

ANSWER KEY

Commas, Conjunctions, and Modifiers

1. Answer: a

Explanation: The comma is omitted before *and* because the conjunction separates the verbs in a compound predicate, but commas must set off the modifying phrase.

2. Answer: a

Explanation: A comma is inserted before *and* because the conjunction separates independent clauses, but no commas are used around the modifying clause because it is essential to the meaning of the sentence. The sentence cannot read, “I forgot to set my alarm, and I would have been late for school.”

3. Answer: a

Explanation: A comma is inserted before *and* because the conjunction separates independent clauses, and one comma follows the modifying clause—*if she hadn't arrived for dinner early*—since the clause is long but essential to the meaning of the sentence. The sentence cannot read, “She forgot to confirm her reservation, and the restaurant would have given away her table.”

4. Answer: c

Explanation: A comma precedes the conjunction joining the two independent clauses, and either commas or dashes can be used to set off the parenthetical element.

5. Answer: c

Explanation: When a transitional adverb, such as *unfortunately*, blends into a sentence, as in *a*, you could use commas around the term if you wish to emphasize the adverb, but they aren't necessary. If the adverb separates the verb from its object, as in *b*, then commas are needed.