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 Frienk, Bass player; and Lisa Grety, drummer.

**Colons**

1. Lists:
★ Use with a complicated list
★ Use when there is not a smooth transition into a list

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.