**Lesson plan – Punctuation**

This lesson plan is a summary of the use of commas and semicolons.

Using correct punctuation is essential for the reader because it conveys meaning just as words do.

Consider these two sentences:

1. Eat children. 2) Eat, children. → Commas convey meaning!

The textbook gives a nice overview of punctuation rules on p. 299ff. (see textbook)

Let’s start with **commas**:

Commas can be organized into just four main groups –

1. Introducer commas
2. Coordinator commas
3. Inserter commas
4. Tag commas

1. Introducer commas (p.299)

Like the word suggests, introducer commas come before the independent clause starts. It may be only a word (*Therefore, Nervously,*); it may be a phrase (*As a result, After 16 years of smoking,* – basically any prepositional phrase like *At noon, / In the morning,* or a participle phrase, which we will discuss later– *Having smoked for 16 years,*).

Or, it may be a dependent clause (*Because I have a chronic cough,*). This is an Adverb clause starting with a subordinator. When you start with the DC, you **have** to put a comma.

And, if you use direct quotation (“Stop smoking today,” she advised.)

1. Coordinator commas (p.300)

Like the word suggests, coordinator commas link coordinate (equal) elements/ideas in a sentence. We are using coordinating conjunctions (FANBOYS) to do that.

We can combine two independent clauses with our FANBOYS, thereby creating a compound sentence. Look at the examples in the book – *She has a good job, yet*… / *They were tired, so*….

Or, you have a series (Aufzählung) in a sentence, where you combine words or even phrases.

Notice that there is a comma before the last item. This may be unusual for you; you may have seen a series often without the last comma. The last comma is often omitted. It is not considered a mistake, but, If you have a series of 3 or more words, I recommend putting the last comma because it enforces the series for the reader.

If you look at the series of 3 or more phrases, notice that the individual parts of the series (*at night, on weekends, and on holidays* / *checked our luggage, raced to the boarding gate, gave the* *attendant our boarding passes, and collapsed in our seats*) have the same structure. This is called parallelism. It gives the sentence a nice, smooth flow.

1. Inserter commas (p.300)

I call this *Einschub* in German. Any element that is inserted into the middle of an independent clause is called inserter comma. Look at the examples.

This can be words *(, however,)*

– this can be phrases *(, on the other hand, / , according to my uncle,)*

*–* this can be nonrestrictive phrasesadding more information (*My aunt, his wife,…* / *My cousins, grieving over their mother’s death,*…this is again a participle phrase)

Or, it can be a nonrestrictive adjective clause (my mother*, who just celebrated her fiftieth birthday,*…)

The last example given are inserter commas in direct quotations. If you want the detailed information on quotation marks and commas, please go to page 306 and use it when needed.

1. Tag commas

Tag commas come at the end of a sentence when certain elements are added. Again, these may be words or phrases – read the sentences. By the way, …, *beating me most of the time*  is a participle phrase.

I hope the comma rules are clearer now. Now let’s move on to **semicolons** (textbook p.301f).

A semicolon is really more like a period than a comma. It is a strong punctuation mark.

Semicolons are used in three places:

1. Between independent clauses (p.302 – Between Sentences)

Use a semicolon to join two independent clauses that are closely connected in meaning. You could also use a period, but a semicolon indicates the close connection. Read the sentences on p.302 (Between Sentences).

1. Before conjunctive adverbs (p.302 – Before Connectors)

Read the two sentences under *Before Connectors*.

1. Between items in a series when the items already contain commas (p.302 – Between Items in a Series)

We discussed that we need to separate items in a series with commas. However, if the items in the series already have a comma in it (look at the example given in the book: the Ferrari, with its quick acceleration / the midsize Ford Taurus, with its comfortable seats and ease of handling / the hybrid Prius, with its economical fuel consumption), we need to use semicolons in the series to avoid confusion.

I hope the semicolon rules are clearer now.

For completeness sake, the book also discusses colons. Please go through p.304/305 top) on your own.

Now go through my power point presentation (PPP) to review the rules one more time.

!! To practice these punctuation rules, I created several chapter quizzes for you. I call them Punctuation Quizzes. The Punctuation Quiz sentences 1-10 is a practice run and does not count towards your grade. You need to be able to recognize the following elements: dependent clause, independent clause, introducer word/phrase, inserter word/phrase, nonrestrictive adjective clause, restrictive adjective clause, series of 3 or more items of the same type, tag word/phrase, simple/complex/compound/ compound complex sentence, coordinating/subordinating/adverbial conjunction

Doing these quizzes should be great practice for you – good luck! Take your time!