review of the comma

Use a comma before <u>and</u>, <u>but</u>, <u>for</u>, <u>or</u>, <u>nor</u>, <u>yet</u>, <u>so</u> when they connect two independent clauses—two clauses, each with a subject and a verb (see below, "Sue wanted" and "she felt").

> *Sue wanted to chat more, but she felt compelled to get back to work.*
> *Jenelle registered for the class, yet she failed to show up for it.*

However, notice sentences with one subject:

> *Sue wanted to chat more but felt compelled to get back to work.*
> *Jenelle failed to show up for the class she had registered for.*

Use commas around nonessential material.

> *My sister, whose own children are in day care, spoke of the need to enhance the program.*
> *Jane, who heads the department, will speak tonight.*
> *New York, which is the capital of the world, is where I was born.*

Use a comma between coordinating adjectives that describe the same noun.

> *Lynne is a strong, articulate, creative contender.*

However, do not use a comma between cumulative adjectives—a series of adjectives, the first modifying and combining with the second and subsequent ones, leading up to the noun:

> *The 23 fascinating young foster children asked stimulating questions.*
> *The four small blue boxes should be moved to the corner.*

To test whether a comma is needed, check whether the word "and" works between each adjective.

> *Two small bright white lights illuminated the stage.*

Two *and* small *and* bright *and* white lights does not work, therefore, no commas.

> *John's friend is tall, dark, and handsome.*

John's friend is tall and dark and handsome, therefore, commas

Use a comma after an introductory clause, one that begins with words indicating when, where, why, or how the main action occurred.

> *Because Martha kept on talking, I didn't have time to eat.*
> *Near the gas station at the fork in the road, I took a left.*

Use a comma after an introductory expression that does not flow smoothly into the sentence.

> *Well, that was the end of that.*
> *It's cold this morning, isn't it?*
> *When everyone had left, the lights were shut off.*

Use commas around the name of a person spoken to.

> *I think, Jane, I love your mother.*
> *Are you ready for your presentation, Lisa?*

Use commas around an interrupter, like *however, moreover, finally, therefore, of course, by the way, on the other hand, I think.*

> *I hope, of course, that they'll come.*
> *It should, I think, take only an hour.*
> *The taxi, however, was late, causing us to miss the plane.*