

Fix This Writing!

Tips



Comma use involves many, complex rules that require an understanding of English grammar. Most important is the ability to identify an independent clause. Sometimes comma use affects understanding, so they are important for accurate communication. But many times comma use functions only as etiquette, like when you should wear white shoes (or choose a salad fork). If you don't have the time or interest, **just follow Tip #1 and Tip #4. You'll be fine!**

Tip

01

Avoid comma splices

Comma splices use a comma to separate two **independent clauses**. Your reputation is at stake here. Learn just a little grammar to avoid this faux pas.

Tip

02

Avoid ambiguity

Commas separate **nonrestrictive relative clauses**. Understanding what the clause refers to may change without the comma (which creates a relative clause).

Tip

03

Recognize rules differ

The **Oxford comma** appears before "and" in a series of items. Rules from *The Chicago Manual of Style* require its use. Rules from the *Associated Press Stylebook* omit it unless the items in the series are long and complex.

Tip

04

Use shorter sentences

Avoid etiquette lapses and misunderstandings by using fewer commas. Use shorter sentences instead!



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