

#### OTHER COMMA USES

### 1. Use a comma to set off contrasting or transposed elements.

## Contrasting elements

Examples:

**a.** He needs understanding, not pity.

**b.** Comedy, rather than tragedy, fits their mood when choosing a movie to see.

**c.** The more we talked, the slower we walked.

## Transposed elements

*Transposed elements* are a part or parts of a sentence that are moved from their usual order for stylistic reasons.

Examples:

**a.** The small child, shy and self-conscious, spoke very softly. The usual order of this sentence would be *The small, shy, self-conscious child spoke very softly*.

**b.** The freezing rain, hard and continuous, devastated the strawberry fields.

The usual word order of this sentence would be *The hard, continuous, freezing rain devastated the strawberry fields*.

### 2. Enclose certain elements within a sentence.

# Enclose appositives with commas

An *appositive* is an expression that renames or explains the noun preceding it.

#### appositive

Examples: **a.** Diego Rivera, the famous muralist, etched.

appositive -

**b.** The dolphin, a marine mammal that is reported to be able to talk to man, is the subject of intensive scientific research.

appositive

**c.** Carlos, my older brother, is a physician.

#### 3. Set off words in *direct address* with commas.

*Direct address* is the name, title, or descriptive term used in addressing a person or a group.

Examples: **a.** *Jorge*, you have a telephone call.

**b.** Taxes, *ladies and gentlemen*, will continue to rise.

**c.** The problem, *Senators*, is here in the Congress.

# 4. Enclose *parenthetical* elements with commas.

Parenthetical elements are elements that are not essential to the meaning of the sentence.

#### parenthetical

Examples: **a.** What, *after all*, makes them behave this way?

parenthetical

**b.** Delia, hurrying, dropped all her books.

**NOTE:** Parenthetical elements may also be enclosed by parentheses or dashes.

**c.** The sweater (an old handmade, patched pullover) was Marta's favorite.

### 5. Use of commas in dialogue.

In dialogue, set off expressions like *she said\** with commas.

\*In dialogue, expressions like she said are called dialogue guides.

Examples: **a.** "Taxes," the president explained, "are a necessary evil."

- **b.** "I got an A on my test," Karin reported.
- **c.** "Where in the world," he laughed, "did you get that hat?"

#### 6. Use of commas in dates and addresses.

Dates are set off with commas. Set off days from months and months from years.

Examples: **a.** My son was born on Saturday, July 21, 1973.

**b.** Thursday, March 20, 2008 is the first day of spring.

**NOTE:** When the day is left out and only the month and year are given, you may use a comma or omit it; either way is correct: August, 2008 or August 2008.

Addresses are set off with commas. Set off street addresses from cities, and set off cities from states or countries.

Examples: **a.** My parents live at 2222 Muirfield Road, Santa Maria, California.

**b.** The O'Dwyers have a home in Dublin, Ireland.

# 7. Use of commas with a title or degree.

Use a comma to separate a person's name from a title or degree that follows it.

Examples: a. Alicia Montoya, Ph.D.

b. Morgan Johansen, Dean of Columbia Law School.

# 8. Use of commas for clarity and to prevent misreading.

Examples: a. To Mary, Ann was just a nuisance.

**b.** Some time after, the actual date was set.

# 9. Use of commas to set off a phrase that transforms a statement into a question.

Examples: **a.** You did say you had the book, didn't you?

**b.** Brahms' "German Requiem" is on the program, isn't it?

### 10. Use a comma to indicate the omission of a word or words.

Examples: a. To err is human; to forgive, divine.

**b.** English is my favorite subject; math, my sister's.