

Punctuation



Commas.

We use commas to separate a list of similar words or phrases:

It's important to write in clear, simple, accurate words.

We do not normally use a comma before *and* at the end of a list of single words:

They travelled through Bulgaria, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland.

We use commas to separate words or phrases that mark where the voice would pause slightly:

I can't tell you now. However, all will be revealed tomorrow at midday.

James, our guide, will accompany you on the boat across to the island.

When main clauses are separated by *and*, *or*, *but*, we don't normally use a comma if the clauses have the same subject.

However, we sometimes use commas if the clauses have different subjects:

Footballers these days earn more money but they are fitter and play many more matches. (same subject)

It was an expensive hotel in the centre of Stockholm, but we decided it was worth the money. (different subjects)

When a subordinate clause comes before the main clause, we commonly use a comma to separate the clauses.

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