

Commas

1. Compound Sentences:

- ★ Search your paper for:
 - but, or, yet, for, and, nor, so (BOY FANS)
- ★ Ask whether there is an independent clause (a complete thought) on BOTH sides of this word. (Can both sides be their own complete sentence?)
 - ✓ Example: Maria was the only freshman in her English class, and she was very nervous on the first day.

2. Introductions:

- ★ Search for introductory clauses that “sets the stage” for your sentence and starts with:
 - although, as, before, since, though, until, when, because, etc....
 - ✓ Example: Because the dog kept barking, we threw his ball.
- ★ Search for introductory phrases
 - long prepositional phrases (starting with to, in, at, on, between, during, within, for, etc...) which are more than 5 words
 - ✓ Example: After staying out all night, Bill was unable to make it to his 7:45 class.
- ★ Words ending in -ing
 - ✓ Example: Blowing violently, the winds of the hurricane destroyed the house.
- ★ Introductory words
 - however, still, furthermore, meanwhile, etc...
 - ✓ Example: However, many minors still manage to sneak into Lacrosse’s bars.

3. Lists:

- ★ Place a comma between each item in a list
 - ✓ Example: At the game they sold hotdogs, brats, pretzels, and beer.

4. Nonessential / Unneeded Information:

- ★ Search for a phrase that gives extra info to a certain element
 - Is it “by the way” information? If it was deleted would the sentence still make sense?
 - ✓ Example: Fred, who often cheats on his exams, is simply wasting his money on tuition.
 - ✓ Example: The best team in the Little League Division, the Mighty Pirates, lost their last game.

5. Interruptions:

- ★ Use commas when an expression interrupts the flow of a sentence
 - however, moreover, finally, therefore, of course, by the way, on the other hand, I am sure, I think, etc...
 - ✓ Example: He thought, however, that Sam should have waited.

6. Quotes:

- ★ Use comma when introducing quotes without transitions
 - ✓ Example: “If you go to that party,” yelled her mother, “you won’t see your car for the next six months!”
 - ✓ Example: The author states, “Computers are the wave of the future.”

Semicolons

1. Linking:

- ★ Use when linking 2 independent clauses WITHOUT but, or, yet, for, and, nor, so (BOY FANS)
 - ✓ Example: I am going home; I intend to stay there.

2. Linking with conjunction:

- ★ Use when linking 2 independent clauses (or complete thoughts) with however, moreover, therefore, consequently, otherwise, nevertheless, thus, etc...

- ✓ Example: Sara loves to run in the marsh trails; however, she realizes how dangerous it can be.

3. Lists:

- ★ Use to separate items in a series if each part already includes commas.
- ✓ Example: The members of the band include Harold Bing, guitarist; Susan March, vocals; Bill Fienk, Bass player; and Lisa Gerty, drummer.

Colons

1. Lists:

- ★ Use with a complicated list
- ★ Use when there is not a smooth transition into a list
- ✓ Example: Cartwright has many dining options: Tratorria, The Grill, The Deli, and The Mex Press.

2. Quotes:

- ★ Use to announce a quote when the first phrase is an independent clause (CT)
- ✓ Example: The CEO of the company offered an apology to calm her down: "I'm truly sorry that we were not able to find your project."

Dashes

1. Emphasis:

- ★ To emphasize a point or to set off a comment
- ★ Don't overuse dashes, or they will lose their impact!
- ✓ Example: We remind ourselves—or perhaps brainwash ourselves—that “we are not racist.”

2. Set off a sentence element

- ✓ Example: At a dinner earlier this month, two Florida legislators—Richard Smith and Sal Dins—discussed their future plans for the state's educational system.