

## Comma Rules

### **Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction when connecting two independent clauses.**

I want to drive to the store, but I cannot find my keys.

Her class finished reading the play, and their projects are due tomorrow.

### **Use a comma after the conjunctive adverb when connecting two independent clauses.**

We live in Massachusetts; therefore, we are used to snow in the winter.

Sally lives in Florida; however, she has seen snow on her vacations to the north.

### **Use a comma after an introductory phrase or clause.**

Before you start today's assignment, read these notes carefully!

During the movie, Larry ran out of popcorn.

### **Use a comma between all items in a series or list of more than two elements.**

Joe ate eggs, bacon, toast, and fruit for breakfast this morning.

We need to rake the yard, plant the seeds, and trim the hedges this weekend.

### **Use commas to set off nonrestrictive (non-essential) clauses.**

My grandmother, who immigrated to America at age ten, is originally from Italy.

We read *The Diary of Anne Frank*, which is published in our literature anthology.

### **Use a comma to set off non-essential appositives.**

The broken toy, a race car, could not be fixed.

The girls jumped and flipped on the trampoline, their birthday present last year.

### **Use a comma to indicate direct address (speaking directly to a person).**

Bob, wash the dishes before you meet your friends.

The answer, Timmy, requires you to analyze the question carefully.

### **Use commas to set off direct quotations.**

Ponyboy said, "Tuff enough."

"You become responsible forever, for what you have tamed," says the fox to the Little Prince.

"When you bake the cookies," advised mom, "be sure to measure the ingredients carefully."

### **Use commas to set off the year in a date.**

Today is March 31, 2020.

The residents of the Secret Annex were discovered on August 4, 1944.

### **Use commas to separate elements of an address or place (except a zip code).**

Our school is in Melrose, Massachusetts.

The Beatles originated in Liverpool, England.

### **Use commas to set off interrupters or parenthetical elements (adding extra emphasis and are not necessary).**

The rain, I was happy to see, finally ended after two long days.

Next week will be, thankfully, a four-day work week.

Billy, unlike his older brother, loves to draw and build.