

# Good Writing Practice

## Syntactic punctuation distraction

### Comma: Over-usage Part 2

#### SECTION EDITORS



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#### Introduction

**C**oordinated noncore sentence constituents are likely to be disrupted by unnecessary comma punctuation.

#### Between coordinated adjectives

##### Example

(Introduction section: research problem background)

The *soluble*, truncated form of HA was generated by substitution of codon L (20) for the first trans membrane residue (T514) containing the stop codon TGA.

##### Revision

The soluble truncated form of HA was generated by substitution of codon L (20) for the first trans membrane residue (T514) containing the stop codon TGA.

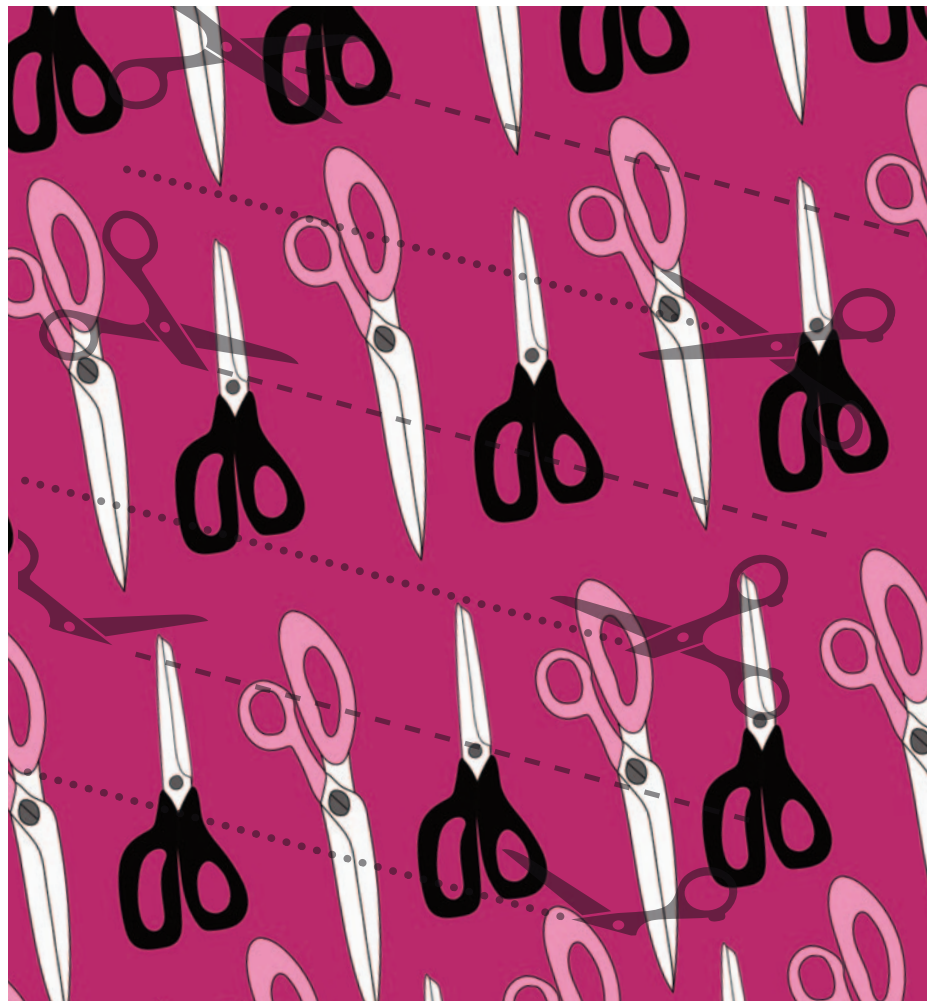
##### Notes

The comma-separation is considered acceptable because the meanings are coordinatable (i.e., *soluble* and *truncated* each modifies *form*) –not cumulative (*soluble* modifies *truncated form*). However, *soluble* is emphasised by its comma-marked segregation.

*Soluble* and *truncated* are adjectives of form, so their positions are inter-changeable, and the adjectives are coordinatable by *and*.

Another consideration is whether the sequence *soluble truncated* does adhere to placement of adjectivals before a noun, whereby the innateness of the noun increases with proximity; thus, *truncated* is more innately descriptive of form than is *soluble*, and *soluble* may even be a consequence of *truncated*.

Another type of distraction is a slight



misreading possibility that two forms (*soluble* and *truncated*) exist; however, the singular word form and verb *was* indicate otherwise. Overall, usage of either the comma or the *and* is distracting. Both may be eliminated.

#### Between parallel noun clauses

##### Example

(Introduction section: hypothesis)

It is possible that these two types of tumours originate from common *pax3-* and *pax-7-* expressing cells, and that subsequent genetic alterations drive the cells into different outcomes.

##### Revision

It is possible (1) that these two types of tumours originate from common *pax3-* and *pax-7-* expressing cells and (2) that subsequent genetic alterations drive the cells into different outcomes.

##### Notes

The comma between the two dependent noun clauses is disruptive by segregation, the disruption indicating a contrast. However, numbering the coordinating noun clauses coheres these clauses, their parallelism, and their relation.