

## COMMAS

While a full stop ends a sentence, a comma indicates a **smaller break**. Think of it being like a gentle **pause** – something that separates words, clauses, or ideas within a sentence. Of all the punctuation marks in English, this one is though perhaps the most misused. There are lots of rules about comma usage, and often the factors that determine whether you should use one are quite subtle.

<p>1. To <b>separate things in a list</b> of two or more items. = <i>Rosy's favourite chocolate bars are Super 8, Hobby and Sahne Nuss.</i></p>	<p>2. Before certain co-ordinating conjunctions (and, but, for, nor, yet, or, so) to <b>separate two independent clauses</b> = <i>Rosy was a fantastic cook, but she would never be as good as her mother-in-law.</i></p>	<p>3. <b>Separate introductory</b> part of a sentence from the main part. If the introductory part is less than three words you can leave out the comma. = <i>Given the scale of the earthquake, Rosy was lucky to survive.</i></p>	<p>4. To separate an <b>aside</b> in a sentence as this part can be removed without changing the essential meaning. You must open and close with a comma. = <i>Rosy, the most intelligent student in the class, was always late for school.</i></p>
<p>5. To <b>separate direct speech</b> / a quote from the rest of the sentence. = <i>"That house there," she said, "is where I grew up."</i></p>	<p>6. When you express a <b>contrast</b>. = <i>Rosy is intelligent, not pretty.</i></p>	<p>7. Separate <b>dates and years, towns, counties</b>, etc. = <i>His home was in Leyton, East London.</i></p>	<p>8. To separate several <b>adjectives</b>. = <i>That rather dull-looking, badly-dressed, clumsy man is actually a university professor.</i></p>

This comes from a real road sign, which instead of warning drivers to reduce their speed because of children crossing the road, instead warns of unusually slow children in the area!

“Slow children crossing”