

The use of the comma



ONE COMMA: INTRODUCTION time, place, and how

The area before the comma can be left out in its entirety, leaving a complete sentence.

- Yesterday, I went to the mall.
- Growing up in the South, I ended up with a distinct accent.
- Growing up in the South, taught me how to deal with the heat.

Right
Right
Wrong

ONE COMMA: FANBOYS

When you use a certain conjunctions (**F**or, **A**nd, **N**or, **B**ut, **O**r, **Y**et, **S**o – FANBOYS) between two independent clauses (= full sentences), use a comma before the conjunction.

- Nancy worked the whole weekend on her assignments, and got an A in English.
- Nancy worked the whole weekend on her assignments, and she got an A in English.
- Bob went to the restaurant, because he was hungry.

Wrong
Right
Wrong

TWO COMMAS THE ADDED INFORMATION

The area between two commas can be left out in its entirety without changing the meaning of the text. It is a part of the sentence that adds information to the subject.

The remaining sentence needs to have a subject and a verb.

- The school, which was the oldest in our town, had a great tradition of athletics.

Right

Put a comma before and after a name when used as an **appositive**.

- My husband, Jeff went to the store.
- My husband, Jeff, went to the store.

Wrong
Right

If the added information is necessary (a restrictive clause), do not use commas.

- All students, who had an F in English, need to stay after school.
- All students who had an F in English need to stay after school.
- When US Marshall, Maria Phillips, saw the criminal, she arrested him.
- When US Marshall Maria Phillips saw the criminal, she arrested him.
- I have five brothers. My brother, Arnold, is a teacher.

Wrong
Right
Wrong
Right
Wrong

Lists of **THREE** or more: THE SERIAL COMMA

Place a comma after each item in a series of three or more items except after the last one.

- I went to the store, and to the doctor.
- I like working in the garden on the weekends, and going to the movies.
- I like going to the beach, surfing, and taking long walks.

Wrong
Wrong
Right

CONTRAST ⇔ THE CONTRAST COMMA

Use commas between parts of the sentence that express contrast.

- I would like large bills not small ones.
- I would like large bills, not small ones.

Wrong
Right