

## 12.2 Commas

### Commas That Separate Basic Elements

Use a comma before the conjunction to separate two independent clauses in a compound sentence. Use commas to separate three or more words, phrases, or clauses in a series. Use commas to separate coordinate adjectives.

COMMAS THAT SEPARATE BASIC ELEMENTS	
<b>Independent Clauses</b>	Everyone played well, but we still lost the game. Several people were ill, so we postponed the party.
<b>Elements in a Series</b>	Billy, Joe, and Ed tried out for the team. (3 people) Billy, Joe, and Ed tried out for the team. (2 people)
<b>Adjectives</b>	That ring contains a rare, exotic gem. (coordinate) My grandmother just got a new fur coat. (cumulative)

**EXERCISE A: Using Commas Correctly.** Add commas where they are needed; not all sentences need commas.

**EXAMPLE:** The first four batters were Kyle Marc Pete and Jason.  
The first four batters were Kyle, Marc, Pete, and Jason.

- The dessert had a fluffy cream topping.
- We requested the book weeks ago yet it hasn't come back so far.
- The cookies should be cooled drizzled with melted chocolate and sprinkled with chopped nuts.
- The fish was served with a rich tangy sauce.
- The marshmallows melted in the steaming hot chocolate.
- Paula tried to reach Jack all day but she had no luck.
- Potted palms Easter lilies and pink azaleas banked the stage.
- My first job was a happy rewarding experience.
- We had hoped to see that new musical but no tickets were available.
- Mr. Hawkins has a large collection of rare valuable coins.

**EXERCISE B: Recognizing Rules for Commas.** Describe the comma rule for each sentence in Exercise A by writing *compound sentence*, *series*, *coordinate adjectives*, or *cumulative adjectives*.

**EXAMPLE:** series

- |          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____  |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____  |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____  |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____  |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

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### Commas That Set Off Added Elements

Use a comma after an introductory word, phrase, or clause. Also use commas to set off a variety of parenthetical expressions and all nonessential expressions.

COMMAS WITH ADDED ELEMENTS	
<b>Introductory Words</b>	<i>Frankly</i> , I doubt we will win.
<b>Introductory Phrases</b>	<i>Not having studied</i> , I was nervous about the test.
<b>Introductory Clauses</b>	<i>As soon as the curtain fell</i> , the audience applauded.
<b>Direct Address</b>	There is no question, <i>Pam</i> , that you are right.
<b>Certain Adverbs</b>	We should note, <i>however</i> , that membership is rising.
<b>Common Expressions</b>	That watch, <i>as a matter of fact</i> , is a family heirloom.
<b>Contrasting Expressions</b>	Please give this note to Ben, <i>not to his brother</i> .
<b>Nonessential Expressions</b>	Bonnie, <i>who is new in town</i> , comes from San Diego.

**EXERCISE A: Using Commas with Added Elements.** Add commas where they are needed in these sentences.

**EXAMPLE:** Luckily the train had not pulled out yet.  
 Luckily, the train had not pulled out yet.

1. What time is dinner Mom?
2. Before I knew what was happening I was at the bottom of the stairs.
3. I think that in addition we should get a small gift for Mr. Bailey.
4. Without thinking of his own safety the firefighter rushed into the burning building.
5. The principal not the class advisor will make the final decision.
6. Several teachers moreover have given us their support.
7. The previous owner I assure you took excellent care of this car.
8. Don't you think Ellen that we need more punch?
9. Once the movie was over I wondered why I had sat through the whole thing.
10. Tanya is without a doubt a stronger candidate than Mandy.

**EXERCISE B: Distinguishing Between Essential and Nonessential Elements.** Decide whether the underlined words in each sentence are essential or nonessential. If they are nonessential, add commas where they are needed. If they are essential, make no changes.

**EXAMPLE:** Their new house, a restored New England farmhouse is charming.  
 Their new house, a restored New England farmhouse, is charming.

1. Yul Brynner created the role of the king in the musical *The King and I*.
2. The song "Shall We Dance?" comes from *the King and I* which was written by Rodgers and Hammerstein.
3. The woman approaching the podium is the governor-elect.
4. The gloves that I gave Mom were the wrong color.
5. This sweater which was a gift from my aunt was handmade in Scotland.
6. Emily Dickinson who seldom left her home in Amherst became famous only later.
7. The reporter who wrote that story was a classmate of my father's.
8. The President speaking unofficially to reporters deplored the act.
9. Jeremy a somewhat retiring person surprised us all by winning the debate.
10. The famous soprano Beverly Sills will host the benefit.

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# Commas

### Other Uses of the Comma

When a date, a geographical name, or an address is made up of two or more parts, use a comma after each part. Also use commas in the other situations shown in the chart below.

<b>Date</b>	On Friday, July 8, 1983, Grandma retired.
<b>Geographical Name</b>	We visited Phoenix, Arizona, on our vacation.
<b>Address</b>	The building at 597 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York, may be declared a National Historic Site.
<b>Name with Title</b>	Carol Hartman, LL.D., will give the second speech.
<b>Salutation and Closing</b>	Dear Uncle Jed, Very truly yours,
<b>Large Numbers</b>	2,687      3,489,620
<b>Elliptical Sentence</b>	Pam is going to Purdue next year; John, to Brown.
<b>Direct Quotation</b>	"Our next contestant," said the emcee, "is a banker."
<b>To Avoid Confusion</b>	With Betty, Jean planned the entire party.

**EXERCISE A: Adding Commas to Sentences.** Insert commas where they are needed.

**EXAMPLE:** The Hermitage near Nashville Tennessee was Andrew Jackson's home.  
The Hermitage near Nashville, Tennessee, was Andrew Jackson's home.

1. An article by Janet Coburn M.D. appeared in the Sunday magazine supplement.
2. My favorite breakfast is ham and eggs; Dad's pancakes and sausage.
3. In one week the station attracted 1238 new subscribers.
4. "I wonder" Joyce said "if anyone gave Tim my message."
5. Phil's new address is 17026 Parker Court Dover Delaware 19901.
6. To Peggy Anne confided her deepest fears.
7. On June 20 1986 my sister will graduate from law school.
8. Entry-level salaries at that factory are \$14000 a year.
9. "In the south wing" the guide continued "were the family's private living quarters."
10. Besides coffee cake is needed to feed this hungry crew.

**EXERCISE B: Punctuating a Letter.** Add commas wherever necessary in the following letter.

672 Pondfield Road  
Bronxville New York 10708  
October 25 1985

Dear Gerri

Well it looks as if I will see you this fall after all. My family and I will be coming to Bronxville next Saturday November 2 to visit Sarah Lawrence College. It has been a busy fall with all this college shopping going on. My current favorite is Rutgers in New Brunswick New Jersey. In addition we have visited Fairleigh Dickinson St. Johns and Hunter. I am applying to all of them but I haven't made any firm decision yet.

My parents would like to take us out to lunch when we are in town next Saturday so think of some likely places. It will be good to see you again.

Your old friend  
Sal

## 12.3 Semicolons and Colons

### The Semicolon

Use semicolons in situations such as those illustrated in this chart.

USES OF THE SEMICOLON	
<b>Independent Clauses Without Coordinating Conjunctions</b>	The walls had been gray; we painted them yellow.
<b>With Conjunctive Adverbs</b>	Jim's chances were poor; nevertheless, he won the marathon.
<b>With Transitional Expressions</b>	Singles tennis games require energy; at the same time, they are fun.
<b>With Elements Already Containing Commas</b>	Our summer house, a ramshackle bungalow, is far from elegant; but the views from the porch are spectacular.

### The Colon

Use a colon after an independent clause to introduce the following elements: list of items, a formal quotation, a summarizing or explanatory sentence, and a formal appositive. Also use colons in the other situations shown in the chart.

USES OF THE COLON	
<b>Lists</b>	These students are competing: Ed Barker, Janet Arms, and Phil Mason.
<b>Formal Quotations</b>	The doctor turned to the woman: "There is no hope."
<b>Explanatory Sentences</b>	Our neighbor is wealthy: Her grandmother left her a million dollars.
<b>Formal Appositives</b>	We were lucky to get such a good advisor: Ms. Ward.
<b>Numerals Giving Time</b>	3:15 A.M.      9:27 P.M.
<b>Periodical References</b>	<i>National Geographic</i> 37:285 (volume: page)
<b>Biblical References</b>	Exodus 12:43 (chapter: verse)
<b>Subtitles</b>	<i>Write If You Get Work: The Best of Bob and Ray</i>
<b>Labels Signaling Important Ideas</b>	Caution: Contents are under pressure; do not use near fire, sparks, or flames.

**EXERCISE A: Using Semicolons Correctly.** In each sentence below a comma is used in place of a semicolon. Circle the comma to show that a semicolon could or should be used there instead.

**EXAMPLE:** The weight-reduction program does not use scare tactics, it relies on behavior modification.

- The yearbook, which should be published by mid-May, is still accepting ads from local merchants, however, we have enough ads to cover expenses.
- Jed overslept, as a result, he wasn't ready when we called for him.
- I am considering photography, film making, or figure drawing as an elective, but typing, driving, or career planning seem more practical.
- Greg plans to follow in his father's footsteps, he is studying law.

**EXERCISE B: Using Colons Correctly.** Add colons where they are needed.

**EXAMPLE:** The agent nodded "The 7 55 is boarding on Track 2."  
The agent nodded: "The 7:55 is boarding on Track 2."

- These holiday plants are poisonous holly, mistletoe, and poinsettias.
- The senator pounded the table "I refuse to concede."
- The article was in *The New England Journal of Medicine* 11 215.
- The solution seems plain We must attract more sponsors.