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

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

10) RANDOMLY

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