

Introductory Elements

This resource will help you determine how to punctuate introductory elements.

An introductory element is a word, expression, phrase, or clause that precedes a sentence. They serve as transitions to a main sentence, giving added information. These types of elements are one way to diversify the beat of your sentences and are offset from the sentence by a comma.

Common introductory clauses begin with while, after, as, because, when, although, and if.

- Some introductory elements are dependent or subordinate clauses, meaning they cannot stand alone.
 1. While the house is empty, I am going to paint the walls.
 2. Because the man left work early, he arrived home early.
 3. If you do not read the assignment, you will fail the class.
- Some introductory elements are only one word. When you see words like yes, however, or well, you may need to use a comma.
 1. Yes, the pie was delicious.
 2. However, you may not like what she has to say.
 3. Well, most people are against paying more taxes.
- Some are phrases, meaning they may begin with a participial phrase, an absolute phrase, an infinitive phrase, or a prepositional phrase.
 1. Amazed by her energy, she climbed further.
 2. Her head held high, she entered the room.
 3. To end the fight, the parents called their children home.
 4. After the tardy bell rang, the student ran into the class.

When using introductory elements, you must make certain that you are following the element with a comma and an independent clause.

Editing strategies: Examine each of your sentences and identify any introductory elements. Include the comma to separate the introductory element from the sentence, but, more importantly, make certain that the clause following the introductory element has a subject and verb and that it is an independent clause.