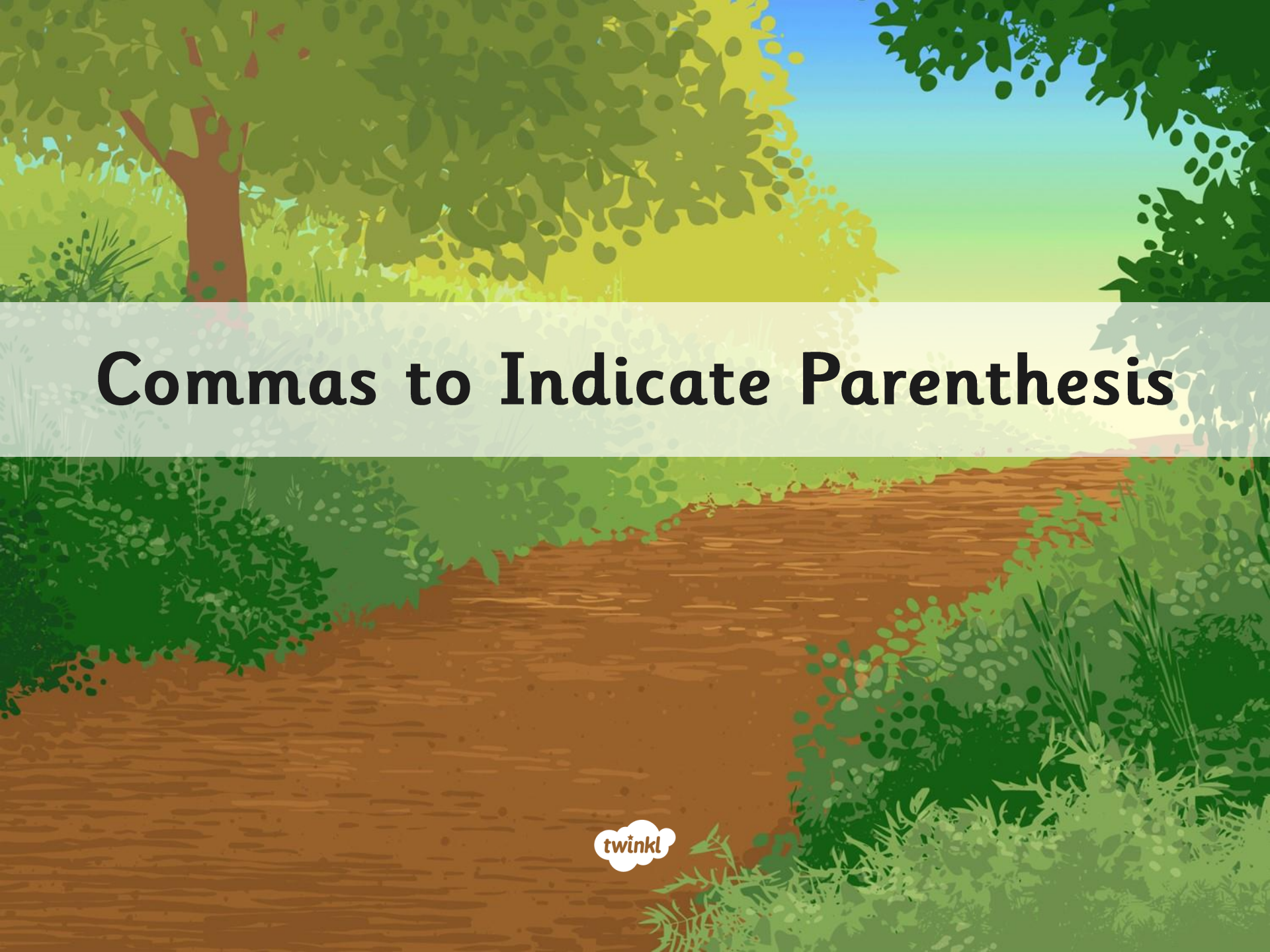
Commas to Indicate Parenthesis



Aim

- I can use commas to indicate parenthesis.

Success Criteria

- I can explain the difference between the main clause and a subordinate clause.
- I can explain that commas are used to show extra detail that has been added to a sentence.
- I can identify where commas belong.
- I can create my own sentences which use commas for parenthesis.

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Verb Prefixes Revision

Introductory Activity

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Simple and Complex Sentences

When you include different punctuation in your writing you must always keep in mind that you are trying to get your points, your message and your story across to the reader. Every choice you make in terms of words, sentences, arrangement, punctuation, has an effect — good, bad, or mediocre — on the reader. Try to plan your choices for the best effect.

Today we are going to focus on using paired commas. To fully understand how to include paired commas we must first understand simple and complex sentences.

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Simple Sentences

A simple sentence is made of one main clause = **subject** + **verb**.

A simple sentence is usually straightforward and it must make sense on its own, as it expresses a complete thought.

A simple sentence can have phrases, adjectives, and adverbs, but no subordinate clauses.

The **students** **were** sleepy.

The **helicopter** **frightened** the dogs.

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Complex Sentences

A complex sentence has at least:

- **One subordinate clause.**
- **A main clause.**

Subordinate Clauses:

- Must have their own subject and verb.
- Do not make sense on their own.
- Can come before, after, or inside of the main clause.

Main Clauses:

The more important information should always go in the main clause because the main clause always "carries" more emphasis than the subordinate clause.

The **students** **were** sleepy because **they** had been **partying** all night.

Can you identify the **main clause**?

The **helicopter** **frightened** the dogs so **they** **barked** loudly.

Can you identify the **main clause**?

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Embedded Clauses

The word embedded means 'within'.

An embedded clause is another way of using a subordinate clause – by dropping it into the middle of a sentence. This time you need two commas, one either side of the clause.

paired commas

Celia, **who loved animals**, searched for the lost cat.

embedded clause

The embedded clause is a **parenthesis**.

Parenthesis = a word or phrase inserted as an explanation or afterthought into a passage which is grammatically complete (the sentence makes sense) without it.

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Simple and Complex Sentences

Look	at the following sentences.
Write	the sentence onto your whiteboard.
Underline	the main clause (makes sense on its own).
Identify	the subordinate clause (does not make sense on its own).
Add	paired commas to identify the embedded subordinate clause.

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Simple and Complex Sentences

Sentence 1

The music, which was too loud, gave me a headache.

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Simple and Complex Sentences

Sentence 2

A young child, who had lost her mum, cried.

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Simple and Complex Sentences

Sentence 3

A bus, which was full of passengers, sped down the street.

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Simple and Complex Sentences

Sentence 4

The loaf of bread, which she bought last week, was mouldy.

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Simple and Complex Sentences

Sentence 5

The singer, dancing and jigging, sang to the audience.

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Simple and Complex Sentences

Sentence 6

The headteacher, who hated chaos, felt frustrated at the noisiness of the children.

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Embedded Clauses

Commas are used before and after embedded clauses (a group of words that includes a subject and a verb). The embedded clauses are put into a sentence to add additional detail for the reader. The embedded clauses do not make sense by themselves. Starting the embedded clause with where, which, who or when is a useful tool to help when first using embedded clauses. When we start the clause in this way we call it a relative clause.

Example:

The spy scanned his surroundings looking for danger.

Is changed to:

commas

The spy, who blended into the crowd, scanned his surroundings looking for danger.

embedded relative cause

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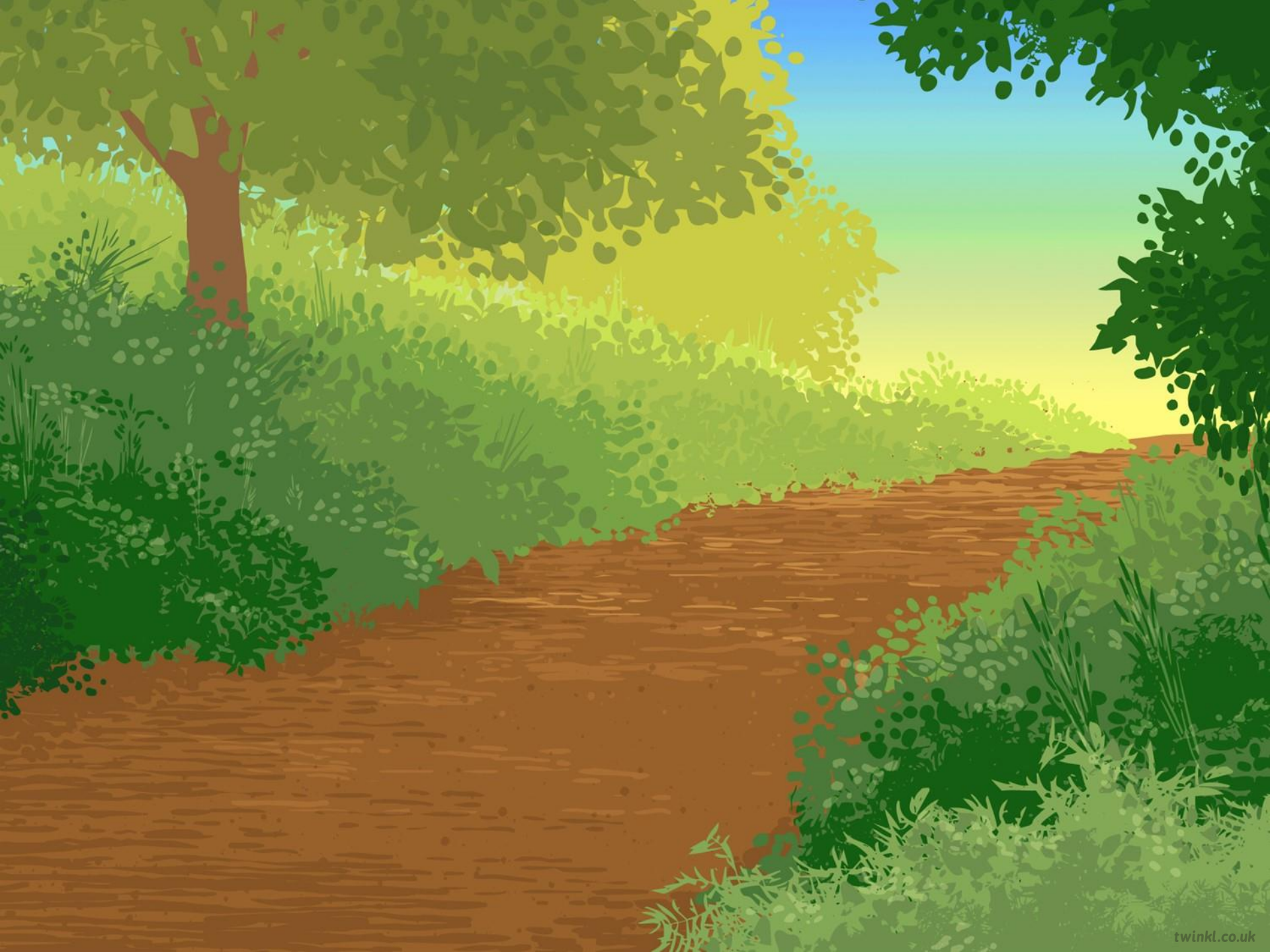
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