English 11 Comma Cheat Sheet!

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| *When to Use* | *Examples* |
| When listing items in succession  **(use the oxford comma)** | *Pack an extra swimsuit, a towel, sunglasses, sunscreen, three bottles of water, lip balm, and an umbrella.*  *I want eggs, bacon, fruit, and sausage.* |
| Between multiple adjectives that are modifying the same noun  (Use a comma to separate two adjectives when the word and can be inserted between them.) | *The friendly, eager-to-please puppy*  *The cold, windy Chicago weather*  We stayed at an expensive summer resort.(You would not say expensive and summer resort, so no comma) |
| After introductory words or phrases and to finish a sentence with a phrase | *After dinner, make sure you wash the dishes.*  *When traveling, do not pack more than three ounces of liquid in your carry-on.*  *Sure, it sounds like a good idea to me.*  *Well, I think we should probably ask Steven before we make plans.* |
| Before conjunctions linking independent clauses  **(think FANBOYS)** | *I want to go to bed, but I still have to finish this essay.*  *There are snakes in our garden, so I try to avoid going out there after dark.* |  |
| Use commas surrounding words such as therefore and however when they are used as interrupters. | I would, therefore, like a response. I would be happy, however, to volunteer for the Red Cross. |
| Around nonessential clarifying phrases | *I hope The Hobbit, which was directed by Peter Jackson, is just as good as the Lord of the Rings movies were.*  Freddy, who has a limp, was in an auto accident. |
| With dates and addresses | *His birthday is July 21, 1988.*  *I hear New Orleans, Louisiana has amazing food.* |
| When directly addressing someone | *Mary, can you go to the store and pick up some milk?*  *I’d like you, Jake, to bring a dessert to the potluck.* |
| At the salutation and close of a letter | *Dear Tom,*  *Sincerely,*  *Sarah* |
| Use commas to introduce or interrupt direct quotations shorter than three lines. | ***Examples:***He actually said, "I do not care." "Why," I asked, "do you always forget to do it?" |
| Use a comma to separate a statement from a question. | I can go, can't I? |
| Use a comma to separate contrasting parts of a sentence. | That is my money, not yours. |
| Use commas to set off expressions that interrupt sentence flow. | I am, as you have probably noticed, very nervous about this. |
| When starting a sentence with a weak clause, use a comma after it. Conversely, do not use a comma when the sentence starts with a strong clause followed by a weak clause. | If you are not sure about this, let me know now. Let me know now if you are not sure about this. |
| A **comma splice** is an error caused by joining two strong clauses with only a comma instead of separating the clauses with a conjunction, a semicolon, or a period. A **run-on sentence**, which is incorrect, is created by joining two strong clauses without any punctuation. | ***Incorrect:***Time flies when we are having fun, we are always having fun. *(Comma splice)* Time flies when we are having fun we are always having fun. *(Run-on sentence)*  ***Correct:***Time flies when we are having fun; we are always having fun.***OR***Time flies when we are having fun, and we are always having fun. *(Comma is optional because both strong clauses are short.)* ***OR***Time flies when we are having fun. We are always having fun. |
| If the subject does not appear in front of the second verb, do not use a comma. | He thought quickly but still did not answer correctly. |