

The Unnecessary Comma

Between subject and verb, verb and subject, or preposition and object.

NOT: The message signal, modulates the carrier frequency.

BUT: The message signal modulates the carrier frequency.

In compound constructions.

*Compound constructions consisting of two elements almost never require a comma.

The only exception is the sentence consisting of two main clauses linked by a coordinating conjunction. *The computer failed, but employees kept working.*

NOT: Laser diodes, and other optoelectronic components have helped to revolutionize the fields of telecommunications, and digital storage.

BUT: Laser diodes and other optoelectronic components have helped to revolutionize the fields of telecommunications and digital storage.

After a conjunction.

NOT: Transformers alter AC voltages and currents, and, they provide electrical isolation.

BUT: Transformers alter AC voltages and currents, and they provide electrical isolation.

Around restrictive elements.

NOT: Horowitz and Hill's book, *The Art of Electronics*, has become a standard reference for electrical engineers since its publication in 1980.

BUT: Horowitz and Hill's book *The Art of Electronics* has become a standard reference for electrical engineers since its publication in 1980.

Around a series.

Commas separate the items *within* a series but do not separate the series from the rest of the sentence.

NOT: The skills of, *coding, analyzing, and debugging*, are essential for programmers.

BUT: The skills of coding, analyzing, and debugging are essential for programmers.

Before an indirect quotation.

NOT: The report concluded, that DSL modems are likely to capture a larger market share than are cable modems.

BUT: The report concluded that DSL modems are likely to capture a larger market share than are cable modems.