

## Commas in Argumentative Writing I

In the following table, you can see sentences containing one or more commas. The sentences, or so-called concordance lines, have been collected using the British National Corpus. This means that these sentences stem from a range of different academic texts that present authentic language use.

### Tasks:

1. a) Examine the concordance lines and identify patterns of comma placement in academic writing. In each sentence, the comma in question is highlighted.

- b) Deduce comma rules from the sentences.

(Hint: Are there specific words or constructions that require a comma? Where exactly is the comma placed?)

Details	sentence
1	Written books a... <s> It is not surprising, therefore, that the Law Commission has recommended no reform of the parol evidence rule, declaring that the "rule" is not as extensive as traditionally expounded (see Law of ContractThe Parol Evidence Rule, Law Commission No 154 (1986)). </s>
2	Written books a... <s> Of course, these pathological tendencies are still with us today and are widely recognized in individual mental illness; but what is not generally appreciated is their extent in cultural forms, not all of which are limited to ancient societies. </s>
3	Written books a... <s> Alternatively, as at Old Carlisle , the simple title magister sufficed, as for example on the inscription dedicated to Mercury by Amilius, magister vici Bodatii (Vic-sur-Seille) in the territory of the Mediomatrices. </s>
4	Written books a... <s> On the other hand, stretches of Creole embedded in a London English turn often correspond to the most salient parts of the utterance , those which the other parties to the conversation respond to. </s>
5	Written books a... <s> Remember that in the production of texts for non-examined purposes (e.g. committee reports, novels, paintings, films), rough versions, sketches and drafts are the norm. </s>
6	Written books a... <s> Scientific discoveries and inventions, art and music, and so on can also be "nested" on the timeline. </s>
7	Written books a... <s> Having run through the preventive health catechism (more exercise, less tobacco and alcohol, and better diet) the 1979 report bluntly dismissed the idea of replacing Britain's tax-funded health service with some form of insurance scheme. </s>
8	Written books a... <s> In the words of Sallis again , " If we know that the head's motive is to protect the school, and especially the more needy in it, from questions which are ill-informed, destructive or selfish, we have a clear objective, which is to make sure we don't deserve or unwittingly attract such accusation (1988:17). </s>
9	Written books a... <s> This indicates an acceptance of the state structures , or a recognition of a need for the separation of Northern Ireland from the remaining state structure of Ireland, but at the same time a continuing opposition to protestant - loyalist dominance. </s>
10	Written books a... <s> Countless examples can be studied in living creatures, seaboard harbours, great castles and manor houses, pots, bottles, soccer goalposts and pinball machines. </s>
11	Written books a... <s> The original position seems to presuppose not just a neutral theory of the good, but a liberal, individualistic conception according to which the best that can be wished for someone is the unimpeded pursuit of his own path, provided it does not interfere with the rights of others. </s>
12	Written books a... <s> Otherwise they were on their own, 'playing, but not playing a game for there was no structured game to play. </s>
13	Written books a... <s> This defence of Marxism carries over, however, to a critique of Modernism itself: not merely for the fact that Nietzsche attaches 'importance' to art but for the further claim ascribed to him, and therefore to Modernism itself , that 'the nature of aesthetic experience contains in nuce the form of understanding proper to the world itself (p. 66). </s>

This worksheet was downloaded from: Nottmeier, Marie, Alina Sophie Peters & Lara Warnecke (2021). "Commas in argumentative writing". In Le Foll, Elen (Ed.), *Creating Corpus-Informed Materials for the English as a Foreign Language Classroom*. <https://elenlefol.pressbooks.com>. CC-BY-NC 4.0.

14	Written books a...	<s> So things such as ourselves, which perceive and have conscious awareness , do so because they are (or have) minds. </s>
15	Written books a...	<s> However , this leaves open the possibility that the Earth, Venus and Mars acquired most of their volatiles from volatile-rich bodies by post-accretional veneering. </s>
16	Written books a...	<s> Moreover , this possibility is strengthened by the neglect of surface repositories, because regardless of how the various volatiles were acquired it is likely that a smaller fraction of the inert gases are retained in such reservoirs than are carbon and nitrogen. </s>
17	Written books a...	<s> Certainly , it is important to study bureaucracies as institutions in their own right, even if we would not go as far as the poet Alexander Pope who wrote: </s>
18	Written books a...	<s> Richards holds that in poetry the function of" feeling" tends to dominate that of" sense" , while Jakobson identifies a special" poetic" function, which can be found in many uses of language, but which dominates over other functions in poetry. </s>
19	Written books a...	<s> This , the court said, was an irrelevant consideration which rendered his decision unlawful. </s>
20	Written books a...	<s> The gap between them , according to Althusser, is mediated by art. </s>
21	Written books a...	<s> However there are a number of important controlling factors: firstly, the subject fixates centrally (usually he has to report a digit which is presented in order to confirm this central fixation); secondly, the stimulus is exposed for less than 200 milliseconds to avoid eye movement; thirdly, the visual angle of the stimuli from the fixation point should be between 2.5° and 5° (otherwise, confounding effects occur). </s>
22	Written books a...	<s> Furthermore, Rossi and Rosadini (1967), who also used the Amytal technique, reported that only one patient out of 74 right handers , all of whom received injections on both sides, did not have exclusively left hemisphere speech dominance. </s>
23	Written books a...	<s> In that case , the opportunity to earn remuneration arose when the appellant obtained the grant of a tenancy of a public house owned by and tied to a large brewery company. </s>
24	Written books a...	<s> Now if the prediction that follows from this maze of premises turns out to be false (in our example, if the planet does not appear at the predicted location) , then all that the logic of the situation permits us to conclude is that at least one of the premises must be false. </s>
25	Written books a...	<s> If there are exclusively private events, in the sense that they are in principle, and not just empirically, inaccessible to more than one observer, it might be argued that such events could not be intelligibly claimed , let alone shown to be, subject to any laws, and this means that no rational explanatory model could be constructed for them. </s>

Use this part of the worksheet to formulate rules:

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