



## WRITING CENTER

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### Comma Rules

Commas are mainly used as follows:

1. To separate items in a series  
(ex.) I bought cheesecake, brownies, and flan at the bakery.  
(ex.) You can use a credit card, write out a check, or provide cash.
2. To set off introductory material or extra material placed at the end of a sentence  
(ex.) Just to annoy her brother, she let the spider crawl up her arm.  
(ex.) Fearlessly, he entered the boxing ring.  
(ex.) I have trouble accepting criticism, except from my grandmother.
3. To separate words or phrases that add information in the middle of a sentence  
(ex.) Vampires, undead creatures that suck human blood, probably aren't real.  
(ex.) *The Shining*, a novel by Stephen King, is one of the scariest books I've ever read.
4. To separate two complete thoughts in a sentence connected by a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)  
(ex.) My parents threatened to throw me out of the house, so I had to stop playing the drums.  
(ex.) She said the drive would only take fifteen minutes, yet the detour slowed me down.
5. To set off a direct quotation from the rest of a sentence  
(ex.) According to Sternheimer, "The answer is not so simple" (223).  
(ex.) "If you don't leave," he warned, "I'm going to call the cops."
6. To mark certain material in everyday writing (like numbers, addresses, dates, people spoken to, and openings/closings in letters)  
(ex.) I spent about \$25,000 fixing up my house at 109 East Chapel Drive, Peoria, Illinois 61606.  
(ex.) Mary, were you in town on April 29, 2014?  
(ex.) Dear John, We're through. Sincerely, Jane

Still unsure about when to use a comma?  
Make an appointment with the Writing Center!  
Library, Room 311/312  
[www.bradley.edu/writeright](http://www.bradley.edu/writeright)