

Avoiding Comma Goofs

In most cases, proper comma usage is straight-forward and easy to apply. Here's a very short list of common comma fixes to apply to your writing.

When to use a comma:

At the end of introductory phrases or dependent clauses that come before the main clause in a sentence.

Dependent clause . . .

- ✓ After the thunderstorm passed, Bob walked to his car.

Introductory phrase . . .

- ✓ For example, my dog chases cats.

Before coordinating conjunctions when they join two independent clauses; *For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So*. Remember the acronym, **FANBOYS**.

- ✓ I don't like mushrooms, and I hate cheese.

When writing a "list sentence" featuring three or more words, phrases, or clauses in a series.

- ✓ I phoned Brandon, Bob, and Patrick.
* Don't forget the Oxford comma!

To separate coordinate adjectives describing the same noun. *Did you know:* you can test if you need a comma between coordinate adjectives by placing "and" between them.

Test . . .

- ✓ Lying on the cold and wet ground gave Hiram the flu.
- ✓ Lying on the cold, wet ground gave Hiram the flu.

When in doubt, consult your professor or the Academic Success Center!

