

# How to Use Commas

Commas are the ‘breaths’ of your writing. Read your text out loud, and every time you need to take a breath, you probably need to insert a comma

**1. Use a comma after an introductory word or phrase such as ‘nevertheless’ or ‘furthermore’.**

e.g. Thus, with the burden of the diversifying energy sector, infrastructure development might lag behind. Therefore, just less than 95% of SA’s primary energy supply comes from these three fuel sources.

**2. Use commas in the middle of a sentence to separate words that are not essential to the meaning of the sentence.**

e.g. Factoring in the impacts of mining, *as part of a cradle-to-cradle model*, may not result in unlimited revenues but, *if the commitment was available*, other sustainable energy sources would begin to look more appealing.

**Useful tip:** Does the sentence still make sense if you ignore the words between the commas? It should!

**3. Use commas to separate two or more adjectives that describe the same noun.**

e.g. He was a difficult, stubborn child.

They lived in a white frame house. **No comma is needed here – see below:**

**Useful tip:** Would the sentence still make sense if ‘and’ was written between the adjectives? It should!

**4. Use a comma to shift between the main discourse and a quote.**

e.g. Based on Eskom data, “...the then pebble-bed nuclear reactors that Eskom want to build in SA would cost over R40 billion during their lifespan.”

**Reference:** UCT Upper Campus Writing Centre, 2015