

GED 2002 Teachers' Handbook of Lesson Plans

Area/Skill - LA, Writing	Cognitive Skill Level - Application	Correlation to Framework - 01.01	Lesson Number - 01
<p>Activity Title - Punctuation (The Comma vs. The Semicolon)</p> <p>Goal/Objective</p> <p>To help students understand the usage of two commonly confused punctuation marks.</p> <p>Lesson Outline</p> <p>Introduction</p> <p>Students often have difficulty determining whether to use a comma or semicolon. Semicolons are generally used in place of a period. Commas can never be used to replace a period. A semicolon is used to separate a series or list in which commas are already a part.</p> <p>Activity</p> <p>Review the uses of commas and semicolons included in the handout. Discuss some of the other differences, such as use of a comma in compound sentences versus the use of the semicolon between main clauses. Finally, as a group work complete the worksheets. Depending upon class size have students work in small groups. Ask each group to create sentences similar to those in the handout but without correct punctuation then exchange their sentences with another group. Have each group correctly punctuate the sentences.</p> <p>Debriefing/Evaluation Activity</p> <p>When the groups have completed their sentences, have each group present their sentences to the rest of the class. Have each group explain why they used they used the punctuation the way that they did. Check for accuracy of the use of commas, semicolons and periods.</p>			<p>Materials/Texts/Realia/Handouts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handout— Commas • Handout— Semicolons • Handout—Comma/Semicolon Worksheet • Handout—Answer Key Comma/Semicolon Worksheet • Paper and pencils
			<p>Extension Activity</p> <p>Have students re-write the sentences in a different way to see how the punctuation might change. Encourage students to re-write the sentences so they are easy to understand. This will help students begin to understand the editing process which is essential when writing the essay for the GED</p>
<p>Real-Life Connection</p> <p>In real-life people often have to put their thoughts in writing. Brainstorm with the class, reasons why they would have to write something. Write the list of reasons on the board. Provide students with some samples of writing taken from email, business documents, newspaper editorials. Have the students discuss the differences in the style of writing for each one. Students should understand that different styles of writing are used depending on the audience for which it is intended.</p>			<p>ESE/ESOL Accommodations</p> <p>Pair students who need help with another student who will help them.</p> <p>Provide a dictionary.</p> <p>Provide a peer helper for those students who need help.</p>

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Activity Title—Punctuation (The Comma vs. The Semicolon)

Introduction

Say: The comma does so much more than provide a reader with a convenient place to take a breath. Punctuation provides you with a map, that shows you how written words are meant to be read and understood. Without these valuable signposts, you could easily become confused and frustrated. Today, we are going to review two easily confused punctuation marks, the comma and the semicolon.

Provide students with examples of comma and semicolon usage. Review handouts provided.

Main Activity

Have students work in small groups. First, identify a topic that will make the activity more relevant and interesting, such as a topic selected from that week's top news stories or positive sentences found in a cover letter for a job application. *Say:* In this activity you are going to write some sentences. Don't put any punctuation in them. When you finish, pass them to the next group. Each group will then have to correctly punctuate the sentences. Remember, the goal is not to trick the other team, but to develop sentences that will challenge them to use the correct punctuation. Before we begin, let's select a topic. *Ask:* Do you have a topic you would like to use?

After the topic has been selected, have the groups write their sentences. The sentences must require commas and/or semicolons. Give the groups 5-minutes to write their sentences. Ask the groups to exchange sentences. You should also receive a copy so you can write the unpunctuated sentences on the board. Each group must then correctly punctuate the sentences.

Debriefing/Evaluation Activity

In a group discussion afterwards, ask each group to review and defend their punctuation choices. As they provide the punctuation choices, insert them onto the sentences on the board. Ask the other groups if they agree with the punctuation choices that the group has made. Discuss any errors in punctuation. *Say:* Sentences may be written in different ways—for example, one person could use two sentences, where another uses one sentence with a semicolon. The content of the sentence stays the same—the structure changes. This is a very useful skill especially when writing your essay for the GED Language Arts, Writing Test.

THE COMMA

1. **Introductory Words, Phrases and Clauses**

Dressing for the interview, I found my long lost necklace.
Oh my, what am I going to do now!

2. **Dates, Addresses and Geographical Names**

Please respond by U.S. mail to John Paul Beatle, 64 Penny Lane, London,
England.

3. **Words of Direct Address**

Bill, did you yell at that clerk?

4. **Setting Off Quotations**

Bill answered, "No, I did not yell at that woman."

5. **Unnecessary Parenthetical Expressions**

If he is going to be prosecuted, I wonder, will it be before or after he leaves his
job?

6. **Appositives**

The volunteer instructor, a professional athlete, was in excellent physical
condition.

7. **Series**

In order for your application to be complete, you must submit a resume, a
statement of interest, two references from former employers and take a drug test.

8. **Clarity**

Before painting the walls, the man put cloths on the floor.

9. **Omitted Words**

The flowers were pink. The vase, gold.

THE SEMICOLON

1. Semicolons Between Word Groups Containing Commas

If a sentence becomes too difficult to read because it contains too many commas, a semicolon may be the cure.

- A semicolon should be used between a conjunction (but, and) that joins two main clauses if the preceding clause includes commas. For example:

The reading club is going to select from the classics, poetry and modern fiction; but it does not plan to select any non-fiction.

- A semicolon should be used to more clearly separate a series of phrases that contain commas:

In recognition of legal holidays, the courthouse will be closed for Good Friday, April 13th; Memorial Day, Monday, May 28th; and Independence Day, Wednesday, July 4th.

- A semicolon should be used to separate a series of phrases when those phrases contain commas:

Before she could go home she had to stop at the bank to use the ATM; at the dry cleaners to get her black suit, the one she'd need for work in the morning; and at the pharmacy to pick up a prescription and some shampoo.

2. Semicolons between main clauses

When two main clauses are closely related, you may not want to break them up into two sentences. A period may not be needed; you can add a semicolon instead.

You might prefer to go to the beach; we would rather go to the movies.

You could also choose to add a conjunction (but, and, etc) and separate the clauses with a comma:

You might prefer to go to the beach, but we would rather go to the movies.

3. Semicolons and Conjunctive Adverbs

A semicolon should be used between clauses joined by phrases like *for example*, *in fact*, or *for instance*:

I think more needs to be done to reduce school violence; for example, I think students should receive counseling so they will not tease and bully other students.

COMMA AND SEMICOLON WORKSHEET

Insert commas and semicolons to correctly punctuate the sentences.

1. Arturo was in love with Beatrice the daughter of his father's rival and wouldn't let his family interfere.
2. The hit song which was nominated for a Grammy Award offended many people.
3. People who have earned their GED have an advantage over those who have not.
4. The President who was considered by some to have stolen the election had the power of the office.
5. Mr. Cruz I appreciate the time you spent with me yesterday.
6. We will go to the meeting every Monday afternoon you will not.
7. The person whose name appears on the credit card must sign the credit slip.
8. My application mailed out two weeks ago has so far gone unanswered.
9. Obviously he meant to say the exact opposite of what he said.
10. The watering restrictions permitted lawn sprinkling to occur only on Mondays Wednesdays and Saturdays for even-numbered houses and on Tuesdays Thursdays and Sundays for odd-numbered houses.
11. The shower date is Tuesday May 25 and the wedding date is Saturday June 8 I don't know what date they will return from their honeymoon.
12. During the course of our trip to New Orleans we ate lots of oysters some on the half shell and others fried and served on a bun Crayfish which is a sort of mini-lobster jambalaya a Cajun rice dish containing sausages and other goodies a tasty fish stew beignets which is a sort of fried doughnut dusted with powdered sugar and traditionally served with a combination of hot coffee and hot milk and Bananas Foster a famous New Orleans desert with flaming bananas and ice cream.

COMMA AND SEMICOLON WORKSHEET
Answer Sheet

Insert commas and semicolons to correctly punctuate the sentences.

1. Arturo was in love with Beatrice, the daughter of his father's rival, and wouldn't let his family interfere.
2. The hit song, which was nominated for a Grammy Award, offended many people.
3. People who have earned their GED, have an advantage over those who have not.
4. The President, who was considered by some to have stolen the election, had the power of the office.
5. Mr. Cruz, I appreciate the time you spent with me yesterday.
6. We will go to the meeting every Monday afternoon; you will not.
7. The person, whose name appears on the credit card, must sign the credit slip.
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