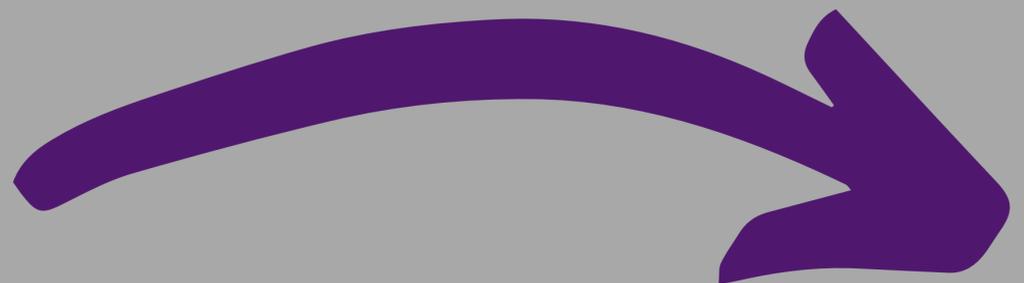




WHEN SHOULD I USE A COMMA?



#1 To connect clauses with conjunctions



Conjunctions are linking words which connect phrases or clauses. For example:

and

then

whereas

but

because

while

so

or

that

You should put the comma immediately before the conjunction when connecting two clauses or phrases. **For example:**

- I finished work early, **so** I met a friend for coffee.
- The weather on Saturday was rainy, **but** we went to the park anyway.

#2 To separate items on a list



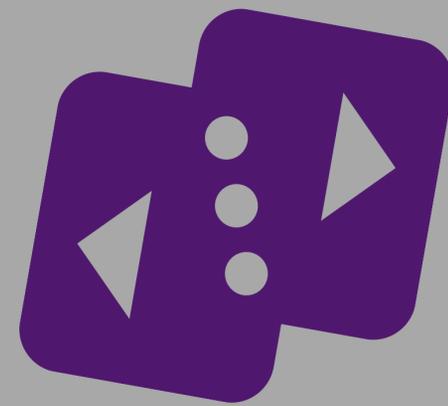
When you create a list of items, each item should be marked off with a comma. Lists are a group of items which could be connected with either the word 'and' or 'or'. However, using a comma is grammatically superior. **For example:**

I am going to the grocery store to buy milk and eggs and bread and cereal.

Should instead be written:

- I am going to the grocery store to buy milk, eggs, bread, and cereal.

#3 To separate a beginning/ending phrase in a sentence



Introductory Phrases

Sometimes sentences are begun with a conjunction or a transitional phrase: these should be separated by a comma.

For example:

- **However**, other research has indicated that this particular assertion might not be true.
- **On the other hand**, Smith suggests that most students would prefer to eat healthy, if the option was available.

Ending phrases

Sentences may also end with a conjunction or an extra clarifying clause. These clarifying clauses are not necessary to the sentence (they could be removed and the sentence would still make sense). They should be separated by a comma.

- I don't necessarily agree with this assertion, **however**.
- Many students would prefer to eat healthy, **Smith has suggested**.
- We are going to the cinema today, **which opens at 11am**.

#4 To mark an inserted phrase or word in the middle of a sentence

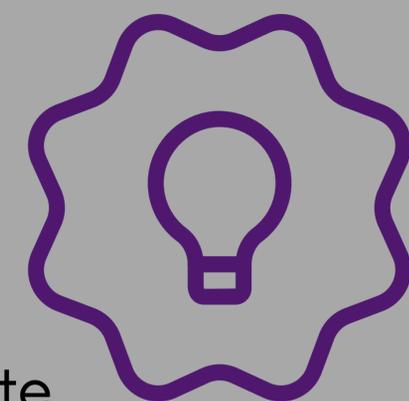


Non-essential clarifying information added in the middle of a sentence should be separated by commas.

If you are unsure: imagine the sentence without this inserted phrase – does it still make sense? If it does – then separate it with commas. For example:

- Christopher Wollacott, **a businessman from London**, recently visited the University's Library.
- The PC suite, **which is adjacent to the large lecture room**, is currently available.

#5 To introduce a quotation



Commas should be used to introduce a quotation when you indicate that someone is about to speak in a sentence with a statement of introduction. **For example:**

- As Smith suggests, 'Students would prefer to eat healthy'.
- According to Jones, 'The journey is greater than the end result'.

Conversey, you should **not** use a comma if the quotation is **not** being introduced with a statement of introduction. **For example:**

- This 1947 text refers to individuals 'reasonable aptitude' to understand.
- While 'students would prefer to eat healthy', according to Smith, it's not always the case.

