

Commas for clarity



Commas

Commas can have a number of roles in a sentence:

- To separate items in a list
- With speech punctuation
- To mark clauses
- To clarify meaning

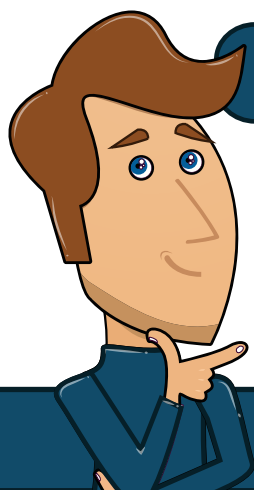
Commas for clarity

Commas play an important role in helping the reader understand what the writer is trying to say.

Look at these examples:

He sprang to his feet quickly, realising that someone was at the door.

He sprang to his feet, quickly realising that someone was at the door.



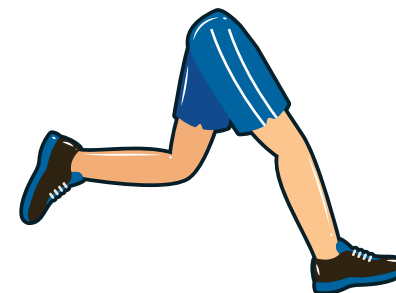
Can you explain the difference?



Commas for clarity

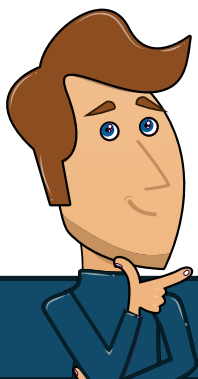
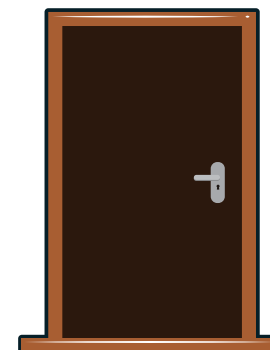
He sprang to his feet quickly, realising that someone was at the door.

This sentence is saying that he was quick to get to his feet.



He sprang to his feet, quickly realising that someone was at the door.

This sentence is saying that he was quick to realise someone was at the door.

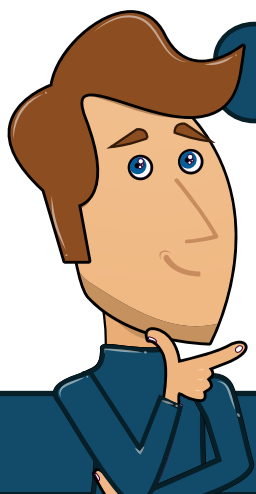


Commas for clarity

Look at the following sentences and add a comma to change their meaning:

Bill claims joe is the best bowler in the team.

We are going to learn to cut and stick kids.



Can you explain the difference?



How did you do?

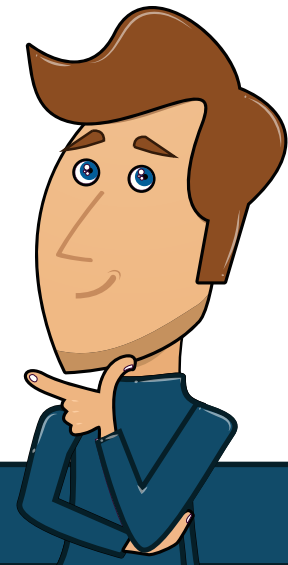
Bill claims joe is the best bowler in the team.

Bill, claims joe, is the best bowler in the team.

How have the commas changed the meaning?

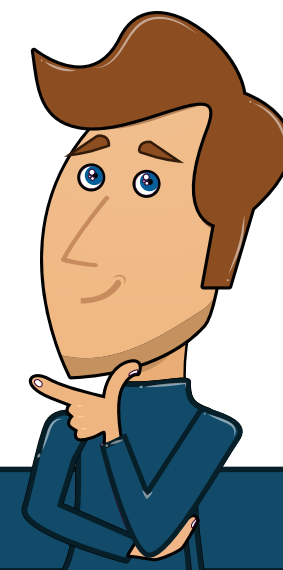
At first Bill is saying Joe is the best bowler.

Adding the comma has changed the sentence so that Joe is claiming Bill is the best bowler.



Add a commas to my sentence to show that 3 people went to the cinema:

After leaving Sarah Claire and Dave went to the cinema.



Add a commas to my sentence to show that 3 people went to the cinema:

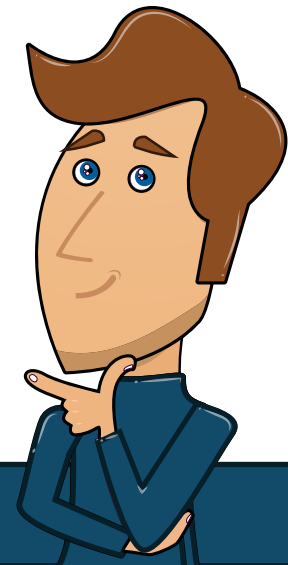
After leaving Sarah Claire and Dave went to the cinema.

After leaving, Sarah, Claire and Dave went to the cinema.



Now add a comma to my sentence to show that only 2 people went to the cinema:

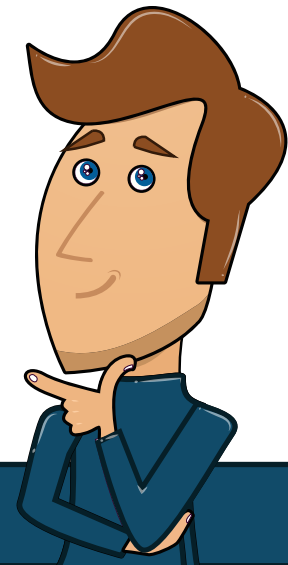
After leaving Sarah Claire and Dave went to the cinema.



Now add a commas to my sentence to show that only 2 people went to the cinema:

After leaving Sarah Claire and Dave went to the cinema.

After leaving Sarah, Claire and Dave went to the cinema.



Challenge

With your partner, come up with a sentence where moving or adding a comma changes the meaning.

