

MY 4 COMMA RULES



PUNCTUATION

DR. H'S 4 RULES



- ❧ Since we will NOT be drafting letters or addressing envelopes
- ❧ Since most students understand the use of direct quotes
- ❧ Since some of these rules can be combined
- ❧ ...
- ❧ I have whittled the list down to **4** essential rules for college writing:

2 IC with a CC



- œ (1) Use a comma before the co-ordinating conjunction that connects two independent clauses in a compound sentence.
- œ Ex. Bill should arrive today, but Alan will not be with him.

2 IC with a CC



2 independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction

- ❧ **Each part of the rule is important.**
 - ❧ If each part is not satisfied, then you do not have this rule.
 - ❧ Therefore, you have no need for a comma.
- ❧ **TWO:**
 - ❧ You can have only **2** independent clauses (complete thoughts) in one sentence.
 - ❧ Otherwise, 3+ independent clauses would make a **Run-On** sentence error.
 - ❧ **Ex. Bill should arrive today, but Alan will not be with him.**

2 IC with a CC



2 independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction

☞ **Each part of the rule is important.**

☞ **INDEPENDENT CLAUSES:**

☞ The 2 word groups must be *independent* clauses.

☞ Subject + Verb, and Subject + Verb.

☞ IC + (, and) + IC.

☞ That is, they must be able to stand on their own as complete thoughts – without any fragment makers, such as Subordinating Conjunctions.

☞ Not Dependent Clause + Independent Clause.

2 IC with a CC



2 independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction

☞ **Each part of the rule is important.**

☞ **COORDINATING CONJUNCTION:**

☞ A conjunction must join the two independent clauses, *not a comma*.

☞ If you use a comma to join two independent clauses, you create a Comma Splice sentence error.

2 IC with a CC



2 independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction

∞ **Each part of the rule is important.**

∞ COORDINATING CONJUNCTION:

∞ "FAN BOYS" = acronym for the 7 CC

∞ (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)

2 IC with a CC



2 independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction

☞ **Each part of the rule is important.**

☞ COORDINATING CONJUNCTION:

☞ ** You need to make sure that you have an independent clause to the left of the comma AND to the right of the comma.

☞ If you do not have 2 IC, then you do not need a comma.

☞ That is, if you have a compound predicate (the subject is performing more than one action), then you do not need a comma before the conjunction.

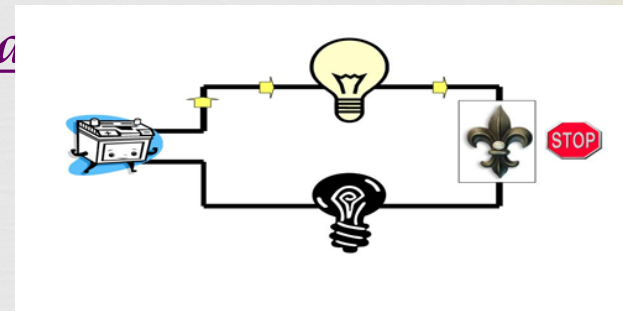
☞ (**Exception:** separate each verb when you have a predicate with 3+ verbs - *items in a series*).

2 IC with a CC



2 independent clauses joined by a coordinating

☞ **Each part of the rule is important.**

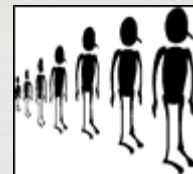


☞ COORDINATING CONJUNCTION:

☞ the battery is the *subject*, the lights are the *verbs*, the doorbell is the *comma*; the flow of electricity is blocked by doorbell and cannot light the second light bulb

☞ For example: *I went to the store and bought milk.* (no comma is required between “store” and “bought,” the “compound predicate”)

☞ For example: *I went to the store, and I bought milk.* (2 subjects and 2 verbs, 2 independent clauses)



ITEMS in a SERIES



❧ (2) Use commas to *separate* each item in a series of (3+) words, phrases, or short clauses.

❧ Do not forget the comma before the “and.”

❧ Ex.

❧ From Helen’s book dropped a pencil, a pen, and a stick of gum.

❧ We looked in the barn, in the cowshed, and in the corncrib.

❧ Gladys has gone to town, Mary is asleep, and Nancy is jogging.



ITEMS in a SERIES



❧ *EXCEPTION:

❧ Use *no comma* between two or more words that are usually thought of as a single item.

❧ I like a picnic of hamburgers, pork and beans, and potato chips.

❧ *EXCEPTION:

❧ Use *no comma* in a series in which all the items are joined by “and” or “or.”

❧ Irma dances and sings and whistles very well.



BONUS INFORMATION



- ⌘ anything added to the sentence that can be extracted *without changing the meaning of the sentence*
- ⌘ metaphoric explanation:
 - ⌘ If your sentence is a stream (of consciousness?) and you reach into it to add or retract some unnecessary material – words that will not change the meaning, with or without them – you will cause ripples on the water on both sides of your hand; those ripples are the commas.
 - ⌘ What this means is that you must use **the commas IN PAIRS** with regard to this rule, on *both* sides of the Bonus Information.



BONUS INFORMATION



- ∞ a.k.a. “interrupters” because they interrupt the “flow” of the sentence
- ∞ a.k.a. “nonessential clauses” or “nonrestrictive clauses” because that are not “essential” or necessary to the meaning of the sentence (necessary=no commas)



BONUS INFORMATION



(1) IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS:

☞ words added for "flavoring"

☞ I believe, of course, indeed, in truth

☞ by the way, on the contrary, on the other hand

☞ according to, including, excluding

☞ though, however, in addition to, as well as



BONUS INFORMATION



(2) RELATIVE CLAUSES:

- ∞ nonessential clauses; commonly begin with relative pronouns who, which, or that
- ∞ Please note
 - ∞ Relative Clauses that begin with “**which**” (but *not* “who” or “that”) will always be nonessential and, therefore, always **set off by commas**.



BONUS INFORMATION



(2) RELATIVE CLAUSES:

☞ **“Who”** clauses can be *either* nonessential *or* essential:

☞ if the clause offers trivial data not necessary for the meaning of the sentence, then it is nonessential and set off by commas;

☞ if, on the other hand, the removal of the “who” clause prompts the reader to ask a question answered by the removed clause, then it is essential and *not* set off by commas.



BONUS INFORMATION



(2) RELATIVE CLAUSES examples:

- ❧ *The teacher, who is a born-again Christian, returned our biology test today.*
 - ❧ (Here, the relative clause is not necessary in order for the sentence to make sense, can be removed, and is, thus, set off by commas.)
- ❧ *The teacher who had the car accident cancelled her classes for the week.*
 - ❧ (Here, the excising of the relative clause would force the reader to ask, "Which teacher?")
- ❧ *Chapter 5, which was very long, was assigned for homework.*
- ❧ *The correct answer, I believe, is 25.*
- ❧ *The teacher, of course, gave us a quiz on the assigned reading.*



INTRO STUFF



- ⌘ anything – *word, phrase, or clause* –
 - ⌘ that is at the start of the sentence
 - ⌘ that cannot stand on its own (fragment)
- ⌘ will have a comma after it



INTRO STUFF



- ∞ introductory expressions (*Yes, No, Well, Oh*)
- ∞ introductory transitions (*However, Further, Also*)
- ∞ introductory adverbs (*Suddenly, Next, First*)
- ∞ prepositional phrases (*In the beginning of the class*)
 - ∞ common prepositions: *in, on, of, for, to, above*
- ∞ participial phrases (*Rushing to her first class*)
- ∞ subordinate clauses (*Because he was late*)
 - ∞ common SC: *because, since, if, when, although, unless*



INTRO STUFF



⌘ For example:

⌘ Yes, you are going to have a quiz on commas now.

⌘ For example:

⌘ Near the end of class, you will have a comma quiz.

⌘ For example:

⌘ When you have completed the quiz, check your answers again.



INTRO STUFF



PLEASE NOTE:

- ❧ Sometimes these introductory fragments *function as the subject* of the sentence, in which case NO COMMA is necessary.
- ❧ So how do you know?
- ❧ If you place the comma after the introductory fragment and what follows the comma is a complete thought with a subject and a verb, then leave the comma in there.
- ❧ If, however, you put in the comma and what follows it lacks a subject, then remove the comma.
 - ❧ *To get to the game proved difficult.*
 - ❧ *To get to the game, we followed the directions closely.*
 - ❧ The infinitive phrase in the first sentence functions as the subject; if we place a comma after "game," we would *not* have a subject to go with the verb "proved."
 - ❧ In the second sentence, what follows the introductory infinitive phrase and comma is a complete sentence: the subject is "we" and the verb is "followed."

EXERCISES



COMMAS

EXERCISES



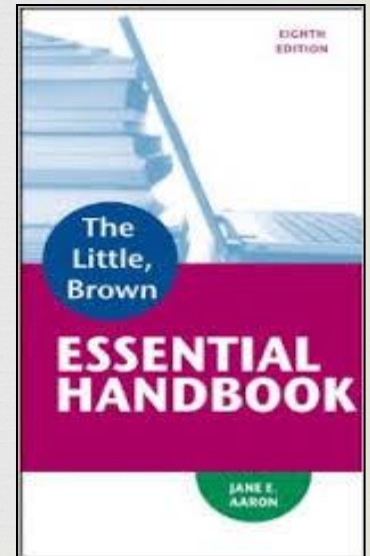
- ❧ ****Determine which book we're using this semester:**
- ❧ **LBE**
- ❧ **LBH**
- ❧ **LSH**
- ❧ **Other**

LBE EXERCISES



Commas:

Ch. 39 (39.1-6)



LSH EXERCISES



Commas:

Exercises #1-4

(10q., 10q., 5q., 5q.)

