**Commas**

Commas help make your writing clear. You might have heard a rumor claiming that commas go wherever you breathe. In fact, there are rules that dictate where commas go. This handout provides some quick, essential comma tips. For more information, visit https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/607/02/.

**Types of Clauses**

When studying commas, it is important to understand the difference between dependent and independent clauses.

**Dependent clause:** A dependent clause is a group of words with a subject and a verb that does not express a complete thought. A dependent clause cannot form a full sentence.

E.g. When I feel hungry, “I” is the subject “feel” is the verb.

**Independent clause:** An independent clause is a group of words with a subject and a verb that expresses a complete though. An independent clause can form a full sentence.

E.g. I eat pizza . “I” is the subject “eat” is the verb.

**Quick Comma Rules**

1. **Joining comma**

Use a comma along with a coordinating conjunction between the independent clauses in a compound sentence.

I felt hungry, so I ate pizza.

1. **Introducing comma**

Use a comma to set off an introductory, dependent clause.

 When I feel hungry, I eat pizza.

1. **Series comma**

Use a comma when listing a series.

 I like pepperoni, artichokes, and olives on my pizza.

1. **Conclusion comma**

Use a comma to set off dependent clauses that follow the main clause.

 I ate my pizza really fast, even though I didn’t have any reason to rush.

1. **Extra info comma**

Use a comma to set off non-essential information.

 My brother, who is older, hates pizza.

1. **Hey-you comma**

Use a comma to set off a direct address.

 Waiter, I want more pizza now!

1. **Quotation comma**

Use a comma to set off direct quotations.

 “I will bring it to you immediately,” the waiter said.

1. **Date comma**

Use a comma when stating the date.

 I ate pizza on August 14, 2011.