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:

A 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, F A N B O Y S.

   ✓ 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!