

APSU Writing Center

Practice Using Commas

What is a comma?

- A comma is a punctuation mark (,) indicating a pause between parts of a sentence.
- We use commas to...
 - Separate a series of words or phrases
 - Connect two independent clauses
 - Set off introductory phrases or clauses
 - Separate the parenthetical elements, coordinating conjunctions, and quoted parts
 - Set off phrases to express contrast
 - Avoid confusion
 - Set off expressions that interrupt the sentence flow
 - Separate dates, years, addresses and more!

Practice using commas

- The best way to remember any common writing error is with practice.
- Read through the sentences below and mark where you believe commas should be.
- The answers are on the back of this handout.

Where is the comma?

1. I went to the APSU Writing Center to get help creating my outline title page and thesis statement.
2. When you come to the Writing Center you can expect to collaborate with a thoughtful reader in a friendly low-stakes environment.
3. If you have multiple papers you want to submit please send each as a separate submission to avoid confusion.
4. If you leave out the clause phrase or word does the sentence still make sense?
5. Sarah spends time after class painting baking and reading.
6. Philip asked “Did you schedule an appointment with a tutor?”
7. I saw that he was busy so I scheduled an appointment with him for later in the week.
8. Having finally arrived for my appointment we began the tutoring session.
9. Although Tarrah called Francine did not get the message.
10. The snow started to fall heavily so all the schools and universities closed early.

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ANSWER KEY

Where is the comma?

1. I went to the APSU Writing Center to get help creating my outline, title page, and thesis statement.
2. When you come to the Writing Center, you can expect to collaborate with a thoughtful reader in a friendly, low-stakes environment.
3. If you have multiple papers you want to submit, please send each as a separate submission to avoid confusion.
4. If you leave out the clause, phrase, or word, does the sentence still make sense?
5. Sarah spends time after class painting, baking, and reading.
6. Philip asked, “Did you schedule an appointment with a tutor?”
7. I saw that he was busy, so I scheduled an appointment with him for later in the week.
8. Having finally arrived for my appointment, we began the tutoring session.
9. Although Tarrah called, Francine did not get the message.
10. The snow started to fall heavily, so all the schools and universities closed early.