

Commas - Reference

You will need to use a comma...	Example Sentences
To separate independent clauses joined by coordinating conjunctions: and, but, yet, or, nor, so, for	The light was on, but no one was home. He was home, yet the lights were all off. Sam left the room, and we all laughed.
Between 3 or more items in a list.	I enjoy skiing, skating, or indoor swimming in the winter months. The teacher, the student, and the nurse looked up.
After introductory clauses. These often indicate time, cause, or condition and begin with subordinate conjunctions: because, if, unless, while, when, since, after, although etc.	Because he wasn't home at the time, I left. Since you didn't do the homework, you won't pass the course. When he was a child, I thought he was kind.
After introductory phrases, or prepositional phrases with more than 4 words: prepositions such as at, on, in, under, etc.	On the coldest day of the year, my car refused to start. In the deepest reaches of the Indian jungle, you may come across a temple.
After introductory words. These words often indicate connections to previous ideas or the writer's opinion: however, indeed, additionally, nevertheless, moreover, unfortunately, sadly etc.	Indeed, his hopeless attitude wouldn't get him far. However, his favorite artist had not yet arrived. Unfortunately, it was time to leave.
To indicate extra information or ' a side comment ' that is not essential to the sentence. Use a pair of commas around this additional information.	My friends, however, couldn't be bothered. That day, which is actually a holiday, would be a good day to start our journey. Oranges, on the other hand, need to be peeled.

You will need to use a comma...	Example Sentences
Between co-ordinate adjectives. (If adjectives are co-ordinate, you should be able to use 'and' between them or reverse their order without affecting the sentence's meaning or flow.)	He was a difficult, stubborn child. It was an ill-planned, expensive, wasteful project.
To indicate a pause or shift in focus	He was a smart boy, not a genius. He looked everywhere, even under the rugs.
Before tag questions	You found your keys, didn't you? It hurts, doesn't it?
With participle phrases and modifying phrases.	She counted down until the special day, marking the days on the calendar. Having never eaten sushi, Jim was not sure what to expect. Bored with English grammar, Martin studied math.
With place names	Toronto, Canada 200 King Street, Toronto
In dates	Tuesday, March 22, 2012
Between a quotation and the reporting phrase	"I was only," she cried, "taking out the garbage!" She whispered to him, "What about the child?"
To prevent confusion or misreading.	To John, Lenin was a monster. I understand you, Sam, didn't see her.