

Give Openers Their Commas

Edit clear examples, then build complete sentences.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.5.2b "Use a comma to separate an introductory element from the rest of the sentence."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Add the missing introductory commas in A-F and underline each opener. Two practice sentences need no added comma.

Theater sentence workshop

How an opener joins a sentence

An introductory element comes before the main statement. Use a comma after an introductory dependent clause, a long introductory phrase, or a transition word such as *Meanwhile*. Do not put a comma between the subject and its verb. Some short time or place openers allow optional commas; this practice uses clear cases.

Practice A-C: add missing introductory commas

- A. Before our class entered the theater Ms. Chen checked our tickets.
- B. At the end of the longest hallway a volunteer pointed to our seats.
- C. The actors waited behind the curtain.

Practice D-F: add missing introductory commas

- D. While the audience found seats the musicians tuned their instruments.
- E. The doors opened quietly.
- F. Meanwhile the stage manager checked the lights.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

- 1 Rewrite A with its introductory comma. Underline the whole opener. Why does the comma go after "theater" rather than after "class"?

- 2** A writer puts a comma after "actors" in C. Rewrite C correctly. Explain why the beginning of this sentence is not an introductory element.

- 3** Combine these parts into one complete sentence with the opener first: "When the final song ended" + "the audience applauded." Place the comma and underline the opener.

- 4** Rewrite D with its "while" clause at the end. Compare the comma use in these two versions of D.

3

YOUR TURN

_____ Your own words

Write four original sentences about a class event. Start two with dependent clauses beginning Before, After, or When; start one with a phrase of at least five words telling where; start one with Meanwhile. Underline each opener and place its comma.

Your four sentences

Write complete, meaningful sentences. Make each opener lead into the main statement, and leave space between sentences for checking.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Add the missing introductory commas in A-F and underline each opener. Two practice sentences need no added comma. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Rewrite A with its introductory comma. Underline the whole opener. Why does the comma go after "theater" rather than after "class"?	Before our class entered the theater, Ms. Chen checked our tickets. The whole opener is "Before our class entered the theater"; it includes the action of entering. "Before our class" leaves that introductory clause unfinished.
2	A writer puts a comma after "actors" in C. Rewrite C correctly. Explain why the beginning of this sentence is not an introductory element.	The actors waited behind the curtain. "The actors" is the subject of the main statement, so a comma would wrongly separate it from "waited."
3	Combine these parts into one complete sentence with the opener first: "When the final song ended" + "the audience applauded." Place the comma and underline the opener.	When the final song ended, the audience applauded. Underline "When the final song ended."
4	Rewrite D with its "while" clause at the end. Compare the comma use in these two versions of D.	The musicians tuned their instruments while the audience found seats. In the original order, the introductory while-clause takes a comma; in this sentence, the same time clause follows the main statement without one.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)**One possible four-sentence response**

Before the curtain rose, our class settled into its seats. When the music began, the room grew quiet. At the back of the crowded theater, an usher closed the door. Meanwhile, the actors waited for their cue.

Underline these complete openers in the model: Before the curtain rose; When the music began; At the back of the crowded theater; Meanwhile. Each comma follows the underlined opener.

TEACHER ASSESSMENT NOTES

Practice commas: A after theater; B after hallway; D after seats; F after Meanwhile. C and E need none. Accept varied complete sentences with accurate opener boundaries. The moved-clause comparison applies to D, not to every kind of phrase in every position. Never insert a comma between subject and verb.