The Comma

1. Place a comma before a coordinating conjunction linking two complete thoughts.
   i. **Coordinating conjunctions**
      Use this acronym to remember the conjunctions:
      
      F A N B O Y S
      For And Nor But Or Yet So
   ii. Examples:
       1. She gave her dog a new bone, but he only barked and growled at it.
       2. The actress was given the lead in the play, so she celebrated with her friends.
       3. Rebecca decided to go for a walk, and her dog accompanied her.

2. Use a comma to separate three or more items listed in a series.
   i. Examples:
      1. Jack’s favorite animals are dogs, giraffes, and tigers.
      2. Kelly put the car in the garage, walked the dog, and then took a nap.

3. Place a comma after introductory words, phrases, or clauses that come before an independent clause (complete thought).
   i. Examples:
      ii. **Introductory Words:**
         1. **First,** place the flour in the bowl.
         2. **However,** there needs to be an investigation of the claim.
         3. **In fact,** she decided to go to the library instead of the party.
      iii. **Introductory Phrases** (of four or more words):
         1. **Despite its high rating,** the washing machine broke after a year.
         2. **During the Yankee game,** a fan fell onto the field.
         3. **In addition to liking rock music,** Kate also enjoys listening to hip-hop.
      iv. **Introductory Clauses**
         1. **Although the cat didn’t scratch the child,** he still was kept away from children.
         2. **When Jessica went to the concert,** she was given the opportunity to meet the band.
4. **Use a comma in between coordinate adjectives**
   
   i. **Coordinate adjectives:**
      1. words used to describe a person, place, or thing
      2. the order of them can be reversed, and the word ‘and’ can be inserted between them
   
   ii. **Example:**
      1. She is a very intelligent, hardworking, and trustworthy student.

5. **DO NOT use a comma in between adjectives whose order you cannot reverse.**
   
   i. **Examples:**
      1. The **bright red** ball bounced down the hall.
      2. The **seven small** puppies followed their mother.
      3. The **old Greek** statue is being torn down.

6. **Use a comma before and after a nonessential word, phrase, or clause.**
   
   i. **Nonessential word, phrase, or clause:**
      1. Provides extra information about a noun, but can be removed from the sentence without altering the essential meaning of the sentence.
   
   ii. **Examples:**
      1. Her attitude, **which is different from her brother’s,** will help her to succeed.
      2. The parents decided, **however,** to ground their son.
      3. Mary’s sister, **a doctor,** decided to move to California for a change of pace.
      4. There will be a banquet in her honor tonight, **which will begin at 7:00.**
         *(You do not need a comma after the nonessential section if it ends a sentence).*

7. **Use a comma before a quote when a verb precedes it.**
   
   i. **Example:**
      1. She **explained,** “the ways a person can convey his/her learning of a subject or skill depends on the type of Gardner’s Intelligences he or she most identifies with.”
8. Use a comma to set off sharply contrasted elements at the end of a sentence.
   i. Examples:
      1. The little boy was laughing, not crying.
      2. She is simply thrifty, not impoverished.

9. Use a comma to set off “ing”--phrases at the end of a sentence that refer back to the
   start or middle of the sentence.
   i. Examples:
      1. Brian jogged along the shoreline, feeling the waves crash at his feet.
      2. The puppy ran after the toy, tripping on its floppy ears.
      3. The baby gazed at his mother, giggling joyfully.

10. You may also need to add commas to sentences to clarify meaning.
    i. Example:
       1. On Monday night workers will start a strike.
          Change:
       2. On Monday, night workers will start a strike.
          OR
       On Monday night, workers will start a strike.

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