

TROUBLESHOOTING ON TUESDAY

The Comma Fun Continues

Recognize a coordinating conjunction when you see one:

and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet

To remember all seven, you might want to learn one of these acronyms:
FANBOYS, YAFNOBS, or FONYBAS.

A REVIEW OF THE RULE:

Use a comma to separate the clauses of a compound sentence connected by one of these coordinating conjunction. The comma is placed *before* the coordinating conjunction, not after.

Examples:

The students ate spaghetti for dinner, but no one cleaned his plate.
I gave three books to John, and John gave them to Nancy.

However, do not use a comma before *and*, *but*, *or* and *nor* when they link pairs of words, phrases or elements other than independent clauses.

Examples:

The students ate spaghetti for dinner and cake for dessert.
I gave three books to John and four to Nancy.

The trick here is to recognize if the conjunction separates two independent clauses (complete sentences) or if it simply links pairs of words or phrases.

Practice: Highlight all of coordinating conjunction used in this paragraph.

One of the things I look forward to in the winter is squid eyeball stew but it is must be made just right. The kind I like is hot and delicious. It is so thick that you can eat it with a fork or with a spoon. It is spicy yet comforting. I even eat it for breakfast sometimes. I clearly love it but there are some people in my life who don't. My brother refuses to eat even a drop of squid eyeball stew yet he will eat dried squid eyeball cereal covered in bananas and milk. I don't really understand why he hates the stew but loves the cereal nor do I understand how anyone can prefer cold cereal to something hot and steamy in the winter. I hate to waste a single drop of anything made from squid eyeballs for they are hard to find and very expensive. I feel lucky every time my mother buys squid eyeballs so I have to be sure that I don't waste a drop. I sprinkle the stew with a little cheddar cheese and then I savor every bite.

After highlighting all of the coordinating conjunctions, insert commas where necessary.