Comma Use with Items in a Series and Coordinate Adjectives

VOCABULARY

Series
A list of three or more things.

Coordinate Adjectives
Two or more adjectives that modify the same noun separately.

THE RULE
1. Use commas to separate each item in a series.
2. Use a comma between coordinating adjectives.

PRACTICE  Comma Usage in a Series

Error: Recent research shows that students and parents alike look at academic reputation faculty credentials and the accomplishments of graduates when choosing a college to attend.
Correction: Recent research shows that students and parents alike look at academic reputation, faculty credentials, and the accomplishments of graduates when choosing a college to attend.

Error: The campus activities office works hard to execute many activities and events on campus, including concerts, movie nights and intramural sports.
Correction: The campus activities office works hard to execute many activities and events on campus, including concerts, movie nights, and intramural sports. (Omitting a comma between the last two items in a series can cause ambiguity in some lists, so it is preferable to place a comma in that position).

PRACTICE  Comma Usage with Coordinating Adjectives

Error: My father is a kind generous soul.
Correction: My father is a kind, generous soul.

Error: Emily picked the delicious chocolate cake for dessert.
Correction: Emily picked the delicious, chocolate cake for dessert.