

# More Jobs for Commas

- As you know, commas are used to separate sentence parts in order to make the meaning of the sentence clear.

# More Jobs for Commas

- Now you'll learn how to use commas to separate
  - independent clauses,
  - items in a series,
  - items in a date or address,
  - adjectives,
  - contrasting elements, and
  - words that interrupt the flow of thought in a sentence.

# More Jobs for Commas

- You'll also learn how to use commas in a friendly letter.

# SEPARATING INDEPENDENT CLAUSES

- You already know that an independent clause is a group of words that could stand alone as a complete sentence.

# SEPARATING INDEPENDENT CLAUSES

- A conjunction is a joining word.
  - **and**
  - **for**
- Here is a complete list of conjunctions that can be used to join two independent clauses:
  - **so**
  - **but**
  - **nor**
  - **yet**
  - **or**

# SEPARATING INDEPENDENT CLAUSES

- When two or more independent clauses are joined with a conjunction to make a compound sentence, a comma should follow the first clause.
- The commas and conjunctions are highlighted in the following examples.

# SEPARATING INDEPENDENT CLAUSES

- I wanted experience, **so** I operated on the man myself.
  - When two or more independent clauses are joined with a conjunction to make a compound sentence, a comma should follow the first clause.

# SEPARATING INDEPENDENT CLAUSES

- Laura packed the organs carefully, **but** some of them still broke during the move.
  - When two or more independent clauses are joined with a conjunction to make a compound sentence, a comma should follow the first clause.



# SEPARATING INDEPENDENT CLAUSES

- Mandy lost her purse, **and** her driver's license was in her wallet.
  - When two or more independent clauses are joined with a conjunction to make a compound sentence, a comma should follow the first clause.

# SEPARATING INDEPENDENT CLAUSES

- If independent clauses are joined **without** a conjunction, they are separated by a semicolon instead of a comma.
- The commas and conjunctions are highlighted in the following examples.

# SEPARATING INDEPENDENT CLAUSES

- We told Mr. Kay about our plan; he wasn't sure it would work.
  - If independent clauses are joined **without** a conjunction, they are separated by a semicolon instead of a comma.

# SEPARATING INDEPENDENT CLAUSES

- The company's finances have improved; we still need to spend carefully.
  - If independent clauses are joined **without** a conjunction, they are separated by a semicolon instead of a comma.

# SEPARATING INDEPENDENT CLAUSES

- I found Susan's address; I hadn't seen her for months.
  - If independent clauses are joined **without** a conjunction, they are separated by a semicolon instead of a comma.



# SEPARATING ITEMS IN A SERIES

- Separating a list of similar words, phrases, or clauses makes the material easier for the reader to understand.
- Usually, the last item in a series is preceded by a conjunction.
- No comma is needed before the conjunction.
- However, some writers prefer to use one because it helps to clarify some sentences.

# SEPARATING ITEMS IN A SERIES

- Gory, Sue, John, and Craig went to the conference.
  - Separating a list of similar words makes the material easier for the reader to understand.
  - Usually, the last item in a series is preceded by a conjunction.
  - No comma is needed before the conjunction.



# SEPARATING ITEMS IN A SERIES

- The horse snorted, pawed the dirt, reared up, and ran off toward hills.
  - Separating a list of similar phrases makes the material easier for the reader to understand.
  - Usually, the last item in a series is preceded by a conjunction.
  - No comma is needed before the conjunction.

# SEPARATING ITEMS IN A SERIES

- Sean taught me how to inventory the equipment, stock the shelves, and complete a quality-control check.
  - Separating a list of similar clauses makes the material easier for the reader to understand.
  - Usually, the last item in a series is preceded by a conjunction.
  - No comma is needed before the conjunction.

# SEPARATING ITEMS IN A SERIES

- If each item in the series is separated by a conjunction, no commas are needed.
  - Kara and Farrah and Andrea left their books behind.

# SEPARATING ITEMS IN DATES AND ADDRESSES

- When a year is specified in a date including the month and year, surround it with commas.
- If only the month or the season is listed, no commas are needed.

# SEPARATING ITEMS IN DATES AND ADDRESSES

- Jody came to Fargo on June 1, 1997, right after she graduated from high school.
  - When a year is specified in a date including the month and year, surround it with commas.
  - If only the month or the season is listed, no commas are needed.

# SEPARATING ITEMS IN DATES AND ADDRESSES

- Jody came to Fargo in June 1997 after graduating from high school.
  - When a year is specified in a date including the month and year, surround it with commas.
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# SEPARATING ITEMS IN DATES AND ADDRESSES

- When the name of a state is included to further identify a city, set it off with commas.
  - Gail has lived in Peoria since last year.

# SEPARATING ITEMS IN DATES AND ADDRESSES

- When the name of a state is included to further identify a city, set it off with commas.
  - Gail has lived in Peoria, Illinois, since last year.





# USING COMMAS WITH DATES

## **American Style**

- She was born on August 18, 1950.

## **European (inverted) Style**

- The conference is scheduled for 14 June 2014.

# USING COMMAS WITH DATES

1. Use a comma between the day and the year when following the American style for dates:

- August 18, 1950

2. When using the inverted style, do not use a comma:

- 18 August 1950

# USING COMMAS WITH DATES

3. When writing the day as well as the date also use a comma after the day:
- We will hold elections for class president on Monday, January 14, 2014.

# USING COMMAS WITH DATES

4. When a date ends a sentence:

- My birthday is August 18, 1950.
- We will hold elections for class president on Monday, January 14, 2014.

# USING COMMAS WITH DATES

5. When a date *doesn't* end a sentence, *then use a comma after the year, too:*

- My birthday is August 18, 1950, but I usually don't celebrate it unless someone else makes a big deal out of it.
- On January 14, 2014, we will hold elections for class president.
- On Monday, January 14, 2014, we will hold elections for class president.

# WHEN TO OMIT COMMAS WITH DATES

1. When a date contains the month with only a day:
  - The proposal was due on March 17.

# WHEN TO OMIT COMMAS WITH DATES

2. When a date contains the month with only a year:

- The moon landing occurred in July 1969.



# WHEN TO OMIT COMMAS WITH DATES

3. When using an inverted date:

- 20 July 1969.



# USING COMMAS WITH ADDRESSES

## Geographical Names

Use a comma when you provide specific locations :

- Amarillo, Texas

# USING COMMAS WITH ADDRESSES

## Geographical Names

When using both the city and state within a sentence, be sure to place a comma between the city and state and after the state to save the reader from confusion about whether the statement is directly addressed to someone (e.g. a person whose name is "Austin") or not:

- Austin, Texas, is one of the most fascinating vacation destinations in the country.

# USING COMMAS WITH ADDRESSES

## Postal Address

When you use a postal address within a sentence, remember to place a comma after the person's name, after the street name and after the city:

- Karen's full name and address is Karen Reilly, 4956 Arlington Road, South Fork, Colorado 77945.

(Notice that there is **no** comma between the state and the zip code)



# SEPARATING EQUALLY IMPORTANT ADJECTIVES

- An adjective is a word that modifies, or describes, a noun or pronoun.
- Adjectives answer the questions
  - *Which one?*
  - *What kind? and*
  - *How many?*

# SEPARATING EQUALLY IMPORTANT ADJECTIVES

- Kathy avoided the **friendly, talkative, pleasant** clown sitting next to her at work.
  - The highlighted words describe *clown*.
  - They answer the question *What kind?*



# SEPARATING EQUALLY IMPORTANT ADJECTIVES

- The workmen repaired the floor with **that dark, aged oak** flooring.
  - The highlighted words describe *flooring*.
  - They answer the questions *Which one?* and *What kind?*

# SEPARATING EQUALLY IMPORTANT ADJECTIVES

- The reporter spoke with **several intense, talented high school** athletes.
  - The highlighted words describe *athletes*.
  - They answer the questions *How many?* and *What kind?*

# SEPARATING EQUALLY IMPORTANT ADJECTIVES

- When adjectives are equally important in describing a word, they are separated by a comma.
- However, not all adjectives are equally important.

# SEPARATING EQUALLY IMPORTANT ADJECTIVES

- Some adjectives must be right next to the word they modify, or they will not make sense.
- For instance, in the example sentence above, the word *oak* must be placed next to the word *flooring*.
  - The workmen repaired the floor with **that dark, aged oak** flooring.

# SEPARATING EQUALLY IMPORTANT ADJECTIVES

- Pay close attention to the example sentence above.
- The words *several*, *high*, and *school* are all adjectives modifying athletes, but they are not separated by commas.
  - The reporter spoke with **several intense, talented high school** athletes.

# SEPARATING EQUALLY IMPORTANT ADJECTIVES

- These adjectives need to stay where they are in the sentence for the words to make sense, and they should not be separated by a comma from the word they modify.
- Only adjectives of equal importance are set off by a comma.
  - The reporter spoke with **several intense, talented high school** athletes.

# SEPARATING EQUALLY IMPORTANT ADJECTIVES

- How can you tell if adjectives should be separated with a comma?
- Apply one or both of these tests:

# SEPARATING EQUALLY IMPORTANT ADJECTIVES

– How can you tell if adjectives should be separated with a comma?

- **Test #1**
- Change the order of the adjectives.
- If the sentence reads just as clearly, separate the adjectives with a comma
- If the sentence becomes unclear or sounds awkward, do not use a comma.



# SEPARATING EQUALLY IMPORTANT ADJECTIVES

- The example sentences make sense even if the position of the adjectives is changed.
  - Kathy avoided the **friendly, talkative, pleasant** clown sitting next to her at work.
  - The workmen repaired the floor with **that dark, aged oak** flooring.

# SEPARATING EQUALLY IMPORTANT ADJECTIVES

- In the example sentence, the sentence would make no sense if the adjectives came in this order:
  - *intense, several, high, talented, school.*
- *Intense* and *talented* are the only adjectives in the sentence that can be reversed; therefore, they are the only adjectives separated by a comma.
  - The reporter spoke with **several intense, talented high school** athletes.

# SEPARATING EQUALLY IMPORTANT ADJECTIVES

- Kathy avoided the **pleasant, friendly, talkative** clown sitting next to him at work.
  - Kathy avoided the **friendly, talkative, pleasant** clown sitting next to her at work.

# SEPARATING EQUALLY IMPORTANT ADJECTIVES

- The carpenter repaired the floor with that **aged, dark** oak flooring.
  - The workmen repaired the floor with **that dark, aged oak** flooring.

# SEPARATING EQUALLY IMPORTANT ADJECTIVES

- The reporter spoke with **several talented, intense** high school athletes.
  - The reporter spoke with **several intense, talented high school** athletes.

# SEPARATING EQUALLY IMPORTANT ADJECTIVES

– How can you tell if adjectives should be separated with a comma?

- **Test #2**
- Place the word *and* between the adjectives.
- If the sentence still reads well, use commas between the adjectives.
- If the sentence sounds unclear or awkward, do not use commas.

# SEPARATING EQUALLY IMPORTANT ADJECTIVES

- This works with two example sentences, but in the last sentence an *and* makes sense only between *intense* and *talented*.
  - Kathy avoided the **friendly and talkative and pleasant** clown sitting next to him at work.
  - The carpenter repaired the floor with that **dark and aged** oak flooring.
  - The reporter spoke with several **intense and talented** high school athletes.





# SEPARATING EQUALLY IMPORTANT ADJECTIVES

- Practice: Try the two tests with the following sentences. Where do the commas belong?
  - Marshall cut his short wavy light blond hair.
  - In my wallet are five crisp new twenty dollar bills.
- **Test #1:** Change the order of the adjectives.
  - If the sentence reads just as clearly, separate the adjectives with a comma
- **Test #2:** Place the word *and* between the adjectives.
  - If the sentence still reads well, use commas between the adjectives.

# SEPARATING EQUALLY IMPORTANT ADJECTIVES

- Marshall cut his short wavy light blond hair.
- Marshall cut his short, wavy light blond hair.
- **Test #1:** Change the order of the adjectives.
  - If the sentence reads just as clearly, separate the adjectives with a comma
- **Test #2:** Place the word *and* between the adjectives.
  - If the sentence still reads well, use commas between the adjectives.

# SEPARATING EQUALLY IMPORTANT ADJECTIVES

- In my wallet are five crisp new twenty dollar bills.
- In my wallet are five crisp, new twenty dollar bills.
- **Test #1:** Change the order of the adjectives.
  - If the sentence reads just as clearly, separate the adjectives with a comma
- **Test #2:** Place the word *and* between the adjectives.
  - If the sentence still reads well, use commas between the adjectives.

# SEPARATING SENTENCE ELEMENTS

- Use commas to separate **contrasting** elements in a sentence.
- The following examples illustrate contrasting elements in a sentence.

# SEPARATING SENTENCE ELEMENTS

- We interviewed well, **but did poorly on the written test.**
- This company needs problem solvers, **not complainers,** to tackle our challenges.
  - The comma tells the reader that what follows is an opposite idea.
  - It makes the idea easier for the reader to grasp. The contrasting ideas are highlighted.

# SEPARATING SENTENCE ELEMENTS

- The liquid poured slowly at first, **quickly toward the end.**
- The tour group expected to meet the actors, **not a press agent.**
  - The comma tells the reader that what follows is an opposite idea.
  - It makes the idea easier for the reader to grasp. The contrasting ideas are highlighted.

# SEPARATING SENTENCE ELEMENTS

- Use commas to separate words or phrases that **interrupt** the flow of thought in a sentence.
- The words and phrases that interrupt the flow of thought in the sentences have been highlighted.

# SEPARATING SENTENCE ELEMENTS

- The task, **it seemed to us**, was overwhelming.
  - The dog remembered, **however**, the harsh words and cruel actions of his owner.
  - Morning, **we discovered**, was the best time to water the lawn.
- Use commas to separate words or phrases that interrupt the flow of thought in a sentence.



# SEPARATING SENTENCE ELEMENTS

- Whenever the **name of the person** being addressed is included in a sentence, it should be set off by commas.
- Jessi is the person being addressed in each of the following examples.
- Notice how commas are used to set off her name, depending on where it is placed in the sentence.

# SEPARATING SENTENCE ELEMENTS

- **Jessi**, Pat needs you to sign for a package in the office before you leave.
- Pat needs you to sign for a package in the office, **Jessi**, before you leave.
- Pat needs you to sign for a package in the office before you leave, **Jessi**.
  - Whenever the **name of the person** being addressed is included in a sentence, it should be set off by commas.

# SEPARATING SENTENCE ELEMENTS

- **Mild exclamations** included in a sentence are also set off with commas.
- The exclamations have been highlighted for you in each of the following examples.

# SEPARATING SENTENCE ELEMENTS

- **Gosh**, I never expected you'd make such a fuss.
  - **No**, we won't be needing you any longer.
  - **Heck**, we could have done that hours ago.
- **Mild exclamations** included in a sentence are also set off with commas.

# USING COMMAS IN A FRIENDLY LETTER

- Use a comma after the **greeting** of a friendly letter.
  - Dear Aunt Hilda,
  - Dear Juanita,
  - Dear Val,

# USING COMMAS IN A FRIENDLY LETTER

- Use a comma after the **closing** of a friendly letter.
  - Sincerely yours,
  - Yours truly,

