

Using Commas

Learn

- a. Sister Wendy Beckett, an art historian, has written several books about art.
- b. She has written about Italian, German, and French painters.
- c. Her latest book is a colorful, informative volume.

Circle the comma or commas in each sentence.

In which sentence do commas separate three items in a series? _____

What kind of words does the comma separate in sentence c? _____

A **series** is a sequence of three or more words, phrases, or clauses. A **comma** is used to **separate items in a series**. The last comma in a series goes before the conjunction (*and*, *or*). A comma is also used to separate **pairs of similar adjectives** (*colorful, informative volume*). To decide whether to put a comma between adjectives, read the sentence with the word *and* inserted between the adjectives. If the word *and* sounds natural, use a comma.

Practice

Add commas where they are needed in these sentences. Use the delete mark (↵) on commas that don't belong.

1. Pablo Picasso, Piet Mondrian and Andy Warhol lived in the last century.
2. Their work is colorful exciting and individual.
3. The Blue Period, and the Rose Period of Picasso show different styles.
4. This creative talented artist helped develop new art forms.
5. Piet Mondrian used such colors as red yellow and blue.
6. Much of his work focuses on shape color and balance.
7. Actresses soup cans and his own image were painted by Andy Warhol.
8. His distinctive bold style is known as pop art.
9. Pop art celebrates both advertising, and entertainment.
10. It contains images from films advertising and even comic books.
11. Modern artists experiment with odd materials, strange colors and unusual shapes.
12. I love viewing fresh exciting art.

Apply

Rewrite each group of sentences as a single sentence. Use **and** or **or** to join the last two items in a series. Use commas where you need them.

13. Artists apply paint with brushes. They also use rollers. Some even use spray guns.

14. An artist will select colors. Then the artist will mix the colors. Finally, the artist will apply the colors to the canvas or paper.

15. One artist might choose watercolors. One artist might use oil paints. Some artists prefer tempera.

16. Oil paints use pigment in some oil. The oil could be linseed oil or safflower oil. It could also be poppy oil.

17. Artists choose their brushes based on the thickness of the paint. They also consider the size of the canvas and the style of the work.

18. Modern artists may use oil paints. They may use watercolors. Many use acrylic paints.

19. Acrylic paints can imitate oil paints. They can look like watercolors. They can imitate other types of paints as well.

20. Today, computers help modern artists draw images. Computers help them change images. Computers help them display images.
