

### 10.7. Punctuation Comma Rules

A. Use a comma around **appositive phrases** (noun phrases to describe/identify another noun)

- Robbie, **a hot-tempered tennis player**, charged the umpire and tried to crack the poor man's skull with a racket.
- Eleanor, **his wife of thirty years**, suddenly decided to open her own business.

1.
2.

B. Use a comma to separate the elements in a series (three or more things), including the last two.

- When Harold saw his girlfriend across the crowded airport, he sprinted toward her, **leaping over luggage, colliding with travelers, and dodging potted palms.**
- To make her famous muffins, Paulette bought **fresh broccoli, baker's chocolate, flour, sugar, and eggs.**

3.
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C. Use a comma to separate two adjectives when the word *and* can be inserted between them.

- In order to get home, we must travel over several **narrow, winding, treacherous roads.**
- The poster depicted a **brown-haired, blue-eyed** child wearing a red denim shirt.
- In the attic, we found **old, thin** paper cutouts.

5.
6.

D. Use a comma to separate two strong clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction--*For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, and So*.  
I, cc I.

- Many companies are hiring chief information officers to oversee their information technology systems, **for** only a specialist can keep pace with the rapid changes in technology.
- Susan may stay on campus for the weekend, **or** she may decide to go home to see her high school friends.

7.
8.

5. Use a comma to separate a dependent clause/phrase (incomplete thought) from an independent clause (complete thought).

- **On the sand of the beach by the inlet**, we relaxed in the sun.
- **Under the pile of clothes**, we found his wallet.
- **After we studied for the test**, we finally could relax.

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6. Use a comma(s) to separate any word or phrase from the rest of the sentence that is not essential to the sentence's meaning.

The average world temperature, **however**, has continued to rise significantly. (word)

Company managers, **seeking higher profits**, hired temporary workers to replace full-time staff. (phrase)

My uncle, **who is eighty years old**, walks three miles every day. (clause)

11.

12.

7. Use a comma to set off the speaker's tag (he said) from the beginning of a quotation. Place the comma inside closing quotation marks when the speaker's tag follows the quotation.

- "I would like to go to the beach this weekend," **she** told him as they left the apartment.
- Did he **say**, "We should all go to the movies"?
- "Do you want to go to the movies?" Bob asked.

13.

14.

8. Use quotation marks around each part of a divided quotation. Remember to set off the speaker's tag with commas.

"That is," Mark said, "that neither you nor I are ready for the test...."

"The dog ran away," I said. "He was hit by a car."

15.

16.