



## Rule #2 — continued

So here's how this rule applies: If you put any grammatical structure in front of the basic sentence structure, you must separate the introductory structure away from the sentence structure using a **COMMA**.

Introductory PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE [two or more]:

**On one of the first days in spring,** Jessica walked to class with her best friend.

Introductory PARTICIPIAL PHRASE:

**Running down the main staircase,** Jessica tripped on her flip flops.

Introductory SUBORDINATE [ADVERB] CLAUSE:

**When she landed at the bottom of the stairs,** Jessica realized the hottest guy in school was reaching out his hand to help her up.



If you don't know what the subordinate conjunctions are, now is the time to learn, or this rule will be hard to follow. See box at end for these words.

Introductory ADVERB:

**Luckily,** all that was hurt was her pride.

Introductory INTERJECTION:

**Wow,** he's hot! The thought raced through her mind.

Introductory DIRECT ADDRESS:

**"Jessica,** are you hurt?" the hottie asked.

Introductory TRANSITION:

**In conclusion,** it's a truth of life that the best things happen at the worst times.

**Rule #3:** Always use a comma before an adjective clause that starts with which. Never use a comma before an adjective clause that starts with that.

Why? The grammar gods have decided that which introduces a clause that is unnecessary [also called nonrestrictive], so the comma(s) show that the clause can be left out. The relative pronoun that introduces a necessary [also called restrictive] clause so you can't use comma(s). What about who, whose and whom? You decide. If it's necessary [don't use commas] or unnecessary [use commas]. Kind of backwards thinking, I've always thought. Or think of it like this. The commas form little handles that allow you to pick up the clause and throw it out because it is not needed, not necessary, to the meaning of the sentence.

Example of that: The movie **that I wanted to see** is no longer playing at Highlands Ranch.

Example of which: The Platte River, **which once was heavily polluted,** serves as the focal point for the Hudson Gardens' nature walk.

**Rule #4: Separate compound sentences with a comma, placing the comma before the conjunction.**

So what's a compound sentence, you ask. What's a conjunction? A compound sentence is two or more sentences connected with a conjunction. An easy way to remember the conjunctions is with the acronym **FANBOYS**. **F = for, A = and, N = nor, B = but, O = or, Y = yet, S = so.**

**Example:** Englewood is my home town, **and** it is also the corporate headquarters for Sports Authority.

**Check it:** There's one sentence to the left of the comma and one sentence to the right of the comma. Also, the conjunction **and** immediately follows the comma.



What happens if there is a comma but no conjunction? That is a major no-no according to the grammar gods. It's called a **comma splice**. The solution: If you have two sentences together in one sentence with no conjunction, use a **semi-colon** to separate the two sentences.

**Example of semi-colon:** Englewood is my home town; it is also the corporate headquarters for Sports Authority.

**Rule #5: Separate interrupters from the rest of the sentence with commas. Use a comma before and after if the interrupter comes in the middle of the sentence.**

What are interrupters? An interrupter is anything that interrupts the flow of the sentence or that breaks up the main pattern of the sentence [see Rule #2].

**TRANSITION as interrupter**

College, **on the other hand**, expects students to be independent learners.

**DIRECT ADDRESS as interrupter**

Are you listening, **David**, to what I am saying?

**PARTICIPIAL PHRASE as interrupter**

Randy Penn, **-serving currently as Englewood city councilman**, grows irises for relaxation.

**APPOSITIVE as interrupter**

Sheila Jones, **Pirateer adviser**, will be the featured speaker at the summer journalism conference.

**MISCELLANEOUS, UNNECESSARY WORDS as interrupter**

My lost cell phone, **as luck would have it**, was lying just outside my car door where I had dropped it.

**Rule #6:** Separate the speaker of a quotation from the quote with a comma. In a split quote, separate a partial quote with commas. If the second part of the split quote is a complete sentence, separate the two parts of the quote with a period. Remember, in most cases, the punctuation goes to the LEFT of the quotation marks.

**Example:** Mrs. Jones said, “Separate the speaker of the quote from the quote with a comma.”

**Split quote #1:** “Commas can be confusing,” Mrs. Jones said, “so it’s important to learn the rules.”

**Note:** This split quote is one compound sentence separated with commas.

**Split quote #2:** “Students make too many mistakes with commas,” Mrs. Jones said. “It’s important that they learn the rules, so they don’t continue to drive me crazy.”

**Note:** This split quote is two complete, separate sentences. Therefore, it is separated with a period after the speaker of the quote.

**For Rule #2: Subordinate Conjunctions: *Memorize these!***

If	Since	Before	So that	Whenever	As long as
After	In order that	Even though	Although	Unless	While
As if	When	As	Until	Where	Though
Because	Wherever	As soon as			