

## The Oxford Comma

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### Oxford Comma

Ezra Koenig, *Vampire Weekend*, 2008

Who gives a fuck about an Oxford comma?  
I've seen those English dramas too, they're cruel  
So if there's any other way to spell the word  
It's fine with me, with me

Why would you speak to me that way?  
Especially when I always said that I  
Haven't got the words for you  
All your diction dripping with disdain  
Through the pain  
I always tell the truth

Who gives a fuck about an Oxford comma?  
I climbed to Dharamsala too, I did  
I met the highest Lama, his accent sounded fine  
To me, to me

Check your handbook, it's no trick  
Take the chapstick, put it on your lips  
Crack a smile, adjust my tie  
Know your boyfriend, unlike other guys

Why would you lie about how much coal you have?  
Why would you lie about something dumb like that?  
Why would you lie about anything at all?  
First the window, then it's to the wall  
Lil' Jon, he always tells the truth

Check your passport, it's no trick  
Take the chapstick, put it on your lips  
Crack a smile, adjust my tie  
Know your butler, unlike other guys

Why would you lie about how much coal you have?  
Why would you lie about something dumb like that?  
Why would you lie about anything at all?  
First the window, then it's through the wall  
Why would you tape my conversations?  
Show your paintings at the United Nations  
Lil' Jon, he always tells the truth

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Why would you lie about how much coal you have? Lying about how much coal you have can easily be done through the omission of an oxford comma.

An oxford comma is the comma right before the *and* in a series.

*I have 100 pounds of iron, 50 pounds of steel, and coal.*  
*I have 100 pounds of iron, 50 pounds of steel and coal.*

In the first example, the amount of coal is not specified, while in the second example there are clearly 50 pounds of coal. By omitting the oxford comma, you can let people think that you have 50 pounds of coal, even if you do not, as the oxford comma is often viewed as optional.

But why would you lie about how much coal you have? Why would you lie about something dumb like that?

~HoppyChris, discussion of "Oxford Comma" on songmeanings.net, 2/04/2010

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Or, another example:

