

## COMMAS

We use comma in numerous ways, including:

- 1) Elements in a series
- 2) Comma plus coordinating conjunction
- 3) Introductory elements
- 4) Non-defining clauses
- 5) Other uses – quotation, avoiding confusion, etc.

### Coordinating conjunctions

- Connect parts of a sentence – connect two **independent clauses**
  - o Thomas didn't want to do it, but he did it anyway. – two independent clauses connected by a comma and a coordinating conjunction
- **FANBOYS: For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So**
- Almost always accompanied by a comma
- Different from **subordinating conjunctions** – one of the clauses becomes a subordinate element (and therefore cannot stand on its own)
  - o Although Květa thought about joining the army, she never discussed it with anyone.
  - o Květa never discussed her wish to join the army, because she was afraid people would ridicule her.

### Dependent clauses

- Cannot stand by themselves because they do not make sense.
  - o Adverb clauses: *When the show is over*, we can go for a drink.
  - o Adjective clauses: My sister, *who is an engineer*, helped me a lot.
  - o Noun clauses: *What he knows* is no concern of mine.

### Avoiding confusion

- For most the year is already finished.
- For most, the year is already finished.
- Outside the lawn was cluttered with hundreds of broken branches.
- Outside, the lawn was cluttered with hundreds of broken branches.

### Exercise 1: Insert commas where necessary.

- 1) After a hard day at the office I like to relax with a large gin.
- 2) The recipe needed jam flour sugar fruit eggs ketchup and baking powder.
- 3) "Look at this" he whispered.
- 4) Paulina his wife of many years had decided to go and live in Greece.
- 5) As the sun began to sink over the sea Karen got ready to go out.

- 6) The thief was wearing impractical high heels so she could not run fast.
- 7) We go to Blackpool for the cuisine not the weather.
- 8) Steven his head still spinning walked out of the office for the last time.

**Exercise 2: The following sentences are extremely confusing. Insert commas to avoid confusion.**

- 1) Before leaving the soldiers demolished the fort.
- 2) As she was rising to speak her mind suddenly played a cruel trick and she forgot her speech.
- 3) Shelley having drowned Byron presided over the funeral ceremonies on the beach.
- 4) Did the lion eat Fred?
- 5) Let's eat grandpa.

**Exercise 3: More comma practice.**

- a) In theory the dark smoke from the burning oil wells absorbs sunlight and the surrounding air is heated.
- b) The anticipation that biological and chemical weapons would be used caused unprecedented stress for the troops.
- c) It seems that she answered the question easily but her answer was actually quite complex.
- d) It can be beneficial to register for classes early yet each student must wait his or her turn.
- e) Analyzing the data reveals public support of conflict for as environmental issues become a variable attitudes towards war become more complex.
- f) Because of mass destruction to the system sewage overflowed and spread diseases.
- g) He could either go to the store or go to the basketball game.
- h) I did not want to go to class nor did I want to write that paper.
- i) She worried about finding someone to take care of the dog and provide a good home for him.
- j) I did not want to scare him so I did not tell him about the accident.