

## Comma Quiz

by Laura King, MA, ELS

Directions: Edit the following based on your understanding of section 8.2 of the *AMA Manual of Style*.

Edit the following phrases using the appropriate comma, semicolon, or colon punctuation marks.

1. Because this was a pragmatic open trial it was not possible to conceal the allocation group from either participants or clinicians.

**ANSWER:**

Because this was a pragmatic open trial, it was not possible to conceal the allocation group from either participants or clinicians.

**Editor's Note:** Use a comma after opening dependent clauses (whether restrictive or not) or long opening adverbial phrases (§8.2.1, *Comma, Separating Groups of Words*, pp 336-337 in print).

2. The factorial design with independent allocation to the individual interventions meant that patients received 1 of 4 types of follow-up.

**ANSWER:**

The factorial design, with independent allocation to the individual interventions, meant that patients received 1 of 4 types of follow-up.

**Editor's Note:** Use commas to set off nonrestrictive subordinate clauses (see also §7.2.2, *Grammar, Pronouns, Relative Pronouns*) or nonrestrictive participial phrases (§8.2.1, *Comma, Separating Groups of Words*, pp 336-337 in print).

3. Late-onset Alzheimer disease defined as onset of symptoms after 65 years of age is the most common form of dementia.

**ANSWER:**

Late-onset Alzheimer disease, defined as onset of symptoms after 65 years of age, is the most common form of dementia.

**Editor's Note:** Use commas to set off appositives (commas precede and follow the apposition) (§8.2.1, *Comma, Separating Groups of Words*, pp 336-337 in print).

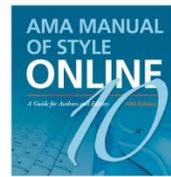
4. The investigators performed a double-blind placebo-controlled patient-initiated 2-armed parallel clinical trial.

**ANSWER:**

The investigators performed a double-blind, placebo-controlled, patient-initiated, 2-armed, parallel clinical trial.

**Editor's Note:** In a simple coordinate series of 3 or more terms, separate the elements by commas (§8.2.1, *Comma, Series*, pp 337-338 in print).





5. The investigators performed a randomized placebo-controlled trial.

**ANSWER:**

The investigators performed a randomized placebo-controlled trial.

**Editor's Note:** *This sentence is correct without commas. When fewer than 3 modifiers are used, avoid adding a comma if the modifiers and the noun are read as one entity (§8.2.1, Comma, Series, pp 337-338 in print).*

6. The textbook was published by Holt Rinehart & Winston.

**ANSWER:**

The textbook was published by Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

**Editor's Note:** *When an enumeration occurs in the name of a company or organization, the comma is usually omitted before the ampersand. However, follow the punctuation used by the individual firm (eg, Lippincott Williams & Wilkins), except in references (in which case no punctuation is used) (§8.2.1, Comma, Names of Organizations, p 338 in print).*

7. The demographic features of our 2 control cohorts were not matched to each other yet Epstein-Barr virus seroprevalence was identical.

**ANSWER:**

The demographic features of our 2 control cohorts were not matched to each other, yet Epstein-Barr seroprevalence was identical.

**Editor's Note:** *Clauses introduced by yet and so and subordinating conjunctions (eg, while, where, after, whereas) are preceded by a comma (§8.2.1, Comma, Separating Clauses Joined by Conjunctions, p 339 in print).*

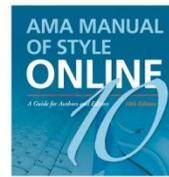
8. The study was authored by Charles King III MD PhD and Michael Simpson Jr MPH PhD.

**ANSWER:**

The study was authored by Charles King III, MD, PhD, and Michael Simpson Jr, MPH, PhD.

**Editor's Note:** *Academic degrees and titles are set off by commas when they follow the name of a person. Although it is not incorrect to set Jr and Sr off by commas when they follow the name of a person, the JAMA Network journals are now deleting these commas (§8.2.1, Comma, Setting Off Degrees and Titles, p 340 in print).*





9. Patients were recruited for the drug trial from August 1 2007 through August 31 2012.

**ANSWER:**

Patients were recruited for the drug trial from August 1, 2007, through August 31, 2012.

**Editor's Note:** *When complete dates are given, commas are placed before and after the year (unless the year ends a sentence). Commas are not used when the month and year are given without the day (eg, August 2007 through August 2012) or between a holiday and its year (Christmas 2014) (§8.2.1, Comma, Dates, p 340 in print).*

10. Since 1998 15 treatment studies of neuromyelitis optica have been published.

**ANSWER:**

Since 1998, a total of 15 treatment studies of neuromyelitis optica have been published.

**Editor's Note:** *A comma may be used to separate adjacent unrelated numerals if neither can be expressed easily in words, but it is preferable to reword the sentence or spell out one of the numbers (§8.2.1, Comma, Numbers, pp 340-341 in print).*

11. The newborn weighed 7 lb 3 oz.

**ANSWER:**

The newborn weighed 7 lb 3 oz.

**Editor's Note:** *This example is correct as is. Do not use a comma between 2 or more measures whose units are the same dimension (§8.2.1, Comma, Units of Measure, p 341 in print).*

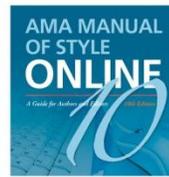
12. Numerous campaigns have been developed to inform the public about safe sleeping positions for infants: Safe to Sleep<sup>1</sup> This Side Up<sup>2</sup> and Back to Sleep.<sup>3</sup>

**ANSWER:**

Numerous campaigns have been developed to inform the public about safe sleeping positions for infants: Safe to Sleep,<sup>1</sup> This Side Up,<sup>2</sup> and Back to Sleep.<sup>3</sup>

**Editor's Note:** *The comma is placed inside quotation marks (see also §8.6.5, Quotation Marks, Placement) and before superscript citation of references and footnote symbols (§8.2.1, Comma, Placement, p 341 in print).*





13. CRP indicates C-reactive protein; HDL-C high-density lipoprotein cholesterol; and LDL-C low-density lipoprotein.

**ANSWER:**

CRP indicates C-reactive protein; HDL-C, high-density lipoprotein cholesterol; and LDL-C, low-density lipoprotein cholesterol.

**Editor's Note:** *The comma is used to indicate omission or to avoid repeating a word when the sense is clear (§8.2.1, Comma, Omission, p 341 in print).*

14. The patient asked the health insurance company representative “Where do I find a physician?”

**ANSWER:**

The patient asked the health insurance company representative, “Where do I find a physician?”

**Editor's Note:** *Commas are often used before direct dialogue or conversation is introduced (§8.2.1, Comma, Dialogue, p 341 in print).*

15. The main campus of Northwestern University is located in Evanston Illinois but the medical school campus is in Chicago Illinois.

**ANSWER:**

The main campus of Northwestern University is located in Evanston, Illinois, but the medical school campus is in Chicago, Illinois.

**Editor's Note:** *In running text and in affiliation footnotes, use commas to separate the elements in an address. Use commas after the city and before and after the state or country name (§8.2.1, Comma, Addressed, p 340 in print).*

