

## 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.