Study Guide  
  
Commas  
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**Commas: Intervening Words/Phrases**A comma is a punctuation mark used to set apart ideas or segments of meaning, dates, addresses, and parts of a letter. At this level, a comma is used with intervening elements and appositives.  
  
An intervening element is a phrase or clause that comes between the subject and the predicate of a sentence.  
  
An appositive follows a noun, pronoun, or phrases in clauses that they describe. Appositives are different from intervening elements because an appositive *describes* the noun, pronoun, or phrase in a sentence, while an intervening element adds further detail to a sentence.

Both intervening elements and appositives are separated from the rest of the sentence by using commas.  
  
Examples of a comma used with intervening elements:  
  
-The dogs, as well as the rabbits and cats, made my house feel like a barn.  
-Lightning, as well as thunder, really frightens me.  
-My brother, along with my twin sister, decided to throw me a surprise party.  
-Christophe, whose middle name is Pierre, is moving to Ohio with his family.  
  
Examples of a comma used with an appositive:  
  
-Barkley, my neighbor's pet poodle, really earns his name.  
-Manitoba, a province of Canada, has a population of over one million residents.  
-My uncle, Yoturi Ishu, won a hot dog eating contest.  
  
**Practice:**  
  
It may be helpful to explain the use of commas with intervening elements and appositives to the student. Review the rule, and learn how to apply it by having the student rewrite sentences from his or her favorite books or the school textbook without the correct punctuation. Work with the student and help him or her rewrite the sentences by inserting commas as needed. Using the following examples is a good start.  
  
1. Lemmings as well as caribou and otters are familiar sights in Alaska.  
2. A cold drink and perhaps even a cheese sandwich would be much appreciated while I am studying.  
3. Minerva my sister is older than me by only eighteen months.  
4. Matthew running as quickly as he could hoped that he wouldn't drop the baton as he rounded the corner.  
5. Victor Castellano my cousin lives in New Mexico.