QUICK GUIDE TO COMMAS

Below, you will find the basic rules of **COMMA** usage in writing.

**BASIC COMMA RULES**

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

  *Example: Walmart has a wide variety of items to choose from, and their prices are cheap.*

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

  *Example: Also, the local Walmart buys their produce only from local farmers.*

• Use a pair of commas in the middle of a sentence to set off clauses, phrases, and words that are not essential to the meaning of the sentence. Use one comma before to indicate the beginning of the pause and one at the end to indicate the end of the pause.

  *Example: The registrar’s office, located in Ragsdale, can give you a copy of your transcript.*

• Use commas to separate three or more words, phrases, or clauses written in a series.

  *Example: To make the cake, you need butter, sugar, vanilla flavoring, milk, eggs, and flour.*

• Use commas to separate two or more coordinate adjectives that describe the same noun. Be sure never to add an extra comma between the final adjective and the noun itself or to use commas with non-coordinate adjectives.

  *Example: The cake was the most moist, buttery, heavenly piece of cake I have ever tasted.*

• Use a comma near the end of a sentence to separate contrasted coordinate elements or to indicate a distinct pause or shift.

  *Example: You are in the doctoral program, aren’t you?*
• Use commas to set off phrases at the end of the sentence that refer back to the beginning or middle of the sentence. Such phrases are free modifiers that can be placed anywhere in the sentence without causing confusion.

Example: The Spartans defeated the Persian army, killing thousands of their soldiers.

• Use commas to set off all geographical names, items in dates (except the month and day), addresses (except the street number and name), and titles in names.

Example: I moved to Greenville, North Carolina, on January 13, 2007, to start a new job.

• Use a comma to shift between the main discourse and a quotation.

Example: My mom asked, “What are your plans for today?”

• Use commas wherever necessary to prevent possible confusion or misreading.

Incorrect: For most the year is almost over.
Correct: For most, the year is almost over.