

**ENGLISH 10**  
**UNIT II**  
**LESSON ONE: THE COMMA**

The following are the six most common rules governing the use of the comma.

**Rule One: Use commas to separate three or more items in a series (words, phrases, or clauses).**

- a. My little brother wants to play football, baseball, and hockey. (words)
- b. He swims, reads, and hikes in his leisure time. (words)

Ex. \_\_\_\_\_

**Rule Two: Use commas to separate the items in a date or address.**

- a. The company moved to 120 Turner Avenue, Macon, Georgia, late last year.
- b. The historic meeting took place at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, July 2, 1990, in the Blackstone Hotel.

Ex. \_\_\_\_\_

Ex. \_\_\_\_\_

**Rule Three: Use a comma before the coordinating conjunction that joins two complete sentences (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)**

- a. The final session came to a close, *and* the legislators left for home.
- b. The accident occurred in a busy intersection, *but* no one was hurt.

Ex. \_\_\_\_\_

**Rule Four: Use a comma after introductory words, phrases, and clauses.**

- a. *Yes*, I will leave earlier. (word)
- b. *Well*, what shall I do now? (word)
- c. *In the early morning light*, the beach looks magical. (prepositional phrase)
- d. *Leaning over the desk*, I grabbed the books and papers. (phrase)
- e. *To make matters worse*, he was unable to walk for days. (verbal phrase)

Ex. \_\_\_\_\_

**Rule Five: Use commas to set off words, phrases, or clauses that interrupt the flow of the sentence.**

### 1) expressions used in direct address

- a. *Mr. Ford*, we will send you a copy later.
- b. Has it occurred to you, *my friend*, that some people may disapprove?

Ex. \_\_\_\_\_

### 2) appositives

- a. Tom Walker, *the leader of the expedition*, died in the third month of the voyage.
- b. *A great athlete*, Tony received several offers to play in college.

Ex. \_\_\_\_\_

### 3) parenthetical expressions (interrupters)

- a. I believe, *however*, that Sam scored better on the exam.
- b. It was, *in my opinion*, a great example of Romantic literature.

Ex. \_\_\_\_\_

### Rule Six: Use commas to set off nonessential phrases and clauses.

- c. All the kids *who play instruments* will be asked to join the band.  
(essential)
- d. Marty and Ben, *who play instruments*, have recently joined the band.  
(nonessential)

Ex. \_\_\_\_\_