Using Commas

You need to write down all of the rules and uses of commas covered in this PowerPoint.
Commas in a Compound Sentence

- Use commas between the main clauses in a compound sentence.

I am not going to work, for I am too busy.

REMEMBER---FANBOYS
For, and, nor, but, or, yet, so
Commas in a Series

- Use commas to separate three or more words, phrases, or clauses in a sentence.

A chair, a table, and a sofa were the room’s only furnishings.
Commas in a Series Cont.

- Nouns that are normally used in pairs—thunder and lightning or bread and butter—are treated as one unit.
- If such nouns appear in a sentence, they must be set off from the other items in the series.

My favorite breakfast is bacon and eggs, toast, and milk.
Commas and Coordinate Adjectives

- Place a comma between coordinate adjectives that precede a noun.
- Coordinate adjectives modify a noun equally. To determine whether adjectives are coordinate, try to reverse their order or put the word *and* between them. If the sentence still sounds natural then the adjectives coordinate.

*Pepper is a good, obedient, gentle dog.*
Commas and Coordinate Adjectives

Do not use a comma between adjectives preceding a noun if they sound unnatural with their order reversed. In general, adjectives that describe size, shape, age, and material do not need commas between them.

Jelani grew up in a small white house.
Commas and Coordinate Adjectives

- Commas may be needed in some of the adjectives in a series but not others.

I like to read in our bright, cozy family room.
Commas and Nonessential Elements

- Use commas to set off participles, infinitives, and their phrases if they are not essential to the meaning of the sentence.

She watched, puzzled, as the man in the yellow hat drove away.

A customer, complaining loudly, stepped up to the counter.

I have no idea, to be honest, what you would like for a graduation present.
DO NOT set off participles, infinitives, and their phrases if they are essential to the meaning of the sentence.

The man standing by the door is my father. (The participial phrase describes which man.)

My mother’s car is the one parked in the driveway. (The participial phrase identifies the car.)

She went to medical school to become a doctor. (The infinitive phrase (to….) tells why.)
Commas with Nonessential Elements

- Adjective Clauses
- Use commas to set off nonessential adjective clauses.

Atlanta, which is the capital of Georgia, is the transportation center of the Southeast.

People who are afraid of heights do not like to look down from balconies or terraces.
Commas with Nonessential Elements

- Use commas to set off an appositive if it is not essential to the meaning of the sentence.

  Nelson Mandela, the president of South Africa, was freed from a South African prison in 1990.

  An insurance executive, Charles Ives wrote music in his spare time.
Commas with Interjections, Parenthetical Expressions, Conjunctive Adverbs, and Antithetical Phrases

- Use commas to set off interjections (such as oh and well), parenthetical expressions (such as on the contrary, on the other hand, in fact, by the way, to be exact, and after all), and conjunctive adverbs (such as however, moreover, and consequently).
Commas with Interjections, Parenthetical Expressions, Conjunctive Adverbs, and Antithetical Phrases

- Well, we’d better be going home.
- Oh, I don’t know.
- We have to leave, unfortunately.
- Last night, on the other hand, we could have stayed longer.
- We said we’d be home early; consequently, we must leave now.
Commas with Interjections, Parenthetical Expressions, Conjunctive Adverbs, and Antithetical Phrases

- Use commas to set off antithetical phrase.
  - An antithetical phrase uses a word such as not or unlike to qualify what precedes it.

You, not I, deserve this honor.

Bicycles, unlike cars, cause no pollution.
Using Commas with Other Phrases and Clauses

- Introductory prepositional phrase
  - Although a comma after a short introductory prepositional phrase is not incorrect, it is necessary only if the sentence would be misread without the comma.

  To those outside, the house appeared deserted. (comma needed to prevent misreading)

  At the last moment we decided not to go. (comma not needed)
Commas with Other Phrases and Clauses

- Use a comma after a long prepositional phrase or after the final phrase in a succession of phrases.
  - On the extremely steep and rocky cliff, the mountain climbers carefully placed their feet in foot holes.

Do not use a comma if the phrase is immediately followed by a verb.

- On the stone above the front door of the building was the date.
Introductory participles and participial phrases

Use commas to set off introductory participles and participial phrases.

Purring, the kitten curled up in my lap.

Sitting in a tree, my little sister called down to us.
Commases with Other Phrases and Clauses

- Adverb Clauses
  - Use commas to set off all introductory adverb clauses.

Although I like country music, I did not want to hear his entire collection.

Until she arrived, I thought that no one was coming.
Commas with Other Phrases and Clauses

- Use commas to set off interval adverb clauses that interrupt the flow of a sentence.

  Evan, after he thought about it a while, agreed with our idea.
Additional Uses of Commas

- Titles of people
  - Alan Wong, M.D.
  - Maureen O’Connor, mayor of San Diego
  - and Jorge Gonzalez, Ph. D., will speak on Thursday.
Additional Uses of Commas

- Addresses
  - Her address is 9 Lee Road, Nome, Alaska 99762.
Additional Uses of Commas

- Dates
  - Friday, March 15, 2017, is the day I received my license.
  - Do not use commas if only the month and the day or only the month and the year are given.
Additional Uses of Commas

- Geographical Terms
  - Anaheim, California is the home to Disneyland.
Odysseus becomes reunited with his son Telemachus in the Odyssey, Book 16, lines 177-219.
Additional Uses of Commas

- Direct Address
  - Use commas to set off words or names in a direct address.

  Nathaniel, do you know where Kathleen is?

  I can order the book for you, sir, if you like.
Additional Uses of Commas

- **Tag Questions**
  - Use commas to set off tag questions.
  - A tag question (such as shouldn’t I? or have you?) emphasizes an implied answer to the statement preceding it.

You’ve already seen this movie, haven’t you?
Additional Uses of Commas

Letter Writing

Place a comma after the salutation of an informal letter and after the closing of all letters.

Dear Dolores,

Very truly yours,
Misuse of Commas

- In general, do not use a comma before a conjunction that connects a compound predicate or compound subject.

She started the car and drove down the hill.

The adults playing softball and the children playing soccer argued on the field.
Do not use only a comma to join two main clauses that are not part of a series. Use a coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS) with the comma, or use a semicolon.

John Wayne worked in Hollywood for almost 50 years, and he made more than 200 films.