COMMAS WITH INTERRUPTING ELEMENTS

Notes and Exercises
Use a comma to separate interrupting elements from the message-bearing (subject-verb-object) part of the sentence, as if you were encasing those elements in parentheses.
“Hey there! Remember the main idea (message-bearing) part of the sentence?”

Exercise
In the following sentences, underline the subject once and the verb twice.

1. Uncle Arthur was voted Clementsville’s Outstanding Citizen in 1985.

2. Coach Miller told all of the little league players to relax and enjoy the game.

3. Linda always enjoyed visiting her relatives, but her last visit seemed awkward and difficult.

4. Randy accepted the teaching position in Japan, for he thought that the experience would be valuable.
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Review Introductory Elements

Exercise
In the following sentences, underline the introductory element (including any subordinating conjunction). Circle the subordinating conjunction. Punctuate as necessary.

1. After Kathy took the turkey out of the oven Bill began to carve it and put it on the platter.

2. While Gloria was giving her presentation several of the board members rudely discussed other matters among themselves.

3. Angela always gets a little nervous whenever her doctor steps out of the room for a consultation.

4. If you want to be successful in your profession you must watch successful people and do what they do.
CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

1. After Kathy took the turkey out of the oven, Bill began to carve it and put it on the platter.

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Interrupting elements (like introducing elements) come in three sizes:
- single words
- phrases
- clauses

**Single Words, typically Conjunctive Adverbs (or transition words)**

Jeremy, consequently, will be hired full time.
Angela, however, knew the answer.

**Phrases, typically transitions or adjective phrases describing the subject**

Students attending every class will receive extra points.
Jessica, having attended every class, received extra points.
ADJECTIVE PHRASES are categorized as RESTRICTIVE OR NONRESTRICTIVE

An adjective phrase is RESTRICTIVE when it is needed to identify WHICH ONE.

The doctor waiting for the elevator is the newest neurologist on staff.

Which doctor?

The one waiting for the elevator

The house damaged by the fire was a total loss.

Which house?

The one damaged by the fire
An adjective phrase is NONRESTRICTIVE when it is NOT needed to identify WHICH ONE.

Chester, waiting for the elevator, had to admit that he was nervous about his upcoming interview.

The head of the company, a friend of the family, had invited Chester to interview after he had finished his accounting degree.
Exercise

Underline any adjective phrases you find in the following sentences. Place commas where they are necessary.

1. The bookseller most often in contact with my uncle who collects rare books lives on a two hundred and fifty-acre estate in Vermont.

2. Justin still working on his accounting degree envied Chester’s chance for a lucrative position in the company.

3. Mt. Everest the highest peak in the world is located in the Himalayan Mountains.

4. The woman sitting on her porch with her grandchildren is ninety years old.

5. Grandma Harold sitting on the porch with her grandchildren still has difficulty speaking English.
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   Which one? the one most often in contact with my uncle who collects rare books

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   Which one? The one sitting on her porch with her grandchildren

5. Grandma Harold, sitting on the porch with her grandchildren, still has difficulty speaking English.
A clause is a group of related words that contains a subject and a verb.
Exercise
One of the following groups of words in each pair is a phrase. The other is a clause. Identify which is which.

1. Peter whom I have known all my life
2. Peter a friend from college

1. Art Appreciation offered only in the spring
2. Art Appreciation which is offered only in the spring

1. Star Wars: Episode X now showing in theatres across the country
2. Star Wars: Episode X which is no showing in theatres across the country

1. NBC formerly affiliated with Turner Broadcasting
2. NBC which has the only news broadcast my father will watch
CHECK YOUR WORK

1. Peter whom I have known all my life (CL)
2. Peter a friend from college (PH)

1. Art Appreciation offered only in the spring (PH)
2. Art Appreciation which is offered only in the spring (CL)

1. Star Wars: Episode X now showing in theatres across the country (PH)
2. Star Wars: Episode X which is no showing in theatres across the country (CL)

1. NBC formerly affiliated with Turner Broadcasting (PH)
2. NBC which has the only news broadcast my father will watch (CL)
ADJECTIVE CLAUSES always begin with a RELATIVE PRONOUN

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| **WHO** | Subject Case, used when referring to people  
  • Peter, who has been a friend of mine since college, |
| **WHOM** | Object Case, used when referring to people  
  • Peter, whom I have known since college, |
| **WHOSE** | Possessive Case, used to show ownership  
  • Our dog, whose favorite bone had been stolen, |
| **THAT** | Used only in RESTRICTIVE CLAUSES and when referring to animals or inanimate objects.  
  • The movie that was her favorite |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>WHICH</strong></th>
<th>Used only in NONRESTRICTIVE CLAUSES and when referring to animals and inanimate objects</th>
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<td></td>
<td>• <em>Gone with the Wind</em>, which was her favorite movie,</td>
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<th><strong>WHERE/WHEN</strong></th>
<th>Used, although rarely, to refer to place or time</th>
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<td>• I was looking for the place where the accident had occurred.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• She couldn’t remember a time when she had felt more relaxed.</td>
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Exercise

Underline the adjective clauses in the following sentences. At this point, do not concern yourself with restrictive and nonrestrictive. Simply underline the adjective clauses and circle the word it is describing. The first one has been done for you.

1. **Dr. Arrow** who is the head of internal medicine at UCLA's Medical Center is an expert on the diagnosis and treatment of digestive disorders.

2. Winnie-the-Pooh is the kind of character that most small children find comforting.

3. April who plans to graduate from her local community college next spring intends to transfer to Bemidji State to get her BA in English education.

4. The couple who recently adopted a little girl from China is enjoying researching the foods and culture of that culture.

5. The therapist who worked with my mother after her knee surgery remembered working with my grandmother as well.
CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

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How do I know how much is included in the adjective clause?

When the adjective clause describes the subject of the sentence, it will end before the verb of the sentence.

Dr. Arrow who is the head of internal medicine at UCLA’s Medical Center is an expert on the diagnosis and treatment of digestive disorders.

When the adjective clause describes an object of the sentence, it will end with the end of the sentence.

Winnie-the-Pooh is the kind of character that most small children find comforting.
Exercise

Underline the adjective clauses in the following sentences. Then punctuate the nonrestrictive clauses.

1. The Diamond Cup which is located on the corner of Maple and Third has the only decent cappuccino in town.

2. Uncle Tom’s Cabin which was written by Harriet Beacher Stowe was based on the life of a real-life slave named Josiah Hensen who was born in Maryland in 1789.

3. Jill who must pick up her daughter Lisa from kindergarten, take her to the babysitter across town and be back at work by 12:30 never has time for lunch.

4. Some of the plants that were left over from the huge plant sale didn’t look too healthy.

5. The use of herbs as medicine is a science that dates back to some of the earliest cultures.

6. The antique dealer who sold us the old, wooden trunk obviously hadn’t found the treasure map in the secret compartment.
7. Dr. Charles who teaches Western Civilization has actually traveled to many of the places he discusses in class.

8. The cornflower teacup and saucer which had been my grandmother’s were given to me when she died.

9. Steven who likes to watch the late, late movie has great difficulty waking up and getting to his morning classes.

10. Chewing with your mouth open is a habit that you really should break.
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Exercise

Sentences in the following paragraphs have been numbered for you. Take ONE SENTENCE AT A TIME and do the following: 1) Underline the adjective clause(s) 2) Decide if the clause requires commas or not, 3) Punctuate the sentences correctly, and 4) Proofread and correct any other punctuation or word errors.

1) Several Soviet women are among the heroic pilots who flew missions in World War II.  
2) Russians still talk about Lily Litvak who shot down a dozen German planes during her brief career.  
3) While pursued by enemy planes Litvak would quickly maneuver until she was behind her foes and able to attack freely.  
4) Many German pilots kept an eye out for the white rose painted on Litvak’s plain because they wanted the honor of downing the famous Russian ace.  
5) Litvak’s final skirmish came when she was surrounded by a squadron of German plans and was shot down by eight of them.
6) During another famous air battle two Soviet women pilots faced 42 German plains who they knew were planning an attack on a town. 7) After the two aces destroyed some German planes the other German pilots turned back for home. 8) After that encounter one of the Soviets parachuted from her exploding plane and the other pilot landed safely.

9) Perhaps the most stunning story is that which features Irs Kasherina who had to stand up and fly through enemy fire while holding her co-pilots lifeless body off the controls. 10) The Soviet women pilots were respected and feared by their German enemies who renamed them the “night witches of the skies.”
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