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**Level 3 – 1st February, 2020**

## Oxford comma missing from Brexit coin

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<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2002/200201-oxford-comma-brexit.html>

### Contents

The Article	2	Discussion (Student-Created Qs)	15
Warm-Ups	3	Language Work (Cloze)	16
Vocabulary	4	Spelling	17
Before Reading / Listening	5	Put The Text Back Together	18
Gap Fill	6	Put The Words In The Right Order	19
Match The Sentences And Listen	7	Circle The Correct Word	20
Listening Gap Fill	8	Insert The Vowels (a, e, i, o, u)	21
Comprehension Questions	9	Punctuate The Text And Add Capitals	22
Multiple Choice - Quiz	10	Put A Slash ( / ) Where The Spaces Are	23
Role Play	11	Free Writing	24
After Reading / Listening	12	Academic Writing	25
Student Survey	13	Homework	26
Discussion (20 Questions)	14	Answers	27

**Please try Levels 0, 1 and 2 (they are easier).**

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# THE ARTICLE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2002/200201-oxford-comma-brexite.html>

The United Kingdom officially left the European Union on January the 31st, three-and-a-half years after the British people voted to leave. The U.K. government issued a special coin to mark the occasion. However, the coin is at the centre of an argument about punctuation. The new 50-pence coin became available yesterday. It has the words: "Peace, prosperity and friendship with all nations" on its reverse side. A famous British writer, Sir Philip Pullman, is unhappy with the punctuation. He believes the phrase is incorrectly punctuated. Mr Pullman said there should be a comma after the word "prosperity". Such a comma is called an Oxford comma. He said the coin, "should be boycotted by all literate people".

The Oxford comma gets its name from the Oxford University Press, which makes common use of the punctuation mark. In the USA, it is called the serial comma. It is used before the final "and" or "or" in a written list of three or more items. Many people say there is no need for an Oxford comma in the phrase on the 50-pence coin because the meaning is very clear. Word expert Susie Dent said the Oxford comma is useful if it makes it easier to understand the writer's meaning. A U.K. citizen said the comma issue wasn't important. She tweeted: "It doesn't matter if there is a comma or not on the 50p coin. The most important thing is that there is peace, and prosperity, and friendship with all nations."

Sources: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/10835240/what-oxford-comma-examples-how-use/>  
<https://abcnews.go.com/International/commemorative-brexite-coin-sparks-oxford-comma-debate/story>  
<https://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/oxford-comma-does-the-brexite-50p-coin-have-a-grammatical-error-1-5081991>

# WARM-UPS

**1. PUNCTUATION:** Students walk around the class and talk to other students about punctuation. Change partners often and share your findings.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, talk about these topics or words from the article. What will the article say about them? What can you say about these words and your life?

United Kingdom / European Union / coin / punctuation / Oxford / comma / literate / serial / list / phrase / meaning / understand / peace / prosperity / friendship / nations

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. COMMA:** Students A **strongly** believe commas are very important; Students B **strongly** believe they are not. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**4. NATIONS:** How are these things between your country and other nations? How can your country do better with these things? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners often and share what you wrote.

	Now	Doing Better
Peace		
Prosperity		
Friendship		
Understanding		
Trade		
Peace		

**5. VOTE:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "vote". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**6. PUNCTUATION MARKS:** Rank these with your partner. Put the most important at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- comma
- question mark
- full stop (period)
- semi colon
- exclamation mark
- colon
- quotation mark
- parentheses

# VOCABULARY MATCHING

## Paragraph 1

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| 1. officially | a. A particular time or instance of an event.  |
| 2. voted      | b. Able to read and write.   |
| 3. mark       | c. In a formal and public way.   |
| 4. occasion   | d. Do something special for an important event time of the year.                             |
| 5. reverse    | e. Put an 'x' in a box or raised your hand to choose a new leader or make your choice known. |
| 6. boycotted  | f. The other side; the opposite side.  |
| 7. literate   | g. Refused to join in or cooperate with a policy or event.                                   |

## Paragraph 2

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| 8. serial      | h. Different connected items or names written or printed on paper one below the other. |
| 9. list        | i. Things that are part of collection, list or set.                                    |
| 10. items      | j. Someone who belongs to a country and has the passport of that country.              |
| 11. phrase     | k. Something that is part of many related things that come one after another.          |
| 12. expert     | l. Being successful with money and wealth; being rich.                                 |
| 13. citizen    | m. Someone who knows everything about something.                                       |
| 14. prosperity | n. A small group of words used together to mean something.                             |

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2002/200201-oxford-comma-brexite.html>

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- a. The British people voted to leave the EU two years ago. **T / F**
- b. The new coin has an argument in its centre. **T / F**
- c. The front of the new coin has a message about peace on its front. **T / F**
- d. A writer asked people who can read to boycott the coin. **T / F**
- e. The Oxford comma was named because of the Oxford University Press. **T / F**
- f. The Oxford comma is used with a written list of two or more items. **T / F**
- g. The article said the meaning of the phrase on the coin is unclear. **T / F**
- h. A woman tweeted that the comma did not matter. **T / F**

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** (The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                      |               |
|----------------------|---------------|
| <b>1. leave</b>      | a. widespread |
| <b>2. phrase</b>     | b. specialist |
| <b>3. prosperity</b> | c. educated   |
| <b>4. boycotted</b>  | d. last       |
| <b>5. literate</b>   | e. expression |
| <b>6. common</b>     | f. crucial    |
| <b>7. final</b>      | g. shunned    |
| <b>8. items</b>      | h. depart     |
| <b>9. expert</b>     | i. wealth     |
| <b>10. important</b> | j. things     |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- |   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1. The United Kingdom officially        | a. incorrectly punctuated  |
| 2. issued a special coin to             | b. by all literate people  |
| 3. Peace, prosperity and friendship     | c. or more items           |
| 4. He believes the phrase is            | d. the writer's meaning    |
| 5. the coin should be boycotted         | e. mark the occasion       |
| 6. which makes common use               | f. in the phrase           |
| 7. in a written list of three           | g. left the European Union |
| 8. there is no need for an Oxford comma | h. there is a comma        |
| 9. it makes it easier to understand     | i. with all nations        |
| 10. It doesn't matter if                | j. of the punctuation mark |

# GAP FILL

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2002/200201-oxford-comma-brexite.html>

The United Kingdom (1) \_\_\_\_\_ left the European Union on January the 31st, three-and-a-half years after the British people voted to leave. The U.K. government (2) \_\_\_\_\_ a special coin to mark the (3) \_\_\_\_\_. However, the coin is at the centre of an argument about punctuation. The new 50-pence coin became (4) \_\_\_\_\_ yesterday. It has the words: "Peace, prosperity and friendship with all nations" on its (5) \_\_\_\_\_ side. A famous British writer, Sir Philip Pullman, is unhappy with the (6) \_\_\_\_\_. He believes the phrase is (7) \_\_\_\_\_ punctuated. Mr Pullman said there should be a comma after the word "prosperity". Such a comma is called an Oxford comma. He said the coin, "should be boycotted by all (8) \_\_\_\_\_ people".

*punctuation*  
*issued*  
*literate*  
*available*  
*officially*  
*incorrectly*  
*reverse*  
*occasion*

The Oxford comma gets its name from the Oxford University Press, which makes (9) \_\_\_\_\_ use of the punctuation mark. In the USA, it is called the (10) \_\_\_\_\_ comma. It is used before the final "and" or "or" in a written list of three or more (11) \_\_\_\_\_. Many people say there is no need for an Oxford comma in the phrase on the 50-pence coin because the meaning is very (12) \_\_\_\_\_. Word (13) \_\_\_\_\_ Susie Dent said the Oxford comma is useful if it makes it easier to understand the writer's meaning. A U.K. (14) \_\_\_\_\_ said the comma issue wasn't important. She tweeted: "It doesn't (15) \_\_\_\_\_ if there is a comma or not on the 50p coin. The most important thing is that there is peace, and (16) \_\_\_\_\_, and friendship with all nations."

*clear*  
*citizen*  
*serial*  
*prosperity*  
*common*  
*expert*  
*matter*  
*items*

# LISTENING – Guess the answers. Listen to check.

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2002/200201-oxford-comma-brexit.html>

- 1) three-and-a-half years after the British people \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. voted to leaf
  - b. voted too leave
  - c. voted tool eave
  - d. voted to leave
- 2) The U.K. government issued a special coin to \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. make the occasion
  - b. mark the occasion
  - c. meek the occasion
  - d. mar the occasion
- 3) He believes the phrase is \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. incorrectly punctuate it
  - b. incorrectly punctuates it
  - c. incorrectly punctuated
  - d. incorrectly punctuation
- 4) Pullman said there should be a comma after the \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. world prosperity
  - b. world prosper city
  - c. word pros parity
  - d. word prosperity
- 5) He said the coin should be boycotted by \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. all illiterate people
  - b. all literate people
  - c. all literation people
  - d. all ill iterate people
- 6) the Oxford University Press, which makes common use of \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. the punctuation make
  - b. the punctuation mark
  - c. the punctuation mar
  - d. the punctuation meek
- 7) It is used before the final "and" or "or" in a written list of three \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. or more items
  - b. armour item
  - c. or more itemise
  - d. amour items
- 8) useful if it makes it easier to understand \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. the writer's mean in
  - b. the writer is meaning
  - c. then writer's meaning
  - d. the writer's meaning
- 9) A U.K. citizen said the comma \_\_\_\_\_ important
  - a. reissue wasn't
  - b. issue wasn't
  - c. tissue wasn't
  - d. wish you wasn't
- 10) It doesn't matter if there is a \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. comma or not
  - b. comma or no
  - c. comma or knot
  - d. comma or nought

# LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2002/200201-oxford-comma-brexit.html>

The United Kingdom (1) \_\_\_\_\_ European Union on January the 31st, three-and-a-half years after the British people voted to leave. The U.K. government issued a special coin to (2) \_\_\_\_\_. However, the coin is at the centre of an argument about punctuation. The new 50-pence coin became available yesterday. It has the words: "Peace, prosperity and friendship with all nations" on (3) \_\_\_\_\_. A famous British writer, Sir Philip Pullman, is unhappy with the punctuation. He believes (4) \_\_\_\_\_ incorrectly punctuated. Mr Pullman said there should be (5) \_\_\_\_\_ the word "prosperity". Such a comma is called an Oxford comma. He said the coin, "should be boycotted (6) \_\_\_\_\_ people".

The Oxford comma (7) \_\_\_\_\_ from the Oxford University Press, which makes (8) \_\_\_\_\_ the punctuation mark. In the USA, it is called the serial comma. It is used before the final "and" or "or" in a written (9) \_\_\_\_\_ or more items. Many people say there is no need for an Oxford comma in the phrase on the 50-pence coin because the meaning (10) \_\_\_\_\_. Word expert Susie Dent said the Oxford comma is useful if it (11) \_\_\_\_\_ to understand the writer's meaning. A U.K. citizen said the comma issue wasn't important. She tweeted: "It doesn't matter if there is a comma (12) \_\_\_\_\_ the 50p coin. The most important thing is that there is peace, and prosperity, and friendship with all nations."



# COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2002/200201-oxford-comma-brexite.html>

1. How long ago did the article say British people voted to leave the EU?
2. What denomination is the coin to mark the UK leaving the EU?
3. What word is on the coin besides peace and prosperity?
4. What is the job of Sir Phillip Pullman?
5. Who did Sir Phillip Pullman say should boycott the new coin?
6. Where does the Oxford comma originate?
7. What is the Oxford comma called in the USA?
8. Who is Susie Dent?
9. How important did a U.K. citizen say the Oxford comma was?
10. What did the U.K. citizen say didn't matter?

# MULTIPLE CHOICE - QUIZ

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2002/200201-oxford-comma-brexit.html>

- 1) How long ago did the article say British people voted to leave the EU?
  - a) two-and-a-half years ago
  - b) four years ago
  - c) three-and-a-half years ago
  - d) eighteen months ago
- 2) What denomination is the coin to mark the UK leaving the EU?
  - a) fifty pence
  - b) one pound
  - c) ten pence
  - d) five pounds
- 3) What word is on the coin besides peace and prosperity?
  - a) Europe
  - b) friendship
  - c) fraternity
  - d) happiness
- 4) What is the job of Sir Phillip Pullman?
  - a) English teacher
  - b) lexicographer
  - c) coin designer
  - d) writer
- 5) Who did Sir Phillip Pullman say should boycott the new coin?
  - a) all British people
  - b) all Europeans
  - c) all literate people
  - d) anyone who cannot read
- 6) Where does the Oxford comma originate?
  - a) Oxford Union
  - b) Oxford University Press
  - c) Oxford Punctuation Society
  - d) the Oxford Comma Club
- 7) What is the Oxford comma called in the USA?
  - a) the list divider
  - b) Bob
  - c) the New York comma
  - d) the serial comma
- 8) Who is Susie Dent?
  - a) a comma specialist
  - b) a word expert
  - c) an English teacher
  - d) a blogger
- 9) How important did a U.K. citizen say the Oxford comma was?
  - a) fairly important
  - b) not important
  - c) of utmost importance
  - d) critically important
- 10) What did the U.K. citizen say didn't matter?
  - a) if there is a comma or not on the coin
  - b) the shape and size of the coin
  - c) peace, prosperity and friendship
  - d) if the UK was in the EU

# ROLE PLAY

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2002/200201-oxford-comma-brexit.html>

## **Role A – Comma**

You think a comma is the most important punctuation mark. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their marks. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): parentheses, question mark or full stop.

## **Role B – Parentheses**

You think parentheses is the most important punctuation mark. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their marks. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): comma, question mark or full stop.

## **Role C – Question Mark**

You think a question mark is the most important punctuation mark. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their marks. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): parentheses, comma or full stop.

## **Role D – Full Stop (Period)**

You think a full stop is the most important punctuation mark. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their marks. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): parentheses, question mark or comma.

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2002/200201-oxford-comma-brexit.html>

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'comma' and 'punctuation'.

<b>comma</b>	<b>punctuation</b>
--------------	--------------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• left</li><li>• special</li><li>• centre</li><li>• unhappy</li><li>• incorrectly</li><li>• people</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• common</li><li>• USA</li><li>• need</li><li>• easier</li><li>• matter</li><li>• nations</li></ul>
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# PUNCTUATION SURVEY

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2002/200201-oxford-comma-brexite.html>

Write five GOOD questions about punctuation in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

# PUNCTUATION DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

1. What did you think when you read the headline?
2. What images are in your mind when you hear the word 'comma'?
3. What do you know about Brexit?
4. Will the UK be more successful outside of the EU?
5. What special coins has your government issued?
6. Will coins soon be a thing of the past?
7. Do you think the phrase on the coin needs a comma?
8. Why do people get excited about commas?
9. What is punctuation like in your language?
10. What would change if the word 'prosperity' had a comma after it?

*Oxford comma missing from Brexit coin – 1st February, 2020*  
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# PUNCTUATION DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

11. Did you like reading this article? Why/not?
12. What do you think of when you hear the word 'punctuation'?
13. What do you think of your country's coins
14. What do you think about what you read?
15. Why do we use commas in English?
16. What punctuation marks are difficult to use?
17. What would happen if we didn't use punctuation?
18. When will there be peace, prosperity and friendship between nations?
19. What did your teachers teach you about punctuation?
20. What questions would you like to ask the British writer?

# DISCUSSION (Write your own questions)

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_

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# DISCUSSION (Write your own questions)

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_

# LANGUAGE - CLOZE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2002/200201-oxford-comma-brexit.html>

The United Kingdom (1) \_\_\_\_\_ left the European Union on January the 31st, three-and-a-half years after the British people (2) \_\_\_\_\_ to leave. The U.K. government issued a special coin to (3) \_\_\_\_\_ the occasion. However, the coin is at the centre of an argument about punctuation. The new 50-pence coin became available yesterday. It has the words: "Peace, prosperity and friendship with all nations" on its (4) \_\_\_\_\_ side. A famous British writer, Sir Philip Pullman, is unhappy with the punctuation. He believes the phrase is incorrectly (5) \_\_\_\_\_. Mr Pullman said there should be a comma after the word "prosperity". Such a comma is called an Oxford comma. He said the coin, "should be boycotted by (6) \_\_\_\_\_ literate people".

The Oxford comma gets its name from the Oxford University Press, which makes common (7) \_\_\_\_\_ of the punctuation mark. In the USA, it is called the serial comma. It is used before the final "and" or "or" in a written (8) \_\_\_\_\_ of three or more items. Many people say there is no need for an Oxford comma in the phrase on the 50-pence coin because the meaning is very (9) \_\_\_\_\_. Word expert Susie Dent said the Oxford comma is useful if it makes it easier to understand the writer's (10) \_\_\_\_\_. A U.K. citizen said the comma issue wasn't important. She tweeted: "It doesn't matter if there is a comma or (11) \_\_\_\_\_ on the 50p coin. The most important (12) \_\_\_\_\_ is that there is peace, and prosperity, and friendship with all nations."

## Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- |     |               |                |                 |                |
|-----|---------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1.  | (a) officer   | (b) official   | (c) officially  | (d) officials  |
| 2.  | (a) voted     | (b) election   | (c) choose      | (d) decision   |
| 3.  | (a) mark      | (b) bark       | (c) park        | (d) dark       |
| 4.  | (a) reverse   | (b) reserve    | (c) sever       | (d) severe     |
| 5.  | (a) punctuate | (b) punctuated | (c) punctuation | (d) punctuates |
| 6.  | (a) entire    | (b) every      | (c) whole       | (d) all        |
| 7.  | (a) writing   | (b) spelling   | (c) use         | (d) reading    |
| 8.  | (a) lust      | (b) lost       | (c) last        | (d) list       |
| 9.  | (a) clear     | (b) clarity    | (c) clearly     | (d) clears     |
| 10. | (a) meaning   | (b) mean       | (c) meanie      | (d) meant      |
| 11. | (a) no        | (b) not        | (c) now         | (d) never      |
| 12. | (a) think     | (b) thins      | (c) thing       | (d) then       |



# SPELLING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2002/200201-oxford-comma-brexit.html>

## Paragraph 1

1. lifyifcloa left the European Union
2. eisuds a special coin
3. at the centre of an agnuremt about punctuation
4. Peace, proptriyes and friendship
5. incorrectly catpeuudnt
6. boycotted by all ilterat people

## Paragraph 2

7. makes omconm use of the punctuation mark
8. a written list of three or more mtesi
9. no need for an Oxford comma in the hsrape
10. Word xperte Susie Dent
11. A U.K. zticine
12. friendship with all nonisat

# PUT THE TEXT BACK TOGETHER

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2002/200201-oxford-comma-brexit.html>

**Number these lines in the correct order.**

- ( ) understand the writer's meaning. A U.K. citizen said the comma issue wasn't important. She tweeted:
- ( ) available yesterday. It has the words: "Peace, prosperity and friendship with all nations" on its reverse
- ( ) punctuated. Mr Pullman said there should be a comma after the word "prosperity". Such a comma is called
- ( ) thing is that there is peace, and prosperity, and friendship with all nations."
- ( ) occasion. However, the coin is at the centre of an argument about punctuation. The new 50-pence coin became
- ( ) or more items. Many people say there is no need for an Oxford comma in the phrase on the 50-pence coin because the meaning
- ( ) after the British people voted to leave. The U.K. government issued a special coin to mark the
- ( ) an Oxford comma. He said the coin, "should be boycotted by all literate people".
- ( ) The Oxford comma gets its name from the Oxford University Press, which makes common use of the punctuation
- ( ) is very clear. Word expert Susie Dent said the Oxford comma is useful if it makes it easier to
- ( **1** ) The United Kingdom officially left the European Union on January the 31st, three-and-a-half years
- ( ) mark. In the USA, it is called the serial comma. It is used before the final "and" or "or" in a written list of three
- ( ) "It doesn't matter if there is a comma or not on the 50p coin. The most important
- ( ) side. A famous British writer, Sir Philip Pullman, is unhappy with the punctuation. He believes the phrase is incorrectly

# PUT THE WORDS IN THE RIGHT ORDER

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2002/200201-oxford-comma-brexit.html>

1. Issued the occasion . mark a coin special to
2. centre an argument At the punctuation . about of
3. incorrectly phrase He the is believes punctuated .
4. comma should a word . be There the after
5. should the said boycotted . He be coin
6. before "and" . used It the final is
7. is need Oxford no for an There comma .
8. if easier it it makes understand . Useful to
9. matter comma . It doesn't is there if a
10. most peace . thing there is important The is

# CIRCLE THE CORRECT WORD (20 PAIRS)

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2002/200201-oxford-comma-brexite.html>

The United Kingdom *officially* / *official* left the European Union on January the 31st, three-and-a-half years *after* / *later* the British people voted to leave. The U.K. government issued a *specially* / *special* coin to mark the occasion. However, the coin is *on* / *at* the centre of an argument about punctuation. The new 50-pence coin became *available* / *availability* yesterday. It has the words: "Peace, prosperity and friendship with *every* / *all* nations" on its reverse *side* / *back*. A famous British writer, Sir Philip Pullman, is unhappy with the punctuation. He believes the *phase* / *phrase* is incorrectly punctuated. Mr Pullman said there should be a comma after the word "prosperity". *Such* / *Name* a comma is called an Oxford comma. He said the coin, "should *have* / *be* boycotted by all literate people".

The Oxford comma *calls* / *gets* its name from the Oxford University Press, which makes *common* / *commonly* use of the punctuation mark. In the USA, it is called the *cereal* / *serial* comma. It is used before the final "and" or "*or*" / "*and*" in a written list of three or *more* / *most* items. Many people say there is no need for an Oxford comma in the phrase on the 50-pence coin because the meaning is very *clearly* / *clear*. Word expert Susie Dent said the Oxford comma is *useless* / *useful* if it makes it easier to understand the writer's meaning. A U.K. citizen said the comma *issue* / *tissue* wasn't important. She tweeted: "It doesn't matter if there is a comma or *never* / *not* on the 50p coin. The most important *thing* / *think* is that there is peace, and prosperity, and friendship with all nations."

**Talk about the connection between each pair of words in italics, and why the correct word is correct.**

# INSERT THE VOWELS (a, e, i, o, u)

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2002/200201-oxford-comma-brexit.html>

T h\_ U n\_t\_d K\_n g d\_m \_f f\_c\_\_ l l y l\_f t t h\_  
E\_r\_p\_\_ n U n\_\_ n \_n J\_n\_\_ r y t h\_ 3 1 s t, t h r\_\_  
-\_n d -\_ h\_l f y\_\_ r s \_f t\_r t h\_ B r\_t\_s h p\_\_ p l\_  
v\_t\_d t\_ l\_\_ v\_. T h\_ U . K . g\_v\_r n m\_n t \_s s\_\_ d  
\_ s p\_c\_\_ l c\_\_ n t\_ m\_r k t h\_ c\_c\_s\_\_ n . H\_w\_v\_r  
, t h\_ c\_\_ n \_s \_t t h\_ c\_n t\_r\_ \_f \_n \_r g\_m\_n t  
\_b\_\_ t p\_n c t\_\_ t\_\_ n . T h\_ n\_w 5 0 - p\_n c\_ c\_\_ n  
b\_c\_m\_ \_v\_\_ l\_b l\_ y\_s t\_r d\_y . I t h\_s t h\_ w\_r d s :  
" P\_\_ c\_, p\_r\_s p\_r\_t y \_n d f\_r\_\_ n d s h\_p w\_t h \_l l  
n\_t\_\_ n s " \_n \_t s r\_v\_r s\_ s\_d . A f\_m\_\_ s B r\_t\_s  
h w\_r\_t\_r, S\_r P\_h\_l\_p P\_l l m\_n, \_s \_n h\_p p y  
w\_t h t h\_ p\_n c t\_\_ t\_\_ n . H\_ b\_l\_\_ v\_s t h\_ p h  
r\_s\_ \_s \_n c\_r\_r\_c t\_l y p\_n c t\_\_ t\_d . M\_r P\_l l m\_n  
s\_\_ d t h\_r\_ s h\_\_ l d b\_ \_ c\_m m\_ \_f t\_r t h\_ w\_r d  
" p\_r\_s p\_r\_t y " . S\_c h \_ c\_m m\_ \_s c\_l l\_d \_n O x  
f\_r d c\_m m\_ . H\_ s\_\_ d t h\_ c\_\_ n, " s h\_\_ l d b\_  
b\_y c\_t t\_d b y \_l l l\_t\_r\_t\_ p\_\_ p l\_ " .

T h\_ O x f\_r d c\_m m\_ g\_t s \_t s n\_m\_ f\_r m t h\_ O  
x f\_r d U n\_v\_r s\_t y P\_r\_s s, w h\_c h m\_k\_s c\_m  
m\_n \_s\_ \_f t h\_ p\_n c t\_\_ t\_\_ n m\_r k . I n t h\_ U S  
A, \_t \_s c\_l l\_d t h\_ s\_r\_\_ l c\_m m\_ . I t \_s \_s\_d  
b\_f\_r\_ t h\_ f\_n\_l " \_n d " \_r " \_r " \_n \_ w\_r t t\_n l\_s  
t \_f t h r\_\_ \_r m\_r\_ \_t\_m s . M\_n y p\_\_ p l\_ s\_y t  
h\_r\_ \_s n\_ n\_\_ d f\_r \_n O x f\_r d c\_m m\_ \_n t h\_ p  
h\_r\_s\_ \_n t h\_ 5 0 - p\_n c\_ c\_\_ n b\_c\_\_ s\_ t h\_ m\_\_  
n\_n g \_s v\_r y c\_l\_\_ r . W\_r d \_x p\_r t S\_s\_\_ D\_n t  
s\_\_ d t h\_ O x f\_r d c\_m m\_ \_s \_s\_f\_l \_f\_t m\_k\_s \_t  
\_\_ s\_\_ r \_t\_ \_n d\_r s\_t\_n d t h\_ w\_r\_t\_r 's m\_\_ n\_n g .  
A U . K . c\_t\_z\_n s\_\_ d t h\_ c\_m m\_ \_s s\_\_ w\_s n 't  
\_m p\_r t\_n t . S h\_ t w\_\_ t\_d : " I t d\_\_ s n 't m\_t  
t\_r \_f t h\_r\_ \_s \_ c\_m m\_ \_r n\_t \_n t h\_ 5 0 p\_c\_\_  
n . T h\_ m\_s t \_m p\_r t\_n t t h\_n g \_s t h\_t t h\_r\_  
\_s p\_\_ c\_, \_n d p\_r\_s p\_r\_t y, \_n d f\_r\_\_ n d s h\_p  
w\_t h \_l l n\_t\_\_ n s . "

# PUNCTUATE THE TEXT AND ADD CAPITALS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2002/200201-oxford-comma-brexite.html>

the united kingdom officially left the european union on january the 31st threeandahalf years after the british people voted to leave the uk government issued a special coin to mark the occasion however the coin is at the centre of an argument about punctuation the new 50pence coin became available yesterday it has the words peace prosperity and friendship with all nations on its reverse side a famous british writer sir philip pullman is unhappy with the punctuation he believes the phrase is incorrectly punctuated mr pullman said there should be a comma after the word prosperity such a comma is called an oxford comma he said the coin should be boycotted by all literate people

the oxford comma gets its name from the oxford university press which makes common use of the punctuation mark in the usa it is called the serial comma it is used before the final and or or in a written list of three or more items many people say there is no need for an oxford comma in the phrase on the 50pence coin because the meaning is very clear word expert susie dent said the oxford comma is useful if it makes it easier to understand the writers meaning a uk citizen said the comma issue wasnt important she tweeted it doesnt matter if there is a comma or not on the 50p coin the most important thing is that there is peace and prosperity and friendship with all nations

# PUT A SLASH ( / ) WHERE THE SPACES ARE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2020/202021-oxford-comma-brexite.html>

The United Kingdom officially left the European Union on January the 31st, three-and-a-half years after the British people voted to leave. The U.K. government issued a special coin to mark the occasion. However, the coin is at the centre of an argument about punctuation. The new 50-pence coin became available yesterday. It has the words: "Peace, prosperity and friendship with all nations" on its reverse side. A famous British writer, Sir Philip Pullman, is unhappy with the punctuation. He believes the phrase is incorrectly punctuated. Mr Pullman said there should be a comma after the word "prosperity". Such a comma is called an Oxford comma. He said the coin, "should be boycotted by all literate people". The Oxford comma gets its name from the Oxford University Press, which makes common use of the punctuation mark. In the USA, it is called the serial comma. It is used before the final "and" or "or" in a written list of three or more items. Many people say there is no need for an Oxford comma in the phrase on the 50-pence coin because the meaning is very clear. Word expert Susie Dent said the Oxford comma is useful if it makes it easier to understand the writer's meaning. A U.K. citizen said the comma issue wasn't important. She tweeted: "It doesn't matter if there is a comma or not on the 50p coin. The most important thing is that there is peace, and prosperity, and friendship with all nations."







# HOMEWORK

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find out more about this news story. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. PUNCTUATION:** Make a poster about punctuation. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. THE COMMA:** Write a magazine article about everyone having to use the Oxford comma. Include imaginary interviews with people who are for and against it.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?** Write a newspaper article about the next stage in this news story. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Give each other feedback on your articles.

**6. LETTER:** Write a letter to an expert on punctuation. Ask him/her three questions about it. Give him/her three of your ideas on the comma. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## VOCABULARY (p.4)

1. c    2. e    3. d    4. a    5. f    6. g    7. b  
8. k    9. h    10. i    11. n    12. m    13. j    14. l

## TRUE / FALSE (p.5)

- a F    b F    c F    d T    e T    f F    g F    h T

## SYNONYM MATCH (p.5)

1. h	2. e	3. i	4. g	5. c
6. a	7. d	8. j	9. b	10. f

## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS (p.9)

1. Three-and-a-half years ago
2. Fifty pence
3. Friendship
4. He's a writer
5. All literate people
6. Oxford University Press
7. The serial comma
8. A word expert
9. Not important
10. If there is a comma or not on the 50p

## WORDS IN THE RIGHT ORDER (p.20)

1. Issued a special coin to mark the occasion.
2. At the centre of an argument about punctuation.
3. He believes the phrase is incorrectly punctuated.
4. There should be a comma after the word.
5. He said the coin should be boycotted.
6. It is used before the final "and".
7. There is no need for an Oxford comma.
8. Useful if it makes it easier to understand.
9. It doesn't matter if there is a comma.
10. The most important thing is there is peace.

## MULTIPLE CHOICE - QUIZ (p.10)

1. c    2. a    3. b    4. d    5. c    6. b    7. d    8. b    9. b    10. a

## ALL OTHER EXERCISES

Please check for yourself by looking at the Article on page 2.  
(It's good for your English ;-)