This book includes several full-length essays as examples.

Day 31
1. Here are the rules of commas.
   - Use a comma when separating items in a series. Some people drop the comma before the last and, but it is not wrong to use it, and sometimes wrong to not use it, so I say always put a comma before the last item in a series.
     ▪ We stopped at the store, the gas station, and the post office.
   - Use a comma between interchangeable adjectives, when you could put “and” between them.
     ▪ You can say the feeble, old man or the old, feeble man.
     ▪ the feeble and old man – the old and feeble man
     ▪ You most naturally say the three adorable puppies, not the adorable three puppies.
     ▪ The three and adorable puppies? No.
   - Don’t use a comma where a semicolon or period should go. It’s a run-on sentence called a comma splice.
     ▪ Go home quickly, mom needs you. WRONG
     ▪ Go home quickly. Mom needs you.
   - When two independent clauses are joined with a conjunction, then you do use a comma before the conjunction.
     ▪ I need to go, but I am not ready yet.
   - If more than one verb is used with a subject, then a comma is not generally used before the second verb. In general, you never put one comma between a subject and verb.
     ▪ He packed up his things and left the house.
   - A comma follows an introductory dependent clause, one that can’t stand alone.
     ▪ If I do this, you better be there to help me out.
     ▪ When I get home, we’ll practice.
     ▪ A comma isn’t needed if the parts of the sentence are reversed.
     ▪ We’ll practice when I get home.
   - Sometimes the comma after introductory phrases, especially very short ones is optional. However, there are many words and short phrases that introduce a sentence alone that are followed by a comma.
     ▪ After dinner we’ll play a game.
     ▪ Yes, I believe so.
     ▪ For instance, this will do.
   - Always use a comma where it is needed to make the meaning clear.
     ▪ Monday night football was cancelled. Monday night, football was cancelled.
     ▪ Was football cancelled Monday night, or is football played Monday nights cancelled for good?
   - Commas separate out appositives, extra info that is unnecessary to the sentences.
     ▪ Jill, who is loving her job, is in charge of check-in.
The key is unnecessary information. If it’s needed to identify what you are talking about, then it is necessary.

- Commas surround **words that interrupt** a sentence.
  - I came here today, as you know, on a very important mission.

- Commas **surround names when the person is being addressed**, even if they are titles or nicknames or terms of endearment.
  - Honey, could you help me with this?
  - Thank you, Mr. President.
  - Yes, Ella, I will.

- Commas **separate date words and numbers**. If a full date is in the middle of a sentence, a comma comes after the year as well.
  - The acceptance of the Declaration of Independence on July 2, 1776, was a turning point in history.
  - Monday, June 28th is an important day.

- Use a comma **before and after a state when used with its city**.
  - I have visited the historical sites in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, many times.
    - Think of the state as an unnecessary description and that’s why it is sectioned off.

- Use a comma **before and after an abbreviation at the end of a name or title**.
  - Jennifer Greene, Ph.D., is here as the speaker.
  - Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., was an influential leader.

- Use a comma **before quotation marks when they are part of the same sentence**.
  - “Yes, sir,” he answered, “I would like that.”
  - Exception is when the words in quotes aren’t being spoken.
    - “Whatever” is an overused term.

- Use a comma to **separate a statement and question and contrasting parts of a sentence**.
  - I believe him, don’t you?
  - I have taste, but you don’t.

2. On your worksheet today, you’ll have to write sentences using some of these rules. Your worksheet will tell you which ones.

**Day 51**

1. There are two parts to your worksheet today. Go over the dialogue lesson below and try the activity in the workbook to practice punctuating dialogue.

2. Here are two different ways of punctuating dialogue from the book *The King Will Make a Way*.
   - The first example is the most common way.

   “Our spies tell us that in the morning Vulpine will condescend to be among the common folk,” Stone mocked.
“Stone mocked” is a speech tag. This type of tag is preceded by a comma. If you were telling this to someone you would say, “Stone mocked that our spies…”

If you were telling someone a story, you wouldn’t say, “It’s number five. He said.” You would say, “He said it was number five.”

- You can see how this type of tag is part of the sentence.
- The comma (instead of a period) keeps it as part of the sentence.

By the way, if it was a question or exclamation, you would keep those punctuation marks.

- “She said what?” she asked again.
- Notice the lower case she…remember it’s all part of the same sentence.

3. A second example:
   - “They are greedy for money and power and despise virtue.” Stone rose and began methodically pacing the length of the room.
   - This quote is followed by an action tag. It’s not a he said, she said tag. It’s describing what the character did. This type of tag is preceded by a period, or question mark, or exclamation point. It is its own sentence.
   - You could also tell who’s speaking by using a description. This is also its own sentence and doesn’t use the comma like a speech tag.

- Rachel’s eyes were shining. “I’ll be there.”
- A speech tag would look like this: Rachel’s eyes were shining as she said, “I’ll be there.”

4. Use the dialogue below to review these grammar rules.
   - Each new speaker starts a new paragraph. (1-6)
   - Commas, periods, etc. go inside of the quotation marks. (1-6)
   - Quotation marks enclose everything that is being said. (1-6)
   - Quotation marks can close and then open again in the middle of a sentence. (5)
   - Commas end most quotations if they are followed by a speech tag. (2, 5)
   - Periods instead of commas should be used if the tag is not a speech tag. (4, 6)
   - You can use an exclamation point or question mark instead of a comma. (1)
   - The punctuation goes inside the quotation marks. (1-6)
   - A speech tag starts with a lowercase letter unless it is a proper noun. (1, 5)

1 – “Hey!” called Mary to get Charity’s attention. “What’s up?”
2 - “Nothing,” Charity answered. “Who’s this?”
3 - “This is—” Mary started to say, but the new girl jumped in.
4 - “I’m Susan.” She was taller than Charity and looked her in the eyes. “I’m her new neighbor. I’m starting school here.”
5 - “Nice to meet you,” she said with a smile, “and welcome.”
6 - “Thanks.” Susan returned the grin.

5. Then choose someone from history whom you have recently studied or that you find interesting. This is the start to a biographical essay you will be writing. Today, find an interesting quote by that person.
• Onto your workbook page copy the quote as well as the title, author, and date written from where you got the quote.

Day 100
1. Edit your essay.
2. Fill out a critique of your essay using the worksheet in your workbook.
3. Publish your essay when you are ready.
4. Save this in your portfolio.

Day 101
1. Today you are editing sentences.
2. There are a bunch of homophones, words that sound the same but are spelled differently. If you are reading and it doesn’t make sense, it probably needs a different word in there.
3. Also, be on the lookout for punctuation mistakes and missing quotation marks. Don’t forget your lessons on pronoun choice!

Day 102
1. This sentence is in your workbook.
   • One smooth path led into the meadow, and here the little folk congregated; one swept across the pond, where skaters were darting about like water-bugs; and the third, from the very top of the steep hill, ended abruptly at a rail fence on the high bank above the road. (from Jack and Jill, by Alcott)
2. It is describing three different sledding paths the children could take. The first was for the smaller children. Look at the punctuation. There is a list of three sledding paths. The list is divided by semi-colons, not commas.
3. On your worksheet, circle the first comma. What is its function? It is needed because before and after the comma are two independent clauses; they could both be complete sentences. “One smooth path led into the meadow.” “Here the little folk congregated.” The comma always comes before the conjunction, e.g. and, or, but, so.
4. When you are listing things and use commas within the listed items, then you use semi-colons to separate the items on your list. Normally, you would use commas to separate items in a list.
   • “One smooth path led into the meadow, and here the little folk congregated;”
   • There is a comma in the middle of the first item on the list, so we need a semi-colon after it before we list the next thing.
5. Underline all the verbs. She uses great verbs that describe, not just tell, what the characters are doing.
   • How is “swept” across the pond better than “goes” across the pond?
   • How is “darting” about better than “moving” about?
6. Circle the next comma.
   • “one swept across the pond, where skaters were darting about like water-bugs;”
   • This comma separates off unnecessary information. The author is saying that kind of as an aside, she’s not really giving us information on which pond as if we’d be confused if she didn’t clarify. She’s just adding a description.
7. “Skaters were darting about like water bugs” is a simile. Skaters are being compared to water bugs using like or as.
8. Write a simile describing skaters. There’s a space on your worksheet.
9. Circle the next two commas. These two are a pair. The sentence could be, “And the third ended abruptly at a rail fence…” She adds in a description of the third.
10. Now, you write a list of three things you are going to do today. Write them on every other line so that you have room to add words. You might want to use a pencil for this. There may be erasing involved!
   • e.g. Today I’m going to wake up, make my bed, and drink a cup of tea.
11. Now add a comma to each thing on your list. (You’ll need to add words.) You’ll also need to add semi-colons.
   • e.g. Today I’m going to wake up, not that I have a choice; make my bed, if tossing back my covers can count; and drink a cup of tea, a warm, lovely cup of tea.
12. Now, add a simile.
   • e.g. Today I’m going to wake up, not that I have a choice; make my bed, if tossing back my covers like a Matador whipping around his bull cape counts; and drink a cup of tea, a warm, lovely cup of tea.

Day 103
1. This paragraph is in your workbook for today.
   • “Well, no; it usually takes twenty-one days for bones to knit, and young ones make quick work of it,” answered the doctor, with a last scientific tuck to the various bandages, which made Jack feel like a hapless chicken trussed for the spit. (from Jack and Jill, by Alcott)
2. Circle the quotation marks. Quotation marks go around whatever someone is saying. Whenever a new speaker begins, a new paragraph starts.
3. Circle the first comma. This comma comes after an introductory exclamation.
   • Examples: Well, Yes, No, Actually…
4. Circle the semi-colon. This is used as a period. You could use a period there. Semi-colons are used a lot more in older writing than in modern writing.
5. Circle the next comma. This again separates two independent clauses. What are the two clauses that could stand alone as their own sentences?
6. Circle the next comma and quotation marks. You always use a comma instead of a period when closing out a quote before a speech tag, like Susan said. You are allowed to use exclamation points and question marks, though. The punctuation always comes before the quotation marks.
7. Circle the next two commas. Here we see again the sectioning off of additional information. These are dependent clauses, meaning they couldn’t be their own sentence. “With a last scientific tuck to the various bandages” doesn’t work as a sentence.
8. In the last clause we read another simile: “made Jack feel like a hapless chicken trussed for the spit.” Here is a before and after picture of a chicken trussed for the spit. Do you see that there is string on it, squeezing it together?
9. Your turn. Write a comment someone is saying. Start on the second line.
   • e.g. “I’ll be home by noon,” she said as she walked out the door.
10. Add an introductory expression (and comma.)
    • e.g. “Wait, no, change of plans, I’ll be home by noon,” she said as she walked out the door.
11. Add a conjunction and independent clause to your quote.
    • e.g. “Wait, no, change of plans, I’ll be home by noon, or I’ll call you,” she said as she walked out the door.
12. Add a comma and additional description to the end of your sentence.
    • e.g. “Wait, no, change of plans, I’ll be home by noon, or I’ll call you,” she said as she walked out the door, letting it slam behind her.
    • e.g. “Wait, no, change of plans, I’ll be home by noon, or I’ll call you,” she said as she walked out the door, letting it slam behind her like the crash of thunder when the storm is near.
14. Make sure you have all your commas and quotation marks.
   Answers: #5 It usually takes twenty-one days for bones to knit. Young ones make quick work of it.