**Comma Handout**

Basics:

An independent clause (IC) can stand alone as a sentence. It has a

* Subject,
* Verb
* Expresses a complete thought

Ex. The boy runs.

A Dependent Clause (DC) cannot stand alone as a sentence.

1. FANBOYS (Coordinating Conjunctions)
2. You can join 2 ICs using FANBOYS (for, and , nor, but, or, yet, so)
3. A comma is usually placed before the coordinating conjunction

EX. The boy runs, so he is healthy.

1. Dependent Clauses (DC, IC).
2. Dependent Clauses are usually created by using a dependent word (or subordinating conjunction) like *although* or *because*
3. DC, IC. (If you begin with a DC, then you need a comma followed by an IC)

Ex. Although I set my alarm, I still overslept.

1. NOTE: IC DC. (NO COMMA)

EX. I still overslept although I set my alarm.

1. Introductory Clauses (same rule as DC, IC)

EX. In order to pass my class, I studied every night.

1. Where would you place the comma in the following example?

Because it was raining we decided to go to the movies.

1. Non-essential phrases and clauses (place commas around)
2. Essential phrases and clauses are necessary to the meaning of a sentence.

Ex. The dog that won the race was given a blue ribbon. (Do you need this info? If so, then use “that” WITHOUT a comma)

1. Non-essential phrases and clauses are placed between commas

Ex. The brown horse, which was my favorite, came in last.

\*note that a comma is usually placed before a ‘which’ clause

Appositives (renames, identifies, describes a noun or pronoun)

Michael Jordon, the greatest basketball player, is hosting a show.

V. Use commas to separate all elements in a series of three or more words, phrases, or clauses

A. I like apples, oranges, and cherries.

B. NOTE: DO NOT use commas to separate two words, phrases or clauses.

Ex. I like apples and cherries.

ONLY if “and” is being used as a coordinating conjunction will you use a comma to separate two times:

I like apples, and I buy them often.

1. Adjectives
2. Use commas to separate adjectives that provide an equal description of a noun.
3. The Test:
4. Can you put “and” between the adjectives?
5. Can they be described in reverse order?
6. If so, use a comma

Ex. a cranky, bald man

1. Directly quoted speech
2. She said, “Why do I need to write an essay?”
3. Dates (Day, Month Date, Year)

Ex. Today is Monday, April 14, 2013.

1. If the date falls in the middle of the sentence, put a comma after the year

Ex. On Monday, April 15, 2013, I conquered the dreaded comma.

1. Error: COMMA SPLICE (IC, IC)

Ex. I like tea, I buy many different types.

1. To correct:
2. Semicolon
3. Period
4. Coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS)
5. Adverbial conjunction (however, therefore)
6. Dependent word (because, when)
7. How would you correct the following?

This semester I am taking calculus physics and economics.

Calculus is my best subject, I am certain I will get an A.

Although I am very busy, I still find time to have fun.

Last weekend my brother visited me and we went to a football game a party and a rock concert.

Unnecessary commas:

1. Do not use a comma before the first item in a series:

Ex. I like, apples, oranges, and cherries.

1. Do not use a comma after the last item in a series:

Ex. Apples, oranges, and cherries, are my favorite fruits.

1. Do not use a comma between a subject and a verb.

The boy, is running.

1. Do not use a comma between a compound subject or predicate:

Ex. Sam, and his friends decided to skip school.

Ex. Sam decided to skip school, and go fishing

Note: “and” is not being used as a coordinating conjunction to join two ICs.

1. Do not use a comma to set off a restrictive clause

Dogs, sthat have fleas should be treated.

1. NO IC, DC.

Ex. I fell down, because my laces were untied.

Are there any unnecessary commas?

1. The capital of the Dominican Republic, is Santa Domingo.
2. Some of the most important crops are, sugar cane, coffee, cocoa, and rice.
3. Mining is also important to the country’s economy, because the land is rich in many ores.
4. Spanish is the official language of the Dominican Republic, and Roman Catholicism is the state religion.