

11 Rules of Writing¹

1. To join two independent clauses, use a comma followed by a conjunction, a semicolon alone, or a semicolon followed by a sentence modifier.
2. Use commas to bracket nonrestrictive phrases, which are not essential to the meaning of the sentence.
3. Do not use commas to bracket phrases that are essential to the meaning of the sentence.
4. Use a comma after an introductory phrase or an introductory (dependent) clause that tells when, where, how, why or under what conditions the action of the sentence occurred.
5. To indicate possession, end a singular noun with an apostrophe followed by an "s." Otherwise, the noun appears plural. To indicate possession with a plural noun, add an apostrophe following the "s."
6. Use proper punctuation to integrate a quotation into a sentence. If the introductory material is an independent clause, add the quotation after a colon. If the introductory material end in "thinks," "says," or some other verb indicating expression, use a comma.
7. Make the subject and verb agree with each other, not with a word that comes between them. To test this, remove all prepositional phrases between the subject and the verb.
8. Make sure a pronoun, a participial phrase, or an appositive refers clearly to the proper subject.
9. Use parallel construction to make a strong point and create a smooth flow.
10. Use active voice unless you specifically need to use the passive.
11. Omit unnecessary words.

¹ Adapted from "11 rules of writing." junketstudies.com. Retrieved April 25, 2003 from <http://junketstudies.com/rulesofw/fsidebar.html>