

USES OF THE COMMA (BH 382-406)

(These page numbers correspond to *The Bedford Handbook, Sixth edition* by Diana Hacker)

[Note: the edition on reserve is the fifth edition, but you can find corresponding page numbers in section 32 (426-453)]

DO

- 1) Introductory clause or phrase.
BH 383-384

When Irwin was ready to eat, his cat jumped onto the table.

- 2) All items in a series.
BH 385-86

The activities include a search for lost treasure, much discussion of ancient heresies and midnight orgies.

- 3) Before a coordinating conjunction joining independent clauses. *BH 382-83*

Nearly everyone has heard of love at first sight, but I fell in love at first dance.

- 4) Between coordinate adjectives.
BH 386-87 [and] (scramble)

Roberto is a warm, gentle, affectionate father.

- 5) With non-restrictive elements. [which]
BH 388-90 (doesn't change meaning)

Ed's house, **which** is located on thirteen acres, was completely furnished with bats in the rafters and mice in the kitchen.

DON'T

- 1) Phrases that begin inverted sentences.
BH 401

At the bottom of the lake, lies a ship.

- 2) Before the first and after the last item in a series. *BH 402*

Ironically, this job that appears so, glamorous, care-free, and easy, carries a high degree of responsibility.

- 3) Compound elements that are not independent clauses. *BH 401*

The director led the cast members to their positions, and gave an inspiring last-minute pep talk.

- 4) Between cumulative adjectives.
BH 387 & 402 (unable to scramble)

Ira ordered a rich chocolate layer cake.

- 5) With restrictive elements. [that]
BH 403 (changes meaning)

One corner of the attic was filled with **that** dated from the turn of the century.

{Q: Is the meaning restricted? NO = comma, YES = no comma}

- 6) Transitional and parenthetical expressions, absolute phrases, elements expressing contrast.
BH 393-95

-The prospective babysitter looked very promising; she was busy, however, throughout the month of January. (TRANS.)
-Evolution, as far as we know, doesn't work this way. (PAR.)
-Her tennis game at last perfected, Krista won the cup. (ABS.)
-Celia, unlike Robert, had no loathing of dance contests. (CON.)

- 6) Restrictive or mildly parenthetical elements.
BH 403

-Drivers who think they own the road make cycling a dangerous sport. (REST.)
-Margaret Mead's book Coming of Age in Samoa stirred up considerable controversy when it was published. (MILD PAR.)

- 7) Direct Quotations.
BH 396

Who said, "Give me liberty, or give me death!"?

- 7) Indirect Quotations.
BH 406

The president once said that he liked cats.

- 8) Direct Address and with *yes* and *no*, interrogative tags, and mild interj. *BH 395*

-Forgive us, Dr. Spock, for reprimanding Jason.
-Yes, I can go to the prom with you.
-The film was faithful to the book, wasn't it?
-Well, cases like these are difficult to decide.

- 8) After *such as*, *like*, *although*, and coord. conj.
BH 405

-Animals, such as, monkeys, need contact comfort.
-Pat dances to different music, like, country and punk.
-Although, he sat on my dog, I still like him.
-Sometimes I eat apples, but, today I will eat oranges.

- 9) Dates, addresses, titles, and numbers*.
BH 396-97

*spell out numbers less than 101--ex: ninety not 90.
Her formal title is Dr. Betty Harp, Ph.D.

- 9) Before *than* and parentheses.
BH 405-06

-Visiting Boris was better, than visiting Natasha.
-He loves ice cream, (chocolate not vanilla) with cake.

- 10) TO PREVENT CONFUSION

The only attribute the site had going for it, it seemed, was its supreme defensiveness.

- 10) RANDOMLY