

- **Commas**

A comma is used to mark a brief pause, much shorter than a pause made by a full stop. It can be used to separate two words, or groups of words, in a sentence, in order to make the meaning clear.

Examples A

1. We will need pots, pans and spoons.	4. I like green, red, blue, yellow and pink.
2. Mr. Green is a kind, gentle man.	5. Tom scares the cat, teases the dog,
3. She stopped, stared and ran.	bullies his brother and annoys his sister.

Commas are the most common used punctuation mark, but you have to be careful how you use them. You can easily change the meaning of a sentence by moving a comma to a different place or taking it away altogether.

Examples B

1. We ate chocolate, jelly and cake.	The comma is missing in example 2. This makes it sound as though the jelly was made of chocolate.
2. We ate chocolate jelly and cake.	

USE COMMAS:	DON'T USE COMMAS
1. To show a pause inside a sentence.	1. Don't use too many commas.
2. To separate the items on a list.	2. If a sentence is broken by commas in too many places it makes it harder, instead of easier, to understand.
3. To separate inessential words or phrases from the rest of a sentence.	3. Don't break up a list of adjectives (these describe nouns or pronouns) by commas, if they sound better without pauses.
4. To break up numbers into thousands.	
5. When writing a date.	
6. When opening and closing letters. (Dear John, Kindest Regards,)	

Commas are not generally used with "and". In a list "and" tends to replace the comma, but sometimes you need to use a comma before "and" to make the meaning absolutely clear.

The best yachts in the race were Seawave, Starlight, Miss Lola, and Thunder and Lightning.

Without the comma you might think that Miss Lola and Thunder was one yacht and Lightning another.

