Using Commas

1) Commas are used before a coordinating conjunction (and, or, but, for, so, nor, yet) that links sentences:
   The Writing Center is an awesome service, and all students should use it.
   I thought the Writing Center was just for citation help, but now I see it’s for all stages of writing.

2) Commas are used to set off introductory phrases and clauses:
   Until the Writing Center came along, many students didn’t have someone to talk with about their writing.

3) Commas are used to set off nonessential (nonrestrictive) elements:
   Phrases: The Writing Center, with few exceptions, is staffed by interesting people.
   Clauses: The Writing Center, which is a free service, is open to all students on campus.
   Appositives (a word or words that rename a noun): The Writing Center, the best place on campus, is well known for its friendly environment.
   Parenthetical Expressions (a word or words that interrupt the sentence): That, of course, is not a matter of opinion.
   Tag Questions: “You fix grammar at the Writing Center, don’t you?”
   Yes and No: “No, we don’t fix grammar for you, but we can help you find error patterns, so you can fix it yourself.”
   Direct Address: Writing Center consultants, why are you so amazing?
   Mild Interjections: “Well, we’re amazing because we work with writers at all levels.”

4) Commas are used to set off absolute phrases:
   His rough draft in hand, the student navigated the hallways to the Writing Center.

5) Commas are used to set off contrasting phrases:
   We are helpful at the Writing Center every day, not just during finals.

6) Use a comma to separate items in a series:
   Words: Grammar, syntax, and structure are only a few of the aspects we can help you with in the Center.
   Phrases: Not all of our consultants are English majors, a commonly held misconception, as some are art, history, or science majors.
   Coordinate Adjectives not linked by conjunctions: The Center is a thriving, growing community of young writers and consultants.