

1.4 Comma Used In A Series

Hop and Hip are relaxing by a stream.

Hop: Hip, why are you so happy? Don't you remember that we're stuck in the jungle?

Hip: Well, Hop, the jungle has so many wonderful things in it.

Hop: Like what?

Hip: The jungle has peaceful streams COMMA, green leaves COMMA, and interesting creatures.

Hop: What are peaceful streams comma? (*realizing*) Oh, you're going to do something with grammar again aren't you? (*begging*) Come on, Hip. I'm not in a good mood.

Hip: Sorry, Hop, but it's my duty to inform you.

Hop: No, your duty is to inform me about poisonous reptiles, man-eating birds, and aggressive fish.

Hip: Good job.

Hop: Good job at what?

Hip: You just created a list sentence, and in a list sentence you use commas to separate the items in the list.

Hop: I thought you didn't have to put a comma right before "and."

Hip: You don't. You'd only use a comma there if the list was more complex, and if leaving out the comma made the sentence confusing.

Hop: Okay, so let's get this over with. The list sentence that I created should sound like this; "Your duty is to inform me about poisonous reptiles COMMA, man-eating birds and aggressive fish."

Hip: Yup. Now, you're successfully using a comma.

Hop: But didn't you say that sometimes you need the comma before the "and?"

Hip: I did.

Hop: But what kind of sentence would that be?

Hip: Here's an example: "On this adventure we've eaten franks and beans (COMMA), shrimp and grits (COMMA), and beans and rice." If we left the comma out at the end, it may be confusing. Someone might think that we ate beans and then we ate rice, instead of beans and rice together.

Hop: Okay, so we use a comma when separating items in a list sentence, but not before the final "and." However, if the sentence is complicated, we may want to put the comma before the "and" just to make sure the sentence is not confusing.

Hip: You got it.

Hop: I knew if I wanted any chance at enjoying the sun, the stream and the quiet, I'd have to wrap this one up quick.

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Post-Reading Activity

A.) Punctuate the following sentences using commas.

1. Hop enjoys complaining sleeping and eating.
2. Hip has lived in Costa Rica Brazil and Alaska.
3. Hop's favorite foods are nachos pizza and cake.
4. Hip eats vanilla chocolate and cookies and cream ice cream.

B.) Create your own list sentences using commas. Use the following questions to help you.

1. What are your three favorite foods?
2. What are your three favorite movies or books?
3. What are three things that you do when you get home after school?
4. What kind of music do you listen to?