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**How to correctly use commas**

\* Commas make sentences easier to understand \* They are most often used:

* To enclose parenthetical expressions
* Example: The Erie Canal, along with many other internal improvements, was built during the Jacksonian Era.
* To enclose a name or title in direct address
* Example: Excuse me, Dr. Smith, but I missed your point about the importance of the Erie Canal.
* After abbreviations
* Example: Carol Sheriff, Ph.D., wrote *The Artificial River: The Erie Canal and the Paradox of Progress, 1817 – 1862*.
* In a list
* Example: The canal boat was full of corn, cows, chickens, and cotton.
* Make sure there is a serial comma (aka Oxford comma) after the last term before the conjunction.
* Before a conjunction joining two independent clauses
* and, but, nor, or, for, so, yet
* Example: The Hudson River was always an important waterway, but its prestige grew after the opening of the great western canal.
* After an introductory phrase or clause that precedes an independent clause
* Example: Before you conclude your essay, you should take into consideration the impact of the Erie Canal on the Civil War.
* Example: In 1825, the Erie Canal opened with great fanfare.
* To indicate tags and interjection
* Example: Yes, I came here via the artificial river.
* Example: Well, actually, I left the supplies in Lockport.
* Example: You know that the Erie Canal was responsible for America’s becoming a superpower, do you not?
* To set off non-restrictive elements
* Words, phrases, or clauses that modify a word whose meaning is already clear
* Example: A celebrated politician, DeWitt Clinton was a canal supporter.
* Example: This book describes the life of Peter Ploughshare, an opponent of the Grand Canal.
* Example: The canal commissioners, all sporting their best attire, looked ready to do business.

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 A restrictive element is a modifier that is necessary to preserve the intended meaning of   
the sentence.

* Example: The commissioners who wore their best suits looked businesslike. o No commas are needed because the phrase “who wore their best suits” is necessary to know which commissioners looked businesslike.