

Quick Guide to Comma Rules

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Use a comma with:

1. Independent clauses when used with and, but, for, nor, so, yet

Example: The game was over, but the crowd refused to leave.

2. Introductory words, clauses, or phrases

Example: While I was eating, the cat scratched at the door.

3. Non-essential words, clauses, or phrases

Example: This restaurant has an exciting atmosphere. The food, on the other hand, is rather bland.

4. Three or more words, clauses, or phrases written in a series

Example: The Constitution establishes the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government.

5. Two or more adjectives that describe the same noun

Example: He was a difficult, stubborn child.

6. Contrasted coordinate elements near the end of a sentence

Example: He was merely ignorant, not stupid.

7. Phrases at the end of the sentence that refer to the beginning or middle of the sentence

Example: Nancy waved enthusiastically at the docking ship, laughing joyously.

8. Geographical names, items in dates, addresses, and titles in names.

Example: Rachel B. Lake, MD, will be the principal speaker.

9. Quotation

Example: John said without emotion, "I'll see you tomorrow."

10. Wherever necessary to prevent confusion or misreading

Example: To George, Harrison had been a sort of idol.

Rules and examples obtained from Purdue Owl:

Extended Rules for Using Commas. (2019). Purdue Online Writing Lab. Retrieved from

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/punctuation/commas/extended_rules_for_commas.html