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# *The Comma*

Punctuation Rules

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**Rule 1:** Use commas to  
separate words in a series

I need to buy sugar, milk, and  
bread from the store.

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## The Oxford Comma

The Oxford comma is the last comma in a series. This comma is important because without it, the meaning of the sentence will change.

Joe thanked my parents, John Doe, and Nancy Doe.

With the Oxford comma: it indicates Joe thanked four people (your parents, John, and also Nancy.)

Joe thanked my parents, John Doe and Nancy Doe.

With no comma: it indicates Joe thanked two people (your parents who are named John and Nancy.)

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**Practice** PREVIEW  
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*Add a comma or commas where they belong.*

My daughter likes skiing biking and  
running.

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**Practice** PREVIEW  
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*Add a comma or commas where they belong.*

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**Rule 2:** Use a comma after numerical words when they introduce elements in a series

In order to get good grades in school, you must do the following: first, attend class; second, do your homework; and third, study.

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**Practice**

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*Add a comma or commas where they belong.*

Firstly he was the most honest person I  
had ever met; secondly he was a  
talented musician.

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**Practice**

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*Add a comma or commas where they belong.*

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**Rule 3:** Use commas to set off a direct quotation

“I can’t dive well,” said Larry, “but I can swim pretty fast.”

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**Practice**

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*Add a comma or commas where they belong.*

She ran to me and yelled “I’ve missed  
you!”

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**Practice**

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**Rule 4:** Use a comma after an introductory word or phrase

When I lived in Hawaii, I would go surfing all the time.

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**Practice** PREVIEW  
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*Add a comma or commas where they belong.*

In the beginning the main character  
does not get along with her sister.

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**Practice** PREVIEW  
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**Rule 5:** Use commas between coordinate adjectives that describe the same noun

The happy, hungry bunnies play outside.

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*Add a comma or commas where they belong.*

She was a passionate intense artist.

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**Practice**

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**Rule 6:** Interrupting information in  
the middle of the sentence

Mr. Sterner, my chemistry teacher, is  
also the football coach.

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**Practice**

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*Add a comma or commas where they belong.*

Maria John's girlfriend seemed very  
angry.

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**Rule 7:** To separate compound sentences

The comma pairs with a coordinating conjunction to connect two independent clauses.

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## Coordinating Conjunctions

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(FANBOYS)

FOR, AND, NOR, BUT, OR, YET, SO

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### Requires a comma:

I want to order pizza, **but** my sister wants to order tacos.

independent clause conjunction independent clause

### Does NOT require a comma:

My mom said I am not allowed to go to the mall **or** to the movies.

independent clause conjunction dependent clause

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**Practice**

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*Add a comma or commas where they belong.*

Everyone was busy after school so I  
went to the mall by myself.

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**Practice**

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**Rule 8:** To set off a free modifier at the end of a sentence

Jordan waved at his mom from the bus window, smiling joyously.

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**Practice** PREVIEW  
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*Add a comma or commas where they belong.*

Betty sleeps with a night light  
convinced that monsters will get her.

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**Practice**

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**Rule 9:** Numbers more than three digits

\$100,000

**Rule 10:** Between the name of a city and state or country

Manchester, England or Baltimore, Maryland

**Rule 11:** After greetings or salutations

Dear Grandma, or Sincerely,

**Rule 12:** Between dates to separate day and year

December 25, 2018

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### Practice PREVIEW

1. You are going to quiz someone in the class. Write five original sentences that each require at least one comma, but purposely **do not** write in the commas. Make sure you look over the rules we just discussed. You want to challenge your classmate, so don't make it easy!
2. Switch papers with someone. Add the missing commas to the sentences on the paper you received. Next to each comma, write down what rule number you used to correct the sentence.

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Name:

Date:

## Comma Rules

Rule #1

The Oxford comma is the \_\_\_\_\_.

Joe thanked my parents, John Doe, and Nancy Doe.

With the OC: indicates Joe thanked four people (your parents, John, and also Nancy.)

Joe thanked my parents, John Doe and Nancy Doe.

No comma: indicates Joe thanked two people (your parents who *are* John and Nancy.)

Practice: Add a comma or commas where they belong.

My daughter likes skiing biking and running.

Rule #2

Practice: Firstly he was the most honest person I had ever met; secondly he was a talented musician.

Rule #3

Practice: She ran to me and yelled "I've missed you!"

Rule #4

Practice: In the beginning the main character does not get along with her sister.

Rule #5

Practice: She was a passionate intense artist.

Rule #6

Practice: Maria John's girlfriend seemed very angry.

Rule #7

The comma pairs with a coordinating conjunction to connect two independent clauses.

Coordinating Conjunctions (FANBOYS): \_\_\_\_\_

Requires a comma: I want to order pizza, but my sister wants to order tacos.

Does NOT require a comma: My mom said I am not allowed to go out until my room is clean.

Practice: Everyone was busy after school so I went to the mall by myself.

Rule #8

Practice: Betty sleeps with a night light convinced that monsters will get her.

Rule #9

Rule #10

Rule #11

Rule #12