5 Rules for Commas

- Use a comma when joining 2 independent clauses with a coordinating conjunction
  Ex: My dog was not feeling well, so I took her to the vet.

  **Remembering Coordinating Conjunctions: Use FANBOYS**
  For
  And
  Nor
  But
  Or
  Yet
  So

- Use a comma to separate introductory elements from the rest of the sentence. (Introductory elements are words or groups of words that introduce the independent clause.)
  Ex: Before next week, you should submit all of your necessary paperwork.

- Use a comma to separate items in a list or series.
  Ex: I will buy peanuts, almonds, and walnuts at the grocery store.

- Use a comma to separate two (or more) adjectives modifying the same noun.
  Ex: The warm, sunny weather was good for my mood.

- Use commas on both sides of a nonrestrictive word group. (Nonrestrictive word groups could be removed from the sentence without changing the main message of the sentence.)
  Ex: St. Augustine, which is located in northeast Florida, is one of my favorite vacation destinations.

Semi-Colons (;) are used:

- To connect 2 independent clauses
  Ex: My dog was not feeling well; I took her to the vet.

- After an independent clause and before transitional words/phrases (i.e. in contrast, on the other hand, etc.)
  Ex: One brother is active and energetic; in contrast, the other brother is sedentary.

- After an independent clause and before a conjunctive adverb (i.e. however, therefore, furthermore, etc.)
  Ex: One brother is active and energetic; however, the other brother is sedentary.

- To separate items in a list or series if the items contain commas.
  Ex: The representatives are from Phoenix, Arizona; Detroit, Michigan; and San Antonio, Texas.

QUOTATION MARKS

- Commas and periods are placed INSIDE quotation marks (except when citing sources in MLA or APA—then the period goes after the parenthetical citation).
  Ex 1: Jack said, “Let’s hurry to the game.”
  Ex 2: According to Dr. Larry Jackson, “One in ten accidents involving alcohol will be fatal” (Jackson 432).

- Semi-colons and colons are placed OUTSIDE quotation marks.
  Ex: Jack said, “Let’s hurry to the game”; we all piled in the car and left.

- Question marks go INSIDE if the question is part of the quoted material and OUTSIDE if the question is part of the larger sentence.
  Ex 1: Jack asked, “What time is the game?”
  Ex 2: Have you read the poem “Promises Like Pie Crust”?