

break a bundle of ten. Love is blind; envy has its eyes wide open.

conjunction A joining word. See *coordinating conjunction*, *correlative conjunction*, *subordinating conjunction*, *conjunctive adverb*.

conjunctive adverb An adverb used with a semicolon to connect independent clauses: If an animal does something, we call it instinct; *however*, if we do the same thing, we call it intelligence. The most commonly used conjunctive adverbs are *consequently*, *furthermore*, *however*, *moreover*, *nevertheless*, *then*, *therefore*, and *thus*. See page 65 for a more complete list.

coordinating conjunction One of the following words, used to join elements of equal grammatical rank: *and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, *for*, *so*, *yet*.

correlative conjunction A pair of conjunctions connecting grammatically equal elements: *either ... or*, *neither ... nor*, *whether ... or*, *not only ... but also*, and *both ... and*.

count nouns See page 48.

demonstrative pronoun A pronoun used to identify or point to a noun: *this*, *that*, *these*, *those*. *This* hanging will surely be a lesson to me.

direct object A word or word group that receives the action of the verb: The little snake studies *the ways of the big serpent*. The complete direct object is *the ways of the big serpent*. The simple direct object is always a noun or pronoun, such as *ways*.

expletive The word *there* or *it* when used at the beginning of a sentence to delay the subject: *There* are many paths to the top of the mountain. *It* is not good to wake a sleeping lion. The delayed subjects are the noun *paths* and the infinitive phrase *to wake a sleeping lion*.

gerund A verb form ending in *-ing*, used as a noun: Continual *dripping* wears away a stone. *Dripping* is used as the subject of the verb *wears away*.

gerund phrase A gerund and its objects, complements, or modifiers. A gerund phrase always functions as a noun, usually as a subject, a subject complement, or a direct object. In the following example, the phrase functions as a subject: *Justifying a fault* doubles it.

helping verb One of the following words, when used with a main verb: *be*, *am*, *is*, *are*, *was*, *were*, *being*, *been*; *has*, *have*, *had*; *do*, *does*, *did*; *can*, *will*, *shall*, *should*, *could*, *would*, *may*.

might, *must*. Helping verbs always precede main verbs: *will work*, *is working*, *had worked*.

indefinite pronoun A pronoun that refers to a nonspecific person or thing: *Anyone* who serves God for money will serve the Devil for better wages. The most common indefinite pronouns are *all*, *another*, *any*, *anybody*, *anyone*, *anything*, *both*, *each*, *either*, *everybody*, *everyone*, *everything*, *few*, *many*, *neither*, *nobody*, *none*, *no one*, *nothing*, *one*, *some*, *somebody*, *someone*, *something*.

independent clause A clause (containing a subject and a verb) that can or does stand alone as a sentence. Every sentence consists of at least one independent clause. In addition, many sentences contain subordinate clauses that function as adjectives, adverbs, or nouns. See also *subordinate clause*.

indirect object A noun or pronoun that names to whom or for whom the action is done: Fate gives *us* our relatives. An indirect object always precedes a direct object, in this case *our relatives*.

infinitive The word *to* followed by a verb: *to think*, *to dream*.

infinitive phrase An infinitive and its objects, complements, or modifiers. An infinitive phrase can function as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb: *To side with truth* is noble. We do not have the right to *abandon the poor*. Do not use a hatchet *to remove a fly from your friend's forehead*.

intensive or reflexive pronoun A pronoun ending in *-self*: *myself*, *yourself*, *himself*, *herself*, *itself*, *ourselves*, *yourselves*, *themselves*. An intensive pronoun emphasizes a noun or another pronoun: I *myself* don't understand my moods. A reflexive pronoun names a receiver of an action identical with the doer of the action: Did you cut *yourself*?

interjection A word expressing surprise or emotion: *Oh!* *Wow!* *Hey!* *Hooray!*

interrogative pronoun A pronoun used to open a question: *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *which*, *what*. *What* does history teach us?

intransitive verb See *transitive and intransitive verbs*.

irregular verb See *regular and irregular verbs*. Or see pages 25-29.

linking verb A verb that links a subject to a subject complement, a word or word group that renames or describes the subject: *Prejudice is* the child of ignorance. Good med-

17 The comma

The comma was invented to help readers. Without it, sentence parts can collide into one another unexpectedly, causing misreadings.

CONFUSING: ~~If you cook Elmer will do the dishes.~~

CONFUSING: ~~While we were eating a rattlesnake approached our campsite.~~

Add commas in the logical places (after *cook* and *eating*), and suddenly all is clear. No longer is Elmer being cooked, the rattlesnake being eaten.

Various rules have evolved to prevent such misreadings and to guide readers through complex grammatical structures. According to most experts, you should use a comma in the following situations.

17a. Before a coordinating conjunction joining independent clauses

When a coordinating conjunction connects two or more independent clauses— word groups that could stand alone as separate sentences **—a comma must precede it.** There are seven coordinating conjunctions in English: *and, but, or, nor, for, so, and yet.*

A comma tells readers that one independent clause has come to a close and that another is about to begin.

- ▶ Nearly everyone has heard of love at first sight,
but I fell in love at first dance.

EXCEPTION: If the two independent clauses are short and there is no danger of misreading, the comma may be omitted.

The plane took off and we were on our way.

CAUTION: Do not use a comma to separate compound elements that are not independent clauses. See page 63.

17b. After an introductory word group

Use a comma after an introductory clause or phrase. A comma tells readers that the introductory word group has come to a close and that the main part of the

sentence is about to begin. The most common introductory word groups are adverb clauses, prepositional phrases, and participial phrases.

- ▶ When air-conditioning arrived in the workplace, it increased productivity significantly.
- ▶ Near a small stream at the bottom of the canyon, we discovered an abandoned shelter.
- ▶ Buried under layers of younger rocks, the earth's oldest rocks contain no fossils.

EXCEPTION: The comma may be omitted after a short clause or phrase if there is no danger of misreading.

In no time we were at 2,800 feet.

17c. Between items in a series

Use a comma between all items in a series, including the last two.

- ▶ Anne Frank and thousands like her were forced to hide in attics, cellars, and secret rooms.

Although some writers view the comma between the last two items as optional, most experts advise using it because its omission can result in ambiguity or misreading.

17d. Between coordinate adjectives

Use a comma between coordinate adjectives, those that each modify a noun separately.

- ▶ Patients with severe, irreversible brain damage should not be put on life support systems.

Adjectives are coordinate if they can be connected with *and*: *severe and irreversible*.

CAUTION: Do not use a comma between cumulative adjectives, those that do not each modify the noun separately.

Three large gray shapes moved slowly toward us.

Adjectives are cumulative if they cannot be connected with *and*. It would be very odd to say *three and large and gray shapes*.

17e. To set off a nonrestrictive element

A *restrictive* element restricts the meaning of the word it modifies and is therefore essential to the meaning of the sentence. It is not set off with commas. A *nonrestrictive* element describes a word whose meaning already is clear. It is not essential to the meaning of the sentence and is set off with commas.

RESTRICTIVE

For camp the children needed clothes *that were washable*.

NONRESTRICTIVE

For camp the children needed sturdy shoes, *which were expensive*.

If you remove a restrictive element from a sentence, the meaning changes significantly, becoming more general than intended. The writer of the first sample sentence does not mean that the children needed clothes in general. The meaning is more restricted: The children needed *washable* clothes.

If you remove a nonrestrictive element from a sentence, the meaning does not change significantly. Some meaning is lost, to be sure, but the defining characteristics of the person or thing described remain the same as before. The children needed *sturdy shoes*, and these happened to be expensive.

Elements that may be restrictive or nonrestrictive include adjective clauses, adjective phrases, and appositives.

Adjective clauses. Adjective clauses, which usually follow the noun or pronoun they describe, begin with a relative pronoun (*who, whom, whose, which, that*) or a relative adverb (*when, where*). When an adjective clause

Absolute phrases. An absolute phrase, which modifies the whole sentence, should be set off with commas.

- ▶ Our grant having been approved, we were at last able to begin the archaeological dig.

Contrasted elements. Sharp contrasts beginning with words such as *not* and *unlike* are set off with commas.

- ▶ The Epicurean philosophers sought mental, not bodily, pleasures.

17g. To set off nouns of direct address, the words *yes* and *no*, interrogative tags, and mild interjections

- ▶ Forgive us, Dr. Spock, for spanking Brian.
- ▶ Yes, the loan will probably be approved.
- ▶ The film was faithful to the book, wasn't it?
- ▶ Well, cases like this are difficult to decide.

17h. To set off direct quotations introduced with expressions such as *he said*

- ▶ Naturalist Arthur Cleveland Bent remarked, "In part the peregrine declined unnoticed because it is not adorable."

17i. With dates, addresses, titles

Dates. In dates, the year is set off from the rest of the sentence with commas.

- ▶ On December 12, 1890, orders were sent out for the arrest of Sitting Bull.

EXCEPTIONS: Commas are not needed if the date is inverted or if only the month and year are given: *The deadline is 15 April 2001. May 1999 was a surprisingly cold month.*

Addresses. The elements of an address or place name are followed by commas. A zip code, however, is not preceded by a comma.

- ▶ Greg lived at 708 Spring Street, Washington, Illinois 61571.

Titles. If a title follows a name, separate it from the rest of the sentence with a pair of commas.

- ▶ Sandra Barnes, M.D., performed the surgery.

17j. Misuses of the comma

Do not use commas unless you have a good reason for using them. In particular, avoid using the comma in the following situations:

BETWEEN COMPOUND ELEMENTS THAT ARE NOT INDEPENDENT CLAUSES

- ▶ Marie Curie discovered radium/and later applied her work on radioactivity to medicine.

TO SEPARATE A VERB FROM ITS SUBJECT

- ▶ Zoos large enough to give the animals freedom to roam/are becoming more popular.

BETWEEN CUMULATIVE ADJECTIVES (See p. 59.)

- ▶ Joyce was wearing a slinky/red silk gown.

TO SET OFF RESTRICTIVE ELEMENTS (See pp. 59–61.)

- ▶ Drivers/who think they own the road/make cycling a dangerous sport.

- ▶ Margaret Mead's book *Coming of Age in Samoa* stirred up considerable controversy when it was first published.

AFTER A COORDINATING CONJUNCTION

- ▶ Occasionally soap operas are live, but more often they are taped.

AFTER SUCH AS OR LIKE

- ▶ Plants such as begonias and impatiens add color to a shady garden.

BEFORE THAN

- ▶ Touring Crete was more thrilling for us than visiting the Greek islands frequented by the jet set.

BEFORE A PARENTHESIS

- ▶ At MCI Sylvia began at the bottom (with only a cubicle and a swivel chair), but within five years she had been promoted to supervisor.

TO SET OFF AN INDIRECT (REPORTED) QUOTATION

- ▶ Samuel Goldwyn once said that a verbal contract isn't worth the paper it's written on.

WITH A QUESTION MARK OR AN EXCLAMATION POINT

- ▶ "Why don't you try it?" she coaxed.

18 The semicolon and the colon

18a. The semicolon

The semicolon is used between independent clauses not joined by a coordinating conjunction. It can also be used between items in a series containing internal punctuation.

The semicolon is never used between elements of unequal grammatical rank.

Between independent clauses. When related independent clauses appear in one sentence, they are ordinarily connected with a comma and a coordinating conjunction (*and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet*). The coordinating conjunction expresses the relation between the clauses. If the relation is clear without a conjunction, a writer may choose to connect the clauses with a semicolon instead.

Injustice is relatively easy to bear; what stings is justice. — H. L. Mencken

A writer may also choose to connect the clauses with a semicolon and a conjunctive adverb such as *however* or *therefore* or a transitional phrase such as *for example* or *in fact*.

He swallowed a lot of wisdom; however, it seemed as if all of it had gone down the wrong way. — G. C. Lichtenberg

CONJUNCTIVE ADVERBS

accordingly, also, anyway, besides, certainly, consequently, conversely, finally, furthermore, hence, however, incidentally, indeed, instead, likewise, meanwhile, moreover, nevertheless, next, nonetheless, otherwise, similarly, specifically, still, subsequently, then, therefore, thus

TRANSITIONAL PHRASES

after all, as a matter of fact, as a result, at any rate, at the same time, even so, for example, for instance, in addition, in conclusion, in fact, in other words, in the first place, on the contrary, on the other hand