

## Grade 7 Playlist: Use a Comma to Separate Coordinate Adjectives

Aligns with *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.7.2.A*:

- Use a comma to separate coordinate adjectives (e.g., *It was a fascinating, enjoyable movie* but not *He wore an old[,] green shirt*).

### Welcome

“It was a warm bright beautiful day on the island and we wanted to visit the beach.” “The yard had a rusty, metal gate that did not seem to match the white, picket fence.” Which of these sentences is correct? Neither. The first does not use commas but it requires three commas, while the second uses commas that it does not require. Correct comma usage is important not only for communicating the author’s message to the reader but also for making a sentence readable.

### Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- use a comma to separate coordinate adjectives.
- determine when using a comma is necessary.

### Review

#### Key Terms

- A **comma** is a punctuation mark that has many purposes, including indicating a pause. The comma belongs within a sentence; it is not a punctuation mark that ends a sentence. The comma’s main purposes in a sentence are:
  - to separate two independent clauses in a compound sentence.
  - to set off clauses or phrases in a sentence that are not necessary to the meaning of the sentence.
  - to set off geographical names, dates, addresses, and titles.
  - to separate items in a list within a sentence, such as adjectives used to describe a noun.
- **Coordinate adjectives** are adjectives that are used together to modify the same noun. In order for adjectives to be coordinate, they must contribute equally to the meaning of the sentence. One coordinate adjective cannot be more important to the sentence than another.

### Watch!

To review knowledge of comma rules, watch this video:

- <https://www.opened.com/video/ten-basic-comma-rules-youtube/117258>



## Exploring the Standard

Commas are used to separate adjectives in a list. Sometimes, commas are necessary when more than one adjective is used. Other times, a list of adjectives in a sentence does not require commas. When several adjectives are used to modify the same noun in a sentence, comma usage depends on the types of adjectives used. Coordinate adjectives must be separated by commas. Non-coordinate adjectives are not separated by commas.

### A Closer Look: Coordinate Adjectives

Coordinate adjectives are descriptors that contribute equally to the meaning of a sentence. Readers and writers need to know if each adjective before a noun contributes equally to the meaning of the sentence. To determine whether or not a list of adjectives used to modify a noun includes coordinate adjectives, try changing the order of the adjectives. Then determine if the list of adjectives still makes sense and keeps the meaning of the sentence. If the list makes sense no matter the order of the adjectives, the adjectives are coordinate. At least one comma is needed. Read the following example.

#### Example 1

Original sentence: *It was a cold snowy winter night.*

Changed order: *It was a snowy, cold winter night.* This sentence sounds acceptable. The words *cold* and *snowy* are coordinate adjectives, because changing their order does not change the meaning of the sentence.

Changed order: *It was a cold, winter snowy night.* This sentence sounds a bit awkward. *Winter* should be the last adjective in the sentence to modify *night* because it is more important to the meaning of the sentence than *cold* or *snowy*.

Therefore, while *cold* and *snowy* are coordinate adjectives in this sentence, *winter* is not.

Another way to determine whether or not adjectives are coordinate is to reword the sentence using a conjunction, such as *and* or *but*, between the adjectives. Read the following rewrites of the sentence in Example 1.

Rewritten: *It was a cold and snowy winter night.* The conjunction *and* between *snowy* and *cold* makes sense in the sentence.

Rewritten: *It was a cold snowy and winter night.* The conjunction *and* between *snowy* and *winter* does not make sense. Neither would *and* between *cold* and *winter*. Therefore, *cold* and *snowy* are coordinate adjectives, but *winter* is not.

So, the correctly punctuated sentence is the following: *It was a cold, snowy winter night.* The comma belongs between the coordinate adjectives.

#### Watch!

This video further explains how to tell if a list of adjectives in a sentence needs to be punctuated with commas:

- <https://www.opened.com/video/comma-rule-5-youtube/99777>

