for sure with that kind of effort.

**In each sentence, circle the comma that should be deleted:**

11. My cousin was born in, Salt Lake City, Utah, on March 21, 2004.
12. The park caretakers planted the young, maple tree in the park, but the tree didn't survive.
13. Mark, needs to change his name, dye his hair, and wear colored contact lenses so he won't be recognized by other spies.
14. That beautiful, sweet-smelling flower was planted last year on April, 1.
15. I live at 8765, Valley Street, Denver, Colorado.

**FIRST PAGE ANSWERS: C, B, A, C, B**

**For each of the comma rules below, fill in the blanks of the incomplete sentence. Then write your own example sentence that follows the same structure and obeys correct comma rules:**

16. *A list of three or more things*

**If you go to the store, I need \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ , and \_\_\_\_\_ .**

17. *A direct address (calling someone by name)*

\_\_\_\_\_, **you should try out for the basketball team.**

18. *Equal adjectives*

**She is looking for a \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ guy to go to the dance with.**

19. *An address or location*

**My friend lives at 1300 \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ , Texas.**

20. *A calendar date*

**My favorite movie star's birthday is \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ .**