

# Using Commas, Dashes, and Ellipses

ELA L.8.2a-b, ELD PI.8.10a

**Commas, dashes, and ellipses** are three types of punctuation that can indicate a pause or break to the reader.

## Use Commas

Commas are frequently used to set off words that interrupt the train of thought. Look at the following example:

“Sidney, I believe, volunteers at the senior center.”

To determine when you might need a comma, read the sentence out loud, noticing where you pause. You probably need to insert commas.

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Day 4

**Practice and Apply** The following sentences include words, phrases, and clauses that need to be punctuated with commas. Rewrite the following sentences, inserting the needed punctuation. If you get stuck, try reading the sentence out loud.

1. I was really excited so much so my palms started to sweat.
2. The movie was very violent or at least too violent for my younger brother to watch.
3. When you go to the island whether you go by boat or plane I'm sure it will be a delightful trip.

## Use Dashes

Commas most frequently set off a break in thought or speech. However, sometimes writers want to indicate a break in thought emphatically. In these instances, a dash is appropriate, as in the following example:

“Ms. Alonzo—she just left—will be one of the judges of the talent show.”

**Practice and Apply** For each of the following sentences, insert dashes where they are needed.

1. A beautiful grand piano it was once played by Chopin was on display in the museum.
2. “I'd like the red no give me the blue cycling shorts and white socks,” said Josh.
3. Frederic Remington artist, historian, and lover of the frontier is famous for his paintings of the West.

## Use Ellipses

An **ellipsis** is a punctuation mark that consists of three dots, or periods. Ellipses are used to indicate a long pause.

“We put up the banners . . . don’t tell me they’ve fallen down . . . for the pep rally.”

Ellipses are also used to indicate an omission in a quote, as in this example from “The Gift of the Magi” by O. Henry.

“But in a word to the wise these days . . . these two were the wisest.”

**Practice and Apply** Rewrite the sentences. Add ellipses to indicate a long pause or to take the place of the underlined words in the quotation.

1. Kohlrabi an odd looking vegetable is part of the cabbage family.
2. “The magi, as you know, were wise men—wonderfully wise men—who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger.”
3. Most planets have Greek or Roman names; Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn were all Roman gods while the word *Earth* is Old English.