

Basic Comma Rules

1. Use commas to separate complete sentences (independent clauses) when they are joined by any of these seven coordinating conjunctions: *and, but, for, or, nor, so, yet*.

I went to the store, but I couldn't find what I needed.

2. Use commas after introductory a) clauses, b) phrases, or c) words that come before the main clause.

In the morning, I need a good breakfast.

Sitting in the living room, Martin finished the puzzle.

3. Use a pair of commas in the middle of a sentence to set off words that are not essential to the meaning of the sentence.

Mary, the taller of the two girls, is sitting in the back of the class.

4. Use commas to separate three or more words written in a series or list, including before the conjunction.

Sally went to the grocery store and bought bananas, cherries, and limes.

5. Use commas to set off all geographical names, items in dates, addresses, and titles in names.

President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas, on Friday, November 22, 1963.

6. Use a comma to introduce a quotation

Sally declared, "My English class is my favorite."