

Aggie Grammar Guide: Commas and Semicolons

Answer Key

Intermediate Practice

- 1) To celebrate the graduation of my brother Aaron, we must throw a big party. (*essential*)
To celebrate the graduation of my brother, Aaron, we must throw a big party. (*non-essential*)
(In the essential meaning, the author has multiple brothers and so the name "Aaron" provides necessary information about which brother. In the non-essential meaning, Aaron is the only brother and so adding his name is unnecessary information as the reader will know which brother the writer refers to.)
- 2) Both cultures are different, yet they share the same purpose of preserving their language.
- 3) Besides, studying abroad will look amazing on future references and work applications.
- 4) For example, she did research on babies who were learning to speak Koro, Japanese, and English.
(No comma is used after “babies” because “who were learning...” is an *essential* phrase. The comma after “Japanese” is optional [Oxford comma].)
- 5) “The Language of Silence” by Maxine Hong Kingston, who is one of the greatest writers in the United States, documents the author’s difficulties in speaking since a very young age.
- 6) Around 1816, Von Drais, a German baron, built the first known bicycle, a two-wheeled wooden walking machine.
- 7) Today, social media has become, I fear, a strong part of people’s lives.
- 8) Lewis (2015) shows that there are over 75,000,000 people who speak French as a first language and over 87,000,000 people who use French as a second language; also, 53 countries use French as an official language.
- 9) People need to start saving water; in many cases, people are unaware of the impacts of having a water drought.
- 10) I have a blog about some serious, but important, aspects about college life; this blog will be a great reference for incoming college freshmen.
(The commas around “but important” are stylistically optional; it depends on whether you see this phrase as an interrupting element.)
- 11) Many undergraduate and graduate students consider studying abroad while in college; however, the reasons vary from person to person.
- 12) That is why it is important for cultural values to continue in Inupiat communities; they allow them to reflect on their cultural values and see their importance in the Inupiat community.

Advanced Practice

Revision:

For some people, biking is not just a way to get around or a recreational pastime, it is a way of life. People utilize bikes to feel healthier, both mentally and physically, and to help the environment. Bicycles unite people together since they have something in common. Bicycles are more than just a toy or exercise machine, they mean freedom from traffic jams, stress, and pollution. People do not have to rely on anyone or adjust to others' agenda to get anywhere or do anything. In addition, repairing a bicycle is less expensive than repairing a car. The bicycle has many benefits besides helping people stay in shape and reducing pollution. A bike can be very beneficial if you need to go somewhere and do not want to walk or take the bus. Furthermore, it can help you in times of need; for example, my bicycle has gotten me out of trouble more than once when I had to race to class on a deadline because I overslept. When I am unable to think, my bike transports me to another place, a place where "I will suddenly find myself marveling at the joy and exhilaration I feel when the breeze tickles my cheek and the pedaling suddenly becomes effortless" (Chen).

Note: The comma in the 4th sentence after the word "stress" is optional. The commas after the words "pastime" and "machine" in the 1st and 4th sentences, respectively, are tricky. One interpretation is that these commas should be semicolons because they seem to be separating two independent clauses. Another interpretation is that even though these clauses are grammatically independent, they are logically inseparable. (The clause "biking is not just a way to get around or a recreational pastime" is logically incomplete without "it is a way of life").