THE COMMAS STRATEGIES PROGRAM

INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

The Commas Strategies Program is an interactive hypermedia program designed to teach six major comma rules. These rules and the associated information covered in the program have been chosen based on the demands of secondary and post-secondary educational settings as well as state competency tests and college entrance exams. Within the program, there is a lesson associated with each rule. The six major comma rules and the corresponding lesson in the program are as follows.

- Commas are used to separate introductory words and phrases from the rest of the sentence. (Rule #1 & Lesson 1)
- Commas are used to separate items in a series. (Rule #2 & Lesson 2)
- Commas are used to separate independent clauses in a compound sentence. (Rule #3 & Lesson 3)
- Commas are used to separate appositives and adjective clauses from the rest of the sentence. (Rule #4 & Lesson 4)
- Commas are used to separate quotations from the rest of the sentence. (Rule #5 & Lesson 5)
- Commas are used in addresses, dates, and salutations. (Rule #6 & Lesson 6)

Within each lesson, one rule is introduced, and concepts related to the rule are explained. As students work through the lessons, they cumulatively learn a mnemonic device (or memory tool) to help them remember all the rules. The mnemonic poem that they learn for this purpose is as follows:

Commas like to introduce.
Commas like to hang in groups.
Commas like to make a match.
Commas like to take out trash.
Commas like to be in conversations.
Commas like to be in addresses, dates, and salutations.

In addition to the six lessons described above, the program contains review lessons. The review lessons are interspersed between the six lessons and help the students to integrate the information that they just learned in a new lesson with information that they learned in previous lessons. The sequence of the six commas lessons and the review lessons is as follows:

- Lesson 1 (Rule #1)
- Lesson 2 (Rule #2)
  - Review A (Rules #1 & 2 integrated)
- Lesson 3 (Rule #3)
  - Review B (Rules #1, 2, & 3 integrated)
- Lesson 4 (Rule #4)
  - Review C (Rules #1, 2, 3 & 4 integrated)
- Lesson 5 (Rule #5)
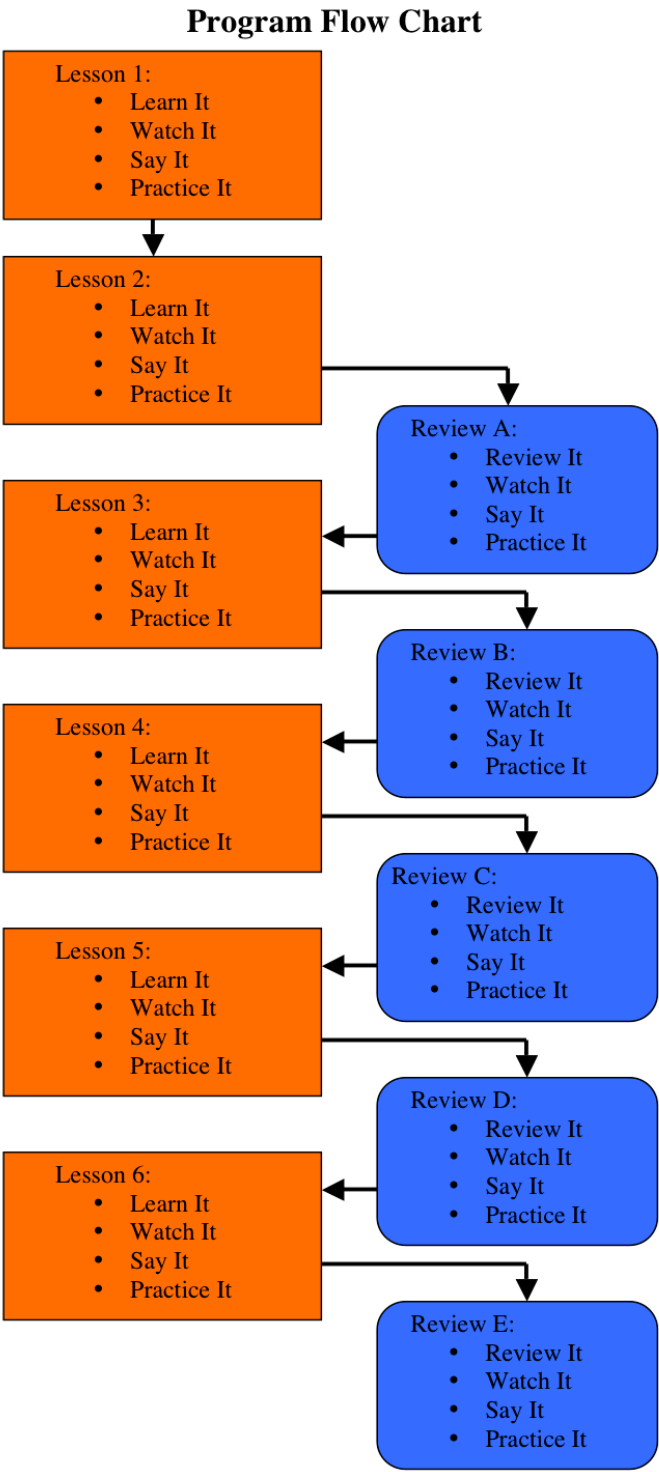 - Review D (Rules #1, 2, 3, 4, & 5 integrated)

• Lesson 6 (Rule #6)
  • Review E (Rules #1, 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6 integrated)

You will see tabs for each of the lessons and the reviews at the bottom of the screen, as shown in Figure 1. When a student clicks on one of these tabs, the lesson (or review) will begin. However, a given tab is not operational unless a student has progressed through the previous lessons and reviews successfully. Thus, students may click on tabs for previous lessons if they wish to review something, but they cannot move forward to a new lesson (or review) until they have completed preceding lessons and reviews successfully. See Figure 2 for a flow chart of the program and the lesson structure.

Figure 1. Lesson and Review Tabs

Figure 2

Program Flow Chart

Lesson 1:
- Learn It
- Watch It
- Say It
- Practice It

Lesson 2:
- Learn It
- Watch It
- Say It
- Practice It

Review A:
- Review It
- Watch It
- Say It
- Practice It

Lesson 3:
- Learn It
- Watch It
- Say It
- Practice It

Review B:
- Review It
- Watch It
- Say It
- Practice It

Lesson 4:
- Learn It
- Watch It
- Say It
- Practice It

Review C:
- Review It
- Watch It
- Say It
- Practice It

Lesson 5:
- Learn It
- Watch It
- Say It
- Practice It

Review D:
- Review It
- Watch It
- Say It
- Practice It

Lesson 6:
- Learn It
- Watch It
- Say It
- Practice It

Review E:
- Review It
- Watch It
- Say It
- Practice It

USING THE PROGRAM

The Commas Program has been designed so that navigation through the materials is intuitive. That is, students should be able to use the program with little instruction. Sometimes, the program advances from screen to screen automatically. On many of the screens, there is a "Forward" arrow button and a "Back" arrow button (see Figure 3). When the student has responded or when the narrator has completed the narration, the "Forward" arrow button will start flashing. This button is operational once it starts flashing. The student can use the "Back" arrow button to move back to a previous screen.

Figure 3. The Forward and Back Buttons

In addition, there is a "Quit" button on every screen (see Figure 4). Each time the student wishes to end work on the program, the student is to click the "Quit" button. The program will give the student a pass code, which needs to be entered the next time the student uses the program so that the student can start on the same screen again. Students should record the pass code on their Pass Code Logs. (See the sections on "Creating Folders" and "Pass Codes" below for more information.) If students fail to record a pass code, you will be able to give them a pass code from Pass Code List A to get them to the beginning of a section. Pass codes from this list will not get them back to the exact screen that they left when they quit the program, however.

Figure 4. The Quit Button

Finally, on screens where students need to insert commas into a sentence, they can click on the "Hear It" button to hear the narrator read the sentence to them (see Figure 5). Students who have difficulty reading should be encouraged to use this function each time they encounter a new sentence. Some teachers have reported that students' reading skills have improved after they have used the "Hear It" button throughout the program.
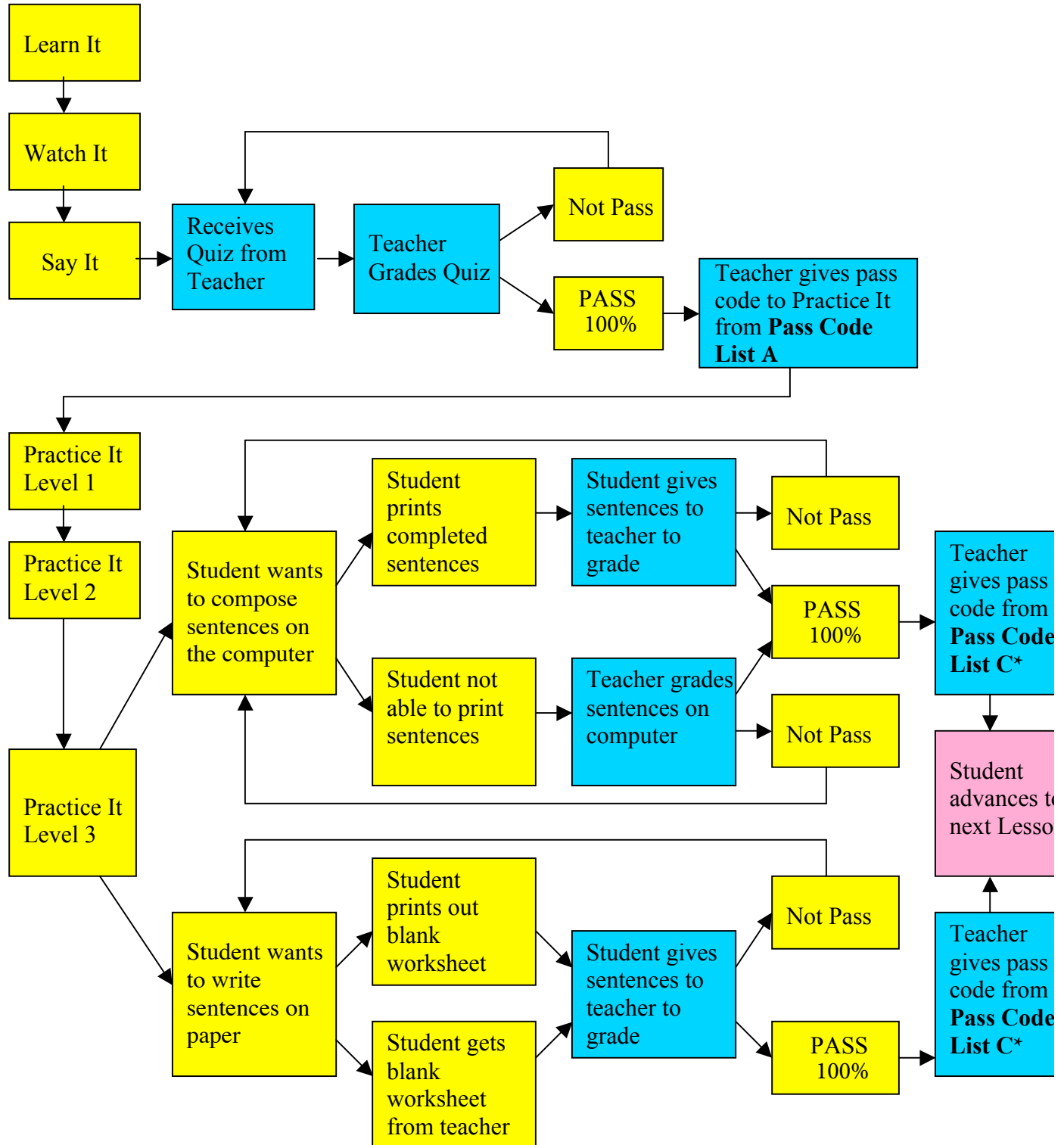
Figure 5. The Hear It Button

LESSON STRUCTURE

Each lesson has four parts. They are called "Learn It," "Watch It," "Say It," and "Practice It." On many of the screens, four "buttons" correspond to these four parts of the lesson as shown in Figure 6. If a student clicks on one of these buttons, the corresponding part of the lesson will begin. However, a given button is not operational unless a student has progressed through the previous parts of the lesson successfully. Thus, students may click on buttons for previous parts of a lesson if they wish to review something, but they cannot move forward to a new part until they have completed the preceding parts.

Figure 6. The Lesson Section Buttons

The purpose of each part of a lesson, the activities that students complete in each part, the printed materials associated with each part, and your role as the instructor in each part are described below. See Figure 7 for a flow chart of the lesson structure, student activities, and instructor responsibilities to which you can refer as you read the descriptions of the parts of each lesson below.

Figure 7   **Lesson Flow Chart**

```
Learn It
   ↓
Watch It
   ↓
Say It  →  Receives Quiz from Teacher  →  Teacher Grades Quiz  →  Not Pass
                                                               →  PASS 100%  →  Teacher gives pass code to Practice It from Pass Code List A
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Practice It Level 1
   ↓
Practice It Level 2
   ↓
Practice It Level 3
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Student wants to compose sentences on the computer
→ Student prints completed sentences → Student gives sentences to teacher to grade → Not Pass / PASS 100%
→ Student not able to print sentences → Teacher grades sentences on computer → Not Pass

Teacher gives pass code from **Pass Code List C***

Student advances to next Lesson

Student wants to write sentences on paper
→ Student prints out blank worksheet → Student gives sentences to teacher to grade → Not Pass / PASS 100%
→ Student gets blank worksheet from teacher

Teacher gives pass code from **Pass Code List C***

*If student is still logged in, use Pass Code List C. If student is logged off, use Pass Code List A.

Learn It Section

Purpose and activities. A new comma rule is introduced and explained in the Learn It Section. Concepts related to the rule are defined, and examples are provided. For example, the concept "compound sentence" is defined, and then examples of compound sentences are shown. Next, the student responds to three mini-practice activities to show understanding of the concept. For example, the student might have to indicate whether a sentence is or is not a compound sentence. Then the next concept related to the rule is introduced, examples are shown, and more mini-practice activities are provided. Students receive feedback after each response. If they answer incorrectly, they are required to answer again until they answer correctly. Then another concept is introduced, and so forth. Students are introduced to exceptions to the rule in a similar way. Finally, they learn some steps that they are to use as they apply the rule.

Printed materials. Students can print out notes associated with the rule at a couple of points during the Learn It Section if their computers are connected to a printer. If they will not have access to a printer, you can print out the notes, make copies of them before class, and distribute them to the students before they start work on the lesson. To print out the notes yourself, go to the folder labeled "Printed Materials," click on the "Lessons" folder, and click on the folder labeled with the lesson name (e.g., "Lesson 1.") Herein, you will see a notes document for the given lesson. Print it as you would print any other document on your computer. Then make the needed number of copies.

Your role. As students work through the Learn It Section, your role is to supervise their use of the program and to ensure that they are responding appropriately. Circulate around the room, and help students who need assistance. Provide corrective feedback if students are not using the program or computer correctly.

Watch It Section

Purpose and activities. The purpose of the Watch It Section is to provide students with a demonstration of how a strategic thinker uses a given comma rule so that they understand how they are to think as they use the rule themselves. During this section, then, students watch as an actor models how to use the steps for the new comma rule while thinking aloud. The student actor shows how to say the commas poem and how to apply the steps for the targeted rule to each of several sentences in turn.

Printed materials. There are no printed materials associated with this part.

Your role. Your role is to circulate and provide help and feedback as needed to ensure that students are progressing through the program and using the computer appropriately as they work through the Watch It Section.

Say It Section

Purpose. The purpose of the Say It Section is to ensure that students learn the key information associated with a given rule to such a level that they can instruct themselves

on what to do and apply the information as they write. Thus, during this section, students practice with the information that was presented in the Learn It and Watch It Sections through a variety of activities. Specifically, they learn to say the new line of the poem, and they respond to questions about the information they have learned. They also practice saying the steps that they are to follow to use the new comma rule. They respond to game-like activities that require them to practice using the information associated with the rule.

Since they must know all the information associated with a given rule at a mastery level in order to be able to use the rule correctly, students can repeat the activities in this part of the lesson as many times as needed to ensure that they learn the information. When they feel they are ready, they take a handwritten quiz over the information in the lesson. They must answer 100% of the questions on the quiz correctly in order to be allowed to proceed to the Practice It Section.

Printed materials. Students can print out the quiz if their computers are connected to a printer. If they will not have access to a printer, you can print out the quiz, make copies of it before class begins, and distribute the quiz to them when they are ready for it. To print out the quiz yourself, go to the folder labeled "Printable Materials," and click on the folder labeled "Lessons." Here, inside a folder labeled with the lesson's name, you will see a quiz document for the lesson. Print it as you would print any other document on your computer. Then make the needed number of copies.

Your role. Your role in this part of the lesson is to ensure that students are ready to take the quiz and that they have access to the quiz. After they have taken the quiz, your job is to score the quiz and instruct the student on what to do next. If the student earns a score of 100% correct, she should progress to the Practice It Section. You will give the student a pass code from Pass Code List B that allows the student to proceed to that section. (See the "Pass Codes" section below.) If the student does not earn a score of 100% correct, you will instruct the student to repeat the Say It Section. Emphasize that the student really needs to pay attention to the information and memorize it in preparation for another quiz.

You will find answer keys to the quizzes in the folder labeled "Printable Materials." Click on the folder labeled "Answer Keys" and then on the folder labeled "Quiz Answer Keys." Here, you will see an answer key for each lesson quiz. Print it as you would print any other document on your computer.

Keep in mind that during the initial lessons, students will not understand the level of learning that is required of them in this part of the lesson. To prepare students for how well they need to know the information, you might quickly give to each student who asks for the written quiz a brief oral quiz consisting of a couple of questions. If the student does not know the answers, instruct the student to go back and really learn the information in the Say It Section before you give the quiz to the student.

Providing feedback. Show the student the quiz, and describe which items were answered correctly. When the student has made errors on items related to strategy steps, point out steps that were omitted or named out of sequence. Help the student figure out a way to remember that information. Finally, ask the student to recite the steps, mnemonic device, or information silently or to another student five times. If appropriate, have the student suggest a way to learn similar items in the future.

Practice It Section

Purpose. The purpose of the Practice It Section is to give students numerous opportunities to practice applying the new comma rule and to ensure that they meet mastery criteria. In this section, students insert commas into sentences that are presented to them on the computer screen, or they write their own sentences to demonstrate that they can apply the targeted rule. The sentences that are presented to them on the screen often require the insertion of several commas which represent all variations of the rule.

There are three levels of Practice It activities. In *Level 1*, students work through several sets of five sentences each. They must insert commas into each sentence. Students receive feedback from the narrator after they insert commas into each sentence. They must insert all the commas correctly in two sets of sentences *in a row* in order to reach mastery at this level. The computer program automatically instructs the student to complete another set of sentences if the student has not met mastery or automatically proceeds to the Level 2 activities when a student reaches mastery.

Level 2 activities also involve several sets of five sentences each. Four of the sentences in each set require commas to be inserted. One of the sentences does not need commas. Thus, through these sets, students show that they can discriminate when not to use commas as well as when to use them. Students receive feedback from the narrator after completing their work on each sentence. Again, students must insert all the commas correctly into two sets of sentences *in a row* in order to reach mastery at this level. Also again, the computer program automatically instructs the student to complete another set of sentences or automatically proceeds to the Level 3 activities when a student reaches mastery.

Level 3 activities require students to write their own sentences in sets of five sentences. The requirements for each sentence are specified for the student on the screen. Students can write the sentences using the computer keyboard and print them out. Alternatively, they can print out the requirements and hand write the sentences. They must respond to the requirements 100% correctly in one set of five items in order to reach mastery at this level.

Printed materials. Students can print out their completed sentences for Level 3 or the requirements for Level 3 if their computers are connected to a printer. If they will not have access to a printer, you can print out the Level 3 worksheet, make copies of the worksheet before class begins, and then distribute it to students when they are ready. To print out the worksheet yourself, go to the folder labeled "Printable Materials," click on the folder labeled "Lessons," and click on the folder labeled with the lesson name.

Therein, you will find a folder labeled "Worksheets." Inside, you will see several Level 3 worksheets for each lesson. Print a worksheet as you would print any other document on your computer. Then make the needed number of copies.

If students' computers are not connected to a computer and you are not concerned about having the completed sentences for your records, students may compose their sentences on the computer for you to view and grade on the spot when they are completed. Keep in mind, however, that there is no way for students to save their work during Level 3 activities. (Once they click on the "Quit" button, the sentences will be lost.) Thus, use this option only if you have a small class and the opportunity to quickly view the students' work.

Your role. Your role during the Level 1 and Level 2 activities is to circulate and provide help and feedback to ensure that students progress through the program and are using their computers correctly. All of the Level 1 and 2 activities are automatically controlled by the computer program, so you need not worry about supplying specific feedback on the students' performance.

Your role during the Level 3 activities is to ensure that students can print out their completed sentences or write the sentences on paper copies of the worksheets or that you can view their sentences when they are completed at the students' computer stations. If the student has pressed the "Forward" arrow key to the next screen before you have looked at the sentences or before printing them, click on the "Back" arrow key to view the screen. The written sentences will still be available for you to view or print. Additionally, your role is to score students' sentences with regard to whether they illustrate the use of the rule correctly and meet the requirements for the items, as well as to provide feedback. If the student writes the sentences correctly, you will give the student a pass code from Pass Code List C for proceeding to the next lesson. (See the Pass Codes section below.) If the student does not write the sentences correctly, you will provide corrective feedback and instruct the student to write another set of sentences. The student will write additional sets of sentences until reaching the criterion of 100% correct sentences on one set of sentences. Also, your role will be more demanding if you choose to score sentences at the student's computer instead of having the sentences printed or written out by hand.

Providing feedback during Level 3 activities.
(1) Explain what the student has done well. Specify two or three correct behaviors.

(2) Specify the error. If an error has been made, explain the type of error. For example, point out to the student that a comma is missing, or tell the student that a comma is placed incorrectly.

(3) Specify what to do. Explain what the student should do to avoid that type of error in the future. Review important steps and mnemonic devices for inserting the comma correctly. If necessary, invent a mini-strategy that will enable the student to

succeed in the future. For example, show the student how to use her notes when writing sentences and how to place a checkmark next to each step as she completes that step.

(4) Provide a model. Next, show the student how to talk to herself as she performs the steps to apply a rule or remembers the memory devices. For example, after a student has completed a practice activity for Lesson 3, model how to use the steps while remembering the "FAN BOYS" memory device.

(5) Have the student practice. Require the student to show you how to proceed in the future, responding to a different item from the one you responded to in your model. Provide feedback as needed to ensure that the student is performing the steps correctly.

(6) Have the student paraphrase the feedback. Ask the student to tell you in her own words what she needs to do to avoid making the same kind of error in the future. Provide corrective feedback, as necessary, to clarify what the student is to do.

(7) Communicate your positive expectations. Tell the student that you have high expectations for how she will do on the next practice attempt. Praise the student's participation in the feedback process.

The feedback listed above may be modified, depending on the number of errors a student has made. For example, if the student only made a careless mistake on one sentence, you may only want to go through Steps 1, 2, and 5. However, if a student made errors in several sentences, go through all the feedback steps to ensure the student is more successful during the next practice attempt. If the student still does poorly even after receiving feedback, you may want to have the student repeat the Learn It and Watch It Sections of the lesson. When time is an issue, for students who appear to "catch on" more quickly than others, you may want to provide feedback using only the steps that would be most relevant. Any remaining time may be dedicated to students who typically struggle more with learning or who need additional feedback to be successful.

REVIEW STRUCTURE

Each review has four parts. They are called "Review It," "Watch It," "Say It," and "Practice It." Four buttons on the screen correspond to these four parts of the lesson, as shown in Figure 8. When a student clicks on one of these buttons, the corresponding part of the lesson begins. However, a given button is not operational unless a student has progressed through the previous parts of the lesson successfully. Thus, students may click on buttons for previous parts of a lesson if they wish to review something, but they cannot move forward to a new part until they have completed the preceding parts.

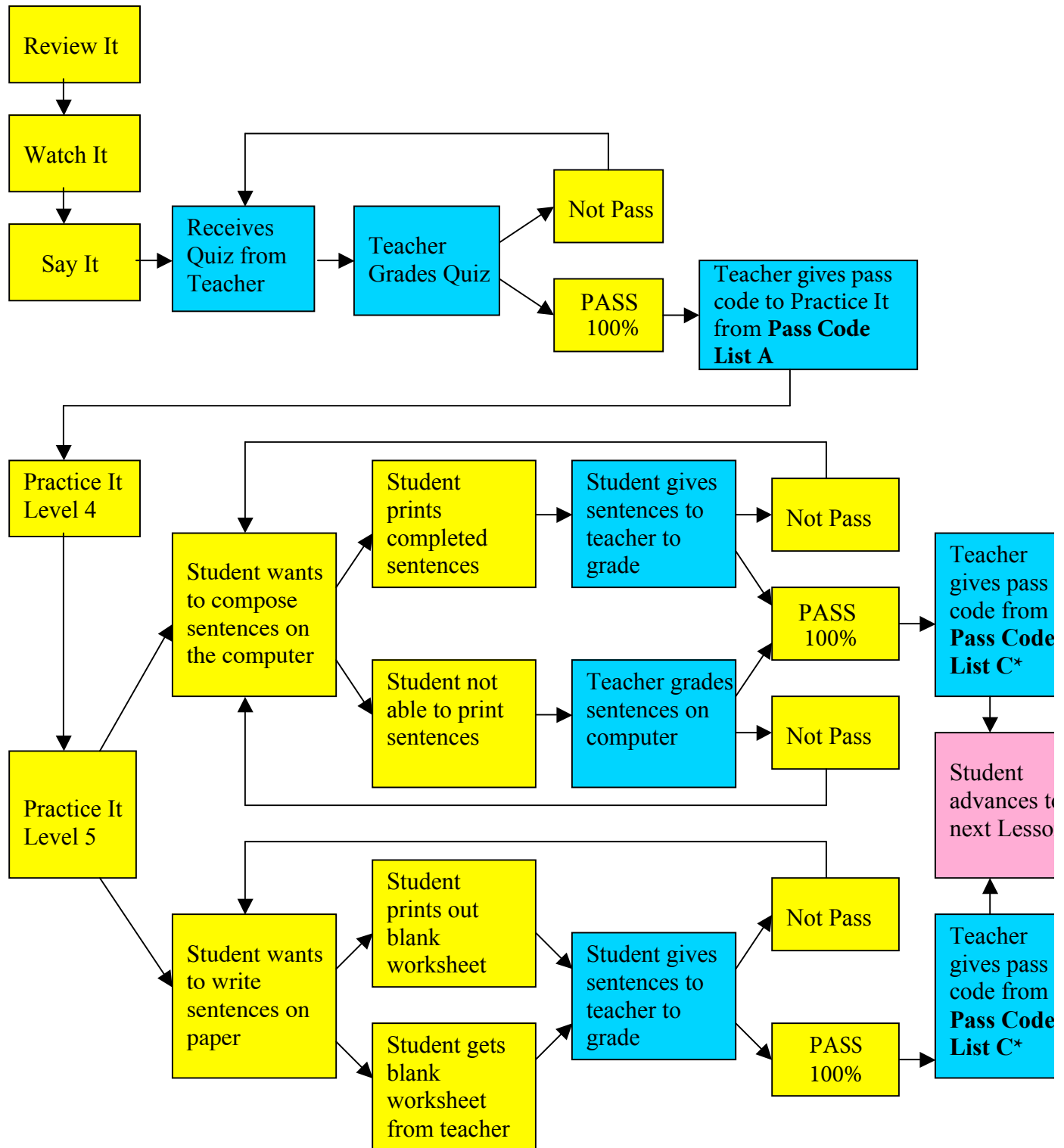**Figure 8. The Review Section Buttons**

The purpose of each part of a review lesson, the activities that students complete in each part, the printed materials associated with each part, and your role in each part are

described below. Please refer to Figure 9 as you read through the descriptions; it provides a flow chart of the lesson structure, student activities, and teacher responsibilities for the review lessons.

Figure 9   **Review Flow Chart**

Review It

Watch It

Say It

Receives Quiz from Teacher

Teacher Grades Quiz

Not Pass

PASS 100%

Teacher gives pass code to Practice It from **Pass Code List A**

Practice It Level 4

Practice It Level 5

Student wants to compose sentences on the computer

Student prints completed sentences

Student gives sentences to teacher to grade

Not Pass

PASS 100%

Teacher gives pass code from **Pass Code List C***

Student not able to print sentences

Teacher grades sentences on computer

Not Pass

Student advances to next Lesson

Student wants to write sentences on paper

Student prints out blank worksheet

Student gives sentences to teacher to grade

Not Pass

PASS 100%

Teacher gives pass code from **Pass Code List C***

Student gets blank worksheet from teacher

*If student is still logged in, use Pass Code List C. If student is logged off, use Pass Code List A.

Review It Section

Purpose and activities. The comma rules and information presented in previous lessons are presented in a shortened form in the Review It Section. Rules that have been learned thus far are reviewed, and students complete mini-practice activities related to each rule.

Printed materials. There are no new printed materials that correspond to this section. You can encourage students to review their notes from the previous lessons.

Your role. As students work through the Review It Section, your role is to supervise their use of the program and to ensure that they are responding appropriately. Circulate among them, and help students who need assistance. Provide corrective feedback if they are not using the program or computer correctly.

Watch It Section

Purpose and activities. The purpose of the Watch It Section is to provide students with a demonstration of how a strategic thinker uses all the comma rules learned thus far in combination. During the Watch It Section, then, students watch as a student actor models how to say each line of the commas poem and how to apply the steps for each rule, in turn, to each of several sentences.

Printed materials. There are no printed materials associated with this part.

Your role. Your role is to circulate around the room and provide help and feedback, as needed, to ensure that students are progressing through the program and using the computer appropriately as they work through the Watch It Section.

Say It Section

Purpose. The purpose of the Say It Section is to ensure that students integrate all the key information associated with all the rules they have learned thus far so that they can instruct themselves on what to do and apply the information as they write. Students also practice applying the information through a variety of activities. They learn to say all the lines of the poem in sequence. They answer questions and respond to game-like activities.

When students feel they are ready, they take a handwritten quiz over the information. The quiz covers all the information learned in all completed lessons. Students must answer 100% of the questions correctly on the quiz in order to be allowed to proceed to the Practice It Section.

Printed materials. Students can print out the quiz if their computers are connected to a printer. If they will not have access to a printer, you can print out the quiz, make copies of it before class begins, and distribute the quiz when students are ready for it. To print out the quiz yourself, go to the folder labeled "Printable Materials," click on the folder labeled "Reviews," and click on the folder labeled with the name of the review lesson (e.g., "Review A"). Herein, you will see a quiz document for the review. Print it as

you would print any other document on your computer. Then make the needed number of copies.

Your role. Your role in this part of the review lesson is to ensure that students are ready to take the quiz and that they have access to the quiz. After they have taken the quiz, your job is to score and instruct the student on what to do next. If the student earns a score of 100% correct, the student should progress to the Practice It Section. You will give the student a pass code from Pass Code List B that allows him to proceed to that section. (See the Pass Codes section below.) If the student does not earn a score of 100% correct, you will instruct the student to repeat the Say It Section. Remind the student to make sure that he pays attention to the information and memorizes it in preparation for another quiz. You will find answer keys to the quizzes if you go to the folder labeled "Printable Materials," click on the folder labeled "Answer Keys," click on the folder labeled "Quiz Answer Keys," and click on the folder labeled "Review Answer Keys." Herein, you will see an answer key for each review lesson quiz. Print it as you would print any other document on your computer.

Providing feedback. Show the student the quiz and describe which items were answered correctly. When the student has made errors on items related to strategy steps, point out steps that the student omitted or named out of sequence. Help the student figure out a way to remember that information in the future. Finally, ask the student to recite the steps or mnemonic device to himself or to another student five times. If appropriate, have the student suggest a way to remember how to learn similar items in the future.

Practice It Section

Purpose. The purpose of the Practice It Section is to give students numerous opportunities to practice applying all the comma rules they have learned in an integrated way.

There are two levels of Practice It activities in review lessons. In *Level 4* activities, students work through sets of five sentences each. They must insert several commas into the sentences where appropriate. Four sentences in each set require commas; one sentence does not require commas. Students may have to apply several rules to each sentence that requires commas. Students receive feedback from the narrator after they insert commas or do not insert commas into each sentence. They must insert all the commas correctly into two sets of sentences in a row in order to reach mastery at this level. The computer program automatically instructs the student to complete another set of sentences when necessary or automatically proceeds to the Level 5 activities when a student reaches mastery.

Level 5 activities require students to write their own sentences in sets of five sentences. The rules to be demonstrated in each sentence are specified with a written prompt. Students can write the sentences using the computer keyboard and print them out. Alternatively, they can print out the worksheet and hand write the sentences. They must correctly respond to 100% of the requirements for one set of five questions in order to reach mastery at this level.

Printed materials. Students can print out their completed sentences for Level 5 or the worksheet for Level 5 if their computers are connected to a printer. If they will not have access to a printer, you can print out the Level 5 worksheet, make copies of it before class begins, and distribute it when students are ready for it. To print out the worksheet yourself, go to the folder labeled "Printable Materials," click on the folder labeled "Reviews," and click on the folder labeled with the name of the review lesson (e.g., "Review B"). Within a folder labeled "Worksheets," you will find folders containing the worksheet documents for each review. Print out the desired worksheet as you would print any other document on your computer. Then make the needed number of copies.

If students' computers are not connected to a computer and you are not concerned about having the completed sentences for your records, students may compose their sentences on the computer for you to view on the screen and grade when they are completed. Again, however, keep in mind that the sentences will not be saved by the computer program. Once a student quits the program by clicking on the "Quit" button, the sentences will be lost. Only choose this option if you have a small number of students to whom you can give immediate attention.

Your role. Your role during the Level 4 activities is to circulate and provide help and feedback to ensure that students progress through the program and are using their computers correctly. All of these activities at this level are automatically controlled by the computer program, so you need not worry about supplying specific feedback on the commas activities.

Your role during the Level 5 activities is to ensure that students can print out their completed sentences or write the sentences on paper copies of the worksheets or to ensure that you can view their sentences when they are completed at the student's computer station. If the student has pressed the "Forward" arrow key to the next screen before you have looked at the sentences, click on the "Back" arrow key to view the screen. The written sentences will still be available for you to view. Additionally, your role is to score their sentences with regard to whether they illustrate correct use of the specified rules as well as to provide feedback to the student. If the student writes the sentences correctly, you will give the student a pass code from Pass Code List C for proceeding to the next lesson. (See the Pass Codes section below.) If the student does not write the sentences correctly, you will provide corrective feedback and instruct the student to write another set of sentences. Require the student to write additional sets of sentences until she has reached the criterion of 100% correct sentences on one set of sentences.

Providing feedback during Level 5 activities.
(1) Tell the student what has been done correctly. Specify two or three correct behaviors.

(2) Specify the error. If errors have been made, choose one error that the student is making, and make a statement about it. For example, point out that a comma is missing, or tell the student that the comma is placed incorrectly. If the error is specific to

a certain lesson, indicate the lesson notes to which the student should refer to view examples of correctly placed commas for that lesson.

(3) Specify what to do. Explain to the student what she should do to avoid that type of error in the future. Review important steps and memory devices for inserting the comma correctly. If necessary, invent a mini-strategy that will enable the student to succeed in the future. For example, explain to the student how to say the poem or use a written copy of the poem and apply each rule in turn.

(4) Provide a model. Next, show the student how to talk to herself as she writes a sentence and performs the steps. For example, show the student how you think as you write a sentence that fulfills the requirements of the item as well as work through each line of the poem and add the commas, as needed.

(5) Have the student practice. Require the student to show you how to proceed in the future, using a different item from the one you used in your model. Provide feedback as needed to ensure that the student is performing appropriately.

(6) Have the student paraphrase the feedback. Ask the student to tell you in her own words what she needs to do to avoid making the same kind of error in the future. Provide corrective feedback, as necessary, to clarify what the student is to do.

(7) Repeat corrective feedback Steps 1-5 for each additional error made.

(8) Communicate your positive expectations. Tell the student that you have high expectations for how she will do on the next practice attempt. Praise the student's participation in the feedback process.

The feedback suggestions may be modified depending on the number of errors in a practice attempt. For example, if the student missed only one sentence, and you think it was a careless error (based on previous work), you may only use Steps 1, 2, and 5 above. However, if a student missed several sentences, be sure to go through all the feedback steps to ensure the student is more successful during the next practice attempt. If the student still does not understand even after receiving feedback, you may ask the student to repeat the Learn It and Watch It Sections of the program that are specific to the error made. Use your feedback time wisely. When time is short, spend it giving feedback to students who really need it. For those students who appear to "catch on" more quickly, you may want to provide feedback using only the steps that would be most relevant.

GETTING STARTED

Become Familiar with the Commas Program
To prepare to teach the Commas Program, work through the program yourself. Simply begin the program as if you were a student, and work through each lesson and review. This will enable you to become familiar with the lessons, the reviews, the various sections of the lessons and reviews, and the activities students will be completing. To

start the program for the first time, click on Button 1 on the first screen. If you are returning to the program, click on Button 2, and enter a pass code to take you to the screen you left when you quit the program the last time. (See Figure 10 for an illustration of Buttons 1 and 2 and Figure 11 for a flow chart of how to begin the program.) Become familiar with the commas rules and the exceptions to the rules as they are presented in this program so that you can talk with the students about them. Note how long you work on each part of the program, so you can plan your instructional time accordingly.

Figure 10. The Start Buttons
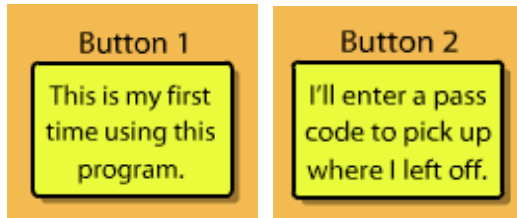
Figure 11

Start Commas Program
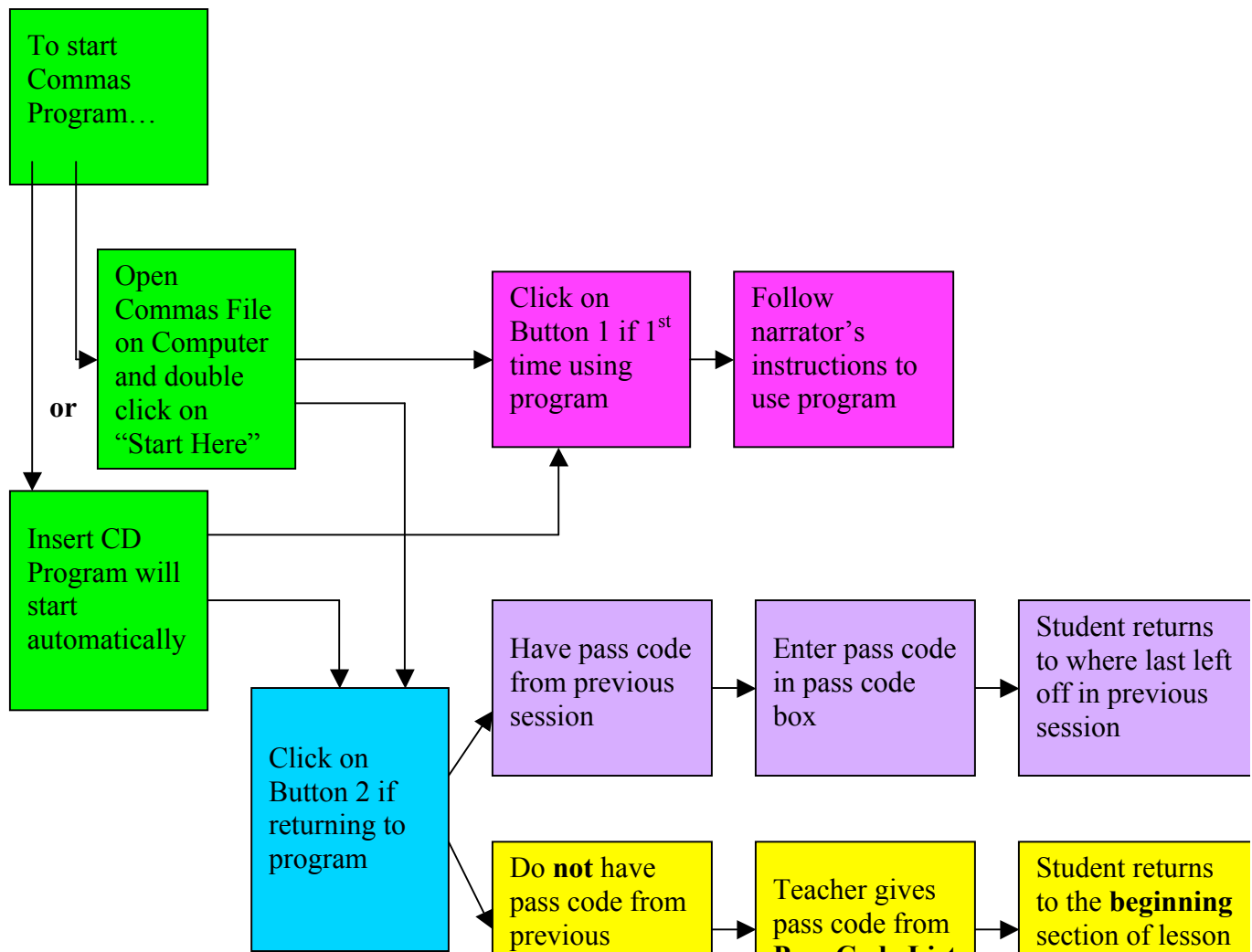
As you work through the program, print out all the materials that you are instructed to print out so that you can use the materials as you work. Pay particular attention to the points at which you need to enter a pass code to proceed. These are the points at which students will be asking you for a pass code at the end of the Say It and Practice It activities. Compare the quiz for each Say It Section to the activities in that section so that you are familiar with how well the students need to know the information. Since the quizzes are all written in an open-ended format, students will have to know the information very well to meet mastery.

Be sure to work through at least one set of sentences at each level in the Practice It Sections to become familiar with the directions, what is required of students, and the possible errors they might make. Also become familiar with the Level 3 and 5 worksheets where students need to write their own sentences. Some students may need help understanding the prompts that signal what they are to write for each sentence, so you will need to be able to explain them.

Download the Program onto Student Computers
You will need to download the Commas Program onto the computers that students will be using.
Macintosh computers. Simply insert the CD-Rom into the CD-Rom drive. When the CD appears on your desktop, double click on it to open it. If the program starts automatically, click on the "Quit" button. When the icons appear, you will see four items in the window: the Commas Program icon ("Start Here"), the Materials folder, the Media folder, and this Instructor's Guide. Drag the "Start Here" icon and the Media folder to a new folder that you created on the desktop labeled "Commas Program." Both of these icons have to be in the same folder for the program to work. Do not download the Materials folder or the Instructor's Guide onto the computers that students will be using. This program is licensed to be downloaded onto eight computers. Once it has been downloaded onto eight computers, use another copy of the CD to download it onto additional computers.

PCs. With a PC, once you insert the Commas CD into the CD drive, the program may begin automatically. If this happens, click on the "Quit" button. Then, click on the Windows "Start" button in the lower left corner of your computer screen. Next, go to "My Computer." In this window, look for the Commas CD icon, which will be located in either the "D" or "E" drive. Right click on the Commas CD; scroll down to "Explore" on the menu, and click "Explore." Drag the "Start Here" icon and "Media Folder" into the same folder on the desktop. Do not download the Materials folder or the Instructor's Guide onto the computers that students will be using. This program is licensed to be downloaded onto eight computers. Once it has been downloaded onto eight computers, use another copy of the CD to download it onto additional computers.

Print out and Copy Needed Materials
If students' computers will not be connected to a printer, or if you do not want students to be using a printer, you will need to print out the materials in the Materials folder and make copies of them for distribution when the students need them. Make one

copy of the notes for each lesson per student. Make sufficient copies of the quizzes and Level 3 and 5 worksheets so that students can take each quiz two or three times and complete two or three variations of the worksheet, if needed. Put copies of each document (i.e., notes sheet, quiz, worksheet) in a folder with its title (e.g., Lesson 1 Notes, Lesson 1 Quiz, Lesson 1 Level 3 Set 1) on the folder tab. File the folders in a place that will be easily accessible during instruction. Decide which documents you will allow students to access freely so that you can reduce the demands on you during the instructional period. For example, the notes can be available to students at any time. However, the quizzes should only be distributed after students have completed the Say It Section of the lesson or review. The worksheets should only be distributed after students have completed the computerized Practice It activities.

Plan the Instructional Schedule

If possible, plan for students to work through the Commas Program daily. If that is not possible, then plan for them to use the program several days per week. In general, each part of each lesson or review takes about 15 minutes to complete. (Allow five minutes more or less for different students' needs.) The Learn It Sections in Lessons 4 and 6 take about 20 minutes to complete. Say It Sections take approximately 10 minutes to complete, and another 10 to 15 minutes are required for taking the quiz. Students will also need time to study their notes or work through the Say It Section again before they are allowed to retake the quiz.

You may decide to have all the students work on the same part of the program each day, or you may decide to allow students who are quickly working through the program to continue without requiring them to wait for the others to catch up. If you choose to have students work on the same part of the program at the same time, plan activities that the speedier students can work on once they complete the section of the program that you have assigned.

Plan the Grading System

You will need to decide the number of points to award students for completing each part of each lesson or review. Also, plan the number of bonus points to award if students reach mastery on a Say It quiz after one attempt, or reach mastery on a Practice It level after two or three sets of sentences. Finally, you will also need to award points to the students for each quiz and each worksheet. Create a list of points the students can earn (see the example list in Figure 12), write the list on the board or make copies of the list to distribute to the students, and share the list with the students when you introduce the program to them.

Figure 12. Grading Ideas

Possible Grading System		
Say It Quiz	*Practice It:* *Levels 1, 2, and 4* (Self-reported)	*Practice It:* *Levels 3 and 5* (Sentences)
Pass on 1st attempt—10 pts. Pass on 2nd attempt—8 pts. Pass on 3rd + attempt—6pts.	Pass on 1st attempt—5 bonus pts. Pass on 2nd attempt—3 bonus pts.	Pass on 1st attempt—10 pts. Pass on 2nd attempt—8 pts. Pass on 3rd + attempt—6 pts.

Progress Monitoring

The Say It Quizzes, the Level 3 and 5 practice activities, and the software program will help you monitor student progress on each lesson and review. If you wish to give the students a pretest before they use the program and a posttest after they use the program, you can print out the pretest and posttest that are contained in the "Printable Materials" folder on the CD and make copies for the students. The answer keys for these tests are in the "Answer Key" folder. You can also administer one of the Level 5 activities from Review E as a pretest and posttest, or you can design your own test to determine whether students are using the rules as they write. You will be able to give students a grade according to how well they perform on the posttests.

Create Folders

To aid organization, create a folder or notebook for each student. Print out the Pass Code Log in the Materials file, and make a copy for each student. Attach the Pass Code Log to the inside front cover of the folder/notebook. Whenever students "quit" the program, they will be given a pass code for the point at which they stopped by the computer program. The next time they begin the program, they will enter this pass code. The program will begin at the exact screen where they stopped. Thus, students need to have easy access to a sheet where they can record and look up their pass codes. If they use the Pass Code Log, you will spend less time helping them to find their place in the program.

You can also have the students use their folders to store their notes sheets and hand in completed quizzes and worksheets. Decide whether you will have "sections" within student folders for different programs or lessons. Create these sections with colored paper. Also, plan how you will have students hand in their completed products (e.g., by stacking their folders on a shelf, putting them in a box), and explain to the students what to do to hand in their products as you introduce the program to them. Teach the students to arrange their products chronologically in their folders so that you can find their latest paper easily when you need to score it.

PASS CODES

Students will need pass codes at various points in the program. Each time they click the "Quit" button when are done working on the program for the day, they will receive a pass code. Each time they start the program, they will need to enter a pass code to go back to the exact screen in the program at which they stopped the previous day. Each time they reach mastery on a quiz in a Say It Section, they will need to enter a pass code, *which you will give them from Pass Code List B,* in order to be able to proceed to the Practice It Section. Further, each time they reach mastery on a worksheet during Level 3 or Level 5 practice activities, they will need to enter a pass code, *which you will give them from Pass Code List C,* in order to be able to proceed to the next lesson or review.

Each time students quit the program, they will need to write their pass code on the Pass Code Log in their folders (see the "Create Folders" section above). Likewise, when

you give them a pass code, they should also write it on their Pass Code Logs so that they do not forget it.

If students "quit" the program and forget to write their pass codes onto the Log, as long as they can tell you the name of the lesson and the section on which they were working, you will be able to provide them with a pass code number for the section of the program from the Pass Code List A. However, this pass code will take them to the *beginning* of the section on which they were working, not the exact screen where they left off. Thus, since they will be starting the section anew, they will probably need to complete some previously viewed screens again. To prevent this from happening, be sure to give the students plenty of notice when they have to shut down their work on the program at the end of a class period so that they have time to record their pass codes. Also, be sure to remind them to write their pass codes on their logs before they leave each day.

There are three different pass code lists. Use Pass Code List A only if students forget to write down their pass code and need to restart at the beginning of a section. Use Pass Code List B to advance students to the Practice It Section after they have passed the quiz for the Say It section. Finally, use Pass Code List C to advance students to the next lesson or review after they have met mastery by writing their own sentences in the Practice It Section. You can print the pass code lists if you go to the folder labeled "Printable Materials," and click on the folder labeled "Pass Codes." Here, you will see three pass code lists. Print them as you would print any other document on your computer. Do not distribute or make these lists available to students.

The Master Pass Code
You may want to get to a particular part of the program without working through several screens. For such purposes, you can use the Master Pass Code, which is for your use only: **231250.** Enter this pass code in the box that appears after you click on Button 2 on the beginning screen of the program. Then click on the lesson or review tab and the section tab of your choice. Use the forward arrow button on the screen to move to the screen of your choice. Do not give this pass code to the students or allow them to witness you using it. They might use it to skip around within the program, and therefore they may not receive the instruction in the order required to promote learning.

COMMAS GENERALIZATION
To help ensure that the students apply the commas rules in their writing during instructional activities, permeate your classroom with commas prompts using all or some of the following suggestions. Make a bulletin board that focuses on commas. Have the students post examples of good and poor comma use that they find in newspapers or magazines. Make a poster of the commas poem, and post it in a prominent place. Make a poster about each rule, and post it in the classroom. Talk about the commas rules whenever a teachable moment arises. Have the students say the poem in unison using a "rap-like" rhythm. Require each student to say the next line of the poem as they exit the classroom. Each time you give a writing assignment, prompt the students to use a

particular rule(s) at least once. Provide bonus points on assignments for correct comma usage.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Students Who Are "Click Happy"

During practice activities, some students will simply start clicking very quickly and indiscriminately, hoping to hit the right answers by chance. They may try to insert a comma after every word in a sentence, for example. Watch for such behaviors as you circulate among the students. Explain that they need to pay attention to the instruction and apply the rules to each sentence and that the quick clicking behavior is not acceptable or appropriate. Offer these students a larger point bonus for paying attention, using the rules, placing the commas in the correct places, and reaching mastery in two or three sets of sentences.

Students Who Share Pass Codes

Watch for students giving their pass codes to others. Give point penalties to students who share their pass codes, and treat the incident as you would treat any type of cheating on academic work. Explain that this type of cheating will not be tolerated and that each student needs to complete each part of the program independently in order to receive points. Notice when a student has proceeded to a new lesson before finishing the last one. Have the student return to the last lesson and complete it by demonstrating mastery. Show the students that you are alert to what they are doing by staying on top of which student is working on what lesson and what part of the lesson. Keep track of which students have met mastery in the Say It and Practice It sections in your grade book as well as which students have passed out of a review section. Have students repeat lessons if they have not taken a quiz or finished a Practice It section.

Students Who Get Frustrated

Students may get frustrated at particular points in the program. For example, they might get frustrated when they do not reach mastery and cannot proceed to the next part or next lesson. This might happen because they went through the program without thinking about it and have not really learned the information. Alternatively, they might be responding too quickly and making "silly" errors. They might have clicked to place a comma, but, because their "click" was not strong enough, it did not actually place the comma. Work with frustrated students to determine what has happened and provide feedback and suggestions accordingly. For example, explain to the student who is not attending to the program how to study the information before taking the quiz. Explain to the student who is responding too quickly to take time to make sure every comma is put in the correct place. Show the student how to click on the "mouse" to be sure to place the comma correctly. Stand next to the student and monitor how he interacts with the program, and give him encouragement and corrective feedback as needed to ensure learning takes place and that his knowledge and skills are adequately demonstrated.

Students Who Have Difficulty Writing

You may have students who have so much difficulty writing that they cannot take the quiz or write out the sentences in the Level 3 and Level 5 Practice It activities. If that is the case, have them complete the activities orally. Have them dictate their answers on the quiz or their sentences to someone (e.g., another student, a student aide, a volunteer, a paraprofessional, you), who then records the answers/sentences on the quiz or worksheet without the commas. Have the student point in each sentence where the commas should be placed. Score the student's products just as you will score the other students' products.

Students Who Are Ahead or Falling Behind

Because students are able to progress at their own pace in this program, some students may progress more quickly than others and finish early, and some students may fall behind other students and have difficulty catching up. For the students who are ahead, plan other activities that they can do when they finish the program. For the students who are behind, if they are enrolled in a study skills class, study hall, or after-school tutoring program, make arrangements for them to use the Commas Program during those times to catch up with the rest of the class.

Students Who Are Not Reaching Mastery

The program requires students to place 100% of the commas correctly in order to reach mastery. In addition, students must do this twice in a row with two sets of sentences in the Level 1, 2, and 4 activities. In other words, the program teaches students to be VERY careful and particular about their placement of commas, which is what is required when they take competency tests and college entrance exams and when they write papers in high school and college. Students are typically not used to being required to earn a score of 100% correct on anything. This program gives you the opportunity to teach students to be very careful about something. If a student is not reaching mastery on a given practice level, talk with her to determine what is happening. Often the student just has not paid enough attention to the instruction and has not internalized or learned the needed information. Explain to the student that she must not only work through the program but also really take in the information and store it for later use during the rest of her life. Prompt students to study their notes sheets before they take the quiz or begin a new practice set. Encourage the student to reach a level of excellence.

If students have difficulty "seeing" the places to put commas in a sentence on the screen, write the sentence on a piece of paper, and have them put the commas into the written sentence with a pencil and then enter the commas into the sentence on the screen. Do this with several sentences until the student can enter the commas into the sentence on the screen without the intermediate step of writing the sentence on a piece of paper.

If you know a student is a poor reader, encourage him to click on the "Hear It" button each time he has to insert commas into a sentence. This will help not only with the commas placement but may also help the student learn to read better.

If students have difficulty paying attention to the computer instruction, provide positive consequences for attending and responding for certain periods of time. Gradually increase the amounts of time required to earn those consequences.

Students Who Lack Prerequisite Skills

Some students have difficulty because they do not have the prerequisite skills to do well in certain activities. For example, they may not know how to identify subjects and verbs in sentences. Although the program provides some instruction related to such skills, it was not designed to teach such skills to mastery. As you work with a student who is not reaching mastery on a particular lesson, be sure to explore whether the student has the prerequisite skills needed. If not, teach those skills whenever possible.

EXPECTED RESULTS

If you require students to work through the program as it is intended to be used and to meet the mastery criteria, you can expect them to learn to use the comma rules at a level similar to the level attained by students in a research study. A total of 82 middle-school students with learning disabilities (LD) and 41 high-school students with LD participated in a research study that focused on this program (Schumaker & Walsh, 2007). Half of the students in each age group were randomly selected to participate in the experimental or the control group. On a test where the students had to insert commas into sentences that were already written, experimental students earned a mean score of 36% on the pretest and 90% on the posttest, whereas control students earned a mean score of 36% on the pretest and 36% on the posttest. An ANCOVA with two between-subject factors (group and age) revealed a significant difference between the posttest scores of the experimental and control groups, $F(1,120) = 497.28$, $p = .0005$, in favor of the experimental group. The effect size for this difference (partial eta squared) was .806. According to Cohen (1988), this is a very large effect size.

On a test where the students had to write their own sentences demonstrating the use of particular commas rules, experimental students earned a mean score of 10% on the pretest and 92% on the posttest, whereas control students earned a mean score of 11% on the pretest and 15% on the posttest. The same type of statistical analysis revealed a significant difference between the posttest scores of the groups, $F(1, 120) = 943.66$, $p = .0005$, in favor of the experimental group. The effect size for this difference was .887, also a very large effect size. No differences were found between the response to the program by middle- and high-school students in the experimental groups. Thus, the program has been found to be equally successful at both levels of schooling. Students can insert an average of 90% of the needed commas into already written sentences, and they can correctly demonstrate use of the commas rules in more than 90% of the sentences that they write themselves.

REFERENCES

Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum Associates.

Schumaker, J. B., & Walsh, L. (2007). *Effects of a hypermedia program on the comma skills of students with learning disabilities. Phase II*. Final report for SBIR Grant #5 R44 HD043618-03. Lawrence, KS: Edge Enterprises, Inc.

PASS CODE LIST A

Use these pass codes when entering from beginning of program—at Button 2

Lesson 1:
Learn It—080708
Watch It—333290
Say It—242389
Practice It—131290

Lesson 2:
Learn It—434142
Watch It—222065
Say It—333184
Practice It—141277

Review A:
Review It—181112
Watch It—191232
Say It—373055
Practice It--201349

Lesson 3:
Learn It—585556
Watch It—535092
Say It—464380
Practice It—131059

Review B:
Review It—181011
Watch It—201223
Say It—585066
Practice It—211341

Lesson 4:
Learn It—322829
Watch It—141077
Say It—151184
Practice It—151195

Review C:
Review It—201112
Watch It—211225
Say It—726381
Practice It—191040

Lesson 5:
Learn It—353031
Watch It—393488
Say It—252082
Practice It—181387

Review D:
Review It—524243
Watch It—201025
Say It—342444
Practice It—201043

Lesson 6:
Learn It—423637
Watch It—282286
Say It—181283
Practice It—100487

Review E:
Review It—675657
Watch It—221128
Say It—544365
Practice It—200943

PASS CODE LIST B

Say It Codes:
(After students pass the Say It quiz.)

Lesson 1—989740

Lesson 2—918999

Review A—948794

Lesson 3—908781

Review B—928412

Lesson 4—999510

Review C—201140

Lesson 5—959020

Review D—908080

Lesson 6—989222

Review E—918008

PASS CODE LIST C

Practice It Codes:
(After students write the sentences correctly)

Lesson 1—999820

Lesson 2—959301

Review A—938655

Lesson 3—969334

Review B—948607

Lesson 4—918732

Review C—988981

Lesson 5—948900

Review D—918111

Lesson 6—999393

Review E—928105