



Commas

Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction (and, but, nor, for, or, so, yet) that links sentences. For example:

I saw an old friend yesterday, *but* she did not recognize me.

Use a comma to set off introductory phrases and clauses (use before the main clause). For example:

At least once a year, my family goes to Disneyland.

After all, do you not deserve to treat yourself?

Use a comma to set off nonessential (nonrestrictive elements). For example:

- **Phrases:** Traveling, *with a few exceptions*, is expensive.
- **Clauses:** My mother, *who is an excellent cook*, hosts dinner parties.
- **Appositives** (words that rename a noun): Harry Houdini, *the greatest escape artist and illusionist of all time*, was famous for his daring escapes.
- **Tag questions:** You are going, *aren't you*?
- **Yes and no:** *No*, I can't make the meeting.
- **Direct address or name:** *Randy*, why did you not call me?

Use a comma to set off absolute phrases (an absolute phrase is a group of words that modifies an independent clause as a whole). For example:

His rough draft complete, John checked his paper for errors.

Use a comma to set off phrases of contrast. For example:

We use fresh vegetables, not frozen.

Use a comma between the main clause and a quotation. For example:

Morrison states, "If there is a book that you want to read, but it has not been written yet, then you must write it."

Need more information or assistance?

Schedule an appointment with the [Excel Multiliteracy Center](http://multiliteracy.uccs.edu). We are here to provide one-on-one and group assistance to any and all UCCS students!