

# Commas in Compound Sentences

## Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

- Identify compound sentences and independent clauses.
- Discuss the use of commas in compound sentences.
- Combine simple sentences into compound sentences, using commas.

## Preparation

### Materials Needed

- Chart paper and markers
- Commas in Compound Sentences (BLM 10)
- Interactive whiteboard resources

### Advanced Preparation

If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the example, modeling, and practice texts onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson.



## 1. Focus

### Explain Commas in Compound Sentences

**Say:** Compound sentences are sentences that include two parts joined by words such as **and** or **but**. Each part can stand on its own as a complete sentence. Each part has its own subject and verb. These sentence parts are called independent clauses. Let's look at an example of a compound sentence.

Display the following compound sentence on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

Jim surprised the dog, and the dog barked.

#### Example Text

**Say:** This sentence has two parts joined by the word **and**. Each part has its own subject and verb, so each part would make a complete sentence on its own. Each part is an independent clause. (Demonstrate by reading aloud each part as a single sentence.) Notice how the writer has used a comma before the word **and**. Today we will look at more compound sentences.

### Model Using Commas in Compound Sentences

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Read the text aloud to students.

It gets very cold, and snow falls heavily.

#### Modeling Text

**Say:** Within this sentence, I see two parts or independent clauses. The first part is "It gets very cold." The second part is "snow falls heavily." Each of these parts of the sentence has its own subject and verb. **It** is the subject of the first clause and the verb is **gets**. **Snow** is the subject of the second clause and **falls** is the verb. The two clauses are joined by the word **and**, and there is a comma before the word **and** to separate the two clauses.



## 2. Rehearse

### Practice Using Commas in Compound Sentences

Display the practice text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

An animal could fall down. A lion could attack it.

The ground is dry. There is no fresh water to drink.

#### Practice Text

Ask students to work with a partner to read each pair of simple sentences. Ask them to write new sentences by combining the two simple clauses into a compound sentence using a comma and the conjunction **and**. Remind them that they will need to change the punctuation and capitalization of the simple sentences when they combine them into a compound sentence.

If your class includes English learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

### Share Sentences Using Commas in Compound Sentences

Invite students to share how they combined the simple sentences to make compound sentences.

## Strategies to Support ELs

### Beginning

Beginning ELs will need additional support and practice to understand the parts of a compound sentence and how to use commas and conjunctions within them. To introduce these concepts, use very simple sentences that you can support with visual props or by acting out; for example, “I see the pen, and I see the pencil.” “I can walk, and I can skip.”

### Intermediate and Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the “Practice Using Commas in Compound Sentences” practice activity. Provide extra practice combining simple sentences, using the following examples:

*I see the caribou. I see the wolves.  
The caribou live in the forest. They spend the winter in the forest.*



## 3. Independent Writing and Conferring

*Say: We learned that compound sentences are often used in writing when we want to join together two simple sentences or independent clauses. When we make a compound sentence, we need to make sure that each independent clause has a subject and a verb. It’s important to place a comma after the first independent clause, and then a conjunction such as the word **and** between the clauses.*

If you would like to give students additional practice recognizing and using commas in compound sentences, ask them to complete BLM 10.



## 4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to share their answers to BLM 10. Provide corrective feedback as necessary.