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 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 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 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.