

WEEK 5 PUNCTUATION: The Comma, Part 1**The First Five Rules of Comma Use****1. IN COMPOUND SENTENCES**

Use a comma between two independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction (FANBOY).

If the sentences are short, the comma is not necessary.

- a. We traveled many miles to see the game, **but** it was canceled.
- b. We wanted to see the game, **for** we had been fans of the center for several seasons.
- c. The game was on Channel 10 last night, **and** we watched it before the news came on.
- d. We went early and we came home late.

BUT NOT:

in other compound elements, such as compound subjects, compound verbs, or compound nouns:

- a. The boys and their dad wanted to see the game.
- b. We hoped and dreamed of seeing the game.
- c. After winning, the team high-fived one another and carried the coach off the court.
- d. I love both **apples** and **oranges**.

2. AFTER LONG INTRODUCTORY ELEMENTS

Use a comma after introductory dependent clauses and phrases, unless they are very short (three words or fewer).

- a. **Before the arrival of the shipment**, the boss had written a letter protesting the delay.
- b. **If you do not hear from me**, assume that I am lost.
- c. **Hoping to hear about the job**, Susan sat by the phone the rest of the day.
- d. **Although I don't really like strawberries**, I ordered shortcake for dessert.
- e. **In winter** we skate on the river.

BUT NOT:

in when a dependent clause comes at the end of a sentence (unless it begins with **although** or **though**)

- a. The boss had written a letter protesting the delay **before the shipment arrived**.
- b. Assume that I am lost **if you do not hear from me**.
- c. I ordered shortcake for dessert, **although I don't really like strawberries**.

3. IN A SERIES

Use a comma to separate words, phrases, or clauses in a series.

- a. **Red, white, and blue** were her favorite colors.
- b. He ran **down the street, across the park, and into the arms of his father**.
- c. **When John was asleep, when Mary was at work, and when Bob was studying**, Mother had time to relax.

BUT NOT:

if coordinating conjunctions separate the elements of the series.

- a. **Red** and **white** and **blue** were her favorite colors.
- b. He ran **down the street** and **across the park** and **into the arms of his father**.

DO put a comma before the last coordinating conjunction, **BUT NOT** after it:

- ☺: My favorite flavors are chocolate, vanilla, **and** strawberry.
 ☹: My favorite flavors are chocolate, vanilla, and strawberry.

4. BETWEEN COORDINATE ADJECTIVES THAT MODIFY THE SAME NOUN

Use a comma to separate two adjectives connected by “and” and modifying the same noun.

As a test, see if you can comfortably put the word “and” between the adjectives. If you can, then **DO** use a comma.

- a. I need a **sturdy, reliable** truck.
- b. She is a **kind, beautiful** person.

BUT NOT:

if the adjectives are not coordinate and you can't put “and” between them.

- a. I built a **red brick** wall.
- b. That's a **nice new** hat.

5. TO AVOID CONFUSION

- a. **Inside**, the theater was nice and warm.
- b. **Inside the theater**, the audience began to applaud.
- c. We looked all around the place, **for the dog could not be found**.
- d. We looked all around the place **for the dog, whose owner was in tears**.

PUNCTUATE AND TELL WHICH RULE:

- __1. While he studied science at the university Victor Frankenstein came upon the secret of how to create life.
- __2. More interested in simple practical matters than in theory he set out to construct a living breathing creature.
- __3. He went all around town picking up body parts and he stored them in his laboratory.
- __4. The dissecting room at a local hospital provided him with the most basic articles and he was very grateful.
- __5. Finally he was able to begin construction of a strange humanlike creature.
- __6. He made a creature that was eight feet tall four feet wide and very strong.
- __7. Henry Clark was actually a woman and her name was really Mary Ann Clark.
- __8. Federal troops gave her a dress to wear made her promise to return to the life of a lady and then released her.
- __9. Being discovered was unlikely for soldiers slept in their uniforms and took baths infrequently.