**Commas ( , )**

1. Use commas to separate items in a series.
   1. We like apples, oranges, bananas, and strawberries.
   2. We drove to zoo, saw many animals, and bought souvenirs.
2. Do not separate items that are used as pairs.
   1. We had hamburgers, macaroni and cheese, and Coke for dinner.
3. Use commas to separate two or more adjectives before a noun. If you can use the word “and” between the words and reverse the order of the words without the sentence sounding odd, use commas.
   1. Montresor leads Fortunato to the dark, cold vaults (cold, dark vaults works)
   2. Brian is an honest, warm person. (Brian is a warm, honest person also works.)
   3. He bought her an expensive diamond necklace. (*He bought her a diamond, expensive necklace* does not work).
4. Use commas before *and, but, or, nor, for, so,* and *yet* when they join two independent clauses (phrase that could stand alone as a sentence).
   1. We wanted to go fishing, but the pond was frozen.
   2. She had to get her hair cut, so she drove downtown.
   3. A good money manager controls expenses and invests surplus dollars. (*Invests surplus dollars* is not a complete thought, so a comma is not used.)
   4. I fed the dog and put it out for the night.
5. Use commas to set off nonessential (unimportant) clauses and phrases. Do not use commas for essential clauses.
   1. Our YMCA, which was built in the 1950’s, is undergoing remodeling and repairs.
   2. My brother attends Warm Springs Middle School, which has an enrollment of 541.
   3. I spoke with Marilyn Greer, who manages the bank.
   4. For camp the children needed clothes that were washable.
   5. For camp the children needed sturdy shoes, which were expensive.
   6. The woman with the red flower is my mother.
6. Use commas after introductory elements.
   1. Oops, I dropped the ketchup.
   2. Yes, I’ve seen that movie.
   3. Well, she should have asked her parents first.
   4. Having read the book *Cold Mountain*, we went to see the movie.
   5. Until he meets Juliet, Romeo is madly in love with Rosaline.
   6. Because she was late, she had to get a tardy note.
   7. While you were sleeping, I went to the store.
   8. Angered by her brother’s remarks, she stormed out of the room.
7. Use commas to set off elements that interrupt a sentence or contrasting elements.
   1. Dr. Ganderbai, in fact, worked very hard.
   2. The storm, the worst this winter, raged for days.
   3. Linda, pass me the salt.
   4. I’ve heard, Clara, that dentists make a large salary.
   5. He was not angry, on the contrary, he was quite nice.
   6. Human beings, unlike oysters, frequently reveal their emotions.
   7. However, in many Eastern cultures the snake is revered.
   8. Hindus, for examples, have deep respect for the snake.
   9. Alfred Hitchcock, the well-known director, died in 1980.
   10. The climax of this movie, a scene at a carousel, thrills audiences.
8. Use commas for dates, addresses, salutations, and abbreviations.
   1. On August 28th, 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke before a crowd of a quarter of a million people in Washington, D.C.
   2. Dear Al,
   3. Sincerely,
   4. Hunter applied for the job on Wednesday, June 12th, 1996 but turned it down on June 14th because it paid only minimum wage.
   5. The letter from Trinity was in a purple envelope.
   6. The letter from Springfield, Illinois, was dated December 2nd, 1998.
   7. Our address is 25 Peralta Road, Oakland, CA 94611 (Commas are not placed between the state and zip code.

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