



Comma Usage

- **Comma Myths:**

1. A long sentence needs a comma.
 - Not necessarily! A sentence can still be long and be correct without commas.
2. A comma is needed wherever someone pauses or breathes in a sentence.
 - Not true. People pause and breathe in different places, so this isn't the most reliable way to tell.

- **Commas after Introductory Sentence Parts:**

- Commas go between the unnecessary introduction of a sentence and its essential clause. Signal words to look for are ones such as **however, while, since, unfortunately**, etc.

Ex. Unfortunately, some of farmer Maggot's crop was stolen.
While farmer Maggot chased the thieves, they tumbled downhill.

- **Conjunctions: FANBOYS**

- The conjunctions **for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so** also signal a comma if the word is between two parts of a sentence that can stand by themselves.

Ex. The culprits were not injured from the fall, but their stolen produce was damaged.

- **Conjunctive Adverbss**

- A comma is also needed any time there are two independent clauses with words such as **however, moreover, and therefore** (conjunctive adverbs) between them.
- These sentences can also use semicolons to separate clauses.

Ex. The burglars discovered wild mushrooms at the bottom of the hill; therefore, they stuffed their sacks with their newfound prize.

- **Lists and Describers**

- Commas work to divide lists of things and/or attributes. If the list is simple, it doesn't matter if the comma goes before the last conjunction (often and). If the list is longer and more complicated, however, a comma is necessary.

Ex. The thieves' prize now consisted of cabbage, carrots, and mushrooms.
Their loot was comprised of farmer Maggot's cabbage, some of his carrots, and wild mushrooms which were technically not stolen.

- **Interrupters**

- There might also be unnecessary information in the middle of a sentence just like there can be in introductory phrases; these also need commas.
- If part of the sentence can be cut out with the line still making sense, then chances are the part that could be cut out needs commas around it.

Ex. The thieves, hearing the rustling of leaves down the road, immediately hid under some large tree roots.