Absurd meanings!

If a comma is left out or inserted in the wrong place in a series, it can change the meaning of the sentence. This meaning can be quite absurd!

1. Read each sentence. One comma has been either left out, added or placed in the wrong position. Explain the meaning of each sentence with the incorrect comma and identify where the comma should be. Then rewrite the sentence with the comma in the correct place.

(a) Mum finds great delight in cooking her family and the cat.
Meaning: 

__________________________

Sentence with comma placed correctly:
__________________________

(b) At the zoo we spotted a tiger prowling, otters diving, a giraffe eating carrots and an enormous python.
Meaning: 

__________________________

Sentence with comma placed correctly:
__________________________

(c) The ingredients for goat’s cheese salad include baby spinach, sliced pears, walnuts, goat’s cheese, lemon juice and olive oil.
Meaning: 

__________________________

Sentence with comma placed correctly:
__________________________

Commas with clauses and phrases – 1

Commas are used to identify a phrase or a clause in a sentence which provides the reader with extra information. If this extra information is taken out, the sentence will still make sense.

Example 1:
Astronomy, which comes from the two Greek words ‘astro’ meaning ‘star’ and ‘nomy’ meaning ‘law’, is the study of the universe and all things in it.

If the clause between the commas is taken out, the sentence still makes sense:
Astronomy is the study of the universe and all things in it.

Example 2:
Mercury, the smallest planet in our solar system, is about the size of Earth’s moon.

If the phrase between the commas is taken out, the sentence still makes sense:
Mercury is about the size of Earth’s moon.

Example 3:
The planet Mars is smaller than Earth, about half its size.

If the phrase after the comma is taken out, the sentence still makes sense:
The planet Mars is smaller than Earth.

A comma can be used after an introductory clause in a sentence.

Introductory clauses often begin with the words: as, if, when, because, after, since, although, whenever, before, though, until.

Examples:
Although Mercury is the closest planet to the sun, Venus is the hottest. 
Because Venus is so hot, nothing can live there. 
As Jupiter is by far the biggest planet, it is known as the king of planets.