

SLAC COMMA AID

COMMAS

Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction (and, or, but, nor, yet, for, so) that separates two independent clauses.

State censorship boards flourished, **but** the pressure groups wanted a more comprehensive ban on objectionable material.

Traditional classroom methods are under fire from educators nationwide, **and** many are advocating that methods for individualizing instruction be incorporated into K-12 curricula.

Use a comma after an introductory word, phrase, or clause that comes before a main clause.

words Strangely, no one has suggested that Watergate gave us a "new Nixon."

Nevertheless, many critics of the new administration point to its inability to develop a coherent strategy for decreasing the budget deficit.

phrases In addition to television's influence, some parents and teachers ascribe children's diminished drive to play to recent changes in the elementary school curriculum.

Despite immigrant's high hopes, their illusions were often shattered.

clauses Since the new system was implemented, payroll has been processed 25% faster than it had been using the prior system.

As they move through the twilight world of big-time narcotics, Crockett and Tubbs constantly break the law to do their jobs.

Use commas around words, phrases, and clauses in the middle of a sentence when they aren't essential to the meaning of the sentence.

words By "imagination," then, I mean the free intellectual and sensory play of the mind.

Numerous studies, however, have shown that negative reinforcement affects self-image more extensively than does positive reinforcement.

phrases This was not, in other words, an invisible 56 percent of the population.

Karl Marx, an important nineteenth-century sociologist, believed in his role as a social thinker to change the world.

clauses Senator McGilvery, who is a Democrat from Rhode Island, dealt fully and responsibly with the controversy his new child care bill sparked.

Newspeak, which greatly reduced people's vocabularies, lessened their ability to understand scientific words.

Use commas between items in a series.

words The frigid, snowy, windy day was typical of Minnesota in January.
Bald eagles, ospreys, herons, mergansers, and kingfishers are native to this area.

phrases As more and more anti-smoking laws are passed, we see droves of would-be non-smokers chomping on Nicorettes, gnawing peppermints, chewing pencils, knitting sweaters, or practicing self-hypnosis.
Three reasons for the closing were insufficient enrollment, poor instructional materials, and inadequate funds.

clauses Though dogs are messy and hard to train, though they chew up my shoes and give me the blues, though they howl like wolves but jump at their own shadows, though they eat me out of house and home, I still find them a necessary part of my existence.
If the procedure is carefully planned, if that plan is followed with skill and precision, and if the results are carefully analyzed and professionally presented, we might receive the research award.

Use commas before and after a quotation within a sentence.

"Cooperation between government and industry," the president said, "must exist if the country is to prosper."
The band leader said, "Once the simple marching drill is learned, we will work on more maneuvers."

Use a comma before an afterthought or contrasting element.

afterthought For Canada, the War of 1812 was vitally important, far more important than it was for Britain.
contrasting element To understand a particular culture, we must consider the society as a whole, not its individual parts.

Use commas to set off geographical names, items in date, and professional titles.

geographical names The speaker that day was from Atlanta, Georgia; she discussed the discrimination against blacks which still exist there.
items in dates Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809, in a log cabin near Hodgenville, Kentucky.
professional titles Stephanie Glenn, Ph.D., will be the main speaker at the banquet.

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June 2012