

#	Number Rules – Follow the number rules properly
align	Alignment – Every element should have some visual connection
[awk]	Awkward – This passage isn't grammatically flawed, but the wording is confusing
c#	Comma Rule – Commas are either missing or misused (see the other side of this page)
choppy	Choppy sentences – Too many short, simple sentences in a row inhibit thought
cont	Contrast – If the elements are not the same, then make them very different
cs	Comma Splice – Two sentences coupled with a comma
dang	Dangling Modifier – A phrase does not make sense
E	English – This construction isn't possible in English
expl	Expletive – “There is” or “it is” can be rephrased for more efficiency
expect	Expectation – Ideas are either reversed or new ideas have arrived suddenly
fo	Forecast – Improper English structure or punctuation for a forecasting statement
fp	Filler Phase – no content exists here, it's just filler in place of real content
<<frag>>	Fragment – Incomplete sentence
gb	Gender Bias – Rephrase to avoid excluding one gender
mod	Modifier – Modifiers should be organized number size shape age color NOUN
np	Non-parallel – Must use same English word type in lists, series of items, or phrases
¶	Paragraph – Start a new paragraph here
¶ 1234	Paragraph Structure – Ideas appear at random. Follow the 1-2-3-4 order/emphasis structure
p	Punctuation – Period, colon, semicolon, dash, or hyphen marks are either missing or misused
po	Possessive – Possessives are either missing or misused
pov	Point of View – You changed the point of view in your writing or using the wrong POV
pr	Pronoun Reference – It is not clear what your pronoun refers back to
prox	Proximity – Group related items together
<u>red</u>	Redundant – Repetition or extra ideas/words need to be cut
rep	Repetition – Use visual elements of the design many times throughout the piece
//ros//	Run-On Sentence – The sentence needs to be broken down
{seq}	Sequence unclear – The sequence in the sentence from “from blah to blah” is unclear
sp	Spelling – Either the word is spelled wrong or a homonym is used instead of the correct word
s/v	Subject/Verb – Your verb is not conjugated (suited) for your noun
t	Tense – An incorrect tense has been used
<u>This</u>	This as the sentence subject is referring back to some vague idea/concept/notion
tone	Tone – The tone does not match the required style
trans	Transitions – You need a transition here
<u>unclear</u>	Unclear – Meaning is lost because of distracting or incorrect sentence structure/grammar
<u>vague</u>	Vague – This section fails to make a relevant point
v?	Verb – Could you specify or rephrase the sentence for a sharper verb?
wc?	Word Choice? – Are you <u>sure</u> this is the word you want?
wc	Word Choice – This is <u>not</u> the word you want
<u>wordy</u>	Wordy – Word(s) that are unnecessary can to be removed/rethought for clarity

Comma Rules

1. Linking independent clauses

An independent clause is one with a subject and verb of its own that could stand as an independent sentence. Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction that links independent clauses (e.g., *for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, and sometimes *yet*, and *so*) [Spells FANBOYS so that's an easy way to remember them.]

Human beings have always prided themselves on their unique capacity to create and manipulate symbols, but today computers manipulate symbols.

2. Enclosing elements

When including a phrase that is parenthetical, use a comma to set it off, both at the beginning and the end.

"My tuna fish sandwich, which was rotten, ended up in the garbage."

3. Introductory Phrases

If your sentence starts with a dependent clause like this sentence you're reading now, set it off with a comma. By doing that, you give an indication of where the independent clause begins. Always place a comma after a long introductory clause or phrase. Get in a habit of placing commas after introductory clauses, even with short ones.

In two seconds, a temperature of 20 degrees Fahrenheit is created in the test tube.

4. Separating items in a series

In technical writing, serial commas are most commonly used to avoid ambiguity that can result in omitting the comma before the last item in a series.

Random House, Bantam, Doubleday and Dell were individual publishing companies.

Does Doubleday and Dell refer to one company or two? So put in that serial comma.

Random House, Bantam, Doubleday, and Dell were individual publishing companies.

5. Clarifying and contrasting

Use a comma to separate two contrasting thoughts or ideas.

The project was finished on time, but not within the budget.

Use a comma after an independent clause that is only loosely related to the dependent clause that follows it.

I should be able to finish the plan by July, even though I lost time because of illness.

6. When present with other punctuation

Conjunctive adverbs (*however*, *nevertheless*, *consequently*, *for example*, *on the other hand*) that join independent clauses are preceded by a semicolon and followed by a comma.

Your idea is good; however, your format is poor.

Commas always go inside quotation marks. Except with abbreviations: a comma should not be used with a period, question mark, exclamation mark, or dash. Except in the commonly used notions *i.e.*, that translate to "that is" and *e.g.*, that means "for example" – then a period and comma go together.

7. Commas with adjectives

Use commas to separate two or more adjectives that describe the same noun equally.

cold, dark water or happy, healthy baby

Not all adjectives in front of a noun describe the noun equally. When they are not equal adjectives (or coordinating modifiers), do not use commas to separate them.

six big dogs or bright green sweater (The color of the sweater is bright green) Or ten 5/8th-inch long blue Phillips screws

8. Unnecessary commas

Commas are omitted when the word or phrase does not interrupt the continuity of thought.

Never place a comma between a subject and verb or between a verb and its object: *The cold conditions at the test site in the Arctic, made accurate readings difficult.*

Do not place commas between the elements of a compound subject consisting only of two elements: *The director of the engineering department, and the supervisor of the quality control section were opposed to the new schedules.*

Do not place a comma before the first item in a series: *The new products we were considering include, calculators, scanners, and camera.*