

15 Comma Rules

1. between city and state
Thornton, Colorado
2. between day and year/between month and year
May 2, 2004 or May, 2004
3. after the Greeting/Salutation in a friendly letter
Dear Lisa,
4. after the Closing in a letter
Sincerely,
5. when listing a person's last name first
Jones, Holly L.
6. in a list of at least 3 or more items
Mary asked for skates, a hockey stick, and a puck for her birthday.
7. after an introductory/transition word (first, second, finally, therefore, however, consequently, of course, for example.....)
Finally, she gave me the chips!
8. separate 2 adjectives that describe the same noun (multiple modifier)
Mary owned a smelly, shaggy dog.
Paul hated his old, ratty bike.
9. when addressing a person
"Mr. Schmidt, can you come here?"
"Can you come here, Mr. Schmidt?"
10. use commas to set off phrases that show a contrast or opposites
Some say the world will end in ice, not fire.
11. before a quote mark at the beginning, middle, or end of a sentence
"I like you," said Mrs. Jones.
"I like you," said Mrs. Jones, "but you aren't getting my chips!"
Mrs. Jones said, "I like you."

12. SALAD FORKS (also known as APPOSITIVES): Use one or two salad forks around information that could be taken out of the sentence and not missed or information that describes that item.

The field trip, which was completely stupid, cost \$10!
Mrs. Jones, who is a wacko, gave me 5 pages of homework!

13. between 2 complete sentences that are joined by conjunctions (which are called COMPOUND SENTENCES), such as:

but and or for neither/nor because so then since

“I like you, but you are not getting my chips!”

“I like you, and you are still not getting my chips!”

“I like you, or I wouldn’t be sharing my chips with you.”

“I neither like you, nor will I share my chips with you!”

14. between 2 complete sentences (called COMPOUND SENTENCES) joined by a semi colon, transition word, and a comma

I like you; however, I will not give you my chips.

15. after introductory phrases that start a sentence with IF, WHEN, BECAUSE, AS, BEFORE, BUT, ALTHOUGH etc (called COMPLEX SENTENCES); the commas show the phrase can be moved to the end of the sentence

If I get the chips, I’ll be your friend.

When I get the chips, I’ll quit bugging you.

Because I got the chips, now I need a soda.

As long as I’m hungry, you are out of luck for the chips.

Before I got the chips, I was starving.

After I got the chips, I was fine.