

COMMA

Punctuation

FACTS

- Indicates a break in a sentence.
- Separates a sentence marking thoughts: join ideas, list ideas, gap ideas, and bracket ideas.
- Used in many locations.
- If used incorrectly, the result is a comma splice sentence structure error.

COMMA USAGE.

Using commas correctly will create clear sentences that your audience will comprehend.

Review the following comma locations.

Commas in emails

After salutations and closings in informal letters or emails.

Dear Mark,

I appreciate the feedback you left on my assignment. I look forward to future conversations with you.

Sincerely,

Thomas

Commas with direct quotations

After a reporting verb (e.g., say, argue, indicate) that is followed by a direct quotation.

The manager said, "Welcome to the department."

BUT

The manager said that was happy to welcome me to the department.

(no comma because this is an indirect quote)



Commas with Lists of 3+

To separate items in a series of 3 or more.

Students need to purchase several items for their residence room like towels, sheets, blankets, and a pillow.

Success in university involves more than studies. It also includes skills such as networking within the community, volunteering in your discipline, and embracing new ideas.

My brother studied in Scotland, my sister studies in Nova Scotia, and I studied at Memorial University.

Commas in Compound Sentences

To separate independent clauses in a sentence connected with a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so)

St. John's and Corner Brook host two of Memorial University's campuses, but St. John's has the largest campus.

Commas with Adverb Clauses

Position a comma after an adverb clause if it is located before an independent clause. There are exceptions to this rule when using ‘*while’ and ‘*whereas’ to contrast ideas.

- *Although biomimicry is resourceful, not many people are aware of its benefits.*
- **Urban areas have few issues to access wifi, while rural areas have many inadequacies.*
- **My biology class is very intense, whereas my chemistry class is not.*

Commas with Non-essential Information

Commas are positioned around dependent clauses or noun phrases to inform the reader that the information is non-essential for the understanding of the content.

- *Biomimicry, which is a design strategy, is used more than people realize.*
- *Biomimicry, a design strategy, is used more than people realize.*

Commas after “Introducers”

Position a comma after any word, or phrase that comes before the independent clause to eliminate any misunderstanding.

- *Prime Minister, please walk this way.*
- *In order to receive my degree, I am required to submit a thesis.*
- *In high school, teachers monitor your work; in university, students must accept that responsibility.*
- *My final two courses were not available this semester; as a result, I will delay my graduation.*

Commas with Two or More Adjectives

Use commas to separate two or more coordinate adjectives that describe the same noun. Do not place an extra comma between the final adjective and the noun itself or use commas with non-coordinate adjectives (cannot reverse order).

- *The degree is a challenging, intense program.*
- *The degree is intense, challenging program.*
- *The family resided in red brick house.*

Commas with geographical names, items in dates, addresses, and name titles

- *St. John’s, Newfoundland takes its name from Giovanni Caboto.*
- *Newfoundland joined Canada on April 1, 1949.*
- *The MUN IT Department is located at 220 Prince Philip Parkway, St. John’s, Newfoundland.*
- *Dr. Cluny Macpherson was a respected physician in Newfoundland.*

NOTE: Do not use a comma with just the month and the year,:

- *The snowfall in February 2021 in St. John’s was 97 centimetres.*

SOURCE USED

Henderson, Eric, and K. M. Moran. “Commas and Other Forms of Punctuation.” *The Empowered Writer: Writing, Reading & Research*, Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 362–372.

Source cited with MLA 9

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