

Comma Usage Cheat Sheet



Introductory Phrase - The first part of the sentence is not a complete sentence on its own.

Running through the finish line, B.C. lifted her arms in celebration.

List of three or more items. The comma before the final item is optional, but it may be needed to clarify the sentence.

Mike only wore shirts featuring monsters, aliens, or creatures.

Mike only wore shirts featuring monsters, aliens or creatures.

A relevant thought or detail in the middle of the sentence.

With a Comma: Mr. Mackey, their fourth grade teacher, was a scary guy.

Without a Comma: Their teacher Mr. Mackey was a scary guy.

With ellipses: Mr. Mackey (their fourth grade teacher) was a scary guy.

Two complete sentences connected by and/or/but.

Heidi thought trick-or-treating with her friends would be awesome, but nothing went according to plan.

Addressing a person at the beginning of a sentence.

With a comma: "Dad, will you give me a ride to school?"

Without a comma: "Dad? Will you give me a ride to school?"

At the end of dialogue that doesn't end with a question mark or exclamation point.

"Let's eat lunch on my porch," said Aimee.

A phrase before dialogue is spoken.

He shook Jamie's hand and said, "It's nice to meet you."

Omit the comma: If and/or/but is used but there is no list or complete sentence following it.

Molly loves to write and draw comics.

B.C. swung the bat as hard as she could but missed the ball by a mile.

If two sentences are joined together but there is no and/or/but, split them into two sentences or add a semicolon instead.

The owner of the store was Mike's older sister. Her name was Julie.

The owner of the store was Mike's older sister; her name was Julie.

When in doubt, look it up! For a complete list of comma usage rules, see:

<https://www.grammarly.com/blog/comma/>

Apostrophe Usage Cheat Sheet



When showing a noun's possession of an object.

They climbed the ladder that led up into Dorothy's tree house.

Plural nouns that don't end in "S."

The children's homes surrounded the playground.

Singular Noun ending in "S," can read s' or s's.

Chris' house was at the end of the street.

Chris's house was at the end of the street.

Plural proper nouns that end in s, should read s' only.

Nobody had been inside the Mackeys' house before.

You (possessive)

Your – Belongs to "you." *You didn't eat your dinner.* **Not:** *You didn't eat you are dinner.*

You're – Means: "you are." *I'm glad you're (you are) here today.*

They (possessive)

There – A location to something. *The car is over there.*

Their – Something belongs to "them." *Their car is new.*

They're – Means: "they are." *They're taking the new car to the beach.*

Were/We're/Wear/Where

Were – Past tense of are. *Were you a good swimmer in school?*

We're – Means: "we are." *We're (we are) going together.*

Wear/Wore – Clothing on your body. *Molly brought their trench coats to wear whenever they played their game.*

Where – Asking about a location. *Where did Lisa go?*

Omit: If you're just making a word plural, unless you're talking about something they possess.

What are these things?

What is this thing's purpose?

When in doubt, look it up! For a complete list of apostrophe usage rules, see:

<https://www.grammarly.com/blog/apostrophe/>