

Ten Days to A+ Grammar

Commas and Apostrophes



by Cheryl Miller Thurston



Teacher's Pet Publications

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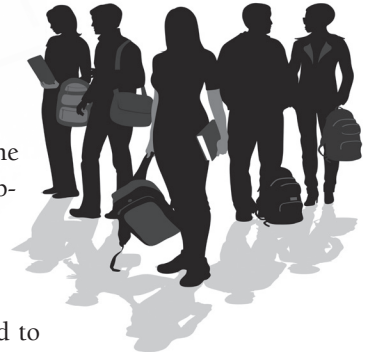
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Introduction



TEN DAYS TO A+ GRAMMAR: *COMMAS AND APOSTROPHES* is designed to help students master the skill of using commas and apostrophes correctly. These two punctuation marks are probably the most widely misused, and they are misused by writers of all ages.

The daily lessons and exercises in *Ten Days to A+ Grammar: Commas and Apostrophes* are carefully designed to build upon each other. Rather than overwhelming students with a list of rules, the lessons introduce rules and concepts a few at a time, and in an order designed to build understanding. Individual and group activities help reinforce the concepts.

Throughout the guide, various grammatical terms are introduced to students, terms like “appositives” and “parenthetical expressions.” It is important for them to remember that learning these terms shouldn’t become the goal. It is perfectly permissible to know how to punctuate an appositive correctly without necessarily knowing it is called an appositive.

Ten Days to A+ Grammar: Commas and Apostrophes covers all of the most common rules for using commas and apostrophes, and it introduces some of the more uncommon ones. It does not, however, try to cover every obscure possibility that might come up in writing. Supplying rules for every eventuality is likely to only confuse students and is beyond the scope of this ten-day Unit.

The quizzes are designed to be used within each lesson, but can easily be converted into a homework assignment if time proves too short to include it in the day’s work. Day #8, for example, has more exercises than usual because, while there are many distinct rules for apostrophes and a great deal of confusion surrounding them, the best way to learn apostrophes is to actually use them.

Some daily units include more exercises that most classes will be able to cover. The exercises can, therefore, be assigned as homework, extra credit, assignments for specific students who need extra help, etc.

Quizzes, reviews, exercises, and answer keys are all on separate pages, which allows you to copy and distribute the work. If you find yourself with some time remaining at the end of either portion of the guide, use one of the extra tests we have supplied.

Finally, *Ten Days to A+ Grammar: Commas and Apostrophes* keeps writing in mind. It isn’t enough for students to be able to plunk commas and apostrophes into ready-made sentences. They need to be able to transfer rules they learn to their own writing. The exercises in *Ten Days to A+ Grammar: Commas and Apostrophes* involve students in writing and manipulating sentences, helping them to build their skills.

The packet contents, at a glance:

1. Pretest and “Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?”
2. Helping students see how various elements can be added before a main clause and should be followed by a comma.
3. Helping students see how certain material can interrupt a main clause and should be set off with commas.
4. Helping students learn how to use commas in a series, in compound sentences, and with two or more adjectives that precede a noun.
5. Helping students learn how to use commas to separate the parts of a date, to separate the parts of an address, to separate a quotation from the rest of a sentence, and to show a contrasting element in a sentence.
6. Reviewing comma rules with a writing exercise that has students use all ten rules in a news story.
7. Helping students understand how to use apostrophes with contractions and with singular possessives and plural possessives that already end in “s.”
8. Helping students learn how to use apostrophes with plural possessives that do not end in “s.”
9. Helping students learn how to use apostrophes for compound possessives and plural letters of the alphabet and reviewing all comma and apostrophe rules.
10. Final test.

DAY #1: Teacher Instructions

Objectives:

- To assess student ability to recognize whether commas and apostrophes are used correctly.
- To give students a quick overview of what they will be studying for the next ten days.
- To help students understand the importance of learning to punctuate correctly.

Activities:

1. **Pretest.** Give the pretest on Commas and Apostrophes.
2. **Overview.** After students finish the pretest, present a brief overview of what will happen during the next ten days: Students will be learning how to use commas and apostrophes correctly. They will study the punctuation rules involved, learn to correct errors they see, and write sentences of their own that are correctly punctuated. On the tenth day, they will take a follow-up test to see how much they have improved.
3. **Lesson.** Present “Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?” You might project the page for the class to see (overhead projector, interactive whiteboard, etc.), or photocopy the material and have students read along as you go over it.

Have students actually try to decipher the paragraph that does not adhere to any conventional capitalization, punctuation, or spelling rules. Because it's not an easy task, the exercise makes an important point about how writing rules and standards are meant to make communication easier. This is a very interesting, but difficult exercise. Once the basic concept—an advertisement for ZZLoops—is understood, deciphering the paragraph can be a fun game when done aloud as a class.

DAY #1: Pretest I

Directions: For each item below, place a “C” in the blank if commas have been used correctly. Place an “I” in the blank if any comma has been used incorrectly or if a comma is missing.

1. ____ No one understood what Tremaine, the most popular boy in school, was doing at a polka party.
2. ____ Esperanza really wanted a new electric guitar the kind that she had played at a store in New York City.
3. ____ Yolanda looked out her window and saw something very strange on the sidewalk but she didn't want to believe that a coyote could be walking calmly down a city street.
4. ____ Mr. Dewhirst accidentally wrote down 428 Ferguson Boulevard, Cloud Haven New Mexico as his address.
5. ____ We had milk a sandwich potato chips and an ice cream sundae for desert.
6. ____ The game show contestant found a box of paper clips behind Door #3 not the suitcase full of money that he had hoped to find.
7. ____ When the gymnast received perfect scores at the end of her routine audience members rose to their feet and cheered wildly.
8. ____ The instructions Pietra found in the box made no sense at all to her, but she tried to put the shelves together; she used screws, bolts, nails, and a lot of duct tape.
9. ____ In my opinion teenagers should not be allowed to drink carbonated beverages or coffee.
10. ____ “Joseph if you don't stop kicking the pew in front of you, the lady there is going to turn around and smack you with her hat” said Mrs. Rivera.
11. ____ We all went to the theater bought some popcorn took our seats and waited for the movie to start.
12. ____ The homely unwanted Gila monster sat forlornly in its cage at the pet store.

DAY #1: Pretest I • Answer Key

1. C CORRECT
2. I Esperanza really wanted a new electric guitar, the kind that she had played at a store in New York City.
3. C CORRECT
4. I Mr. Dewhirst accidentally wrote down 428 Ferguson Boulevard, Cloud Haven, New Mexico, as his address.
5. C CORRECT
6. C CORRECT
7. I When the gymnast received perfect scores at the end of her routine, audience members rose to their feet and cheered wildly.
8. I The instructions Pietra found in the box made no sense at all to her, but she tried to put the shelves together; she used screws, bolts, nails, and a lot of duct tape.
9. I In my opinion, teenagers should not be allowed to drink carbonated beverages or coffee.
10. I “Joseph, if you don’t stop kicking the pew in front of you, the lady there is going to turn around and smack you with her hat,” said Mrs. Rivera.
11. I We all went to the theater, bought some popcorn, took our seats, and waited for the movie to start.
12. I The homely, unwanted Gila monster sat forlornly in its cage at the pet store.

DAY # 1: Pretest II

Directions: For each item below, place a “C” in the blank if apostrophes have been used correctly. Place an “I” in the blank if any apostrophe has been used incorrectly or if an apostrophe is missing.

1. ____ The principal was stunned to find that all the teacher’s desks were missing from the building.
2. ____ Neither Priscilla nor her sister like’s pink lipstick, pink dresses or pink anything.
3. ____ The bedroom that’s done all in black is their’s.
4. ____ The mens’ department is, not surprisingly, next to the womens’ department.
5. ____ “Its time for your pill,” said the nurse sternly. She knew that Blake’s attitude was not the most positive one at the rehab center.
6. ____ Everyone’s ideas will be considered, but only the president’s ideas will go into effect.
7. ____ There are three i’s in the word “infinite.”
8. ____ Whos going to star in “Godzillas Baby Brother”?
9. ____ The calendars missing the month of August.
10. ____ Norville Whitman’s ugly portrait was part of the Whitman family’s estate.
11. ____ The fox’es dens are about a mile apart.
12. ____ Roberta Williams TV show is a huge hit with grandmother’s.

DAY #1: Pretest II • Answer Key

1. I The principal was stunned to find that all the teachers' desks were missing from the building.
2. I Neither Priscilla nor her sister likes pink lipstick, pink dresses, or pink anything.
3. I The bedroom that's done all in black is theirs.
4. I The men's department is, not surprisingly, next to the women's department.
5. I "It's time for your pill," said the nurse sternly. She knew that Blake's attitude was not the most positive one at the rehab center.
6. C CORRECT
7. C CORRECT
8. I Who's going to star in "Godzilla's Baby Brother"?
9. I The calendar's missing the month of August.
10. I Norville Whitman's ugly portrait was part of the Whitman family's estate.
11. I The foxes' dens are about a mile apart.
12. I Roberta Williams's TV show is a huge hit with grandmothers.

DAY #1: Pretest III

Directions: Rewrite the sentences so that all commas and apostrophes are correct. All sentences have more than one error in them.

1. Myrons puppy was born on December 15 2010 at the veterinary clinic at 263 Adamson Street Feldspere Kansas during a tornado.

2. Delmont agreed to try the roasted crickets and fried ants at the food fair. However he would not try his mothers roasted eggplant fried peppers or boiled carrots at home.

3. Anya looked over at the handsome policeman the one who was giving her a ticket and she suddenly didnt care about the \$75 fine. She thought the policemans badge reflected his brown eyes very nicely.

4. Hugh wanted to finish the test as soon as possible and he wanted to pass it with flying colors. His familys future depended on it.

5. "You have'nt completed one assignment this entire week" said Mr. Harrison Tonis math teacher.

6. In fact the entire school districts budget is used up by the need to rebuild the three schools' wrecked in the hurricane.

DAY #1: Pretest III • Answer Key

1. Myron's puppy was born on December 15, 2010, at the veterinary clinic at 263 Adamson Street, Feldspere, Kansas, during a tornado.
2. Delmont agreed to try the roasted crickets and fried ants at the food fair. However, he would not try his mother's roasted eggplant, fried peppers, or boiled carrots at home.
3. Anya looked over at the handsome policeman, the one who was giving her a ticket, and she suddenly didn't care about the \$75 fine. She thought the policeman's badge reflected his brown eyes very nicely.
4. Hugh wanted to finish the test as soon as possible, and he wanted to pass it with flying colors. His family's future depended on it.
5. "You haven't completed one assignment this entire week," said Mr. Harrison, Toni's math teacher.
6. In fact, the entire school district's budget is used up by the need to rebuild the three schools wrecked in the hurricane.

DAY # 1: Lesson

Why Do We Have To Learn This Stuff?

Many students wonder why they have to learn about correct capitalization, spelling, and punctuation—especially in this era of text messaging. After all, many people ignore all three aspects of grammar and manage to communicate with their friends.

It's true. Friends who know each other well can manage to decipher even very strange messages. Even people who aren't friends can usually figure out a text message that is short, but full of errors.

On the other hand, imagine a world where all capitalization, spelling, and punctuation rules were not important, and “anything goes” applied to all forms of communication.

Imagine, for example, that you encountered a website with page after page of information like this:

*Enywo'nwho wontctaluk gr8 shud tri! R gnu brasslut' four both men&-women zzloopsarmad from gen youine letherinter lass-
dwith kulurfulbedsan dezinedto enhance anyoutFit ewekan where them fourany ok azhun whethurcassss ual orr forMul buzzri-
zuto staruvthupopp "youllar" teevee show stranjur frum satt earn sez zzloopsr SEW kuli half wonfour evERee owtfitione gade
chenowith whooo is star'ring in thehitt mOv'ie oshunz o nfire beeeveez that zzloops helpedher "BEEcome" a suc CES ial ways
woa!re zzloopstwomy A udishunz &Iwuz sucSfullevry'tim she sed thEymadme lo!k gud themostpopYou larkulurz inhourlineR
egplantt mellonebonyandflame redif YOU ordur inthuneXt48 ourz weull ssEndyou Urfrist zzloopsbrasletz 415\$ asavengsuv
OvEr*10pursent ordurtoodae*

How much of the message can you decipher?

It's so much easier to read the same information on the same website when it has correct capitalization, spelling, and punctuation:

Anyone who wants to look great should try our new bracelets for both men and women. ZZ Loops are made from genuine leather interlaced with colorful beads and designed to enhance any outfit. You can wear them for any occasion, whether casual or formal.

Buzz Rizzuto, star of the popular TV show Stranger from Saturn says, "ZZ Loops are so cool! I have one for every outfit I own." Jade Chenowith, who is starring in the hit movie Oceans on Fire, believes that ZZ Loops helped her become a success. "I always wore ZZ Loops to my auditions, and I was successful every time," she said. "They made me look good."

The most popular colors in our line are eggplant, melon, ebony, and flame red. If you order in the next 48 hours, we'll send you your first ZZ Loops bracelet for \$15.00, a savings of over 10%. Order today!

Capitalization, spelling, and punctuation rules have developed over the years as a way to make communication easier. When people learn the same rules and guidelines, everyone benefits—just as we benefit from having driving rules and regulations. Imagine the chaos that would result if people could drive any direction, in any lane, and at any speed on our roads and highways. Traffic would be a mess, and accidents would occur even more often than they do now.

Over the next ten days, you are going to be studying two punctuation marks: commas and apostrophes. Learning to use both correctly is really not difficult. If you take time to learn when and how to use both, using them correctly will soon become second nature to you.