

The Second, Third, and Fourth Rules of Commas:

2) **commas surround an interruption**

Our new ark, finally, is a beautiful sight to behold.

This vessel, completely remodeled, is ready for passengers.

The number of passengers, which I've yet to determine, must be even.

Are commas the only way to punctuate an interruption (or an afterthought or qualifier)?

No. But they are the most common way. Commas give an interruption **normal attention**. If you want to give an interruption **maximum attention**, use a **dash** to the left and right of it. If you want to give it **minimum attention**, use **parentheses** around it.

3) **commas show where an introduction ends**

First, I'll compose a passenger list.

Resisting the urge to include every single friend, I'll limit the list to couples.

Although some couples may be odd, the number of passengers will be even.

4) **commas mark an afterthought or a final qualifier**

The gathering will be lively, surely.

The guests will chatter and squawk, getting to know one another.

The event may go down in history, as long as someone keeps a log of everything that happens there.