|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **RULE** | **USE** | **EXAMPLE** |
| **1** | **Join two independent clauses**  **NOTE**: You must use a coordinating conjunction/FANBOYS with this rule:  For  And  Nor  But  Or  Yet  So | My aunt brought the cake**, but** I forgot to buy the ice cream. |
| **2** | **Separate more than two items in a series or list** | I brought **my sisters, Julie, and Joan** with me to the party.  **NOTE:** The comma before the “and” shows that Julie and Joan are separate people from my sisters.  I brought **my sisters, Julie and Joan** with me to the party.  **NOTE:** Eliminating the comma before the “and” implies that Julie and Joan are my sisters. |
| **3** | **Separate an introductory word or phrase (group of words)**  **NOTE**: The introductory phrase doesn’t have to come at the beginning of the sentence; it just has to introduce a main clause. | **In July**, I am planning to go on a cruise; **however**, my sister is going to the mountains |
| **4** | **Connect a dependent clause to an independent clause IF the dependent clause comes first**  **HINT**: dependent clauses will start with subordinating conjunctions. | **Since I have the biggest car,** I drove everyone to the party. |
| **5** | **Separate phrases that interrupt sentence flow or add information not necessary for the sentence to make sense** | My grandmother**, who is ninety-five,** and my great aunt**, who is seventy-one,** go surfing every morning. **Reminder**: Phrases that rename a word also fall under this rule.  Bananas**, a yellow fruit,** are actually berries. |
| **6** | **Separate two adjectives IF they refer to the same thing AND the word “and” can be placed between them.** | The **kind, understanding** teacher gave the students the encouragement they needed. |
| **7** | **To separate the day and month from the year in a date** | On **May 5th, 2015,** my sister will graduate college. |
| **8** | **To separate a city from the state or country in a location** | Many people do not realize that **St. Petersburg, Florida,** is named after **St. Petersburg, Russia.** |
| **9** | **To surround degrees or titles that come after names**  **NOTE:** Jr. and Sr. do not require commas | **Juan Fernandez, M.D.,** is my family doctor. |
| **10** | **To introduce or interrupt direct quotes in dialogue when using a speaker tag** | “She’s a great artist**,” he said.** |
| **11** | **To separate parts of a sentence that contrast** | My dog is **not a fancy purebred, but** a loveable mutt. |

**REMINDER!** A sentence may contain several commas.

**For example**:

In 1929, many Americans, especially those who had invested a lot, lost their life savings when the stock market crashed, and although they had been rich, many struggled to put food on the table.

* “In 1929” is an introductory phrase [Rule 3].
* “especially those who had invested a lot” adds information not needed for the sentence to make sense [Rule 5].
* The comma before the “and” separates two independent clauses [Rule 1].
* “although they had been rich” is a dependent clause [Rule 4].