Using Parenthetical Expressions

A parenthetical expression in a sentence is a word or group of words that contains relevant yet nonessential information. Parenthetical expressions may include words and phrases such as in fact, as a rule, likewise, nevertheless, without a doubt, obviously, indeed, and many others. These parenthetical expressions are also known as transitional words because they connect sentences and bring ideas together.

Examples:

When a parenthetical expression appears at the beginning of a sentence, the expression is followed by a comma.

Incidentally, everyone will be receiving bonus paychecks separately from regular paychecks.

When a parenthetical expression appears in the middle of a sentence, the expression has a comma before and after.

Sandra chose the red box, of course, because it is her favorite color.

When a parenthetical expression appears at the end of a sentence, the expression has a comma before.

The students enjoyed touring the Clinton Presidential Library, without a doubt.

Read each of the following sentences and pay close attention to the parenthetical expressions. Then, rewrite each sentence, underlining the parenthetical expression and inserting commas where needed.

1. Consequently your order for snowboards will arrive just before your Last Friday Sales Event.
2. The sales staff, managers, and assistants were in agreement with the sales forecasts needless to say.
3. The best singer was the one who sang soprano in my opinion.
4. A large order fortunately will require buying more boxes and wrapping paper.
5. In addition the offices will be closed during the week of Labor Day for plant maintenance and remodeling.
6. Employees who have only been with the company for six months on the contrary will not receive the annual salary bonus.
7. Yes you can attend the E-mail Workshop on Friday.
8. Several candidates however applied for the same job.
9. Having a human resources manager could improve our employee relationships generally.
10. Lenore needed to learn of course how to use a PowerPoint presentation effectively.

Using Etc.

Etc. is an abbreviation for et cetera, a Latin expression commonly used in English to mean “and so forth.” Writers often use etc. to substitute for items that they do not wish to put into a list. However, readers usually want to see these lists of items, so use etc. sparingly. Etc. is never preceded with the word and, as this would be redundant. When etc. ends a sentence, only one period is needed. Always put a comma after the last item in a list before using etc.

Examples:
Within a Sentence

The presenter made several points, such as buying a pet, care of a pet, veterinarian support, etc., and suggested that we have proper housing for our pets.

At the End of a Sentence

All of our offices are closed on New Year’s Eve – in Memphis, Little Rock, Oklahoma City, etc.

Read each of the following sentences. Then, rewrite each sentence to make it grammatically correct.

1. The work has to be done collaboratively with all our office managers – Jones, Smith, O’Brien etc.
2. Although the housekeeper cleaned, dusted, washed etc. he did not put the dishes back into the cabinet.
3. Reading, writing, researching, and etc. are all required to be successful in this line of work.
4. The dessert table was covered with delicious cakes – red velvet, coconut, black forest etc.
5. We are expecting to receive all the reports from all the departments – accounting, marketing, human resources etc.
6. I intended to be in all the advanced placement sections – English, physics, trigonometry, and etc...
7. She retrieved her writing tools – pens, erasers, paper etc..
8. The picnic included egg salad, potato chips, pickles etc. – all the usual picnic foods.
9. Although she was in a hurry, she grabbed her gloves, hat, scarf etc. as she rushed into the freezing cold out of doors.
10. She bought chocolate-covered raisins, chocolate ships, chocolate chip cookies etc – all her favorite foods in the chocolate food group.