

## A Distillation of Comma Rules

Coordinating Conjunctions	Subordinating Conjunctions	Prepositions
for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so	after, although, as, because, if, not only, since, when, whenever, whereas, while	about, above, across, after, as, at, to, before, by, during, for, in, of, over, with since, through, under, upon, within

### Coordinating Conjunctions Comma Rule

If two independent clauses are joined by a coordinating conjunction, place a comma before the coordinating conjunction.

Example: *I went to the store, and then I went home.*

### Subordinating Conjunction Comma Rule

If a sentence begins with a subordinating conjunction, place a comma after the adverbial clause. TIP: The adverbial clause will appear before the independent clause.

Example: *After I went to the store, I went home.*

If a subordinating conjunction appears in the middle of a sentence, do not place a comma in front of it.

Example: *I went home after I went to the store.*

### Preposition Comma Rule

If a sentence begins with a preposition, place a comma after the prepositional phrase that begins the sentence.

Example: *Before I went to the store, I went home.*

### Transition Word/Phrase Comma Rule

If a sentence begins with a transition word or phrase, place a comma after the word or phrase. If a transition word or phrase appears in the middle of two independent clauses (sentences), place a semicolon before the transition word and a comma after it.

Common Transition Words and Phrases
furthermore, indeed, in fact, moreover, nevertheless, for example, as a result, therefore, however

Example: *I had a good time on my vacation. However, I was glad when I came home.*

Example: *I had a good time on my vacation; however, I was glad when I came home.*

### Appositive Rule (inserted material)

If a sentence contains inserted material that further identifies (renames) the subject before it, place a comma both before and after that material

Example: *The student, Jamal Burbage, wore six earrings in his left ear.*

### Semicolon rule

When you join two independent clauses together without a coordinating conjunction, place a semicolon between them. A period is also correct, but a semicolon indicates a closer relationship between the two clauses.

Example: *This is Robert's first course in economics; it's the second for me.*