

COMMA

1.- Most authorities recommend a comma after the first digit of a four-digit number. The exceptions include years, page numbers, and street addresses.	We sold 1,270 rare books last year; the most expensive sold for \$5,255.50.
2.- When a degree or certification is shown after a person's name, it should be set off with commas.	The report was prepared by Christopher Smith, PhD.
3.- When directly addressing someone, the person's name or title should be set off with commas.	We could not have done it without you, Lisa.
4.- When a date consists of the day of the month followed by the year, the day of the month should be followed by a comma. When the day of the week is provided before the month, the day of the week should be followed by a comma.	The store closed its doors for good on Wednesday, October 15, 1958.
5.- Commas should be used to separate geographic elements, as in the examples below. The final geographic element should also be followed by a comma when it appears in the middle of a sentence.	The mayor of New York was the first guest to arrive; the mayor of Athens, Georgia, was the last to arrive.
6.- The use of commas in lists is well established. In this usage, the comma separates a series of words, phrases, or independent clauses.	For your entree, you may choose vegetarian pasta, beef, chicken, or salmon.
7.- When a noun is modified by more than one adjective, each of which independently modifies the noun, the adjectives should be separated by a comma. In this usage, the comma substitutes for the conjunction and. If sequential adjectives do not individually modify a noun, they should not be separated by a comma.	The wine offered a fragrant, captivating bouquet. (The wine offered a fragrant and captivating bouquet.) He held a bright red balloon. (The balloon is bright red, not bright and red.)
8.- After lists, the most important function of the comma is to set off nonrestrictive or nonessential information.	I will give the document to my brother, Tom. (The writer has only one brother. The brother's name is nonessential and therefore set off with a comma.) I will give the document to my brother Tom. (The writer has more than one brother. In this case, the specific brother—Tom—is essential information and should not be set off with a comma.)
9.- When a word or phrase occurs at the beginning of a sentence, a comma should usually separate it from the main clause.	To be honest, I didn't enjoy the food.
10.- When a word or phrase follows the main clause at the end of a sentence, it should normally be set off with a comma.	I found the painting rather dull, to be honest.
11.- When a nonessential word or phrase occurs	Your work has been, frankly, awful.

in the middle of a sentence, it should be set off with commas.	
12.- Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction that joins two independent clauses. Exception to the rule: When the independent clauses are closely connected and short, you may omit the comma.	She purchased the car, but she declined the extended warranty. Elizabeth flew to the conference and Nancy drove.
13.- Do not use a comma before a coordinating conjunction if the sentence contains only one independent clause. Exception to the rule: If omitting the comma leads to confusion or lack of clarity, insert the comma.	Are you traveling in first class or in business class? The alumni's fundraising was better this year than last, and better than expected.
14.- If the dependent clause comes before the independent clause, separate it with a comma.	If you can't see without your glasses, you shouldn't be driving.
15.- When a sentence begins with two dependent clauses that both apply to the subsequent independent clause, insert only a single comma after the second dependent clause.	If you eat a balanced diet and exercise for a few hours each day, you will feel healthier.
16.- If the independent clause comes before the dependent clause, omit the comma. Exception to the rule: If the dependent clause is not essential to the meaning of the sentence, it should be set off with a comma.	You shouldn't be driving if you can't see without your glasses. I cannot agree with his position on that issue, though I don't doubt his sincerity. (Not doubting his sincerity is not the reason I cannot agree with his position; it is merely an additional piece of information.)
17.- If the dependent clause occurs in the middle of a sentence, use commas if it is nonessential; do not use commas if it is essential.	The guests, who were all close friends of the president, refused to speak about the events that evening. The guests who arrived more than an hour late were greeted coolly by the host.
18.- If you want to add a nonessential comment before the second clause, you end up with this. Today, such a sentence is considered over-punctuated. There are at least two possibilities. The nonessential in the end comment doesn't really need to be bracketed by commas; the meaning is clear enough without them. The other approach is to introduce a semicolon.	I originally wanted to be a rock star, but in the end, I decided to become an investment banker. I originally wanted to be a rock star, but in the end I decided to become an investment banker. I originally wanted to be a rock star; in the end, I decided to become an investment banker.
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