



How to use commas



Workshop of Reading
Comprehension and Writing

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Rule 1

- To avoid confusion, use commas to separate words and word groups with a series of three or more.

Example: My \$10 million estate is to be split among my husband, daughter, son, and nephew..



Rule 2

- Use a comma to separate two adjectives when the word *and* can be inserted between them.
- **Examples:** *He is a strong, healthy man.*



Rule 3

- Use a comma when an *-ly* adjective is used with other adjectives.
- . ***Examples:*** *Felix was a lonely, young boy.*



Rule 4

- Use a comma to separate the day of the month from the year and after the year.
- **Example:** *Kathleen met her husband on December 5, 2003, in Mill Valley, California.*



Rule 5

- Use a comma to separate the city from the state and after the state in a document. If you use the two-letter capitalized form of a state in a document, you do not need a comma after the state.
- **NOTE:** With addresses on envelopes mailed via the post office, do not use any punctuation.
- **Example:** *I lived in San Francisco, California, for 20 years.*

I lived in San Francisco, CA for 20 years.



Rule 6

- Use commas to set off expressions that interrupt sentence flow.
- **Example:** *I am, as you have probably noticed, very nervous about this.*



Rule 7

- When starting a sentence with a weak clause, use a comma after it. Conversely, do not use a comma when the sentence starts with a strong clause followed by a weak clause.
- **Examples:** *If you are not sure about this, let me know now. Let me know now if you are not sure about this.*



Rule 8

- Use a comma after phrases of more than three words that begin a sentence. If the phrase has fewer than three words, the comma is optional.
- **Examples:** *To apply for this job, you must have previous experience. On February 14 many couples give each other candy or flowers.*

OR

On February 14, many couples give each other candy or flowers.



Rule 9

- If something or someone is sufficiently identified, the description following it is considered nonessential and should be surrounded by commas.
- **Examples:** *Freddy, who has a limp, was in an auto accident.*



Rule 10

- Use a comma to separate a statement from a question.
- ***Example:*** *I can go, can't I?*