When to use commas (,):

- After a long introductory phrase or clause.
  
  *While heating last week’s leftovers, Susie Jo read The Star.*

- To separate elements in a list or series (called serial commas). Commas help make ideas clear.
  
  *Unclear: Jim stopped in the children’s maternity and toy departments.*
  
  *Clear: Jim stopped in the children’s, maternity, and toy departments.*

- To separate independent clauses joined by conjunctions.
  
  *Julia loved Justin, but he seemed oblivious.*

- To set off a phrase that describes a noun or phrase.
  
  *David Copperfield, the magician, has vanished.*
  
  *Pat’s ancient tent, a green canvas monster, collapsed last night.*

- To set off less important clauses. Use commas with “which” clauses.
  
  *Wigs, which come in all colors, are great for bad hair days.*

- In direct address or for greetings in friendly letters.
  
  *Henry, shape up. I’m speaking to you, Judy.*
  
  *Dear Joel, My dearest Buttercup,*

- To separate names and titles; to separate names of cities, states and countries.
  
  *Jasper Sludge, president of Sludge Sanitation, hates recycling.*
  
  *Paris, France Siren, Wisconsin*