

Kingsborough Learning Center

ENGLISH TEAS WORKSHOP Practice Material: Using Commas

Rules for Using Commas:

1. Use a comma to separate 2 independent clauses joined by

for	and	nor	but
or	yet	so*	

*when **so** means **as a result**

Examples:

- Jenny wants to help feed the poor, so she is planning on going to Africa this summer.
- The doctor would like to see you, but he has been at the hospital all day.

When the 2 independent clauses are very short, some people don't use commas. However, if you use a comma, it is still okay.

Examples:

- Joseph likes cheese cake, but Carol likes chocolate cake.
- Joseph likes cheese cake but Carol likes chocolate cake.

2. If there is a list of three or more items, use a comma.

Examples:

- Mom bought grapes and bananas. (no commas)
- Mom bought grapes, bananas, and strawberries.

3. If there are two or more adjectives in a row.

Example:

- Tim is a handsome, smart man.

4. When a dependent clause, unnecessary word, or unnecessary phrase **AND** an independent clause are put together, there is usually a comma.

Example:

- Unless I see you, I won't go.
- Though George is president of the company, he can still be fired.
- When Mei was in Taiwan, she often wrote to me.

The first parts are dependent clauses. Therefore, there is a comma after them. ***NOTE:** When using the above words unless, though, and when, there is **NO COMMA** if the clause is after the independent clause. These words are called subordinating conjunctions. This rule applies to all subordinating conjunctions. To see a list of more subordinating conjunctions, [click here](#).

Examples:

- I won't go unless I see you.

- George can still be fired though he is president of the company.
- Mei often wrote to me when she was in Taiwan.

5. When an adjective clause is unnecessary, use commas. (Don't know what an adjective clause is? [Click here.](#))

Example:

- The president of the company, **who** is a Harvard graduate, plans on retiring at the end of the month.

6. Use commas before a direct quote. (Want more information about quotations and quotation marks? [Click here.](#))

Example:

- Mark said, "I loved visiting China and Korea."

7. A name or title that is used to address or call a person to attention.

Example:

- When, Sir, you come back to this hotel, I cannot guarantee you a room.

***NOTE:** When the name is with an important term of identification, don't use a comma.

Example:

- Billy the Kid

- Alexander the Great
- Jack the Ripper

8. A comma usually follows a transition word.

Example:

- Robert studied for a whole week. Therefore, he got an A+.
- Jake worked 12 hours a day. Consequently, he earned enough money to travel the whole summer.

Quiz Time:

Directions: Put commas in the sentences below.

1. Ivan the Terrible is considered one of the most feared people in history.
2. If you would like to travel first class Madam that will cost an extra \$300.
3. Rebecca asked "Can we go to the restaurant?"
4. My best friend who comes from Egypt is a very nice guy.
5. Even if it takes all day I am going to fix the roof.
6. It seems that it will snow today because of the cold weather and red sky.
7. Japanese is food is healthy light and not very oily.

8. There was fear that another big war would start so the United Nations was formed.

9. When you meet people for the first time never talk about religion politics and a bad boss.

10. Jim wants to see a movie but Carol wants to stay home.