

## TROUBLESHOOTING ON TUESDAY

Comma experts to the rescue!

Rule when dealing with **coordinate adjectives** in a sentence:

**Use commas to separate two or more coordinate adjectives that describe the same noun.**

What are coordinate adjectives?

They are adjectives (words that describe nouns) placed next to each other that are equal in importance.

You can decide if two adjectives in a row are coordinate by asking the following questions:

- Does the sentence make sense if the adjectives are written in **reverse order**?
- Does the sentence make sense if the adjectives are written with **and** between them?

If you answer yes to these questions, then the adjectives are coordinate and should be separated by a comma.

For example:

**Our dog is a happy, lively poodle.**

In this example, a comma belongs between **happy** and **lively** because they are coordinate adjectives.

Test to make certain

**First**, try the "and" test:

Our dog is a happy and lively poodle.

*Placing "and" between the two adjectives makes sense.*

**Second**, try reversing the order of the adjectives:

Our dog is a lively and happy poodle.

*When the adjectives are reversed, the sentence still makes sense.*

Thus, **happy** and **lively** are coordinate adjectives in this example and should be separated by a comma.

CAUTION: Not all adjective pairs are coordinate adjectives. Thus, not all adjectives should be separated from one another by a comma.

Look at this example:

**We hope to get a cute baby alligator.**

In this example, no comma belongs between the two adjectives **cute** and **baby** because they are not coordinate adjectives.

How can we know?

**First**, try the "and" test:

We hope to get a cute and baby alligator.

*Placing "and" between the two adjectives does not make sense.*

**Second**, try reversing the order of the adjectives:

We hope to get a baby cute retriever.

When the adjectives are reversed, the sentence does not make sense.

Thus, **cute** and **baby** are NOT coordinate adjectives; they are cumulative adjectives meaning that they must build on each other and should not be separated by a comma.

## Practice Makes Perfect

Directions:

- Read over each sentence.
- Underline all of the adjectives (words that describe nouns)
- Using the two step test, decide if the adjectives pairs are coordinate or cumulative.
- If they are coordinate adjectives, insert the comma where needed.

1. My sleep was disturbed by a long frightening dream.
2. In my usual bad dream I am wearing a fuzzy green cape.
3. Last night I dreamed I had on an ugly wool sweater.
4. The itchy scratchy fabric irritated my cold dry skin.
5. I had to find my new allergy medicine and some creamy unscented lotion when I woke up.