Know when to use a comma with *and*.

When you write, only three patterns require *and*.

**Pattern 1 – Joining two main clauses**

First, you can use *and* to connect two *main clauses*. In this pattern, you should *always* use a comma.

```
MAIN CLAUSE + , + and + MAIN CLAUSE .
```

My dog Floyd sleeps on the bed, *and* my cat Buster naps in the bathtub.

Dirty dishes fill the kitchen sink, *and* damp towels litter the bathroom floor.

Pattern 1 works with all of the coordinating conjunctions: *and, but, for, nor, or, so,* and *yet.*

**Pattern 2 – Joining any two units except main clauses**

You can also use *and* to connect any *two* items. These items can be any grammatical unit except main clauses. When you have only two items, you do not need a comma with *and*.

```
ITEM + Ø + and + ITEM
```

My dog Floyd has too many fleas *and* too much hair.

Buster, my cat, enjoys knocking glasses off of the kitchen counter *and* dragging toilet paper streamers through the house.

Pattern 2 also works with *but, nor, or,* and *yet.*
**Pattern 3 – Joining three or more items in a series**

When you have three or more items in a series, use a comma with the **and** that connects the last item.

```
ITEM + , + ITEM + , + and + ITEM
```

My computer needs more RAM, a faster processor, **and** a color printer.

George has bad breath, no money, **and** an annoying mother, but Sherry Lynn still wants to date him.

Pattern 3 also works with **but**, **nor**, **or**, and **yet**.

**Quick Test**

**Directions:** Add commas where they are necessary.

1. Tony wanted to order a pizza from Papa John’s ☐ and some Peking duck from Lam’s Garden.

2. Debbie rushed to get the report typed ☐ and Martha frantically answered the phones.

3. I don’t know when to leave my credit card at home ☐ and when to say no to a Big Mac with fries.

4. When Mike took his Toyota to the dealership, the mechanics wanted to put in a new starter, replace his shocks ☐ and overhaul the transmission.

5. Because George snores to wake the dead ☐ and because Fuzzball, the dog, barks at the slightest sound, Alice never gets a good night’s sleep.