

# WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CAT AND A COMMA?

ONE IS A PAUSE AT THE END  
OF A CLAUSE AND THE  
OTHER HAS CLAWS AT  
THE END OF ITS PAWS.



# Using Commas to Clarify Meaning



You may have already learned about using commas in these situations:

To separate items in a list.

After a fronted adverbial.

To mark clauses.

After direct speech.

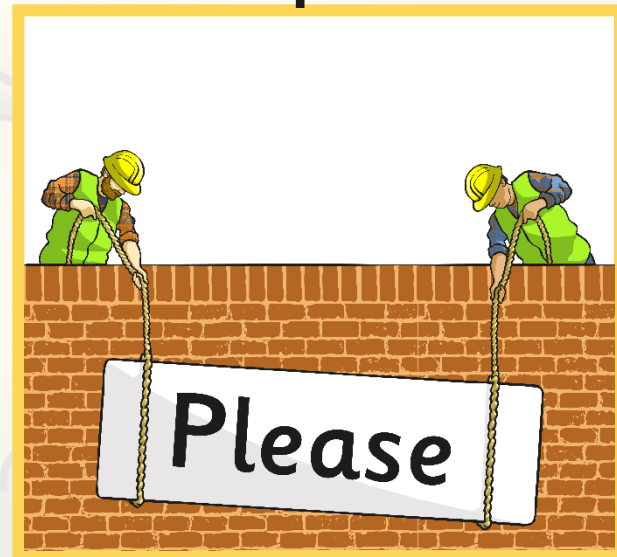
This lesson may call on your knowledge of general comma use but it is primarily about using commas to make the meaning of sentences absolutely clear. On some occasions a comma may be needed even though there is no grammatical rule that requires it.

Sometimes a comma can make a huge difference to the meaning of a sentence. Consider these two interpretations...

**Lower, please!**



**Lower please!**



**This sentence tells me one thing  
about Josephine: she was pretty tall**

**Josephine was a  
pretty tall girl.**

**This sentence tells me TWO things  
about Josephine: she was pretty  
AND tall**

**Josephine was a  
pretty, tall girl.**

**Hurry up and shoot, Grandpa!**



**Hurry up and shoot Grandpa!**



# Commas are important: they clarify meaning and avoid confusion

EATS  
SHOOTS  
AND  
LEAVES



EATS,  
SHOOTS &  
LEAVES

Meiwas



## Sentence Draw

I can suggest different meaning a sentence could have.



Can you show the huge difference one comma makes to the meaning of these sentences by illustrating each version or explaining the difference in words? Use colour in your illustrations!

|                                 |                                |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Slow children crossing!         | Slow, children crossing!       |
|                                 |                                |
| Eat Daniel!                     | Eat, Daniel!                   |
|                                 |                                |
| Look at that blue, bearded man. | Look at that blue bearded man. |
|                                 |                                |



## Sentence Draw

I can suggest different meanings a sentence could have.



Can you show the huge difference one comma makes to the meaning of these sentences by illustrating each version or explaining the difference in words? Use colour in your illustrations!

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Most of the time travellers take the bus.       | Most of the time, travellers take the bus.       |
|   |  |
| Edward tickled the boy with a bunch of carrots. | Edward tickled the boy, with a bunch of carrots. |
|   |  |
| Now blow up the pipe!                           | Now blow, up the pipe!                           |
|   |  |

### Draw the sentence Activity Sheet.

Can you see how the meaning of some sentences can depend on punctuation?  
 Use the drawings to interpret these sentences literally – draw exactly what they say.