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Punctuation: commas with discourse markers

1 Tick the correct sentence in each pair.

- 1 a In conclusion, the world population is expanding at an unsustainable rate.
b In conclusion the world population is expanding at an unsustainable rate.
- 2 a If we look for example, at sport in schools.
b If we look, for example, at sport in schools.

Discourse markers are words or phrases which show how ideas in a text link together. They are often separated from the rest of the text by commas.

We usually use a comma after a phrase or an adverb which introduces a sentence:

In addition, many disabled people suffer discrimination at work.

On the other hand, the unemployment rate has fallen.

Finally, local councils need to consider the cost of recycling schemes.

Unfortunately, there were no more tickets available.

Similarly, animals kept outdoors are also vulnerable to infection.

We also use commas around certain words and phrases in the middle of a sentence:

This problem can't, however, be solved quite so simply.

There are more jobs in the city, but, of course, the cost of living is higher.

Which option you choose depends, to a certain extent, on your budget.

Water is particularly scarce in arid regions, for example/for instance, in Africa.

People who live in cold countries, such as/like Norway, have to spend more on heating.

★ Where an adverb describes an adjective, commas are not needed:

This was matched by a similarly dramatic increase in May.

However careful you are, accidents can always happen.

2 Correct the mistake below.

Inevitably there's always something you forgot.



..... something you forgot.

3 Add commas in the sentences below where needed.

- 1 What happens if for example you forget your password?
- 2 To sum up I'd like to recap the main advantages and disadvantages.
- 3 Statistics can however be misleading.
- 4 Low-lying countries such as Bangladesh are particularly at risk.
- 5 Furthermore not everyone will be able to afford to install new telephones.
- 6 Contact sports like rugby will inevitably involve more injuries.
- 7 A similarly priced house in the city centre would only have one bedroom.
- 8 We will of course reimburse any travel expenses.