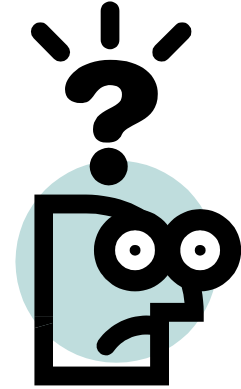


TO COMMA OR NOT TO COMMA?



Too often the comma is misused as a mark of punctuation; often it is overused. Sprinkling your essay with commas will not assure that it will grow to be a perfect paper. Although the comma ordinarily signals a pause, not every pause calls for a comma. Avoid these times when the comma is **not** necessary:

Never separate the subject from its verb or the verb from its object.

The commas circled below should be omitted.

Even people with unlisted telephone numbers, receive crank calls.
(subject separated from its verb)

The sociologist observed, that the majority of the research in her field of study addressed adolescent behaviors.

(verb separated from its object)

Never use a comma before or after a coordinating conjunction (and, but, or, for, so, yet) within a sentence.

The comma circled below should be omitted.

The facts were selected, and organized with care.

Never use a comma before the first or last item in a series.

The comma circled below should be omitted.

Other causes of asthmatic attacks are, stress, change in temperature, humidity, and cold air.

Never use a comma to separate an adjective from the noun that follows it.

The comma circled below should be omitted.

It was a senseless, brutal, vicious, crime.

Never use a comma in the following situations:

1. after *such as* or *like*
2. before *than*
3. after *although*
4. before a parenthesis
5. to set off an indirect quotation
6. with a question mark or an exclamation point



The commas circled below should be omitted. Check the front page for the reason if you cannot remember. The rule is indicated by the number in the parenthesis. ()

Many lovely plants, such as, begonias, impatiens, and coleus, can add color to your garden. (#1)

Receiving a B in a challenging course is more thrilling for me, than getting an A in a course which is not too difficult. (#2)

Although, the test was difficult, the answers were all in the textbook. (#3)

At Union County College I began as a developmental student, (with four developmental requirements) but I graduated in only three years. (#4)

Luke Skywalker once said, that the Jedi will return to conquer the galaxy. (#5)

"Why won't you fix it?" the student asked the English tutor. (#6)