

PUNCTUATION AND SENTENCE STRUCTURE

ANSWER KEY

Insert commas in the paragraphs below wherever they are needed, and eliminate any misused or needless commas.

All incorrect commas have been removed, and added commas are in red.

Ellis Island New York has reopened for business, but now the customers are tourists not immigrants. This spot, which lies in New York Harbor, was the first American soil seen or touched by many of the nation's immigrants. Though other places also served as ports of entry for foreigners, none has the symbolic power of Ellis Island. Between its opening in 1892 and its closing in 1954, over 20 million people, about two thirds of all immigrants, were detained there before taking up their new lives in the United States. Ellis Island processed over 2000 newcomers a day when immigration was at its peak, between 1900 and 1920.

As the end of a long voyage and the introduction to the New World, Ellis Island must have left something to be desired. The "huddled masses," as the Statue of Liberty calls them, indeed, were huddled. New arrivals were herded about, kept standing in lines for hours or days, yelled at, and abused. Assigned numbers, they submitted their bodies to the poking and prodding of the silent, slightest sign of sickness, disability, or insanity. That test, having been passed, the immigrants faced interrogation by an official through an interpreter. Those with names deemed inconveniently long or difficult to pronounce often found themselves permanently labeled with abbreviations of their names or, with the examination humiliation and confusion, to take the last short boat ride to New York City. For many of them, and especially for their descendants, Ellis Island eventually became not a nightmare but the place where life began.

Insert semicolons in the paragraph below wherever they are needed. Eliminate any misused or needless semicolons, substituting other punctuation as appropriate.

The movie set, sounds, and actors capture the essence of horror films. The set was ideal: dark, deserted streets, trees dipping their branches over the sidewalks, mist hugging the ground and creeping up to meet the trees, looming shadow of unlighted, turreted houses. The sounds, too, were appropriate; especially terrifying was the hard, hollow sounds of footsteps echoing throughout the film. But the movie's best feature was its actors, all of them tall, pale, and thin to the point of emaciation, with one exception. **The actors** were dressed uniformly in gray and had gray hair; the exception was an actress who dressed only in black as if to set off her pale yellow, nearly white, long hair; the only color in the film. The glinting black eyes of another actor stole almost every scene; indeed, they were the source of all the film's mischief.

Revise the following paragraph to eliminate sentence fragments by combining them with an independent clause or rewriting them as independent clauses.

Becoming an adult can mean moving into the best years of life **or** moving downhill from the "high" of adolescence, **d**epending on one's outlook, one's experiences as a child, and one's view of adulthood. Beginning at about age twenty, people enter a new world. Released from the restrictions adults place on them, **t**hey are approaching their physical and mental peak. The world is ahead, **w**aiting to challenge and be challenged. If their experiences as children have made them secure with themselves and others, they may welcome the

challenges of adulthood. But those challenges can also seem frightening and overwhelming **if** childhood and adolescence have already presented too many battles to fight **and** too little security.

Parallelism Exercises

Example:

After waiting for hours, pacing the floor, and having bitten her nails to the quick, Sherry was frantic with worry.

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1. For exercise I prefer swimming and **jogging**.
2. After a week on a construction job, Leon felt not so much exhausted **but invigorated** by the physical labor.
3. To lose weight, cut down on what you eat, **eat fewer calories, and exercise regularly**.
4. All persons are entitled **to both equal educational and employment opportunities**.
5. Everyone was surprised at the election results: **the overwhelming approval of the bond issue; the defeat of the redistricting plan; and the city council's new faces**.
6. My father insisted that I learn how to **budget, create, and manage a bank account**.
7. **Her generosity, sympathy, and motivation** make her an excellent supervisor.
8. Pam hoped for either **getting** a loan **or a part-time job**.
9. Baby-sitting children, I have learned how to **keep them amused, keep myself patient, and master the art of being stern and fair**.
10. The shock of having one's apartment burglarized comes less from the missing possessions than **thinking** that a stranger has invaded one's privacy.