

Comma Rules

Rule #1: Do use a comma to separate three or more items or elements in a series.

- *I ate pork, potatoes, and bread. She ran out the door, jumped in the car, and sped off down the road.*

Rule #2: Do use a comma between two adjectives only when the word “and” could be inserted in its place.

- *Jason is a handsome, charming boy.*

Rule #3: Do use a comma before and after a word or phrase that renames the noun (appositives).

- *George, my oldest brother, has red hair. Albany, New York’s capital, is a big city.*

Rule #4: Do use a comma when a sentence begins with an introductory word or phrase such as well, yes, therefore, for example, or on the other hand.

- *Yes, you can stay up an extra hour. However, you must still wake up on time. On the other hand, you could simply go to bed now.*

Rule #5: Do use a comma before and after a word used as an interrupter, such as however.

- *The dog, however, still needs to be taken outside.*

Rule #6: Do use a comma between a city and state and after the state if the sentence continues.

- *I was born in Lake Charles, Louisiana, over 30 years ago.*

Rule #7: Do use a comma to separate the day of the month from the year and after the year.

- *We moved to Texas on February 29, 2000, and have lived here since.*

Rule #8: Do use a comma when a sentence begins with a prepositional phrase, adverbial clause, or dependent clause.

- *Under the bridge, the fog made it difficult to see. Because the bridge was iced over, the state police closed the road.*

Rule #9: Do use a comma to interrupt direct quotations or before or after a direct quotation.

- *“Why,” I asked, “must you leave?”
“Because I have to work in the morning,” replied Sam.
I laughed and said, “Right. I forgot.”*