

If you're like me, one of the few things you learnt at primary school about grammar and punctuation might be that you should **never** put a comma before an "and". But it's simply not true, although many people think it is.

We've just seen that you can join two related sentences with a comma if you have a conjunction. And "and" is a conjunction. In a minute we're going to see another case where you can put commas before "and"s to aid readability. If you're in any doubt at all, let's read this sentence together:

"They needed a flat that was affordable but also within easy reach of work and Lewisham with a DLR station..." Oh – doesn't sound quite right, does it? Doesn't work. That's because it needs a comma before the "and". So let's read it again (and I've also added a comma before the "but" because it's a conjunction):

"They needed a flat that was affordable, but also within easy reach of work, and Lewisham, with a DLR station, was perfect."

So that sentence actually has four commas. Is that a problem? Is it too many? I don't think so. If it makes it easier to read, then it's absolutely fine.