

Commas in a List: Help a Reader Spot Each Item

Key points

- The Department for Education's English curriculum for Year 2 includes using commas to separate items in a list.
- A comma is a punctuation mark (,) that helps show where one list item ends and the next begins.
- A school-bag example is: 'I packed a book, a pencil and a coat.'
- In this example, 'and' joins the last two items, so they do not need a comma between them.
- The curriculum also includes rereading writing to check that it makes sense and checking punctuation.
- Schools choose how to organise this learning, so ask your child's teacher which examples and support they use.

Things to try at home

- Play list detective: write 'We packed apples sandwiches and water.' and invite your child to help repair it as 'We packed apples, sandwiches and water.'
- Choose three real objects or pictures for an imaginary school bag, name them together and write a sentence with a comma and 'and'.
- Plan a pretend picnic with favourite foods, letting your child say, point to or draw their choices while you write the list together.
- Talk through the items in whichever language feels comfortable, then make a short English list together.
- Keep it brief and playful, offer to do the writing yourself and stop when your child has had enough.

Find out more

- Department for Education: [English programmes of study — see Year 2 writing requirements] (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-english-programmes-of-study/national-curriculum-in-england-english-programmes-of-study>).
- Your child's teacher: ask for a familiar list sentence and ways to adapt the activity for your child, including special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or learning English.