

BASIC PUNCTUATION RULES

JOINING SENTENCES:

Don't slam sentences together without proper punctuation, or what's said is hard to read and usually makes no sense.

Pete played baseball in the park under a willow tree Sally watched later the rain fell hard.

1. When ending a sentence, use a period (.), exclamation mark (!), or question mark (?).

Wilbert totaled his mother's car. Before he knew it, he was grounded for life.

2. When using the conjunctions (words that join sentences) and, or, but, for, nor, so, yet to join sentences, always use a comma (,) in front of the conjunction.

Kelly painted a mural on the wall, so he was awarded a prize.

Pete played baseball in the park, and under a willow tree Sally watched, but she feel asleep.

3. Any other time that you join sentences, use a semicolon (;).

- a. It may be used in place of a period.

Before the class began, Allen sang; Mike drummed, and Julia sang.

We walked to the park for a picnic; the place was too muddy after the everlasting rain.

- b. It is used in front of a conjunction like ;however; nevertheless; furthermore; on the other hand.

The dogs barked; however, no one woke up.

Eighty mile an hour winds smacked the coast; then, the rains hit.

OTHER USES FOR COMMAS:

1. Use a comma to separate lists of more than two things.

Elmo and Cory listened to Erma, Wilma, and Beth argue about what to wear.

2. Use commas inside sentences to separate words that are really not essential.

High waves, however, rolled across the beach and smashed the sand castle.

Mr. Jones, the town's mayor, walked slowly into Career Tech.

3. Use commas before and after a quotation in a sentence.

Jimmy said, "I won't write another word," ran down the hall and out the door.

"Food," the principal ordered, "is not allowed in the classroom."

Note: the comma and end punctuation usually goes inside the quotation marks.

4. Use commas to set off geographical names and parts of dates.

Career Tech can be found in Lincoln City, Oregon, above the city hall.

Tom and Ann decided July 22, 2007, would be their wedding date.

THE COLON (:):

Use a colon (:) to tell the reader that a list follows.

Sam ran three places: across the bridge, through the alley, and down Main Street.