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COMMAS RULE!

(Otherwise known as “The Comma Rules”)

1. Use a comma to separate words or word groups in a series in any part of the sentence. To be safe, always place a comma before the conjunction.

A, B, and C.

I went into the kitchen, opened the fridge, poured myself a glass of grape juice, and drank it.

1. Use a comma to separate two or more adjectives when the conjunction **AND** makes sense in its place.

It was a huge, hairy spider.

1. Use a comma to separate independent clauses that are joined by the FANBOYS—coordinating conjunctions: **For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So**. The comma always goes before the coordinating conjunction.

Subject Predicate, **CC** Subject Predicate

Tomorrow is Saturday, so I will sleep until noon.

1. Use a comma to separate introductory clauses and phrases from the rest of the sentence.

Introductory phrase or clause, Subject Predicate

If you would like to ask a question, raise your hand and wait to be called on.

1. Use a comma to separate short introductory elements from the rest of the sentence.

First, let me explain.

1. Use a comma to separate contrasting words, phrases, and clauses introduced by the word **not.**

We attend school to learn, **not** socialize with our friends.

1. Use a comma to separate direct quotations from the rest of the sentence.

“Gosh I love summer,” Taran remarked.

1. Use a comma to separate parts of geographical names and to separate the name of a street, city, and state in an address. NOTE: When these appear in a sentence, put a comma also after the last item.

It takes approximately six hours to drive from Durango, Colorado, to Boulder, Colorado.

1. Use a comma to separate the day of the week, the day of the month, and the year in a date. NOTE: When a multiple part date appears within a sentence, put a comma also after the last item.

The kittens were born on Saturday, August 17, 2002, on a sleeping bag in the closet.

1. Use a comma to separate a person’s name from a degree, a title, or affiliation that follows it.

Marcus Welby, Ph.D., is a brilliant man.

1. Use a comma to enclose nonessential phrases and clauses, and parenthetical expressions that interrupt the flow of the sentence. (Collectively, these can be called “sentence interrupters.” Think appositives, also.)

It is a profitable thing, if one is wise, to seem foolish. (Aeschylus)

Ms. Curmano, the coolest Language Arts teacher, taught me to be an honorable student.

1. Use a comma to separate the “wagging tail” from the rest of the sentence. (“Wagging Tail” is not an official grammatical term, but an informal one to describe the variety of “appendages” at the ends of sentences. These may include phrases, parenthetical expressions, and occasionally dependent clauses.)

The earth breathes, in a certain sense. (Lewis Thomas)

Punctuation is a function of grammar—know your grammar, know your punctuation!

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