

Place commas around an interruption

When writers include an interruption in a sentence, this causes readers to pause.

To remind readers to pause, surround interruptions with commas.

**No
Interruption:** Sue warned us that the roses had thorns.

Interruption: Sue warned us that the roses ^{Comma}, while pretty ^{Comma}, had thorns.
Interruption

If no pause is necessary, do not use commas.

I heard that the roller coaster ^{No Comma} was scary ^{No Comma} and had a really long line.

Note: These interruptions are formally called “parenthetical phrases.”

Use commas to avoid confusion

Commas tell a reader where to pause in a sentence, helping to avoid confusion.

Outside , the sprinklers just went off.
Comma

"Outside the sprinklers"
sounds confusing

For most , the year is already finished.
Comma

"For most the year" sounds
like a word was left out

Some sentences doesn't require any commas at all. If there's no natural pause in a sentence, a comma does not belong.

The sprinklers just went off outside.

I enjoy running and jumping with Max.

Add or remove commas if necessary

I was surprised, when the llama, tried to lick Beyonce's cheek.

I was surprised_ when the llama_ tried to lick Beyonce's cheek.

Yes I would love one of David Schwimmer's famous biscuits!

Yes, I would love one of David Schwimmer's famous biscuits!

George Orwell in case you didn't hear is starring in a Broadway show this summer.

George Orwell, in case you didn't hear, is starring in a Broadway show this summer.

Add or remove commas if necessary

When I first heard Matthew Perry sing the soulful beautiful, ballad, I started to cry.

When I first heard Matthew Perry sing the soulful, beautiful, ballad, I started to cry.

Eleven left her old soft faded sweatsuit at the gym.

Eleven left her old, soft, faded sweatsuit at the gym.

Phoebe Buffay knocked the glass, pickle, jar off the deli counter.

Phoebe Buffay knocked the glass, pickle, jar off the deli counter.