

GLOBAL
EDITION



The Little, Brown Essential Handbook

EIGHTH EDITION



Jane E. Aaron

ALWAYS LEARNING

PEARSON

Brief Contents

Finding what you need 3

Preface 6

PART 1 Writing

Essentials 12

- 1 Academic writing 13
- 2 Writing arguments 23
- 3 Writing in the disciplines 31
- 4 Presenting writing 34

PART 2 Effective sentences

Essentials 42

- 5 Emphasis 43
- 6 Conciseness 46
- 7 Parallelism 49
- 8 Variety and details 51
- 9 Appropriate words 53
- 10 Exact words 58

PART 3 Grammatical sentences

Essentials 62

Verbs

- 11 Forms 63
- 12 Tenses 68
- 13 Mood 70
- 14 Voice 71
- 15 Subject-verb agreement 72

Pronouns

- 16 Forms 75
- 17 Pronoun-antecedent agreement 78
- 18 Pronoun reference 80

Modifiers

- 19 Adjectives and adverbs 82
- 20 Misplaced and dangling modifiers 86

PART 4

Punctuation

- 23 The Comma 95
- 24 The Semicolon 99
- 25 The Colon 101
- 26 The Apostrophe 102
- 27 Quotation Marks 104
- 28 End Punctuation 107
- 29 Other Marks 108

Essential Punctuation

This list focuses on the most troublesome punctuation marks and uses, showing correctly punctuated sentences with brief explanations. For the other marks and other uses covered in this part, see “Detailed Contents” inside the back cover.

Comma

- Subways are convenient, but they are costly to build.
Subways are convenient, but costly.
[With *and*, *but*, etc., only between main clauses. See opposite.]
- Because of their cost, new subways are rarely built.
[With an introductory element. See opposite.]
- Light rail, which is less costly, is often more feasible.
Those who favor mass transit often propose light rail.
[With a nonessential element, not with an essential element. See p. 96.]
- In a few older cities, commuters can choose from subways, buses, light rail, and railroads.
[Separating items in a series. See p. 97.]

Semicolon

- She chose carpentry; she wanted manual work.
She had a law degree; however, she became a carpenter.
[Between main clauses not joined by *and*, *but*, etc., and those joined by *however*, *for example*, etc. See pp. 99–100.]

Colon

- The school has one goal: to train businesspeople.
[With a main clause to introduce information. See p. 101.]

Apostrophe

- Jay Smith's dog saved the life of the Joneses' child.
[Showing possession: -'s for singular nouns; -' alone for plural nouns ending in -s. See pp. 102–103.]
- Its [for The dog's] bark warned the family. It's [for It is] an intelligent dog.
They're [for They are] happy that their [the Joneses'] child is safe.
[Not with possessive pronouns, only with contractions. See pp. 103–104.]

Quotation marks

- She asked, “Why did you do it?”
Kate Chopin uses irony in “The Story of an Hour.”
[With direct quotations, with certain titles, and with other punctuation marks. See pp. 105–107.]

23 The Comma

The comma helps to separate sentence elements and to prevent misreading. Its main uses (and misuses) appear in this chapter.

23a Comma with *and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, *for*, *so*, *yet*

Comma between main clauses

Use a comma before *and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, *for*, *so*, and *yet* (the coordinating conjunctions^o) when they link main clauses.^o

The athletes were well trained, yet they failed to qualify.

Many of the athletes lacked international training, and they failed to enter the qualifying round.

Note The comma goes before, not after, the coordinating conjunction.

No comma between words, phrases, or subordinate clauses

Generally, do not use a comma before *and*, *but*, *or*, and *nor* when they link pairs of words, phrases,^o or subordinate clauses^o—that is, elements other than main clauses.

Not Several athletes were trained abroad, and were able to qualify for the Olympics.

But Several athletes were trained abroad, and were able to qualify for the Olympics.

23b Comma with introductory elements

Use a comma after most elements that begin sentences and are distinct from the main clause.

When trouble strikes, stay clam.

Luckily, she escaped unharmed.

You may omit the comma after a short introductory element if there's no risk that the reader will run the introductory element and main clause together: By 2020, our nation may guarantee healthcare for all.

Note The subject^o of a sentence is not an introductory element but a part of the main clause. Thus, do not use a comma to separate the subject and its verb.

Not Some pessimists, may be disappointed.

But Some pessimists, may be disappointed.

^oSee "Grammar Terms," page 259.

23c Comma or commas with interrupting and concluding elements

Use a comma or commas to set off information that could be deleted without altering the basic meaning of the sentence.

Note When such optional information falls in the middle of the sentence, be sure to use one comma *before* and one *after* it.

Commas around nonessential elements

A **nonessential** (or **nonrestrictive**) **element** adds information about a word in the sentence but does not limit (or restrict) the word to a particular individual or group. Omitting the underlined element from any sentence below would remove incidental details but would not affect the sentence's basic meaning.

Nonessential modifiers

Toni Mathias, who studied at Leeds, now works at Birmingham.

Mathias & Co., her law firm, specializes in business law.

Her husband Patrick is a partner in the firm, though he lives in Edinburgh.

Nonessential appositives

Appositives are words or word groups that rename nouns.

Her latest venture, a law firm, is among the best-performing new businesses in England.

His only child, Tina, stays with her mother.

[He has only one child, so her name merely adds nonessential information about her.]

No commas around essential elements

Do not use commas to set off **essential** (or **restrictive**) **elements**: modifiers and appositives that contain information essential to the meaning of the sentence. Omitting the underlined element from any of the following sentences would alter the meaning substantially, leaving the sentence unclear or too general.

Essential modifiers

People who volunteer for the Red Cross rarely complain about work hazards.

Red Cross volunteers who are often discouraged rarely succeed in their endeavors.

Most Red Cross volunteers persist because they believe their work is in service of a higher cause.

Essential appositives

The label "Recycle" on products becomes a command.

The activist, Susan Bower, urges recycling.

The book, Efficient Recycling, provides helpful tips.

Commas around absolute phrases

An **absolute phrase** usually consists of the *-ing* form of a verb plus a subject for the verb. The phrase modifies the whole main clause of the sentence.

This volunteer, rebuffed too often by those he wanted to help, has decided to return home.

Commas around transitional or parenthetical expressions

A transitional expression^o such as *however*, *for example*, or *of course* forms a link between ideas. It is nonessential and is usually set off with a comma or commas.

Some young people, however, find it satisfying to pursue humanitarian work.

A parenthetical expression^o provides supplementary information not essential for meaning. Examples are *fortunately*, *to be frank*, and *all things considered*. Such an expression may be enclosed in parentheses (see p. 108) or, for more emphasis, in commas.

Humanitarian work, it appears, satisfies a person's inner thirst for reaching out through service.

Note Do not add a comma after a coordinating conjunction^o (*and*, *but*, and *so* on) or a subordinating conjunction^o (*although*, *because*, and *so* on). To distinguish between these words and transitional or parenthetical expressions, try moving the word or expression around in its clause. Transitional or parenthetical expressions can be moved; coordinating and subordinating conjunctions cannot.

Commas around phrases of contrast

Humanitarian workers often reach out in selfless service to others, unfazed by the self-centeredness of others.

Commas around *yes* and *no*

Almost everyone agrees that, yes, the advantages outweigh the disadvantages.

Commas around words of direct address

Do you agree, readers?

23d Commas with series

Commas between series items

Use commas to separate the items in lists or series.

The names Belia, Beelzebub, and Lucifer sound ominous.

^o See "Grammar Terms," page 259.