

Commas

Look at these sentences. Decide where you think a comma should go:

1. After a hard day at the office I like to relax with a large gin.
2. The recipe needed jam flour sugar fruit eggs and baking powder.
3. "Look at this" he whispered.
4. Paulina his wife of many years had decided to go and live in Greece.
5. As the sun began to sink over the sea Karen got ready to go out.
6. She was intelligent not especially practical.
7. The thief was wearing impractical high heels so she could not run fast.
8. We go to Blackpool for the cuisine not the weather.
9. "I advise you" said the teacher "not to cross me again today."
10. Steven his head still spinning walked out of the office for the last time.

Answers:

1. After a hard day at the office, I like to relax with a large gin. = use the comma to set off the introductory phrase.
2. The recipe needed jam, flour, sugar, fruit, eggs, ketchup and baking powder. = use the comma to separate elements in a list.
3. "Look at this," he whispered. = use the comma to set off the direct speech.
4. Paulina, his wife of many years, had decided to go and live in Greece. = use the commas to set off the parenthetical element.
5. As the sun began to sink over the sea, Karen got ready to go out. = use the comma to set off the introductory phrase.
6. She was intelligent, not especially practical. = use the comma when expressing contrast.
7. The thief was wearing impractical high heels so she could not run fast. = use the comma before co-ordinating conjunctions.
8. We go to Blackpool for the cuisine, not the weather. = use the comma to express contrast.
9. "I advise you," said the teacher, "not to cross me again today." = use commas to separate direct speech from the rest of the sentence.
10. Steven, his head still spinning, walked out of the office for the last time. = use the comma to set off parenthetical elements from the rest of the sentence.