

Commonly Needed Commas

1. Commas after introductory elements

CLUE: Look for sentences that begin with connection words or phrases (on, at, in, after, before, by, despite, since, although, however, while, if, since, unfortunately).

Incorrect: However Bob was right when he said carrots were good.

Correct: However, Bob was right when he said carrots were good.

Incorrect: Unfortunately Bob was wrong when he said apples were good.

Correct: Unfortunately, Bob was wrong when he said apples were good.

Incorrect: Despite what Bob said I still think tomatoes are gross.

Correct: Despite what Bob said, I still think tomatoes are gross.

2. Commas to set off parenthetical or transitional expressions

CLUE: Look for words or phrases such as *however, furthermore, for example, moreover, on the other hand, or incidentally* in the middle of sentences.

Incorrect: My mother on the other hand loves tomatoes.

Correct: My mother, on the other hand, loves tomatoes.

Incorrect: Shark attacks for example rarely occur.

Correct: Shark attacks, for example, rarely occur.

3. Commas to separate independent clauses (complete thoughts) when they are joined by the following conjunctions: *and, or, but, so, yet, nor, or for*

Incorrect: I finished studying for the test so I went to bed.

Correct: I finished studying for the test, so I went to bed.

Incorrect: He went to school but he was not happy about it.

Correct: He went to school, but he was not happy about it.

Incorrect: I went to London and I went to Paris.

Correct: I went to London, and I went to Paris.

4. Commas to separate nonessential words or phrases from the rest of a sentence

CLUE: Often, these words or phrases provide extra information about the subject.

Incorrect: My son a five-year-old male is watching television.

Correct: My son, a five-year-old male, is watching television.

Incorrect: The Smurfs who are blue played golf yesterday.

Correct: The Smurfs, who are blue, played golf yesterday.

Incorrect: Ms. Smith my teacher loves poetry.

Correct: Ms. Smith, my teacher, loves poetry.

5. Commas to set off adjective and adverb clauses

CLUE: Look for words like *which* or *while* in the middle of sentences.

Incorrect: I went to the Studio yesterday which is located inside of the library.

Correct: I went to the Studio yesterday, which is located inside of the library.

Incorrect: I prefer blue while she prefers green.

Correct: I prefer blue, while she prefers green.



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