

Kommaregeln im Englischen

Die Kommasetzung folgt im Englischen weniger strikten Regeln als im Deutschen; es kommt oft darauf an, was im jeweiligen Kontext am verständlichsten und am besten lesbar ist. Hier ein paar Grundregeln. Kommas setzt man:

1. In Aufzählungen. Die Elemente einer Aufzählung ohne Bindewörter werden mit Kommas abgetrennt. In einer Aufzählung mit mindestens drei Gliedern *kann* vor *and* ein Komma stehen (das sog. ‚Oxford comma‘); es kann Unklarheiten vermeiden.

We've got crisps, crackers, chocolate(,) and jelly beans.

VERWIRREND: *I love my friends, Homer Simpson and Britney Spears.* (-> Es klingt, als seien Homer und Britney die Freunde.)

BESSER: *I love my friends, Homer Simpson, and Britney Spears.* (Es ist klar, dass drei unabhängige Elemente gemocht werden.)

2. Zwischen zwei Hauptsätzen. Vor den nebenordnenden Konjunktionen *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so* (Merkwort **FANBOYS**) steht ein Komma, wenn danach ein vollständiger Satz folgt.

He was tired, but he kept going.

ABER kein Komma bei unvollständigem Satz: *He was tired but kept going.*

UND kein Komma vor Nebensätzen: *He was tired because he had been up all night.*

3. Manchmal nach adverbialen Bestimmungen am Satzanfang.

3a. Immer nach adverbialen Nebensätzen, Partizipial-, Infinitiv- und Gerundkonstruktionen.

If you ask him, he'll help you.

Having eaten five pieces of cake, Steve felt sick.

To tell you the truth, I couldn't have done it without Peter's help.

On hearing the news, she fainted.

3b. Normalerweise nach *conjunctive adverbs* (die Sätze logisch verknüpfen) und *adverbs of comment* (die eine Meinung zum Ausdruck bringen).

However / In fact / Therefore ..., they still haven't found a solution.

Unfortunately / Remarkably / Surprisingly ..., this is still a huge problem.

3c. Nach anderen adverbialen Bestimmungen (z.B. des Ortes oder der Zeit) nur dann, wenn sie sehr lang sind oder das Komma zu mehr Klarheit verhilft.

After a nap Paul went to see his friend.

After a long nap on the couch, Paul went to see his friend.

VERWIRREND: *After that time was up and everybody had to hand in their tests.*

(Man liest erst "... nach dieser Zeit" und merkt dann erst, dass "that" und "time" nicht zusammengehören.)

BESSER: *After that, time was up and everybody had to hand in their tests.*

4. Vor und nach direkter Rede – außer nach einem Ausrufe- oder Fragezeichen am Ende der direkten Rede.

He said, "You're my best friend." / "You're my best friend," he said. / "You," he said, "are my best friend."

ABER kein Komma bei ! und ? : *"You're my best friend!" he said.*

5. Nach Grußformeln; nach Ausrufen; vor und nach Anreden

Good morning, how are you?

Oh, it's you. / Well, that's what I thought.

Mum, can I have a cookie? / Thank you, Daniel.

6. Nach Yes und No und vor question tags:

Yes, I'm from New York. / No, I'm not.

You're from New York, aren't you?

7. Am Satzende vor please, too und either.

Pass me the sugar, please. (ABER nicht am Satzanfang: Please pass me the sugar.)

I'd like some tea, too. / I don't want any tea, either.

8. Zwischen gleichrangigen Adjektiven (Adjektiven, die man in der Reihenfolge vertauschen oder mit *and* verbinden könnte):

The collection has some funny, original stories in it. = lustige, originelle Geschichten (= funny and original stories)

This is a new original series. = eine neue Originalserie

9. Bei Einschüben, die man auch weglassen könnte. Dazu gehören z.B. Appositionen, verbindende und kommentierende Adverbien und *non-defining relative clauses*.

Mrs Smith, our new English teacher, is very nice.

She is not, however, the best English teacher we've ever had.

Mrs Smith, who is our new English teacher, is very nice.

ABER: Bei *defining relative clauses*, die ihr Bezugswort definieren, darf kein Komma stehen. Vergleiche:

defining: I have three brothers who live in different cities. My brother who lives in New York is a teacher.

non-defining: I only have one brother. My brother, who lives in New York, is a teacher.

10. Bei Zahlen, Datum und Ortsangaben:**10a zum Trennen der Tausender in ganzen Zahlen:**

one thousand = 1,000

(Achtung: für Dezimalzahlen verwendet man einen Punkt. Anderthalb = 1.5)

10b Wenn ein Datum aus mehr als zwei Bestandteilen besteht, werden diese durch Komma abgetrennt und hinter der Datumsangabe ein Komma gesetzt.

On May 15, 1990, Mike Miller was born.

ABER: *Mike Miller was born in May 1990.* (nur zwei Bestandteile)

10c Bei der beliebten Kombination von Stadt und Land (bzw. Bundesstaat) steht zwischen beiden Elementen und danach ein Komma.

I have friends in Springfield, Illinois, and in Paris, France.

Exercises

TASK 1 Decide if you have to put a comma or not.

REMEMBER:

1. Vor den Konjunktionen *for, and, nor, but, or, yet* und *so* steht ein Komma, wenn ein ganzer Satz folgt.
2. Vor anderen Konjunktionen, die Nebensätze einleiten (z.B. *because, although, when ...*), steht kein Komma.
3. Steht ein Nebensatz am Satzanfang, wird er hingegen durch ein Komma vom Hauptsatz abgetrennt.

- a) The dog wagged its tail ___ when it saw its owner.
- b) Josh usually eats meat ___ but today he's trying the vegetarian option.
- c) Because she had been so busy ___ she had completely forgotten her mum's birthday.
- d) She liked his family ___ and his friends were nice guys, too.
- e) While we were having lunch ___ Bob told me the whole story.
- f) I might come to your party ___ or I might decide not to go.
- g) She won the contest ___ although she had hardly practiced.

TASK 2 Add commas where they are necessary.

- a) Dad can you make me a sandwich please?
- b) This car cost more than 8000 dollars didn't it?
- c) After I had finished the book I returned it to the library.
- d) Yes I'm listening.
- e) We need milk toast cheese and eggs.
- f) Usually they're very fast but today they're a bit slow.
- g) Tom is very loud and he is annoying too.
- h) Surprised by this offer they didn't know how to react.
- i) It was a cold rainy day.
- j) Surprisingly nobody had tried it before.
- k) Bob my best friend wanted to help me.
- l) They arrived on Friday January 5.
- m) He lives in Trenton New Jersey and often visits his brother in Dover Delaware.
- n) "You're kidding" she said and I answered "I'm absolutely not."
- o) Working two jobs she had very little leisure time.
- p) No I don't want this one either.
- q) Oh please don't worry about it.
- r) Even though Nick Debbie and Anne had saved some money they couldn't afford the new computer.
- s) Nevertheless it is not too late to make a change.
- t) Smoking can have serious consequences for your health. My grandpa for example died from lung cancer at the age of 54.

TASK 3 Defining or non-defining relative clause? Decide if you need a comma.

- a) Australia ___ which is in the southern hemisphere ___ is a fascinating continent.
- b) People ___ who enjoy their work ___ are generally healthier than those ___ who don't like their job.
- c) I have a sister. My sister ___ who is still in college ___ is working as a waitress.
- d) I have three sisters, but I only talk to the one ___ who lives nearby; I lost touch with the others when they moved out.

Lösungen

TASK 1

- a) The dog wagged its tail x when it saw its owner.
- b) Josh usually eats meat, but today he's trying the vegetarian option.
- c) Because she had been so busy, she had completely forgotten her mum's birthday.
- d) She liked his family, and his friends were nice guys, too.
- e) While we were having lunch, Bob told me the whole story.
- f) I might come to your party, or I might decide not to go.
- g) She won the contest x although she had hardly practiced.

TASK 2

- a) Dad, can you make me a sandwich, please?
- b) This car cost more than 8000 dollars, didn't it?
- c) After I had finished the book, I returned it to the library.
- d) Yes, I'm listening.
- e) We need milk, toast, cheese(,) and eggs.
- f) Usually they're very fast, but today they're a bit slow.
- g) Tom is very loud, and he is annoying too.
- h) Surprised by this offer, they didn't know how to react.
- i) It was a cold, rainy day.
- j) Surprisingly, nobody had tried it before.
- k) Bob, my best friend, wanted to help me.
- l) They arrived on Friday, January 5.
- m) He lives in Trenton, New Jersey, and often visits his brother in Dover, Delaware.
- n) "You're kidding," she said, and I answered, "I'm absolutely not."
- o) Working two jobs, she had very little leisure time.
- p) No, I don't want this one, either.
- q) Oh, please don't worry about it.
- r) Even though Nick Debbie and Anne had saved some money, they couldn't afford the new computer.
- s) Nevertheless, it is not too late to make a change.
- t) Smoking can have serious consequences for your health. My grandpa, for example, died from lung cancer at the age of 54.

TASK 2

- a) Australia, which is in the southern hemisphere, is a fascinating continent. (*Es gibt nur ein Australien, das nicht von anderen unterschieden werden müsste -> non-defining*)
- b) People x who enjoy their work x are generally healthier than those x who don't like their job. (*Es geht nicht um alle Menschen, sondern um zwei verschiedene Gruppen – defining*)
- c) I have a sister. My sister, who is still in college, is working as a waitress. (*nur eine Schwester -> non-defining*)
- d) I have three sisters, but I only talk to the one x who lives nearby; I lost touch with the others when they moved out. (*eine von mehreren Schwestern wird identifiziert -> defining*)