Comma Basics

Use a Comma to:

1) Join two independent clauses with one of the following: and, or, but, for, nor, yet, so (Hacker P1a)
   ○ Tutors are trained to help students with grammar problems, but they are also required to have some computer knowledge.

2) Set off an introductory clause (P1b)
   ○ Although I had seen the Eiffel Tower before, I was again amazed at its size.

3) Set off non restrictive, or nonessential, elements in a sentence (P1e)
   ○ Her husband, who is a teacher, was able to help her with the essay.

4) Set off transitional phrases (P1f)
   ○ As a matter of fact, American Football was established by fans who wanted to play a more organized game of rugby.

5) Set off contrasted elements (P1f)
   ○ Unlike Robert, Celia loved dance contests.

6) Prevent confusion (P1j)
   ○ Patients who can, walk up and down the halls several times a day.

Do not use a comma:

1) Between compound elements that are not independent clauses (p2a)
   ○ Marie Curie discovered radium, and later applied her work on radioactivity to medicine.

2) Between verb and subject (P2b)
   ○ Zoos large enough to give animals freedom to roam are becoming more popular.

3) When a semi-colon or comma is needed (this is a comma splice) (G6)
   ○ William Faulkner is a well-known Southern writer; his works revolve around a small town in Mississippi.

4) To set off restrictive, or essential, parts of a sentence (P2e)
   ○ Drivers who think they own the road make cycling a dangerous sport.

5) After "such as" or "like" (P2g)
   ○ Many shade loving plants, such as begonias, impatiens, and coleus, can add color to a shady garden.

6) After "although" (P2g)
   ○ Although the air was balmy, the water was too cold for swimming.