

SP

In other words,
IF you have a **compound sentence**
with an independent clause joined
to another independent clause,
THEN you put a comma
before the coordinating conjunction
that joins the two clauses.
IF there is no coordinating conjunction,
THEN you put a semicolon.

I went home, **and** she went to school
I went home; she went to school.

IF you have a **complex sentence**
with an independent clause joined
to a dependent clause,
THEN you put a comma
when the dependent clause comes first,
but not when the independent clause comes first.

When she went to school, I went home.
I went home because she went to school.