

# Comma Sense

Good writers commonly use commas. Here are a few rules to help you use commas correctly:

1. **Use a comma before a conjunction (*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*) to join two independent clauses.**

*Example:* I wanted to buy the game, but I forgot to bring my gift card.

2. **Use a comma after an introductory element.**

*Example:* When I hit the home run, I felt a great sense of accomplishment.

3. **Use commas to separate items in a series of three or more things.**

*Example:* I brought my favorite snacks to the party: chocolate chip cookies, popcorn, and raisins.

4. **Use a pair of commas in the middle of a sentence to set off words or phrases that are not essential elements of the sentence.**

*Example:* The flute, which is my favorite instrument, has the most harmonious sound.

5. **Use a comma to separate a person, place, or thing that is being spoken to directly from the rest of the sentence.**

*Example:* I'm not sure, Jeff, what you meant by that. Lisa, did you understand what Jeff meant?

**Directions:** Add the missing commas to the sentences below.

1. Pasco our tour guide helped the group to better understand the plants in the rainforest.

**NOTE:** Add commas to show that Pasco was the tour guide—not to show that Pasco is being spoken to.

2. After I spend a week in England I am going to travel to Scotland for two weeks.
3. I could hardly wait to get to the park which is about an hour away and start riding roller coasters!
4. Before hiking the trail I needed to get the proper shoes an appropriate hat and a cold bottle of water.

**Directions:** Read each pair of sentences below. Place an **X** in front of the one in which the commas are used correctly.

5. \_\_\_ a. On vacation, Sam and I dove into 12-foot waves, rode scooters through town, and ate gallons of chocolate ice cream.  
\_\_\_ b. On vacation Sam, and I dove into 12-foot waves, rode scooters, through town, and ate gallons of chocolate ice cream.
6. \_\_\_ a. Nora took Jacks, her 9-month-old puppy, for a run on the beach.  
\_\_\_ b. Nora, took Jacks, her 9-month-old puppy, for a run on the beach.
7. \_\_\_ a. I'll see you next week, Grandma.  
\_\_\_ b. I'll see you, next week Grandma.

**Directions:** Write one sentence as an example for each comma rule below. Refer to the rules and example sentences at the beginning of this activity to help you.

**8. Rule:** Place a comma before a conjunction to join two independent clauses.

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**9. Rule:** Use a comma after an introductory element.

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**10. Rule:** Use commas to separate items in a series of three or more things.

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**11. Rule:** Use a pair of commas in the middle of a sentence to set off words or phrases that are not essential elements of the sentence.

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**12. Rule:** Use a comma to separate a person, place, or thing that is being spoken to directly from the rest of the sentence.

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