

WHAT IS A COMMA?

A comma is a punctuation mark that identifies a break between items within a sentence. Commas separate sentence clauses, identify extra information about a subject, and divide items in a series of words.

Comma Rules. Here are some basic rules for comma usage that you can follow to ensure that your writing is grammatically correct. Add your own examples to test your understanding.

Rule	Description	Example
1. Use a comma to separate two independent clauses that are joined by a coordinating conjunction.	Commas are used to join one independent clause (a group of words with a subject, object, and verb) to another independent clause within a sentence. If the sentence has two independent clauses, join them by placing a comma after the first part of the sentence and following it with a coordinating conjunction such as "and" or "but." Coordinating conjunctions include <i>and, or, for, so, nor, but, yet</i> .	
2. Use a comma after an introductory phrase.	A comma follows a phrase at the beginning of a sentence that depends on the next clause of the sentence to make meaning. The second clause is called an independent clause.	
3. Use a comma after a conjunctive adverb.	A conjunctive adverb is a transitional word that can either join two related clauses or introduce a sentence. Some conjunctive adverbs include <i>however, nevertheless, furthermore, also, hence, anyway, and moreover</i> . Use a comma after a conjunctive adverb whether it comes at the beginning of a sentence or in the middle.	
4. Use commas to separate items in a list.	These items could be adjectives, adverbs, or nouns. Known as the Oxford Comma, this comma is technically optional. When dividing a list of items, the Oxford Comma is the final comma in a list of subject words, following the second last item which usually precedes " <i>and</i> or another coordinating conjunction."	

<p>5. Use commas to separate nonrestrictive clauses.</p>	<p>A nonrestrictive clause provides nonessential information about the main clause of a sentence. Nonrestrictive clauses, which typically reveal additional information about a subject of the independent clause, are placed after a noun in the clause and set off by commas. Setting off the clause with commas makes it similar to a parenthetical phrase.</p>	
<p>6. Use commas to separate appositives from a subject.</p>	<p>An appositive is a noun or noun phrase that adds information to a noun it follows. The appositive is set off by commas to indicate that it is not essential to the sentence, but, like the nonrestrictive clause, provides useful information.</p>	
<p>7. Use commas to set off a direct quotation.</p>	<p>Use a comma to introduce and end a quotation when it does not fall at the end of a sentence.</p>	
<p>8. Use commas to separate a specific date from the rest of the sentence.</p>	<p>Use a comma to separate the day from the year and another comma to separate the year from the rest of the sentence in a month/day/year format.</p>	