

12,345
1/2
VII

PROGRAMED TEXT

EFFECTIVE WRITING
PARTS I - V

WD 49-53/OD 37-41



**UNITED STATES ARMY
PRIMARY HELICOPTER SCHOOL
FORT WOLTERS, TEXAS**

PROGRAMED TEXT

PROGRAM TEXT

FILE NO:

WD 49-53/OD 37-41

PROGRAM TITLE

Effective Writing
Parts I - V

POI SCOPE: WD 49/OD 37 an introductory discussion of effective writing and how the student may obtain the most favorable results from this text.

WD 50/OD 38 a comprehensive discussion and exercise of the use of the comma in military correspondence and effective writing.

WD 51/OD 39 a basic discussion and exercise on common errors encountered in effective writing with regards to the use of the colon and semicolon.

WD 52/OD 40 an exercise designed to outline the rules and procedures for proper use of periods, capitals, abbreviations and numbers in military correspondence and effective writing.

WD 53/OD 41 an exercise and discussion on basic sentence structure outlining proper usage of the basic parts of speech.

PREPARED BY:

DATE:

Adopted from a Programed Text on "Effective Writing"
Published by the 3825th Support Group (Academics)
Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base

REVISED BY:

DATE:

CPT L. Willman
Fac Dev Div

JUNE 1968

APPROVED BY:

DATE:

Martin Heuer
MARTIN HEUER

for
LTC, CE
Dir, OCD

AUG 1968

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROGRAMED TEXT - EFFECTIVE WRITING

PART I	WD 49/OD 37 Introduction to Effective Writing.....	<u>1</u>
	Performance Objectives.....	<u>2</u>
PART II	WD 50/OD 38 The Comma.....	<u>9</u>
	Performance Objectives.....	<u>10</u>
	Self Evaluation Exercise.....	<u>27</u>
	Answers to Self Evaluation Exercise.....	<u>28</u>
PART III	WD 51/OD 39 Colons and Semicolons.....	<u>29</u>
	Performance Objectives.....	<u>30</u>
	Self Evaluation Exercise.....	<u>48</u>
	Answers to Self Evaluation Exercise.....	<u>49</u>
PART IV	WD 52/OD 40 Use of Capitals, Periods, Numbers, and Abbreviations.....	<u>50</u>
	Performance Objectives.....	<u>51</u>
	Self Evaluation Exercise.....	<u>75</u>
	Answers to Self Evaluation Exercise.....	<u>76</u>
PART V	WD 53/OD 41 Sentences and Paragraphs.....	<u>77</u>
	Performance Objectives.....	<u>78</u>
	Self Evaluation Exercise.....	<u>128</u>
	Answers to Self Evaluation Exercise.....	<u>130</u>
	Self Evaluation Exercise Parts I - V.....	<u>131</u>
	Answers to Self Evaluation Exercise.....	<u>135</u>

PREFACE

This text is designed to teach effective writing, and it deals primarily with the sentence as the basic unit of written communication. Throughout the text, the emphasis is on sentence construction and use. This is because the ability to construct and to use an effective sentence is a fundamental part of the ability to write effectively.

There are five parts to this text which reviews the rules of punctuation, discusses the functions of the various parts of speech, correct use of capitals, abbreviations and the use of numbers as used in military correspondence. There are also exercises and discussion on basic sentence structure.

Throughout the text you will be given situations and problems which will require responses from you. Correct examples or confirmation will follow your responses in the text.

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

PART I EFFECTIVE WRITING

WD 49/OD 37

Introduction to Effective Writing

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

WD 49/OD 37

Introduction to Effective Writing

To teach by programed text proper punctuation, the function of various parts of speech and sentence structure. It also points out how the student may obtain the most favorable results from this test.

INTRODUCTION TO EFFECTIVE WRITING

In this segment, Part One through Four of the text, you will be studying internal sentence punctuation, the uses of capital letters, the forms and uses of abbreviations, and the forms and uses of cardinal and ordinal numbers. Research has shown that all of these subject areas are particularly troublesome to Fort Wolters writers.

Most of Segment One is devoted to a study of internal sentence punctuation. These are the punctuation marks that are covered:

1. The comma
2. The semicolon
3. The colon
4. The period

To prepare you for the study of these selected punctuation marks, it is important for us to consider WHY some sentences require internal punctuation while others do not.

Here are two sentences, one of which effectively demonstrates the need for internal punctuation. Examine both of these sentences, and decide which of them requires internal punctuation. When you have decided, place a check mark () beside that sentence in the space provided.

- () 1. Bernoulli's Principle states that, an increase in the velocity of a fluid in a closed system produces a corresponding decrease

in the pressure energy of that fluid because molecular energy is used for velocity rather than for pressure.

2. Bernoulli's Principle, the principle of fluid dynamics, states that an increase in the velocity of a fluid in a closed system produces a corresponding decrease in the pressure energy of that fluid because molecular energy is used for velocity rather than for pressure.

Internal punctuation is required in sentence number two. This internal punctuation is required for one of the three reasons stated below. Check the response of your choice.

- () 1. The second sentence is longer than the first sentence.
- () 2. The construction of the second sentence is different from that of the first sentence.
- ✓ 3. The second sentence contains a qualifying element that the first sentence does not contain.

The number of qualifying elements in a sentence (clauses, phrases, modifiers, etc.) increases the structural complication of a sentence and, as a consequence, its need for internal punctuation. The correct response is number three, and the sentence in question requires commas after "Bernoulli's Principle" and after "dynamics." These commas set off "the principle of fluid dynamics," a non-restrictive parenthetical element. If you selected either the first or second response, let us caution you that neither length nor novelty of construction qualifies a sentence for internal punctuation.

There you have one of the principal reasons that some sentences require internal punctuation, and that reason is STRUCTURAL COMPLICATION. There is another reason, however, that is almost as important as that of structural complication. The following sentences demonstrate this other reason for internal punctuation. Examine the following sentences carefully, and decide which of them requires internal punctuation. When you have decided, furnish the necessary punctuation by writing directly in the text.

1. Because the wing design did not provide enough lift, the aircraft failed to meet the performance standards.
2. The aircraft failed to meet the performance standards because the wing design did not provide enough lift.

The sentences, as we are sure that you noticed, are precisely the same except for a modification in the sequence of parts. Since they are the same, neither is more structurally complicated than the other. Still, sentence number one requires a comma after "lift," while sentence number two requires no commas. Why is this? Why would a writer knowingly make his writing task more difficult by constructing a sentence like sentence number one? Select a response to this question from the alternatives below.

- ☒ 1. The writer would construct a sentence in the form of sentence number one in order to control the emphasis within the sentence.
- ☐ 2. The writer would construct a sentence in the form of sentence number one in order to have his writing more nearly approximate spoken English.

The correct response is number one, to control the emphasis within the sentence. In sentence number one, the emphasis is on WHY the aircraft failed to meet the performance standards. In sentence number two, the emphasis is on the fact that the aircraft FAILED to meet the standards.

There you have the two fundamental reasons for internal

punctuation, STRUCTURAL COMPLICATION and EMPHASIS CONTROL. We ask that you keep these two reasons for internal punctuation in mind as you progress through the text. As you punctuate sentences in Section One and write the required sentences in Section Two, you will be given numerous opportunities to demonstrate how well you understand them.

In this part of the text, in addition to punctuating sentences for the two reasons just covered, you will be practicing capitalization, the use of abbreviations, and certain other mechanical features of sentence construction. To assist you in gaining the maximum benefit from this practice, Section One is written in a programed instructional style that is described below.

In Section One, there are a number of key exercises similar to this example:

Hercules, who was the ice man on our block always gave us a ride on the back of the ice wagon.

It is obvious that this sample exercise requires commas after "Hercules" and after "block". If this were an actual key exercise, you would have been asked to furnish the necessary punctuation by writing directly in the text. You would then have been given the correct response against which you could check your performance.

The key exercises are furnished in this general form for the following reasons:

1. Each of them introduces the subject area that is to be

covered,

2. Each of them serves as an example of the grammar rule being studied, and
3. Each of them serves as an indicator to you concerning your preliminary knowledge of the subject area.

After you have had an opportunity to respond to each key exercise, your response to the key exercise is confirmed. You are then given the rule that is demonstrated by the key exercise. The rule is followed by several practice exercises in its application.

As the text progresses from one subject area to the next, you are provided with a "self-test" item on the subject area just completed. This self-test item is designed in such a way as to provide you with a realistic estimate of your learning gain.

This completes the introduction to this program. Now that you know what the program is all about, we will allow you to get down to business. Introduction in the use of the comma begins in Part Two.

PART II EFFECTIVE WRITING
WD 50/OD 38
The Comma

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

WD 50/OD 38

The Comma

Given an incorrectly punctuated paragraph, determine where commas are required using rules taught in this text.

THE USE OF THE COMMA

Quite literally, commas allow us to take a breath as we read; they permit us to pause and digest that which has gone before and to shift mental gears in preparation for that which is still to come.

The exercise that follows is your first key exercise in the use of commas. Follow the instructions carefully. In this exercise, we are establishing the response pattern that you will be using throughout most of the effective writing courses.

This key exercise MAY require one or more commas. Read the exercise, and, by writing directly in the text, furnish any commas that may be required.

Dealing, the card shark of doubtful reputation palmed the ace of spades.

The rule in this case is to use a comma when it is necessary to separate two words that might otherwise be misunderstood if the comma is omitted. A comma is required after "Dealing." If the comma is omitted, "card shark" appears to be the object of "Dealing."

Here are your practice exercises in the application of this comma rule.

Place a comma in its correct position in each of the following sentences. The confirmation of your responses follows these practice exercises.

1. To Whitney, Smith was very kind.
2. Instead of cotton, weeds grew.
3. What the problem was, was not known.
- X 4. After the pattern of the given, example, followed example.
5. The people rushed, for the store was having a sale.
6. When the storm struck, the farm was just beginning to pay.
7. As soon as the doctor left, the waiting room was crowded.
8. After the tension of the game is over, the team can relax.

For the sentences to be more meaningful, commas belong after these words: 1. "Whitney," 2. "cotton," 3. the first "was," 4. "given," 5. "rushed," 6. "struck," 7. "left," and 8. "over."

The use of comma just covered was a simple one. Here is a key exercise in a comma use that is not quite as easy. Read the key exercise carefully, and, if commas are required, furnish them.

The centralized system puts standards of living and personal consumption on a very low level of priority and value and gives the consumer a choice of only one or two items of necessities and options in each of the several categories of essentials and nonessentials.

The fact that the key exercise is a long sentence does not

automatically qualify it for commas. No commas are required. The sentence LOOKS like a compound sentence, but it is not. If it were a compound sentence, it would contain two or more independent clauses, these clauses would be joined by a coordinating conjunction (and, or, nor, but, etc.), and there would be a comma preceding the conjunction. The following example shows how this works.

The sharp teeth of the saw came closer and closer to Polly, and she struggled furiously to loose the bonds about her.

THE CONJUNCTION INDEPENDENT CLAUSE INDEPENDENT CLAUSE THE COMMA

Independent clauses, as we are sure you know, are clauses that contain their own subjects (the subject may be implied) and their own verbs.

The following practice exercises are all compound sentences. Each of them will require one or more commas to meet the requirement of the rule just covered. Be sure to read the discussion that follows each exercise. In these exercises, place commas where they are required by writing directly in the text.

1. He fell, but he wasn't hurt.

If you remember, the key exercise was long, but its length did not automatically qualify it for commas. This practice exercise is short, but that fact alone does not DISQUALIFY it for commas. The comma is required after "fell."

2. He went, and we went, but they stayed, and she stayed.

That's a short sentence, but it has four independent clauses separated by coordinating conjunctions. You should have used three commas. The first comma goes after the first "went," the second comma goes after the second "went," and the third comma goes after the first "stayed."

3. Laugh, and the world laughs with you. Stop, and the world laughs on.

Each of the two sentences above contains two independent clauses. The fact that the verbs "laugh" and "stop" have no apparent subjects does not alter the rule. In each case, the subject is "you," and it is implied. "(You) laugh, and the world laughs with you. (You) stop, and the world laughs on."

4. Modern technology is fighting for its life, and it is defeating a dying humanism.
5. Foreign policy is inconsistent, but it is necessary.

We grouped these two sentences together for a particular reason. Notice the use of "it is" in each of the sentences. It would be just as easy to write these sentences this way:

4. Modern technology is fighting for its life and * defeating a dying humanism.
5. Foreign policy is inconsistent but * necessary.

If the sentences were written that way, they would not require

commas. By including the "it is" in the original sentences, we have furnished an additional subject and verb, and (we) caused them to become compound sentences requiring commas. In sentence four, the comma goes after "life." In sentence five, the comma goes after "inconsistent." The use of the additional "it is" gives added emphasis to the last part of the sentence. It is perfectly acceptable to write with emphasis, but (you) be sure the resulting punctuation is equally acceptable.

6. And I have fought, and I shall fight again.

The preceding sentence is an example of an oratorical style of writing. We don't recommend it because this style of writing requires a more thorough knowledge of the English language than most of us possess. The comma goes after "fought."

Some grammar texts say that it is not necessary to use commas in "short" compound sentences. They neglect to say, however, how long a sentence must be to qualify as being "short." In the absence of better guidance than that, our advice to you is to stick with the rule.

Here is another key exercise in the use of commas. Read the exercise carefully, and punctuate it if required.

He had ham and eggs, toast and jelly, heartburn, and static from his wife for breakfast.

This exercise is an example of items in series. The rule states

that a comma is used after each member of the series when the series is used with "and," "or," or "nor." Some texts say that the comma preceding the "and," "or," or "nor" is not required, but Army writing guides say to use it. So use it.

In the key exercise, "ham and eggs" is a collective object, and a comma follows "eggs." The same is true of "toast and jelly." The comma follows "jelly." "Heartburn" and "static from his wife" do not, however, function as a collective. A comma is required after "heartburn." No comma is required after the last member of the series which, in this case, is "static from his wife."

The following exercises are examples of items in series. Place commas where required according to the rule.

1. The Christmas season brought good cheer, fellowship, and unpaid bills.

Commas are required after "cheer" and "fellowship."

2. Hooray for the red, white, and blue.

Commas are required after "red" and "white."

3. There is a store down the block where you can buy your cold drinks by the bottle, by the case, or by the gallon.

This is a series used with "or." Commas are required after "bottle" and "case."

4. Neither rain, sleet, nor snow could keep us from being there on time.

In that sentence, "nor" is used with items in series. Commas are required after "rain" and "sleet."

5. I missed problems numbered 11, 14, 21, and 23.

Numbers in series, whether written out or expressed as figures, require commas according to the same rule. Commas should be placed after "11," "14," and "21."

6. The typical woman's purse is filled with things like loose coins of small denomination, hair pins, or bobby pins, undecipherable notes to herself, assorted cosmetics in or out of their containers, combs, and hair brushes, and sundry items of doubtful value and even more doubtful utility.

When punctuating long and complex lists of items in series, be careful to correctly identify each member of the series. Commas are required in this exercise after "denomination," "bobby pins," "herself," "containers," and "brushes."

The next key exercise combines two uses of the comma. There is one that you will recognize immediately, the use of the comma with items in series. The other use, however, is the real purpose of this key exercise.

Here is the key exercise. Place commas in all positions where they are required.

Trees, like men, women, children, eggs, sauerkraut, banana peels, bread and butter, baked beans, and leftover lamb stew are or once were alive.

The two rules of comma use in this key exercise are as follows:

1. The comma rule for items in series used with "and," "or," or "nor."
2. The comma rule for parenthetical matter.

The comma rule for parenthetical matter is the one we are most concerned with in this exercise. This rule requires that words not necessary to the main thought or to the grammatical pattern of the sentence be considered parenthetical matter and be set off from the rest of the sentence with commas. This rule requires a comma after "Trees" and after "stew."

The other commas in the exercise are required by the item in series rule. These commas are required after "men," "women," "children," "eggs," "flowers," "sauerkraut," "peels," "butter," and "beans."

Because of the parenthetical matter in the key exercise, it could have been written like this without changing its meaning:

Trees are or once were alive.

This sentence form eliminates all of the material between these

commas that set off the parenthetical matter. It is interesting to note that the sentence could not be further reduced to the form below without seriously altering its meaning.

Trees are, or once were, alive.

If we were to treat "or once were" as parenthetical matter, we have, in effect, said that "trees are alive." That statement is invalid because not all trees are alive.

The following practice exercise require commas to set off parenthetical matter. Punctuate each sentence as required.

1. This time, regardless of what happens, we will do it right.

The commas are required after "time" and after "happens." An effective test for parenthetical matter is to read each sentence aloud without the element. Another good test is to mentally enclose the element in parenthesis. If the sentence remains basically the same after doing these things, the element is parenthetical matter, and it should be set off with commas.

2. You look as though you doubt what I say, and I don't blame you, so go see for yourself.

The commas are required after "say" and after "blame you."

3. Thomas, naturally, was the last person to arrive.

Short parenthetical elements like "naturally," "of course,"

"incidentally," and "undoubtedly" are almost always set off by commas. The commas in the previous exercise go after "Thomas" and after "naturally."

The parenthetical elements that you have been working with in the previous exercises, those that are not essential to sentence meaning, are called NON-RESTRICTIVE parenthetical elements. If they had been essential to sentence meaning or construction, they would have been RESTRICTIVE parenthetical elements, and they would not have required commas. Here is an exercise with another parenthetical element. You are to decide if it is RESTRICTIVE or NON-RESTRICTIVE. Punctuate the sentence accordingly.

4. Charles hit John while John was standing next to him.

The punctuation of this sentence depends upon how you treat "while John was standing next to him." If that was a factor contributing to John's being hit, it is RESTRICTIVE, and no commas are required. If, however, John's standing next to Charles was only incidental to John's being hit, a comma is required because the element is NON-RESTRICTIVE.

In the exercises that follow, we want to demonstrate that, as so often happens, the TOTAL narrative of which the sentence is a part will determine whether the parenthetical element is restrictive or non-restrictive.

In the sentence that follows, we are talking about APPLE PIES. The previous narrative of which this sentence is a part has already established that the apple pie in the sentence is only

one of many apple pies scattered in various places about the kitchen. One of the apple pies has been stolen. Read the sentence, and decide if commas are required.

5. The apple pie that was on the window ledge has been stolen.

Did you include any commas? You should not have because "that was on the window ledge" is not a parenthetical element. It is necessary for the correct identification of the stolen apple pie from all of the others scattered about the kitchen.

In the next sentence, we are speaking about the same kitchen. This item, however, there are several kinds of pies about. There is only one apple pie. It shares the window ledge with a mince pie and a blueberry pie. Punctuate this sentence if required.

6. The apple pie, that was on the window ledge, has been stolen.

Since there was only one apple pie, "that was on the window ledge" it is not necessary to identify the apple pie. It becomes non-restrictive, and it should be set off with commas.

7. By the way, did you know that I have a new baby brother?

The comma is required after "way." The parenthetical element, as this sentence shows, does not have to be buried within the sentence. Of course, it can come at the beginning. It can also come at the end of the sentence, incidentally.

The following key exercise demonstrates another use of the comma. Punctuate the exercise as required.

Although there are some texts that do not cover the requirement for using a comma after an introductory adverbial clause, we will.

We were trying to see if you were paying attention. This key exercise is several things:

1. It is the rule for this use of commas,
2. It is an example of the rule, and
3. It is an exercise in the application of the rule.

It is the rule because it states that a comma is used after an introductory adverbial clause.

It is the example because except for the "we will" the entire sentence is one long introductory adverbial clause.

It is the exercise in the application of the rule, and you should have placed a comma after "clause."

Here are your practice exercises in this use of commas. Place commas where they are required.

1. Even though it snowed throughout the entire second half, we enjoyed the game.

The comma is required after "half."

2. Because of the need for precision, the drill team practiced every day.

The comma is required after "precision."

In the same way that an introductory clause is followed by a comma, an introductory modifying phrase is set off from the subject that it modifies by a comma. Here are a couple of examples of this type of phrase. Place commas where they are needed.

1. Angered by his friends, he went into seclusion.

The comma goes after "friends." If this sentence were turned around and written as follows, there would be no need for commas.

He went into seclusion because he was angered by his friends.

2. Though tired, we had to continue.

Some grammar texts say that a comma is not required after "tired" in the sentence above. These texts argue that a "short" introductory phrase or clause does not have to be followed by a comma. You may use your own judgment in these cases; however, the jury is still out on what constitutes "short," "middle-sized," or "long." At what size, for example, does a puddle become a pond and a pond become a lake?

One of the greatest features of written English is its extreme flexibility. If you are faced with a problem in punctuation, recast the sentence in one form and then another until you derive a punctuation that you are sure of.

Please notice the previous sentence that ends in the word "of."

This is so much more functional than writing "until you derive a punctuation OF WHICH YOU ARE SURE." When his writing can be improved by breaking grammar rules, the effective writer breaks grammar rules. Such a rule is the one that says that you will NEVER end a sentence in a preposition. Baloney! Arbitrary rules of grammar are something up with which the effective writer will not put.

The following is the final key exercise in the use of the comma. This exercise consists of two sentences that are alike in many ways. Each of them contains adjectives modifying "day," but only one of them requires a comma between these adjectives. Punctuate one of the sentences as required.

He woke up to a cold windy day.

He woke up to a threatening winter day.

One of the sentences contains PARALLEL adjectives, and one of them does not. The rule is this: when the adjectives are parallel that is, when they are equal in value and purpose, a comma is used between them. The first sentence above contains the parallel adjectives, and a comma is required after "cold."

A valid test of parallel adjectives is to turn the adjectives around, that is, to put one before the other. Another test is to insert "and" between them. If, after doing either of these things, the sentence still makes sense, the adjectives are parallel, and a comma is required between them. Let's try it with the sentences

1. It means an untimely, sudden death to be trapped under the hot desert sun.

The comma goes after "untimely." No comma goes after "hot."

2. She wore a tight silk dress to the office party.

These adjectives are not parallel. No comma is required.

3. The machine was covered with dirty red oxide and black, sticky tar.

The adjectives in "dirty red oxide" are not parallel. "Black" and "sticky" are parallel, and a comma is required between them.

4. He walked down the old country lane.

The adjectives are not parallel. No comma is required.

With this, we conclude the coverage of these critical comma rules. These are not all of the rules covering comma usage, to be sure, but these are the ones most often violated by students at the United States Army Primary Helicopter School.

Go on to the next page for a review of all of the rules that we have covered. After the review, you will have an opportunity to complete a comprehensive exercise in comma usage.

REVIEW OF THE COMMA RULES

1. COMMAS ARE REQUIRED WHEN THERE IS A NEED TO SEPARATE TWO WORDS THAT MIGHT OTHERWISE BE MISUNDERSTOOD.

Use the comma for it can be of great help in preventing misreading. ↑

2. COMMAS ARE REQUIRED TO SEPARATE TWO OR MORE INDEPENDENT CLAUSES IN A SENTENCE. THE COMMAS PRECEDE EACH COORDINATING CONJUNCTION.

This sentence contains two independent clauses and a comma is required. ↑

3. COMMAS ARE USED AFTER EACH MEMBER IN A SERIES USED WITH "AND," "OR," OR "NOR."

The uses of commas are many varied and frequently implausible. ↑ ↑

4. PARENTHETICAL EXPRESSIONS THAT ARE NOT CONSIDERED NECESSARY TO THE THOUGHT AND PATTERN OF THE SENTENCE ARE NON-RESTRICTIVE AND, AS SUCH, ARE SET OFF WITH COMMAS.

Non-restrictive parenthetical elements naturally should be set off with commas. ↑ ↑

5. INTRODUCTORY ADVERBIAL CLAUSES ARE FOLLOWED BY A COMMA.

When opening a sentence with an adverbial clause use a comma. ↑

6. COMMAS ARE USED BETWEEN PARALLEL ADJECTIVES.

Commas are difficult annoying punctuation marks. ↑

SELF EVALUATION EXERCISE ON COMMA USAGE

This exercise is provided so that you may check your knowledge of the rules of comma usage covered in this text. Read the exercise carefully, and furnish all commas that are required. When you have completed the exercise, check your responses on the next page.

A comma is a mark of punctuation, but a coma is a mark of illness. Instead of commas, comas cause a comatose state, but commas, rather than comas, may cause a confused state. If commas cause confusion, consternation, and complications, rework this text, and rethink your clever, captivating thoughts. Keep your comma calm and avoid a comma coma.

0 1.8 gal. fuel

0 2.5 M. 235°

fuel 25 gall	fuel 14 30 press	cylin. 14 50 239 temp 500
oil 160 90 press,	oil 10 1/2 2 1/2 temp	antenna

SELF-EVALUATION OCNFIRMATION

A comma is a mark of punctuation, but a coma is a mark of illness. Instead of commas, comas cause a comatose state, but commas, rather than comas, may cause a confused state. If commas cause confusion, consternation, and complications, rework this text, and rethink your clever, captivating thoughts. Keep your comma calm, and avoid a comma coma.