

Comma Missing After Introductory Clause or Phrase

DEFINITION: Commas are necessary after introductory clauses or phrases. When commas are not put where they belong, sentences are stringy and difficult to understand.

EXERCISE: ADD COMMAS WHERE THEY BELONG.

1. After the opera the main characters stroll down the avenue and discuss world affairs.
2. Though the report was informative my colleagues and I worried about its curt tone.
3. An articulate and respected businessperson Harold makes a good candidate for president of the board.

HAVING TROUBLE? Adding commas after introductory clauses and phrases can be difficult if you do not completely understand clauses and phrases. Read on for information about each type of word group.

Understanding Clauses and Phrases

DEFINITIONS: A clause is a word group that contains a subject and a verb, but not all clauses can stand alone.

EXAMPLES: The sky is blue.

Although the sky is blue

A phrase is a word group that lacks a subject, a verb, or both.

EXAMPLE: Into the blue sky

EXERCISE: ARE THE FOLLOWING CLAUSES OR PHRASES?

1. Sleepers in that quiet earth
A. Clause
B. Phrase
2. Over the river
A. Clause
B. Phrase
3. Despite the fact that she hates mice
A. Clause
B. Phrase

HAVING TROUBLE? Looking closer at different types of clauses and phrases will make it easier to determine how to combine them.

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Comment [1]: Subject

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Comment [2]: Verb

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Comment [3]: Subject

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Comment [4]: Verb

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Comment [5]: Noun/Subject

Independent and Dependent Clauses

DEFINITION: An independent clause contains a subject and a verb and can stand alone as a sentence.

EXAMPLE: Inez had a lovely wedding.

DEFINITION: A dependent clause contains a subject and a verb and begins with a subordinating conjunction (although, even though, whenever, before, once, since, etc.). Dependent clauses cannot stand alone and are not complete sentences.

EXAMPLE: Even though her flowers arrived late

USE A COMMA TO JOIN A DEPENDENT AND AN INDEPENDENT CLAUSE TOGETHER TO MAKE A COMPLEX SENTENCE.

EXAMPLE: Even though her flowers arrived late, Inez had a lovely wedding.

***A COMMA IS REQUIRED WHEN JOINING A DEPENDENT CLAUSE TO AN INDEPENDENT CLAUSE.

HAVING TROUBLE? In order to identify clauses, you must first understand the difference between subjects and verbs.

Understanding Subjects and Verbs

DEFINITION: Sentences are made up of subjects and verbs. Nearly every sentence must have both a subject and a verb to be complete.

THE SUBJECT OF THE SENTENCE IS THE **PERSON, PLACE, THING, OR IDEA** THAT IS *DOING* OR *BEING* SOMETHING.

THE SUBJECTS IN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES ARE UNDERLINED:

My mother won the lottery.

After midnight, he falls asleep.

My favorite animal is the polar bear.

UNDERLINE THE SUBJECTS IN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES:

Thus, the doctor concluded that Michael was allergic to penicillin.

The banker wore a fashionable vest.

Worried about finding employment, Sarah wondered if she should admit that she had once committed a felony.

Several students have requested clarification from Professor Doyle.

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Comment [6]: Subject

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Comment [7]: Verb

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Comment [8]: The clause is independent and can stand alone as a sentence.

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Comment [9]: Subordinating conjunction

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Comment [10]: Subject

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Comment [11]: Verb

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Comment [12]: The clause begins with a subordinating conjunction, and therefore, it is a dependent clause that cannot stand alone as a sentence.

Disillusioned, Beatrice no longer attended church.

We travelled nine hundred miles in less than fifteen hours.

The irritable, fidgety crowd waited impatiently for the rally speeches to begin.

After her bat mitzvah, Elaine had a long and pleasant conversation with her grandmother.

The timber wolf looks like a large German shepherd.

We smiled at the gardener, who was busy pruning the rose bushes.

THE VERB DESCRIBES THE ACTION OR STATE OF BEING TAKEN BY THE SUBJECT.

THE VERBS THAT MODIFY THE SUBJECTS ARE BOLDED:

My mother **won** the lottery.

After midnight, he **falls** asleep.

My favorite animal **is** the polar bear.

CIRCLE THE VERBS IN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES:

Who participated in last year's event?

I love playing baseball.

She thinks about her ex-boyfriend too much.

Talking to my sister usually calms me down.

The teacher reminded his students to cite all of their sources.

Snoring softly, the baby smiled.

Why should students pay the consequences for legislators' irresponsible decisions?

While dancing at a concert, Harry stubbed his toe.

The generous man offered Emily \$700.00 for her antique chair.

"Please hurry," Sarah added.

Exploring Types of Phrases

To construct a complete sentence, a phrase should be added to the beginning of an independent clause. The two word groups must be joined with a comma.

These phrases are frequently used as introductory phrases:

PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE: A phrase beginning with a preposition and ending with the noun the preposition modifies.

EXAMPLE: Throughout the winter, the family hoped that her prognosis would improve, and the doctors continued to monitor her closely for heart failure.

PARICIPIAL PHRASE: A present or past participle and its objects, complements, and modifiers.

EXAMPLE: Winded, the runners took one more lap around the track before returning to their teammates.

APPOSITIVE PHRASE: A noun or noun phrase that renames a nearby noun or pronoun.

EXAMPLE: Artists at heart, news photographers aim to preserve stories' narratives while also presenting aesthetically pleasing compositions.

HAVING TROUBLE? Let's review prepositions, present and past participles, and appositives.

Defining Prepositions, Participles, and Appositives

PREPOSITION: A word placed before a noun or noun equivalent to form a phrase modifying another word in the sentence. The preposition indicates the relation between the noun (or noun equivalent) and the word the phrase modifies. Some common prepositions are *about, above, across, after, against, along, among, around, at, before, behind, below, beside, between, beyond, by, down, during, except, for, from, in, inside, into, like, near, of, off, on, onto, out, outside, over, past, since, than, through, to, toward, under, unlike, until, up, with, within, without*.

UNDERLINE THE PREPOSITION(S) IN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCE.

After the banker adjusted for inflation, she noticed that her income well-exceeded that of her father when he was her age.

Under the sea, the fish explore the coral reef.

He likes to read on the sun porch.

The house is between 162nd Avenue and 163rd Avenue.

I don't approve of your condescending tone.

PRESENT PARTICIPLE: A verb form ending in *-ing*.

PAST PARTICIPLE: A verb form usually ending in *-d, -ed, -n, -en, -t*.

UNDERLINE THE PARTICIPLE(S) IN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCE.

Smiling at her baby, the mother sang "My Old Kentucky Home," a song reminiscent of her childhood in Louisville.

After Ralph fired Ethan, Ethan, dejected, cleaned off his desk.

Having won every meet this season, East High School's swim team moved on to sectionals.

Annoyed by her students' passivity, the teacher conducted a surprise quiz.

Watching me hungrily, the wolf approached.

APPOSITIVE: A noun or noun phrase that renames a nearby noun or pronoun.

UNDERLINE THE APPOSITIVE IN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCE.

David Bowie's "Young Americans," my favorite song of all time, runs through my head often.

Her brother's car, a tan sedan with a broken taillight, rumbles loudly.

The first of her siblings to get a tattoo, Margot was more rebellious than Paul and Nikki.

Your friend Allison is ringing the doorbell.

Kind and intelligent, Sadie is my favorite dog.

PRACTICE: Now that you understand that dependent clauses and phrases are often connected to independent clauses to shape meaning and that commas must separate the introductory clause or phrase from the independent clause, add a comma to the following sentences.

1. Nervous and shaky in front of the audience I gave a brief and lackluster introduction to my project, watched the film critically as my impressive content was juxtaposed with pixelated images and imprecise sound effects, and anxiously readied myself to field questions from faculty members and from my peers.
2. Despite Elaine's protestations I could see that she was proud of her recent award.
3. As a strategic learner I failed to see the value in Professor Corr's untraditional assignment because I feared that I could not receive a high grade on the project.

4. Honored Elaine took her seat next to the college's president, a woman whose keen business skills and intellectualism Elaine greatly admired.
5. Even though Maryann moved to Austin her friends still drive by her old house.
6. An expert in high-risk pregnancies Dr. Kozi recommended that Ana remain well hydrated throughout her third trimester.
7. Over the mountains the stars shine bright.
8. Having eaten three servings of lamb Hernando began to experience indigestion.
9. After the wedding the guests attended the reception.
10. Driving too fast she failed to see the squirrel run in front of her car.