

## The Major Uses of Commas

1. Use a comma after an introductory clause or phrase.

*Example: Before you begin your paper, please check the guidelines handed out.*

2. Use commas to set off transitional phrases...for example, phrases that include “however”, “therefore”, “for example”, and “in other words”.

*Example: You really want to get a good grade this semester, however, you must complete all of the assignments.*

3. Use commas to separate elements in a series, such as a list of items.

*Example: If you want to get a good grade you must study, work hard, and participate in class.*

4. Use commas to separate non-essential (parenthetical) information from a sentence. When a sentence contains information that is not crucial to the message or intent of the sentence, enclose it in or separate it by commas.

*Example: John, who is currently in Florida, has worked here for three years.*

5. Use a comma between adjectives that are equal and reversible (coordinate adjectives).

*Example: The small, compact car easily fit into the space.*

6. Use a comma with quoted words.

*Example: “Yes, that’s right,” John said, “I will be back this afternoon.”*

7. Use a comma and a coordinating conjunction (such as and, but, or, for, nor, or so) to join two independent clauses.

*Example: Upgrades to the network are time-consuming, but they are necessary.*

Independent clause: a complete sentence. It is a sentence that has a subject and a verb and can stand alone.

Dependent clause: an incomplete sentence. It is a sentence that has a subject and a verb but cannot stand alone.