

Punctuation!

Commas

Series

- Use a comma to set off items in a series.
- Example:
 - The flag is red, white, and blue.
- Do not use a comma when there are only two items in the list.
- Example:
 - I like coffee and donuts for breakfast.
- Do not use commas when “and” or “or” joins each item.
- Example:
 - I enjoy a warm bath and a soft bed and a good night’s sleep.
- Do not use a comma after the last item in the series.
- Example:
 - Red, white, and blue are my favorite colors.

Compound Sentences

- Use a comma between two independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction.
- The comma comes after the first independent clause and before the conjunction.
- Example: She needed milk, so she went to the store.
- Coordinating Conjunctions (FANBOYS):
 - For
 - And
 - Nor
 - But
 - Or
 - Yet
 - So

Compound Sentences

- Do not use a comma before a coordinating conjunction that does not join to independent clauses.
- Example:
 - Sarah borrowed my car and drove her mother home.
 - Reason: Never separate a subject (Sarah) from its verb(s) (borrowed and drove) with a comma.
- Do not use a comma before “so that.” (Sometimes the “that” is left out, so you have to ask yourself if a “that” could follow the “so.” If it could, do not use a comma.)
- Example:
 - I am on a diet so I can lose weight.

Introductory Elements

- Use a comma after most introductory elements.
- An introductory element is either a dependent clause or a phrase that introduces an independent clause.
- Most introductory phrases begin with
 - Verbals
 - Prepositions
 - Subordinating Conjunctions
- Remember that an introductory element is a sentence fragment that introduces a sentence.

Verbal Phrases

- Verbal phrases begin with
 - Present participles (such as going, buying, seeing)
 - Past participles (such as gone, bought, seen)
 - Infinitives (such as to go, to buy, to see)
- Examples:
 - Sleeping on the job, I missed an important call from my boss.
 - To see the latest results, the scientist met in the laboratory.

Prepositional Phrases

- Prepositional phrases begin with a preposition.
- Example:
 - On the first day of the term, the professor informed her class of her attendance policy.
- Common Prepositions:
 - About
 - After
 - As
 - At
 - In
 - Off
 - Of
 - On
 - To
 - Until
 - By

Subordinating Conjunctions

- Subordinating Conjunctions turn an independent clause into a dependent clause.
- Example:
 - Although it was raining, they took a walk.
- Common Subordinating Conjunctions
 - Before
 - When
 - If
 - Although
 - Unless
 - Whether
 - As
 - While

Dependent and Independent Clause Rule

- When a sentence begins with a dependent clause with a subordinating conjunction and is followed by an independent clause, there should be a comma to separate the two. (The previous sentence is an example.)
- If a sentence begins with the independent clause and is then followed by the dependent clause with a subordinating conjunction, no comma is needed.
- Example:
 - Because I was hungry, I went to the store.
 - I went to the store because I was hungry.

Interrupters

- Commas are used to set off interrupters, which are single words or groups that change the flow of the sentence.
- Interrupters include:
 - Certain small words at the beginning of sentences
 - Names of Direct Address
 - Transitions
 - Appositives
 - Nonrestrictive Elements

Small Word Interrupters

- Use a comma after certain small words at the beginning of the sentence.
- These words include:
 - Yes
 - No
 - Oh
 - Well
 - Hey
 - Hi
- Example:
 - Yes, this rule is easy to learn.
- This rule only applies when the small word actually functions as an interrupter, not when it is part of the subject.
- Example:
 - No students have registered yet.

Direct Address

- Direct address means communicating directly to the person or group being named.
- Names or titles can be placed anywhere in the sentence and should be separated from the rest of the sentence by commas when they interrupt the flow of the sentence.
- Examples:
 - Sir, your order will take two weeks to arrive.
 - Please complete the assignment by Friday, students.
 - Your appointment, Andre, is on Thursday at noon.
- Do not use commas to set off a name or title if the person is not being directly addressed.
- Example:
 - I think Mr. Jordan is the best athlete ever.

Transitions

- If the transition can be removed from a sentence without changing the meaning of the sentence, it is an interrupter.
- These interrupters can be conjunctive adverbs or transitional expressions, and they can be placed anywhere in the sentence.
- Interrupting transitions should be separated from the rest of the sentence by commas.
- Examples:
 - Moreover, he had trouble reading.
 - The design is flawed because it allows no wheelchair access, for example.
 - The reason for the delay, however, was the severe thunderstorm.

Appositives

- Use commas to set off an appositive, a word or group of words that define or explain the word or phrase that comes before it.
- Usually an appositive comes immediately after the word or phrase it defines.
- An appositive must be the same part of speech as the word it defines.
- Examples:
 - I like George, my next-door neighbor.
 - My mother's native land, Colombia, is located in South America.

Tips for Recognizing Appositives

- Because an appositive phrase must be the same part of speech as the word it renames, the appositive and its referent are interchangeable.
- The sentence should make sense either without the appositive or with only the appositive.
- Example:
 - Washington, D.C., the nation's capital, is beautiful in April when the cherry trees bloom.
- The most common error with appositives occurs when the writer fails to end the appositive with a comma.
- Example:
 - **Wrong:** Bill, my next-door neighbor is a great golfer.
 - **Right:** Bill, my next-door neighbor, is a great golfer.

Nonrestrictive Elements

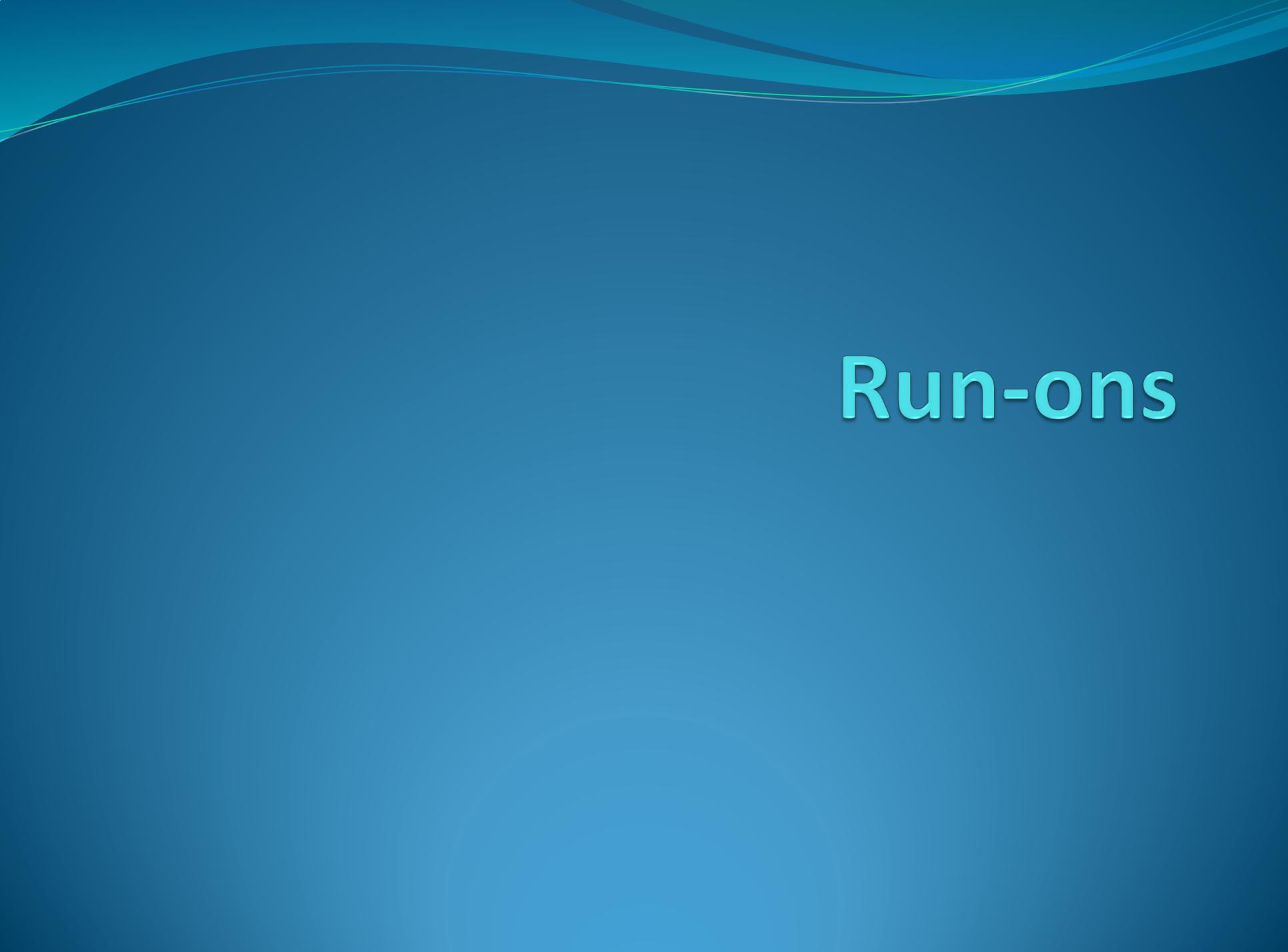
- Use commas to separate information that is nonrestrictive, or nonessential to the meaning of the sentence.
- Nonrestrictive information is not necessary to understand the meaning of the word or phrase that the information is modifying or explaining.
- Examples:
 - My family's first house, which was in Vermont, had a fireplace.
 - Our history teacher, who is from Vermont, told us about New England's rich history.

Restrictive Elements

- Do not use commas to separate restrictive information in a sentence; this is information that is essential to the meaning of the sentence.
- Example:
 - The teacher who is from Vermont has not yet arrived at the teachers' conference.

Tips for Deciding When Commas Are Needed

- If the information begins with “that,” then the information usually is restrictive and no commas are needed.
- Example:
 - The building that was condemned last week burned down yesterday.
- If the information describes a noun that needs no identification or clarification, then the information is nonrestrictive.
- Example:
 - The firefighters surrounded the burning building, which was condemned last week.



Run-ons

Run-Ons

- Run-ons consist of two or more independent clauses that are run together without proper punctuation.
- There are two types of run-ons: Fused Sentence and Comma Splice

Fused Sentence

- A fused sentence incorrectly joins or fuses together two independent clauses without any punctuation
- Examples:
 - The sun is shining we are going to the beach.
 - I enjoy going home my family is glad to see me.
 - Exercising regularly helps the exercise should be done early in the day.

Comma Splice

- A comma splice incorrectly joins or splices together two independent clauses with only a comma.
- Examples:
 - The sun is shining, we are going to the beach.
 - I enjoy going home, my family is glad to see me.
 - Many people don't get enough sleep, one in three adults suffers from sleeplessness.

Five Ways to Correct Run-Ons

- Step 1: Separate the independent clauses with a period, and start the second with a capital letter.
 - The sun is shining, we are going to the beach. → The sun is shining. We are going to the beach.
- Step 2: Join the two independent clauses with a comma and a coordinating conjunction.
 - The sun is shining, we are going to the beach. → The sun is shining, so we are going to the beach.
- Step 3: Join the two independent clauses with a semicolon, a conjunctive adverb or transitional expression, and a comma.
 - The sun is shining, we are going to the beach. → The sun is shining; therefore, we are going to the beach.
- Step 4: Join the two independent clauses with a semicolon.
 - The sun is shining, we are going to the beach. → The sun is shining; we are going to the beach.
- Step 5: Join two independent clauses with a subordinating conjunction.
 - The sun is shining, we are going to the beach. → Because the sun is shining, we are going to the beach.

Semicolons and Colons

Semicolons with Independent Clauses

- Typically, writers use a coordinating conjunction and a comma to join two independent clauses.
- However, writers sometimes choose to use a semicolon to connect two independent clauses when the relationship between the two clauses is clear and no connecting word is needed to show the relationship.
- For Example:
 - Some movies are long and boring; others are short and exciting.

Semicolons with Independent Clauses: Misuses

- Do not use a semicolon between an independent clause (sentence) and a dependent clause or phrase (fragment).
- Example:
 - Incorrect: Because Bob moved away; Maria got the job.
 - Correct: Because Bob moved away, Maria got the job.
- Do not use a semicolon between two independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction.
- Example:
 - Incorrect: She wanted a new car; but she couldn't afford it.
 - Correct: She wanted a new car, but she couldn't afford it.

Semicolons with Conjunctive Adverbs or Transitional Expressions

- When joining two independent clauses with a conjunctive adverb or a transitional expression, use a semicolon before the adverb or transition and a comma after it.
- The semicolon must be placed before the conjunctive adverb or transition in order to end the first independent clause.
- Examples:
 - The band will lead the parade; next, the floats will follow.
 - You should recycle more; for example, you just threw a plastic bottle in the trash can instead of the recycling bin in the hall.

Semicolons with Conjunctive Adverbs or Transitional Expressions: Misuse

- If the conjunctive adverb or transition is merely interrupting the flow of one sentence (not joining two independent clauses), do not use a semicolon.
- Simply use commas to set off the conjunctive adverb or transition from the rest of the sentence when it serves as an interrupter.
- Example:
 - Incorrect: The problem; however, was easily solved.
 - Correct: The problem, however, was easily solved.

Semicolons with Items in a Series

- Use semicolons between items in a series when one or more of the items use commas.
- Each comma goes with the information about the item, so semicolons must be used to separate the items.
- Examples:
 - The tour includes visits to Helsinki, Finland; Riga, Latvia; Warsaw, Poland; and Kiev, Ukraine.
 - Ms. Smith introduced Mr. Bradley, a lawyer; Dr. Elliot, a surgeon; and Ms. Lathrop, an accountant.

Colons to Introduce a List

- Use a colon after an independent clause that introduces a list.
- Example:
 - We sold many items at the garage sale: old clothes, dishes, and books.
- Misuse: Do not use a colon after an incomplete sentence that introduces a list.
- Examples:
 - Incorrect: The family visited: Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire.
 - Correct: The family visited Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire.
 - Incorrect: Maine is known for its delicacies such as: lobster, maple syrup, and wild blueberries.
 - Correct: Maine is famous for delicacies such as lobster, maple syrup, and wild blueberries.

Colons after Following/As Follows

- Use a colon after an independent clause that includes the words the following or as follows.
- Formula:
 - Independent clause...as follows:....
 - Independent clause...the following:....
- Examples:
 - Tomorrow's test will include the following punctuation skills: commas, semicolons, and colons.
 - My plans are as follows: get my college degree, find a good job, and have a family.

General Rules: Colons and Semicolons

- Colons: What comes to the left of the colon must be a complete sentence.
 - Ex: There are three colors on our flag: red, white, and blue.
- Semicolons: What comes to the left and to the right of the semicolon has to be a complete sentence.
 - Ex: There are three colors on our flag; those colors are red, white, and blue.

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Some examples and materials in this presentation come from the following textbook:
Robitaille, Julie, Robert Connelly, and Sheila Allen. *Bridges and Banks*. Mason, Ohio:
Cengage Learning, 2009. Print.