



Using Commas

What is a comma and how do I use it?

Commas are a form of punctuation and are used for the purpose of separating independent clauses within a sentence.

Examples:

- The paper was written, but needed to be revised.
- Writing is fun, inspirational, tedious, and rewarding.

The Various functions of Commas

Commas can be tricky, but these guidelines will help guide you to figure out when and where to place them correctly throughout your writing.

Using Commas in Introductory words and phrases

Place a comma after an introductory word or phrase in order to signal that the main subject and main verb are going to come later in the sentence.

Examples:

- **Generally**, extraterrestrials are friendly and helpful.
- In fact, Godzilla is just a misunderstood teen lizard of giant proportions.
- If you discover that you feel nauseated, then you know you've tried my Clam Surprise.

Using Commas with Coordinating Conjunctions

A comma needs to be placed before a conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) in a sentence when joining two independent clauses. A clause is when a subject and a verb make a complete thought. A comma connects a complete thought with another complete thought.

Examples:

- You wore a lovely hat, **but** it didn't match your outfit.
- My hamster loved to play, **so** I gave him a hula- hoop.

Comma Splices

A comma splice is when you try to connect two complete thoughts with just the comma alone. This is incorrect because it causes the sentence to be a run-on when not punctuated correctly.

Examples:

- You wore a lovely hat, it looked very good with your sweater.
There were several problems with the paper, the main
problem was with the author's use of commas.

Further assistance

For further assistance with numbers, visit the Writing Center located in the Lewis University Library on the first floor in the LRC.