WHAT DOES THE PUNCTUATION SUGGEST?
Restrictive and Nonrestrictive Elements

In your writing, it's important to use commas correctly to indicate whether information is **restrictive** or **nonrestrictive**. This indication conveys meaning to your reader. Look at the examples below.

Lily's brother Jacob just started working for an architecture firm in Seattle.

*The name Jacob is not set off by commas, meaning it is **restrictive**, or necessary for the reader to understand who is being discussed. This punctuation suggests that Lily has more than one brother.*

Lily's sister, Alyssa, is starting her own bakery featuring all nature-themed desserts.

*The name Alyssa is set off by commas, meaning it is **nonrestrictive**, or not necessary for the reader to understand who is being discussed. If the name Alyssa were left out of the sentence, the reader would still know who is being discussed. This punctuation suggests that Lily has only one sister.*

Read each sentence below, paying attention to the restrictive or nonrestrictive elements. Then place an "X" beside the statement that tells what the punctuation implies.

Example: Patience and flexibility are skills that Kimberly learned from her mentor, Dr. Agius.
- **X** Kimberly has only one mentor.
- ____ Kimberly has more than one mentor.

1. Guests who have season passes will get a fifteen percent discount on merchandise in the park.
- ____ All guests get a discount.
- **X** Only some guests get a discount.

2. The fundraiser will take place at the smoothie shop downtown, which was started by two graduates of the local university.
- **X** There is only one smoothie shop downtown.
- ____ There are multiple smoothie shops downtown.

3. Our neighbor Mr. Kimura is the music teacher at the community arts school.
- ____ The speaker has only one neighbor.
- **X** The speaker has multiple neighbors.

4. Will you help me put the dishes that are broken into this basket so I can use them for a mosaic?
- ____ All of the dishes are broken.
- **X** Only some of the dishes are broken.

5. Alaina's cousin Oscar was invited to display his delicate, unique aluminum foil sculptures in the local cooking school's lobby.
- ____ Alaina has only one cousin.
- **X** Alaina has more than one cousin.

6. Daniela hosts a bonfire every year on the first day of summer at her aunt's house, which is near the lake.
- **X** Daniela's aunt has only one house.
- ____ Daniela's aunt has more than one house.

7. The Sierra Nevada mountain range that is in Spain is home to some of the southernmost ski resorts in Europe.
- ____ There is only one Sierra Nevada mountain range.
- **X** There is more than one Sierra Nevada mountain range.

8. Last summer, the museum's curator Joshua spent weeks planning and creating an engaging exhibit for visitors.
- ____ Joshua was the only museum curator.
- **X** Joshua was one of several museum curators.

9. The guests gathered on the aquarium's observation deck, where visitors have sweeping views of the bay, to look for orcas.
- **X** The aquarium has only one observation deck.
- ____ The aquarium has multiple observation decks.

10. Establishing a consistent sleep schedule can be helpful for new parents, who often experience sleep deprivation.
- **X** New parents in general experience sleep deprivation.
- ____ Only some new parents experience sleep deprivation.