



Yeah, Write!

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(Edited version)

WRITER'S CORNER

by Kelly Mortimer

Ah, what a wealth of things I can choose to write about. I'll go for something curvy. The comma. Where in the heck does it go, and why?!

FIRST: The "pause." Start talkin'. When you pause naturally, if written as a sentence, you'd put in a comma. Easy enough. Here's an example. 'If you want the truth, ask me.'

SECOND: Comma in a series. The last comma in a series is often left out, causing ambiguity. Example: 'I'm going to the park, the school and the store.' Unless you have a clone, you can't go to the school and the store at the same time. Without the comma, you're putting your last two items in the series together. When not to use: 'I love to eat steak, baked potatoes, and peas and carrots.' Peas and carrots are a concept. No comma there.

THIRD: If your sentence starts with, 'if, when, although, before, after, where, etc.,' you have a place a comma at the end of the clause. Example: 'When I send an agent my submission, I'll make sure I follow her guidelines.'

FOURTH: Use a comma after a dependant clause when addressing a person by name. Example: 'You know, I never liked you, Sally.' If your name is Sally, don't think I mean you. I don't know a Sally, which is why I picked that name. One more: 'I love you, honey.' If your name is Honey ... never mind. Okay, last one. Let's go for something harder...

FIFTH: Commas paired with adjectives. This causes a lot of confusion. First, coordinate adjectives. If two adjectives modify a noun IN THE SAME WAY, put a comma between the adjectives. But how do ya know? That's what I'm gonna tell ya! There's a two-part test. One: Can you take out the comma and insert the word 'and'? Two: If you reverse the adjectives, does the sentence still mean the same thing? If you can do both, you have a Coordinate Adjective. Example: 'Did you hear about Kelly's wonderful, happy clients?' Let's see if that sentence passes both tests. 'Did you hear about Kelly's wonderful and happy clients?' 'Did you hear about Kelly's happy, wonderful clients?' All three make sense, so separate the adjectives by a comma.

Now, cumulative adjectives. If the pair of adjectives fails the two-part test mentioned above, then don't use a comma. Your words have to remain in the original order to make sense. Example: 'The red fire truck zoomed down the street.' Try adding the word 'and.' 'The red and fire truck...' or switch the

adjectives: 'The fire red truck...' Neither makes sense, so you have Cumulative Adjectives, and leave the comma out. Had enough? I have!

WISE WORDS FOR the MONTH by that Sassy sage, Kelly Mortimer
“Always shoot for the moon. The worst that can happen is you'll run out of ammo.”

That's all, folks! (notice the comma....)

Smiles,
Kelly