Name _____ Date _____

Comma catch

A comma goes straight after a fronted adverbial.

1 Learn



When an adverbial is at the front, put a **comma** straight after it. The comma is the join that shows where the opener ends and the main sentence begins.



The comma sits at the join: after the **last word** of the opener, never in the middle of it.

Add the comma: In the middle of the night the baby woke.

1. Find the main sentence: **the baby woke** (who did what).
2. Everything before it is the fronted adverbial: **In the middle of the night**.
3. Put the comma straight after its last word: **In the middle of the night, the baby woke.**
4. Read it aloud and take a small pause at the comma.

Flip's tip: a comma can change the meaning! Read **"After hunting the owl flew home."** Who was hunted? Now: **"After hunting, the owl flew home."** The comma shows the owl did the hunting.

Warm up: add the missing comma.

Yesterday I lost my hat. With a giggle Mia ran off.

Grown-ups: in Year 4, children are taught to put a comma after every fronted adverbial, even a one-word one like "Suddenly,". The comma helps the reader see where the main sentence starts.

Name _____ Date _____

2 Try it together a child and a grown-up, about 10 minutes



Bright-pen commas

You need: sticky notes or scraps of paper, a pencil, and a bright pen or crayon.

1. The grown-up writes 3 sentences that start with a when, where or how opener, one per note, and **leaves out the commas**.
2. The child reads each one aloud and listens for the end of the opener.
3. The child adds the comma with the bright pen, then writes the opener in the table.
4. Swap! The child writes a sentence with the comma in the **wrong place**. Can the grown-up catch it?

#	The opener (with its comma)	When, where or how?
1		
2		
3		
4		

Grown-ups: try "After tea we baked a cake", "Under the stairs the cat was sleeping" and "As fast as he could Leo ran home". Stick the finished notes somewhere you'll see them.

3 Practise

A. Add the comma after each fronted adverbial.

1 At the end of the road the bus stopped.

2 Quietly the spy opened the safe.

3 Before the sun came up we set off.

4 Without looking back Leo ran home.

B. Write your own fronted adverbial and its comma.

1 _____ the fireworks lit up the sky. when?

2 _____ a spider spun its web. where?

Name _____ Date _____

C. Is the comma in the right place? Tick or cross. Then write the wrong ones correctly.

1 Later, that day the rain stopped. ☐

2 On the beach, we built a sandcastle. ☐

3 After lunch we, played outside. ☐

4 Very slowly, the snail climbed the wall. ☐

D. A missing comma can trick the reader. Add the comma, then say what the sentence could wrongly seem to mean without it.

While the children ate the dog sat under the table.

As Dad was washing the dog ran into the garden.

Challenge

Mia says you only need a comma after **long** openers, not one-word ones like **Suddenly**. What would you tell her?

I can… Tick when you can.

- ☐ put a comma straight after a fronted adverbial
- ☐ spot a comma in the wrong place and fix it
- ☐ explain how a missing comma can change the meaning