

COMMA RULES



PUNCTUATION

COMMAS



- ❧ (1) Use commas after the parts of a complete address in a sentence.
 - ❧ The house number and street form one part, as do the state and ZIP code number.
 - ❧ Of course, put commas between the city and the state, and put no commas between the state and the ZIP code.
 - ❧ (put commas at the end of each line on an envelope)
- ❧ Ex. Send this to Alice Ray, 417 Elm Street, Detroit, Michigan 48200, today.

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œ (2) Use commas after the various parts of a complete date.

œ The month and the day form a single part.

œ Ex. On June 2, 1973, I went to California.

œ Ex. On Thursday, April 5, 1956, we had a blizzard.

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❧ ***EXCEPTION:** Use *no comma* after a date or an address that contains only one part—unless, of course, the comma is necessary for some other reason.

❧ That happened in June of 1963.

❧ ***EXCEPTION:** Also, use a period, not a comma, after the last part of a *complete* address or date that ends a sentence.

❧ He left on June 20, 1999.

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- ❧ (3) Use a comma after the salutation and the complimentary close of a friendly letter and after the closing of a business letter.
 - ❧ (salutations in *business* letters are followed by colons instead of commas – **To Whom It May Concern:**)
- ❧ Ex.
 - ❧ Dear Susan,
 - ❧ Yours affectionately,
 - ❧ Very truly yours,

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❧ (4) Use a comma to set off a noun in direct address
❧ (someone you are directly addressing).

❧ Ex.

❧ James, Mother wants you. (speaking to James)

❧ Turn off the lights, Jill. (addressing Jill)

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- ❧ (5) Use a comma to set off an appositive *unless* it is closely tied to the word it explains

- ❧ Ex. Dawn, my pony, is in the barn.
 - ❧ (interchangeable; pause)

- ❧ Ex. The year 1941 will always be remembered by Americans.
 - ❧ (no pause; closely related)

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- ❧ (6) Use a comma to set off the exact words of a speaker from the rest of the sentence –
 - ❧ unless the sense of the sentence requires another mark (?!).
- ❧ When the Subject and Verb come before the direct quote → the comma goes outside the quotation marks -
 - ❧ Bob replied, "I agree."
- ❧ However, when the Subject and Verb come after (or between) the direct quote → the comma goes within the quotation marks -
 - ❧ "I agree," Bob replied.
 - ❧ "Why, yes," Ellen answered, "I can help you now."
 - ❧ "What time is it?" she asked.

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❧ *EXCEPTION:

❧ An *indirect* quotation needs no comma.

❧ He said *that* Jane had left.

❧ He said a great deal, but the gist of it is that she left.

❧ Here, his exact words have been *paraphrased*.

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❧ (7) 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.

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❧ *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.

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

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- ❧ (9) Use a comma to set off parenthetical elements;
 - ❧ that is, words inserted between main sentence parts but not necessary to the meaning (and can thus be excised).
- ❧ Relative Clauses
 - ❧ (always “which” clauses, sometimes “who” clauses)
- ❧ Participial Phrases
 - ❧ (phrases that begin with -ing words that do NOT have a helping verb)
- ❧ Idiomatic Expressions
 - ❧ (*of course, I believe, indeed, in truth, by the way, according to, in addition to, accompanied by, together with, including, as well as, though, however, on the other hand, on the contrary*)

COMMAS



- ❧ (9) Use a comma to set off parenthetical elements;
 - ❧ that is, words inserted between main sentence parts but not necessary to the meaning
 - ❧ (& can thus be excised).

- ❧ Ex.
 - ❧ This story, *by the way*, is true.
 - ❧ You will, *of course*, agree.
 - ❧ The runner, *breathing heavily*, stopped.

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❧ 10) Use a comma after *yes, no, oh, of course, well,* and other such introductory expressions.

❧ Ex.

❧ Yes, there is a test on this material.

❧ Of course, you must study.

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- œ (11) Use a comma after an introductory dependent clause.
- œ Ex. If you want to see that concert, order your tickets as soon as possible.

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❧ (12) Use a comma after an introductory modifying phrase containing

❧ a *participle* (-ing, -ed),

❧ a *gerund* (-ing as noun), or

❧ an *infinitive* (to + verb).

❧ Ex. Feeling warm, I drank a glass of lemonade.

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❧ (13) Use a comma between co-ordinate adjectives before a noun

❧ (2 adjectives modifying the same noun AND “and” sounds right when placed between them).

❧ Ex.

❧ This has been a clear, sunny day. (clear *and* sunny)

❧ Aunt Mary screamed, “Isn’t she such a cute little girl!” (not cute *and* little girl)

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œ (14) Use a comma to set off words that are added to change statements into questions or exclamatory sentences.

œ Ex.

œ We are going to the game, aren't we?

œ We showed them, didn't we!

EXERCISES



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EXERCISES



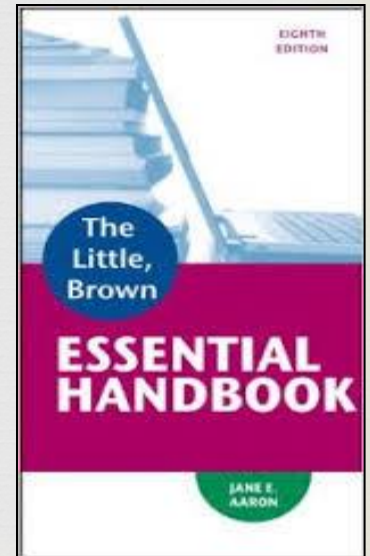
- ❧ ****Determine which book we're using this semester:**
- ❧ **LBE**
- ❧ **LBH**
- ❧ **LSH**
- ❧ **Other**

LBE EXERCISES



Commas:

Ch. 39 (39.1-6)



LSH EXERCISES



Commas:

Exercises #1-4

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

