

Comma Clues

Sort adjective pairs by the comma rule.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.7.2a "Use a comma to separate coordinate adjectives (e.g., It was a fascinating, enjoyable movie but not He wore an old[,] green shirt)."

NAME _____

DATE _____

COORDINATE ADJECTIVES

Each adjective describes the noun in the same way.
You can usually put and between them or switch their order, so use a comma.

a bright, cheerful mural

CUMULATIVE ADJECTIVES

The adjectives build together, with one adjective closer to the noun. Do not use a comma between them.

three tiny glass jars

1 SORT _____ 8 items

For each phrase, circle COORDINATE or CUMULATIVE, then choose two item numbers and explain whether you can place and between their adjectives.

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. a long exhausting hike | ☐ COORDINATE | ☐ CUMULATIVE |
| 2. an unusual memorable concert | ☐ COORDINATE | ☐ CUMULATIVE |
| 3. a small wooden box | ☐ COORDINATE | ☐ CUMULATIVE |
| 4. a fierce dangerous storm | ☐ COORDINATE | ☐ CUMULATIVE |
| 5. an ancient stone bridge | ☐ COORDINATE | ☐ CUMULATIVE |
| 6. a delicate silk scarf | ☐ COORDINATE | ☐ CUMULATIVE |
| 7. a clever surprising solution | ☐ COORDINATE | ☐ CUMULATIVE |
| 8. a huge gray elephant | ☐ COORDINATE | ☐ CUMULATIVE |

2**PROVE IT**

Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

3**MAKE YOUR OWN**

One of each

Write one noun phrase with coordinate adjectives and a comma, then write one noun phrase with cumulative adjectives and no comma.

COORDINATE

CUMULATIVE

CHALLENGE

Write one complete sentence that includes one coordinate adjective pair with a comma and one cumulative adjective pair with no comma.

PART 1 • SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	a long exhausting hike	COORDINATE	Long and exhausting each describe the hike independently, so a comma belongs between them.
2	an unusual memorable concert	COORDINATE	Unusual and memorable can be joined by and, so the adjectives are coordinate.
3	a small wooden box	CUMULATIVE	Wooden box is a unit, and small describes that unit, so no comma is used.
4	a fierce dangerous storm	COORDINATE	Fierce and dangerous separately describe the storm, so a comma belongs between them.
5	an ancient stone bridge	CUMULATIVE	Stone bridge is a unit, and ancient describes that unit, so no comma is used.
6	a delicate silk scarf	CUMULATIVE	Silk scarf is a unit, and delicate describes that unit, so no comma is used.
7	a clever surprising solution	COORDINATE	Clever and surprising can be joined by and, so a comma belongs between them.
8	a huge gray elephant	CUMULATIVE	The size adjective comes before the color adjective in a cumulative description, so no comma is used.

PART 2 • PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 • MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **COORDINATE:** a gentle, patient coach
- **CUMULATIVE:** a tall brick wall

Challenge: The lively, colorful parade passed the old stone courthouse.

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item. For Part 2, accept explanations that use the and test or explain that the adjectives can switch places for coordinate adjectives. For cumulative adjectives, students should explain that the adjective closest to the noun forms a unit with it.