

Commas Yes, Commas No

The Rules

YES

NO

1	<p>Before a coordinating conjunction (and, or, but, nor, for, yet, so) that joins two complete sentences</p>	<p>To join two complete sentences: this would be a comma splice. Instead, to join two complete sentences, you need BOTH a comma and a coordinating conjunction.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He frowned, but she did not understand why. • We can go to the park, or we can watch a movie. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I threw the ball, the dog ran after it. • We went to the store, they were closed.
2	<p>After an introductory word or phrase</p>	<p>Split two verbs that refer to the same subject or actor.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After the Civil War, slavery was abolished. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She cried, and called her mother.
3	<p>To set off extra information (not essential to meaning of sentence) in TWO extra commas</p>	<p>Around essential information which is necessary to meaning of sentence</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terry and John, my brothers, play football. • Your paper, Mary, is very well written. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The player, who scored the goal, became a hero. • The dog, that ate my shoe, is staring at us.

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4	To set off parenthetical expressions	Before a clause beginning with “that” or after “such as”
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You will, of course, want to be there. The result, however, was not as we expected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> She told me, that the class was cancelled. Dairy products such as, milk and cheese, contain a lot of fat.
5	To separate items in a list	Between subject and verb or between a verb and an object
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> She wrote about France, Germany, and England. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cat, climbed a massive maple tree.
6	Immediately after a verb that introduces a quotation (says, said, exclaimed, etc.)	After a coordinating conjunction (and, or, but, nor, for, yet, so)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Her father said, “Have some cake and ice cream.” I asked, “May I have another egg roll?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I walked to the store and, bought a cookie. She walked around the house and, saw a moose.

Apostrophe

Don't Misuse me!

Apostrophe Yes	Apostrophe No
<p>When making a noun possessive except in the case of "it."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John's ball, cat's meow • Chris' book, actors' roles 	<p>When making "it" possessive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Its leaf, its bone
<p>When forming a contraction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He didn't, she can't • It's a great day. 	<p>When pluralizing a noun.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The boys run, the girls sing
<p>When indicating a letter or number that has been purposefully excluded, such as when showing slang in speech.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I was goin' to town" • "She was movin' out" • "The '30s were rough" 	<p>When using possessive nouns/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The chair was his - The job was theirs - Victory was ours
	<p>To pluralize names.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Smiths, the Browns
<p>When pluralizing letters, symbols, or words treated as words.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross your t's and dot your i's • That's a lot of ?'s • How many but's did you use 	<p>To pluralize abbreviations and decades</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UFOs, VCRs, PSATs - 1960s, 1990s