



Literacy Lesson 3: Using Commas and Full Stops

Commas “separate elements within the sentence.” In other words, they can break the sentence up by making the reader pause.

Full Stops indicate the end of a sentence.

A. Commas. In groups of 2 or 3, work out how the meaning of the sentence would change if the comma was deleted. Feedback to the class.

1. *From the Oxford Dictionary definition of a Panda...*

“Eats, shoots and leaves.”

Removing the comma would indicate that the Panda eats vegetation (shoots and leaves) rather than eating, firing a rifle/hand weapon and then leaving the scene of the crime.

In this case, inserting a comma makes rather a fundamental difference!

2. *From Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone...*

“Harry, is Lord Voldemort...” began Hermione.

“Yes.” Answered Harry. “Lord Voldemort is alive.”

Removing the comma here would suggest that Harry is Lord Voldemort. Rather a serious twist to the original story!

B. Full Stops.

1. Again, in groups of 2 or 3, take a deep breath and see if you can read to the end of the sentence! **Do you think full stops are an important feature of writing?**

KS3 Extract from Skellig by David Almond:

I found him in the garage on a Sunday afternoon. It was the day after we moved into Falconer Road. The winter was ending. Mum had said we'd be moving just in time for the spring. Nobody else was there. Just me. The others were inside the house with Doctor Death, worrying about the baby. He was lying there in the darkness behind the tea chests, in the dust and dirt. It was as if he'd been there forever. He was filthy and pale and dried out and I thought he was dead. I couldn't have been more wrong. I'd soon begin to see the truth about him, that there'd never been another creature like him in the world.

There are **12** missing full stops. There are **3** missing commas. See if you can find out where they should be and put them in. **Feedback to the class.**

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KS4 Extract from A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens:

Once upon a time - of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve - old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house. It was cold, bleak, biting weather; foggy withal, and he could hear the people in the court outside go wheezing up and down, beating their hands upon their breasts and stamping their feet upon the pavement stones to warm them. The city clocks had only just gone three, but it was quite dark already: it had not been light all day and candles were flaring in the windows of the neighbouring offices, like ruddy smears upon the palpable brown air. The fog came pouring in at every chink and keyhole, and was so dense without, that although the court was of the narrowest, the houses opposite were mere phantoms. To see the dingy cloud come drooping down, obscuring everything, one might have thought that Nature lived hard by, and was brewing on a large scale.

There are **5** missing full stops. There are **13** missing commas. See if you can find out where they should be and put them in. **Feedback to the class.**

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That's all Folks!