



Comma Uses

To separate independent clauses joined by coordinating conjunctions (c.c.) or conjunctive adverbs (c.a.).

TIP: An independent clause has a subject and verb and expresses a complete thought.

Examples: She can swim fast, but she cannot swim far.

(c.c.)

The dog has won many ribbons, and his owner displays them all proudly.

(c.c.)

Gary has a poor work attendance record; nevertheless, he has been promoted.

(c.a.)

It was pouring rain outside; therefore, the football game was cancelled.

(c.a.)

To separate introductory words or phrases or subordinate clauses from the main (independent) clause.

TIP: A subordinate clause begins with a subordinating conjunction (s.c.).

Examples: Unafraid, she jogged through the dark tunnel.

Without hesitation, Alex rescued the child from the busy street.

Since they first met in college, Jack and Lisa have dated only each other.

(s.c.)

Because dinner was getting cold, we ate before Dad got home.

(s.c.)

To set apart words or phrases that are not essential to the meaning of the sentence.

Examples: The team with the best record, *of course*, is favored to win the tournament.

Lemon pie, *for example*, is on the dessert list every day.

Listen, *dear children*, to the bedtime story.

To set apart words or phrases that rename or extend the meaning of a nearby noun.

Examples: Mr. Martin, *the school principal*, retired after thirty years.

Her oldest daughter, *Nell*, is in the hospital with appendicitis.

We visited Carl Sandburg's home, *which is called Connemara.*

His doctor, *who studied at Johns Hopkins*, is only twenty-four years old.

To separate words, phrases or clauses in a series.

Examples: Grandmother's matching necklace, brooch, and earrings were stolen.

Travis was caught smoking in the hall, on the bus, and behind the bleachers.

Benny had \$14, Rose had \$12, and Sal had \$8 to spend at the carnival.