



## Commas (,)

Commas help readers understand writing by indicating pauses between sections of a sentence (much like temporary halts of breaths in speech).

The following rules detail the comma's main uses.

### To separate 2 or more items in a list.

- I bought paintbrushes, an easel, and a canvas for today's class.
- He bit into the ripe, juicy apple.

**If there are only two items in a list separated by "and", do not use a comma.**

- He bit into the ripe and juicy apple.

**Do not place a comma after the last item unless otherwise necessary.**

- The island was tranquil, sunny, and warm, but its beaches were too rocky.

### After words that introduce the main idea in a sentence.

- Even though he felt sick, he still went to her birthday party.
- In addition, there are two other factors to consider when buying a house.

**Around words that interrupt the flow of thought in a sentence (it's an interruption if the words can be removed and the sentence still makes sense).**

- My new neighbor, Mr. Flanders, is very noisy.
  - My new neighbor is very noisy.
- Her new dress, a white ballgown, was stunning.
  - Her new dress was stunning.

**Between two complete thoughts separated by the words "and", "for", "or", "so", "yet", and "nor."**

- The duck swam across the river, and I saw it feeding its ducklings.
- You can come with me for a walk, but it will already be dark outside.

**The comma can be omitted if the sentence is short.**

- He is intelligent but his clothes are mismatched.

**Do not use a comma between two thoughts that "share" a subject, but have two verbs.**

- He is intelligent and asks a lot of good questions.
- The duck swam across the pond and started feeding her ducklings.

**To set off a direct quotation from a sentence.**

- He said, "you have to be joking!"

**With Addresses.**

- I live at 223 Roxbury avenue, London, Ontario.

**IMPORTANT:**

- DO NOT place commas only where you think you "naturally" stop, as this can quickly become confusing and misleading.
- When in doubt, underuse rather than overuse commas.