

Use commas in lists: Read the information below about how to use commas to separate items in a list:

1

Commas in Lists

Look at this sentence:

The fruit bowl has oranges and bananas and pears and kiwis and apples in it.



What is wrong with using 'and' between each item in the list?

2

Taking out 'and'

Let's take our fruit bowl sentence and remove 'and'. Has this improved it?

The fruit bowl has oranges ~~and~~ bananas ~~and~~ pears ~~and~~ kiwis ~~and~~ apples in it.



The fruit bowl has oranges bananas pears kiwis apples in it.

We do need one 'and' in the sentence. Where should it go?

3

Using one 'and'

We need to put an 'and' between the last two items in our list:

The fruit bowl has oranges bananas pears kiwis apples in it.



The fruit bowl has oranges bananas pears kiwis **and** apples in it.

4

Using Commas

We have now improved our sentence by only using one 'and'. Now we need to separate the other items in our list to avoid confusion. This is where commas come in handy!

The fruit bowl has oranges, bananas, pears, kiwis and apples in it.

A comma is put between each item in the list, but the last two items always have 'and' between them and no comma.

5

Things to Avoid

- Don't put a comma before the first item in your list:

The party was, fun, loud and exciting. ❌

- Don't put a comma in a list of just two items:

For tea we are having tea, and toast. ❌



1. Ask someone to read Chapter 1 ('Left to Rot') then Chapter 2 ('The Homing Parrot') aloud to you:

Left to Rot ¹

Captain Starling, Bo'sun Barnaby and Stragglebeard couldn't believe their bad luck. They had escaped one angry mob only to be caught and captured by another. Still, Captain Blackheart had acted with considerable generosity - for him! He had allowed them to live!

Normally, he would make his victims walk the plank or he would, at the very least, cut out their tongues. The three pirates had something to be grateful for; they still had their tongues to moan with!

"And they say worse things happen at sea!" moaned Stragglebeard.

"This is not my idea of a picnic!" said Barnaby.

"Talking about picnics, you got anything to eat, Captain?" asked Stragglebeard.

"I fear we may end up as someone else's picnic," said Captain Starling.

"What do you mean, Captain?" quizzed Stragglebeard.

"If I'm not mistaken we are surrounded by rats," declared Captain Starling.

"Rats? Shiver me timbers!" wailed Barnaby.

"Ouch! Something nibbled me toes!" screeched Stragglebeard.



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The Homing Parrot ²



Meanwhile, Mister P was flying faster than he had ever flown before. He knew the pirates were in danger and it was up to him to send for the rescue partywell, rescue personer, I suppose I mean rescue boy! Cabin Boy Egg was his only hope. He found Egg on the poop deck sorting things into piles and making lists.

"I was wondering when you lot were coming back!" Egg remarked when he saw Mister P land on the railings.

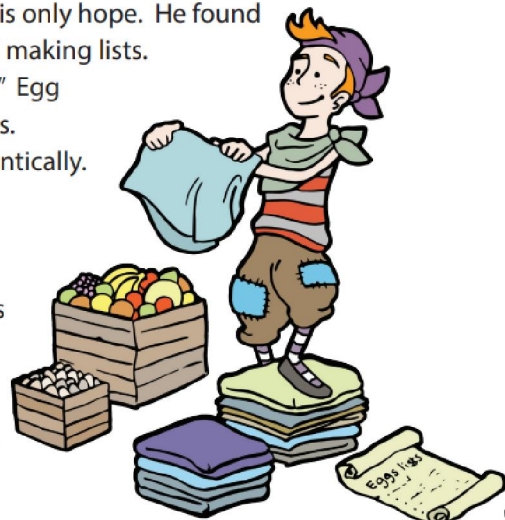
"Scurvy dogs! Scurvy dogs!" squawked Mister P frantically.

"There's no need to be rude to me," answered Egg.

"I've been doing a lot of cleaning and tidying while you lot have been away. I've washed the doublets, waistcoats, shirts and Stragglebeard's smelly socks!"

"Black Pirates! Black Pirates!" screeched the parrot.

"Look at this!" declared Egg ignoring Mister P's protests. "I've made a list of all the things I've done."






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Activity:

Complete the sheet below, writing the corrected sentences out into your book. Think carefully about



Green Pirates

Name: _____

I can use commas in lists.   

Correctly punctuate Egg's list using commas.

Egg's list of jobs:



- 1 I've scrubbed the cannon the cannonballs the anchor and the poop deck.
- 2 I've washed the topsail the mainsail and Barnaby's breeches.
- 3 I've folded Stragglebeard's waistcoats the Captain's doublets my shirts and Barnaby's long johns.

Complete these lists and then add the commas where they are needed.

- 4 I've cleaned the frying pan the saucepan
- 5 I've painted the crow's nest the hatch

Now complete his other lists using commas.

- 6 In the fruit box we have got
- 7 In the vegetable box we have got

Extension Make a list of things that you would expect to find in a treasure chest.

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where the commas need to go and the rule about not having a comma before 'and'.

SPOILER ALERT!

ANSWERS ON THE NEXT PAGE (FOR AN ADULT TO USE TO MARK YOUR WORK)

The Homing Parrot – *Commas in lists*

Answers to pages 85 – 88

I've scrubbed the cannon, the cannonballs, the anchor and the poop deck.

I've washed the topsail, the mainsail and Barnaby's breeches.

I've folded Stragglebeard's waistcoats, the captain's doublets, my shirts and Barnaby's long johns.