

RULES FOR COMMAS

Rule 1: In a series of 3 or more

- words : Fruits, nuts, and berries are great sources of nutrition.
- phrases: We can either climb up the mountain, cross the river, or fight the bear.
- clauses: The student came into the lab, she sat down, and she asked for help.

Rule 2: After transitional words or phrases, introductory phrases (subordination), or prepositional phrases

- Happily, the child eats the candy. —On the other hand, music helps me sleep. (transitional)
- When I was little, I danced in the rain. —Although Mario was sick, he went to work. (subordinate)
- Laughing at the joke, I spilled soda on my pants. (participle phrases)
- For extra money, I sell newspapers. —On my way home, I will pick up some milk. (prepositional)

Rule 3: When speaking to someone

- After direct address: William, get on the bus.
- Before direct address: Get on the bus, William
- Around direct address: Everyday, William, is an opportunity for success.

Rule 4: Around nonrestrictive relative clauses-who, whom, which-(words not relevant to the meaning of the sentence)

- Mrs. Rucker, who is interested in arts and crafts, plans to be a teacher.
- The cat, which is black and yellow, loves to drink milk.

Note: Do not use commas when clauses are restrictive (necessary) to the meaning of sentence

- The employee who was fired acted inappropriately.
- Professor James allowed homework that was more than five days late.

Rule 5: Use commas with appositives (renaming a noun)

- Jack's motorcycle, a 1999 Harley Davidson, was stolen yesterday.
- A dedicated worker, Sherry deserves a promotion.

Rule 6: Around interrupters or parenthetical expressions

- Nick's cake, to be perfectly honest, is the best tasting.
- The baby, however, needs undivided attention.

Rule 7: After the day of the month and year if followed by more words

- May 13, 1980, was my birthday.
- My fall classes will begin August 17, 2012.

Rule 8: After street address, after city, and after state (IF followed by more words)

- We resided at 1234 Meadow Park, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, ten years ago.
- OCCC is located at 7777 S.W. 59th, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Rule 9: When connecting two independent clauses (coordination with but, or, yet, for, and, nor, so)

- Tania loves to dance, but she is embarrassed to do so in public.
- Muhammad went to the store, and he bought a candy bar.

Rule 10: When you answer "Yes" or "No" in a sentence, use a comma

- Yes, I will help wash the dishes.
- No Kim, you cannot have the keys to the car.