

COMMAS, COMMA SPLICES, OXFORD COMMAS, AND SEMICOLONS

| What is a <u>comma</u> ?  | Where do you use commas?  | Correct examples   | What are the common mistakes?  | Incorrect examples   |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| <p>A comma is the type of punctuation mark that indicates a soft pause or a separation of words, clauses, and/or ideas within a sentence.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. After an <u>introductory phrase</u></li> <li>2. With <u>interrupters</u> or parenthetical elements</li> <li>3. With a <u>question tag</u></li> <li>4. With <u>direct address</u></li> <li>5. With an <u>appositive</u></li> <li>6. In dates</li> <li>7. Before “but” when joining two independent clauses</li> <li>8. With lists</li> <li>9. With a <u>nonrestrictive clause</u></li> <li>10. Inside quotation marks</li> <li>11. After parentheses</li> <li>12. With “as well as”</li> <li>13. With “such as”</li> <li>14. Before “too”</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Before eating</u>, the family said grace.</li> <li>2. The weather, <u>I was happy to see</u>, was beginning to clear.</li> <li>3. These willow trees are beautiful, <u>aren’t they?</u></li> <li>4. <u>Mom</u>, I can’t find my shoes!</li> <li>5. My mother, <u>Angela</u>, is a wonderful cook.</li> <li>6. July 4, 1776</li> <li>7. Cleo is a good singer, but she’s an even better dancer</li> <li>8. I love ice cream, books, and rabbits.</li> <li>9. My wife, <u>whom I love dearly</u>, is a brilliant physicist.</li> <li>10. “Pass me that thesaurus,” said Matthew.</li> <li>11. After opening the new cookie tin (and eating several of the cookies), Chester had a hard time replacing the lid.</li> <li>12. Spelling mistakes, as well as grammatical errors, are distracting to readers.</li> <li>13. Coniferous trees, such as pine and spruce, do not drop their needles in the winter.</li> <li>14. I like bananas, too.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. With <u>subjects</u> and <u>verbs</u></li> <li>2. Between <u>two nouns</u> in a compound subject or object</li> <li>3. Between <u>two verbs</u> in a compound predicate</li> <li>4. Within a comparison</li> <li>5. Between <u>coordinate adjectives</u></li> <li>6. Before “but” when not joining two independent clauses</li> <li>7. Before “and” in a list with only two items</li> <li>8. Separating <u>verb</u> and its <u>object</u></li> <li>9. With <u>restrictive clauses</u></li> <li>10. Between <u>correlative conjunctions</u></li> <li>11. Between <u>direct quote</u> and <u>attributive tag</u></li> <li>12. <u>Before</u> parenthesis</li> <li>13. Between an <u>article</u> and <u>noun</u></li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>My friend Cleo</u>, is a wonderful <u>singer</u>.</li> <li>2. <u>Cleo, and her band</u> will be playing at Dockside Diner next Friday.</li> <li>3. Cleo will <u>sing, and play</u> the banjo.</li> <li>4. This box is lighter, than that box.</li> <li>5. The <u>adorable, little</u> boy was eating ice cream</li> <li>6. My teacher is tough, but fair.</li> <li>7. My dog Charlie is cute, and smart.</li> <li>8. I’m glad I <u>trained, Charlie</u> not to beg for scraps.</li> <li>9. The café, <u>that Chester recommended</u>, is a fantastic restaurant.</li> <li>10. Either the <u>blue shirt, or the red sweater</u> will look good with your jeans.</li> <li>11. <u>“You have a spider on your nose!”</u>, she <u>yelled</u>.</li> <li>12. After taking her sister’s shirt (and staining it,)Leila didn’t want to return it.</li> <li>13. I’ll have <u>an, apple</u>.</li> </ol> |

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| What is a <u>comma splice</u> ?  | How do you avoid a comma splice?   | Correct example                                     | What are the common mistakes? | Incorrect Example                         |
|--|--|---|-------------------------------|---|
| A comma splice is the mistake of using a comma alone when it is not strong enough to join two independent clauses. | Use a conjunction following the comma when joining two independent clauses | We were out of milk, <b>so</b> I went to the store. | Using the comma on its own    | We were out of milk, I went to the store. |

| What is an <u>oxford comma</u> ?  | Where do you use an oxford comma?                 | Correct examples   | What are the common mistakes?                  | Incorrect Examples   |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| The optional comma that comes before “and” in a list of three or more items | When clarifying individual elements within a list | Mary needs bread, milk, and butter at the grocery store. | Not using one when it is necessary for clarity | I dedicate this ward to my parents, Jane Austen and Albert Einstein. |

| What is a <u>semicolon</u> ?   | Where do you use a semicolon?  | Correct examples   | What are the common mistakes?                       | Incorrect examples  |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| A semicolon is used to continue a sentence that would have been complete on its own. | To join two independent clauses without using a conjunction (like <b>and</b> ) | We can go to the museum to do some research; Mondays are pretty quiet there. | Using a semicolon as if it were a comma or a period | -I ordered a cheeseburger for lunch; but I should be counting calories.<br>-I ordered a cheeseburger for lunch; Although I should be counting calories. |