Commas

Use commas to separate three or more items in a list.
Consultants can help you brainstorm, draft, and revise a paper.

Use commas to complete sentences that are combined with a coordinating conjunction: and, but, yet, so, or, nor, for.
Leslie knew she was in trouble, but she didn’t want to admit it.
Tom was worried about his assignment, so he made an appointment at the writing center.

Use commas to separate names in direct address.
It’s been two weeks, Martha, but you’ve finally mastered the semi-colon.

Use commas to separate an introductory phrase or clause from the rest of a sentence.
Signal phrases for quotations
“I write this sitting in the kitchen sink,” begins Dodie Smith’s novel, I Capture the Castle.

Transitional phrases
First, you need to brainstorm your topic.

Prepositional phrases
During the last few weeks of the semester, the writing center gets crowded.

Subordinate clauses
When you plan your paper, leave yourself plenty of time for revision.

Separate non-essential information, such as an interruption or relative clause, from the rest of the sentence.
All kinds of students, including experienced writers, can benefit from a writing center.

Note: Sometimes non-essential information will include commas within it. When this happens, use dashes or parentheses to separate it from the rest of the sentence.
Students can bring all sorts of projects – creative, scientific, professional, and academic – to the writing center.