A note from Mr. Wede

• Hello! I am here on campus today. But I am taking a grading day, so I am hidden away somewhere on campus, grading your fabulous work.
• Next Thursday/Friday, we will take a major-grade grammar test. More info on that to come next class, but keep that in mind as you work through the info and practice exercises today. If something is baffling you, slow down and figure it out. It’s fine to get help from a classmate. Even go online and look for more examples.
• As you go through this PP, take notes on rules and concepts that you have not yet mastered.
• When asked to write the practice sentences, complete those on a separate piece of paper, which you will hand in today—so use a different piece of paper than the one you use to take notes.
Essential vs. Nonessential and
When Do I Need Commas?

“I have trouble with punctuation. I just don’t have any comma sense.”
• When we write phrases and clauses, some are essential and some are nonessential. (Some people refer to this distinction as restrictive or non-restrictive.)

Sentence Structure: Nonessential Phrases and Clauses

Steve said that he would propose to me on Valentine’s Day, which is my favorite holiday! Use commas to set off additional information.

Purdue University Writing Lab
• A **nonessential** phrase or clause is **offset with comma(s.)** It often provides extra information and can be moved around within a sentence or can be removed all together.

• **Because he is afraid of clowns,** Daniel never walks past the grate on Rogongo Street.

• Daniel, **because he is afraid of clowns,** never walk past the grate on Rogongo Street.

• **Daniel never walks past the grate on Rogongo Street.**
An essential phrase or clause lowers the number of possible meanings of the word(s) it modifies or renames. Usually, it reduces that number to just one possibility, but not always.

**Essential = No Comma(s)!**

The girl sitting next to Harold gave him this note.
1. Appositive Phrases

The cat, a snappy dresser in heels, walked by.
Appositive Phrase Review

- An appositive further explains, identifies, or renames a noun or pronoun in a sentence.
- If often begins with a, an, or the.
- It always contains a noun.

Most employees avoided the terribly awkward office gathering, a lame and last minute attempt at a birthday party for Chuck.
One-word Appositives

• There are appositive *phrases*, but there are also *appositives*, a single word—a *noun*—that redefines or renames another noun or pronoun.

Chuck, *a labradoodle*, loves Cheetos.
One-word Appositives

• When the information an appositive gives about a noun is **NOT ESSENTIAL**, we use **commas**. (Some people call this *non-restrictive*)
• The noun would still be clearly defined—*even without the appositive.*

Chuck loves Cheetos.

Chuck, *a labradoodle*, loves Cheetos.

This information is helpful but it’s not essential. (And let’s assume we already knew Chuck was a dog.)
Appositive Phrase (non-restrictive)

• When the information an appositive gives about a noun is **NOT ESSENTIAL**, we use **commas**. Most appositive phrases are **nonessential**.

Rita, **my first cat**, loved the snow.

Rita loved the snow.

This information is helpful but it’s not essential. Rita is already a very specific, defined proper noun.
Essential Appositives

• When the information an appositive gives about a noun is **ESSENTIAL**, we **DON’T** use commas. (Some people call this *restrictive*)

• This year, actor **Freddy Redmayne** won the Oscar for Best Actor for his portrayal of Stephen Hawking in *The Theory of Everything*.

Without his name, we don’t know which actor we’re talking about because “actor” is a very broad, undefined noun.
Nonessential – Use Commas

• Larry, my roommate obsessed with *Where’s Waldo books*, embarrasses me when we go out in public.

The appositive phrase provides extra information. We could move it around or take it out.
• My other roommate Larry embarrasses me because he loves dressing up like Waldo.

The speaker could have many roommates, so without the name, “roommate” is not yet defined.
ESSENTIAL – no commas

• Jessica wanted an autograph of the famous ballerina Misty Copeland.

• The noun “ballerina” would not be clearly defined without the name because there are many famous ballerinas, so it’s ESSENTIAL. NO COMMAS!
A name is not always essential

- Her husband, **Leon**, was arrested for stealing ten packages of hotdogs and six jugs of milk from 7-11.

The expectation is that someone only has ONE husband, so the name, in this particular case, is really EXTRA information.
• Your friend **Sam** is in really big trouble.

The decision regarding commas often depends on context. **“Your friend,”** in most cases, is so general that the **name is essential** to define **subject**--with the understanding that most people have more than one friend, so **NO COMMAS.**
The MVP soccer player of the final game, Zach Still, celebrated his victory by going to Disneyland.

We can assume there was only one MVP soccer player for a particular game, so the subject is already very specific and defined. The name is extra information.

The soccer star Zach Still celebrated his victory by going to Disneyland.

There could be many soccer stars, so we must know the name to fully define the subject of the sentence.
1. Appositive Practice

• On a separate piece of paper (not the same one you are using to take notes), do the following:

A) Write one original sentence that contains two nonessential appositive phrases. Underline the appositive phrases and circle the nouns they rename.

B) Write an original sentence that contains two essential appositives. Underline the appositives and circle the nouns they rename.
2. Participles and Participial Phrases

"Participial phrases are dressed up like verbs, but they function as adjectives to describe nouns."
Nonessential participial phrases need to be offset with comma(s)

- Transforming his scar, Mason got this cool tattoo.
- Mason, transforming his scar, got this cool tattoo.
- Mason got this cool tattoo.

A nonessential phrase can be moved around or even removed.
The hamster **rolling on the carpet** loves science fiction books. The hamster **eating a cookie** prefers romance novels.

The participial phrases are essential to define the subjects. Without the participial phrases, we don’t know WHICH hamster is being described.
The hamster, rolling on the carpet, looked right at me.

The participial phrase could be considered helpful, but NOT essential, and thus, USE COMMAS!
2. Participial Phrase Practice

C) Write an original sentence that contains a *nonessential* participle (rather than a participial phrase). Underline the participle and circle the noun it describes.

*SKIP A LINE*

D) Write a sentence that contains two *essential* participial phrases. Underline the participial phrases and circle the nouns they describe.
3. Adverb Clauses

A dependent clause that functions as an adverb

I will eat my broccoli **now.**

- adverb modifying **will eat**

I will eat my broccoli **after I eat this cookie.**

- adverb clause modifying **will eat**
An Adverb Clause

- will contain a subject and verb.
- will have a subordinate conjunction that keeps the clause from expressing a complete thought.
- Will answer the questions: *How? When? Where? or Why?*

### Subordinating Conjunctions

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Nonessential vs. Essential Adverb Clauses

• Because she found it difficult to control her rage, Judy often got into trouble.
• Judy, because she found it difficult to control her rage, often got into trouble.
• Judy often got into trouble because she found it difficult to control her rage.

• “Because” is the subordinator. Notice if you remove “because,” the dependent clause becomes independent.
• When the adverb clause closes a sentence, almost always, we do not use a comma.
Nonessential vs. Essential Adverb Clauses

• **Essential**: Ernie always acts a little crazy *after we go through the car wash.*

  The adverb clause defines *exactly when* Ernie freaks out.

• **Nonessential**: Ernie sometimes acts a little crazy, *even when we don’t go through the car wash.*

  In the second sentence, the adverb clause provides extra information.
Nonessential vs. Essential Adverb Clauses

Note that clauses beginning with *although, even though, though* and *whereas* are always non-essential, even when they close a sentence.

• All the work Helen did for the monkeys was commendable, *although we sometimes worried that she was becoming a little too close to Chuck*. 
3. Adverb Clause Practice

E) Write one original sentence that contains two nonessential adverb clauses. Underline the adverb clauses. For each clause, write the question the adverb clause answers: How? When? Where? or Why?

SKIP A LINE

F) Write an original sentence that contains an essential adverb clause. Underline the adverb clause. Write the question the adverb clause answers: How? When? Where? or Why?
4. Adjective Clauses

**PUNCTUATION OF ADJECTIVE CLAUSES**

MY BOYFRIEND WHO LOVES THE CELTICS TOOK ME TO A BASKETBALL GAME.

MY BOYFRIEND, WHO LOVES THE CELTICS, TOOK ME TO A BASKETBALL GAME.

WHICH ONE IS CORRECT?

IT REALLY DEPENDS ON HOW COOL YOU ARE.
An adjective clause (also sometimes called a relative clause) will…

• contain a subject and verb
• Begin with a relative pronoun [who, whom, whose, that, or which] or a relative adverb [when, where, or why]
• function as an adjective, answering the questions What kind? How many? or Which one?

![Diagram showing structure of an adjective clause](image-url)
**ESSENTIAL adjective clauses = no comma(s)**

- The woman **who left this Post-it note** would like her butter back.

  The adjective clauses in both these sentences are **essential** because they help limit and define the subjects.

- The note from Princess Party ‘15 **that was found under the glitter craft station** revealed one girl’s disdain for Snow White.
NONSESENTIAL adjective clauses = comma(s)

• Clyde, *whose owner loves to dress him in humiliating costumes*, loves eating treats from the cat litter box.

The adjective clause provides extra information in this sentence.
Use a “THAT” adjective clause for ESSENTIAL information.

- Frank craves a day that is exciting.
Use a “WHICH” adjective clause for NONESSENTIAL information.

• Darlene’s favorite lounging tree, which is a 75-year-old oak, helps her not to go nuts when she’s stressed out.
4. Adjective Clause Practice

G) Write one original sentence that contains a **nonessential** adjective clause. Underline the adjective clause. Write the question the adjective clause answers: *What kind? How many?* or *Which one?*

H) Write one original sentence that contains an **essential** adjective clause. Underline the adjective clause. Write the question the adjective clause answers: *What kind? How many?* or *Which one?*