

## Exercises on Comma Rules in English

*The following sentences have been removed of their commas. Can you put them back where they belong?*

1. Simon have you done your homework yet?
2. No one knew where Mary's son was nor had anyone seen him lately.
3. Wouldn't you want to go back into the '80s if time travelling were possible?
4. When I was five years old my parents lived in New York.
5. Unless it rains tomorrow we will go to the zoo.
6. Chris are you sure there are no viruses malware adware or spy programs on your computer?
7. After my graduation I started to work for IBM.
8. Why didn't you go to school today or did you?
9. My dad who is a great cook always prepares dinner for me on the weekend.
10. What's the matter sir? Tell me why the victim doesn't want to talk to us.
11. Despite being a tough cowboy Hardy became a bit emotional.
12. I think you should tell your dad about your failed exam, or do you think you would be better off not telling him?
13. Spain is a wonderful vacation destination: First it has magnificent beaches. Second it offers the most delicious food. Third the Spanish give parties every night.
14. It is such a shame that Simon didn't manage to win the first prize.
15. Simon had another fight with his sister yesterday. He's such a silly little boy.
16. Mary went to bed early today, and then she decided to watch a movie before finally going to sleep.
17. Christian you are a very tough guy. Bob however is more emotional.
18. If time travelling were possible I would go back straight into the '80s.
19. McDonald's whose revenue has increased threefold over the past decades is still continuing to expand all over the world.
20. I would buy a Porsche if I had enough money.
21. Ouch my knee hurts. Damn I must have broken it.
22. And you Janet will have to pack your suitcase. You're coming with us to Spain.
23. My brother used to be a criminal. When he was fifteen he started stealing cars.
24. My family moved to New Orleans when I was ten years old.
25. The doctors did everything they could to save her life but it was to no avail.
26. If I had enough money I would buy a Porsche.
27. The man whose dog bit our cat yesterday said that he was terribly sorry.
28. Mary lives in a small neat apartment with two rooms.
29. That most of today's languages are slowly becoming extinct makes me very sad.

30. Watching the sun set Hardy became a bit emotional.
31. Hey watch out! Be careful with that ladder<sup>1</sup> or otherwise you'll kill someone.
32. We have to go to Walmart to buy apples bananas pineapples and strawberries.
33. My poor darling I would never even think about leaving you.
34. Even though he was broke Simon couldn't refrain from buying his favorite ice cream.
35. Commas are a very versatile<sup>2</sup> thing: They are used to separate subordinate clauses to indicate pauses in speech to structure sentences and many other things.
36. It is such a shame that 50% of today's 6000 languages in the world will have become extinct by the end of this century.
37. Adam said that he would never have eaten that apple if Eve hadn't offered it.
38. A friend of mine who got pulled over<sup>3</sup> while driving under influence<sup>4</sup> swears that he hadn't had more than two shots of vodka.
39. He must have had more than two shots to get pulled over right?
40. Being stuck in such a dilemma Henry decided to shut his mouth until he would get the chance to talk to his lawyer Mr Eppstein.
41. Son let me tell you: There are so many things you shouldn't do as a teenager. For example if you don't know how to get home after a party. Don't drink and drive. Give me a ring and I will pick you up. In fact don't even bother taking your own car. I will get you there and pick you up too.
42. Jeez I'm so hungry aren't you?
43. Denise has passed three out of her five exams this year yet there's still a long way for her to go.
44. The environmentalists' original belief that nuclear power plants are good for the environment has changed radically.
45. Simon said that he was terribly sorry for what he had done.
46. For him to have done that was a stupid thing.
47. Simon had to go to bed early today for he hadn't slept well in over a week.
48. Now you have finished all your exams, so there won't be any more excuse for not cleaning your room.
49. Oh this is gonna be a problem!
50. If only I had known him earlier I would have never lent him so much money.

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1 ladder: Leiter

2 versatile: vielfältig

3 to get/be pulled over – angehalten werden (von der Polizei)

4 to drive under influence – (euphem.) alkoholisiert fahren

## Keys to the Exercises

*When in doubt, refer to a good grammar book or have a look at the rules online:*

*[www.english-study.de/grammatik/comma\\_rules\\_komma\\_regeln](http://www.english-study.de/grammatik/comma_rules_komma_regeln)*

1. Simon, have you done your homework yet?  
→ die Anrede (Vokativ) wird durch Komma abgetrennt
2. No one knew where Mary's son was, nor had anyone seen him lately.  
→ Hauptsätze, die mit einer Konjunktion verknüpft sind, werden per Komma getrennt
3. Wouldn't you want to go back into the '80s if time travelling were possible?  
→ der if-Satz folgt auf den Hauptsatz: kein Komma
4. When I was five years old, my parents lived in New York.  
→ der Nebensatz in Initialstellung wird per Komma abgetrennt
5. Unless it rains tomorrow, we will go to the zoo.  
→ der Nebensatz in Initialstellung wird per Komma abgetrennt, vgl. if clauses
6. Chris, are you sure there are no viruses, malware, adware(,) or spy programs on your computer?  
→ die Anrede (Vokativ) wird durch Komma abgetrennt  
→ die Aufzählungselemente werden per Komma getrennt; das letzte Komma der Aufzählung ist optional
7. After my graduation, I started to work for IBM.  
→ der Nebensatz in Initialstellung wird per Komma abgetrennt
8. Why didn't you go to school today, or did you?  
→ die Bestätigungsfrage wird per Komma abgetrennt
9. My dad, who is a great cook, always prepares dinner for me on the weekend.  
→ nichtnotwendiger Relativsatz; wird per Komma abgetrennt; vgl. Relativsätze
10. What's the matter, sir? Tell me why the victim doesn't want to talk to us.  
→ die Anrede (Vokativ) wird per Komma abgetrennt
11. Despite being a tough cowboy, Hardy became a bit emotional.  
→ der Nebensatz in Initialstellung wird per Komma abgetrennt
12. I think you should tell your dad about your failed exam, or do you think you would be better off not telling him?  
→ Hauptsätze, die mit einer Konjunktion verknüpft sind, werden per Komma getrennt
13. Spain is a wonderful vacation destination: First, it has magnificent beaches. Second, it offers the most delicious food. Third, the Spanish give parties every night.  
→ verknüpfende Adverbien (linking adverbs) werden per Komma abgetrennt
14. It is such a shame that Simon didn't manage to win the first prize.  
→ ein that-Nebensatz steht in der Regel ohne Komma
15. Simon had another fight with his sister yesterday. He's such a silly little boy.  
→ die attributive Aufzählung steht ohne Komma, da eide Aufzählungselemente eng

miteinander verknüpft sind

16. Mary went to bed early today, and then she decided to watch a movie before finally going to sleep.  
→ Hauptsätze, die mit einer Konjunktion verknüpft sind, werden per Komma getrennt
17. Christian, you are a very tough guy. Bob, however, is more emotional.  
→ die Anrede (Vokativ) wird per Komma abgetrennt; ebenso das Adverb however
18. If time travelling were possible, I would go back straight into the '80s.  
→ der if-Satz wird per Komma getrennt, wenn dieser vorausgeht
19. McDonald's, whose revenue has increased threefold over the past decades, is still continuing to expand all over the world.  
→ nichtnotwendiger Relativsatz, der mittels Komma vom Hauptsatz getrennt wird
20. I would buy a Porsche if I had enough money.  
→ der Hauptsatz geht voraus, daher kein Komma
21. Ouch, my knee hurts. Damn, I must have broken it.  
→ die Interjektionen ouch und damn werden mittels Komma abgetrennt
22. And you, Janet, will have to pack your suitcase. You're coming with us to Spain.  
→ die Anrede (Vokativ) wird per Komma abgetrennt
23. My brother used to be a criminal. When he was fifteen, he started stealing cars.  
→ wenn der Nebensatz vorausgeht, folgt ein Komma
24. My family moved to New Orleans when I was ten years old.  
→ der Nebensatz folgt auf den Hauptsatz: kein Komma
25. If I had enough money, I would buy a Porsche.  
→ wenn der Nebensatz vorausgeht, folgt ein Komma; vgl. if clauses
26. The doctors did everything they could to save her life, but it was to no avail.  
→ Hauptsätze, die mit einer Konjunktion verknüpft sind, werden per Komma getrennt
27. The man whose dog bit our cat yesterday said that he was terribly sorry.  
→ bestimmender Relativsatz steht ohne Komma; vgl. Relativsätze
28. Mary lives in a small, neat apartment with two rooms.  
→ die Aufzählungselemente beziehen sich unabhängig voneinander auf gleiche Weise auf das Substantiv, daher werden sie per Komma getrennt
29. That most of today's languages are slowly becoming extinct makes me very sad.  
→ Nebensätze in Initialstellung werden per Komma getrennt; nicht jedoch, wenn es sich um Subjektsätze mit that handelt
30. Watching the sun set, Hardy became a bit emotional.  
→ Nebensätze (auch Partizipialkonstruktionen) in Initialstellung werden per Komma getrennt
31. Hey, watch out! Be careful with that ladder<sup>5</sup> or otherwise you'll kill someone.

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5 ladder: Leiter

- Interjektionen (hey) werden per Komma getrennt
32. We have to go to Walmart to buy apples, bananas, pineapples, and strawberries.  
→ Elemente einer Aufzählung werden per Komma voneinander getrennt; das letzte Komma ist optional (vgl. Oxford Comma, Harvard Comma)
33. My poor darling, I would never even think about leaving you.  
→ die Anrede (Vokativ) wird per Komma abgetrennt
34. Even though he was broke, Simon couldn't refrain from buying his favorite ice cream.  
→ Nebensätze in Initialstellung werden per Komma getrennt;
35. Commas are a very versatile<sup>6</sup> thing: They are used to separate subordinate clauses, to indicate pauses in speech, to structure sentences(.) and many other things.  
→ Elemente einer Aufzählung werden per Komma voneinander getrennt; das letzte Komma ist optional (vgl. Oxford Comma, Harvard Comma)
36. It is such a shame that 50% of today's 6000 languages in the world will have become extinct by the end of this century.  
→ ein that-Satz wird in der Regel nicht per Komma getrennt
37. Adam said that he would never have eaten that apple if Eve hadn't offered it.  
→ ein that-Satz wird in der Regel nicht per Komma getrennt  
→ der if-Satz folgt auf den Hauptsatz, daher kein Komma
38. A friend of mine who got pulled over<sup>7</sup> while driving under influence<sup>8</sup> swears that he hadn't had more than two shots of vodka.  
→ notwendige Relativsätze werden nicht per Komma getrennt;  
→ ein that-Satz wird in der Regel nicht per Komma getrennt
39. He must have had more than two shots to get pulled over, right?  
→ Fragesätze werden per Komma getrennt
40. Being stuck in such a dilemma, Henry decided to shut his mouth until he would get the chance to talk to his lawyer, Mr Eppstein.  
→ Nebensätze (auch Partizipialkonstruktionen) in Initialstellung werden mittels Komma getrennt
41. Son, let me tell you: There are so many things you shouldn't do as a teenager. For example, if you don't know how to get home after a party. Don't drink and drive. Give me a ring and I will pick you up. In fact, don't even bother taking your own car. I will get you there and pick you up too.  
→ die Anrede (Vokativ) wird per Komma abgetrennt:  
→ Adverbialgruppen (for example, in fact) in satzverbindender Funktion werden per Komma abgetrennt;

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6 versatile: vielfältig

7 to get/be pulled over – angehalten werden (von der Polizei)

8 to drive under influence – (euphem.) alkoholisiert fahren

42. Jeez, I'm so hungry, aren't you?  
→ Interjektionen (jeez) werden per Komma abgetrennt;  
→ Fragesätze werden per Komma getrennt
43. Denise has passed three out of her five exams this year, yet there's still a long way for her to go.  
→ Hauptsätze, die mit einer Konjunktion verknüpft sind, werden per Komma getrennt
44. The environmentalists' original belief, that nuclear power plants are good for the environment, has changed radically.  
→ that-Sätze werden in der Regel nicht durch Komma getrennt - es sei denn, es handelt sich um eingeschobene, nichtnotwendige Nebensätze
45. Simon said that he was terribly sorry for what he had done.  
→ that-Sätze werden in der Regel nicht durch Komma getrennt;
46. For him to have done that was a stupid thing.  
→ Nebensätze in Initialstellung werden per Komma getrennt; nicht jedoch, wenn es sich um Subjektsätze mit that handelt
47. Simon had to go to bed early today, for he hadn't slept well in over a week.  
→ Hauptsätze, die mit einer Konjunktion verknüpft sind, werden per Komma getrennt
48. Now you have finished all your exams, so there won't be any more excuse for not cleaning your room.  
→ Hauptsätze, die mit einer Konjunktion verknüpft sind, werden per Komma getrennt
49. Oh, this is gonna be a problem!  
→ Interjektionen werden per Komma getrennt
50. If only I had known him earlier, I would have never lent him so much money.  
→ wenn der if-Satz vor dem Hauptsatz steht, folgt ein Komma