

Quick reference help sheet.

# COMMAS

## Fast Facts

- **Commas** are used to separate items in a list.
- **Example:** On my desk there is a diary, a pen, a pair of scissors and a ruler.
  
- **Note:** there is not usually a **comma** before **and**.
  
- **Commas** are used before and after extra information (known as a subordinate clause) is included in a sentence.
- **Example:** Mr. Jones, our next door neighbour, kindly threw my ball back.
- **The sentence would make sense if the extra information was removed.**
  
- If the extra information comes at the end of a sentence, its final comma is replaced by the full stop.
- **Example:** We arrived at Chalvedon, one of the best schools in Essex.

## Common 'comma' mistakes.

If you need to separate two main clauses with a punctuation mark, use a semi colon, colon or a full stop.

### **Incorrect example:**

1. Mildred was furious, Maud was upset.

### **Correct examples:**

1. Mildred was furious. Maud was upset.
2. Mildred was furious; Maud was upset. *This implies that something has happened to anger Mildred and upset Maud.*

- A **clause** contains a verb and a subject.
- There are two types of clauses – **main** clauses, which can form a simple sentence on its own, and **subordinate** clauses, which cannot.
- Commas separate main and subordinate clauses. They do not separate two main clauses.

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