

## Comma

1. Use commas **between three or more items in a list**. Those items may be single words or phrases.

**The basket held apples, oranges, and bananas.**

**The director hires workers, writes quarterly reports, and manages the budget.**

2. Use a comma **before a coordinating conjunction that joins two independent clauses**.

Note: There are seven coordinating conjunctions: *for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, *yet*, and *so*.

Note: An independent clause is a word group that can stand alone as a sentence.

**The reporter likes the semicolon, but the editor prefers the period.**

**A storm was brewing, so the picnickers decided to pack up the baskets.**

3. Use a comma **after an introductory word group**.

**When the tide is high, people should leave the beach.**

**During the summer after her senior year, she worked as lifeguard.**

4. Use commas to **set off conjunctive adverbs and transitional phrases**: *therefore*, *however*, *consequently*, *for example*, *on the other hand*, *in fact*, and others.

**Grammar, as a matter of fact, is her specialty.**

**Nevertheless, the army continued its advance.**

5. Use commas to **separate phrases of attribution from quoted material**.

**The man in the back of the room said, "I can't hear the lecturer."**

**"English teachers especially are prone to stress-related illnesses," declares the writer of a recent newspaper editorial.**

6. Use commas to **set off contrasted elements**.

**The dash, unlike the semicolon, can indicate a dramatic shift in thought.**

**That girl looks like her mother, not her father.**

7. Use commas to separate cumulative adjectives, that is, adjectives that can take the word “and” between them.

**The chairperson is a friendly, energetic leader.**

**It’s nice to sit in a warm, comfortable chair.**

8. Use commas to set off nonrestrictive elements.

**Gandhi, a fervent believer in nonviolent protest, has inspired many leaders.**

**The youngest brother, believing that he could fly, jumped off the roof of the playhouse.**