San Clemente High School
Tritons

Grammar Guide

Capistrano Unified School District

Contents

Parts of Speech

Parts of speech refer to the way words are used in sentences.

Noun

A **noun** is a word used to name a person, place, thing, or idea. A **proper noun** names a particular, or specific, person, place, thing, or idea. A **proper noun** is always capitalized. A **common noun** is any noun that does not name a particular, or specific, person, place, thing, or idea.

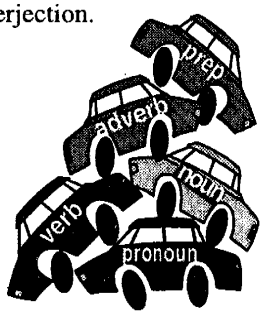
Proper nouns	**Common nouns**
Jewel, Elvis Presley, John Lennon	musician, singer, star
Encinitas, Carlsbad, Cardiff	city, town, village
Volkswagon, Toyota, Ford	car, truck, vehicle
Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism	religion, belief

A **concrete** noun names a tangible thing – something that can be touched or seen – such as: sportscar, guitar, White House, soccer, ice cream.

An **abstract** noun names an idea, doctrine, thought, theory, concept, condition, or feeling – something that cannot be touched or seen – such as: joy, Taoism, illness, love, euphoria, excellence, prejudice.

A **collective noun** names a group or unit, such as: faculty, herd, school, audience, San Diego Chargers.

Eight parts of speech: noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb, preposition, conjunction, and interjection.



Noun Tip:
Proper nouns are always capitalized.

Pronoun

A **pronoun** is a word used in place of a noun. The noun that the pronoun replaces is referred to as the *antecedent*. When a pronoun replaces a noun that indicates a person or people, it is called a **personal pronoun.** Personal pronouns change form to indicate case, gender, number, and person.

The **case** of a pronoun tells how it relates to the other words in the clause. **Nominative** case describes a pronoun used as the subject of a clause. **Possessive** case describes a pronoun that shows possession or ownership. **Objective** case describes a pronoun used as an object in a clause. (See *clause* p. 5)

Number:	**Singular**			**Plural**		
Person:	**1 st**	**2nd**	**3rd**	**1st**	**2nd**	**3rd**
Nominative case:	I	you	he/she/it	we	you	they
Objective case:	me	you	him/her/it	us	you	them
Possessive case:	my	your	his/her	our	your	their
	mine	yours	hers/its	ours	yours	theirs

Pronoun Tip:
An apostrophe (') is not used with a personal pronoun to show possession.

Other pronouns are **relative, indefinite, interrogative, demonstrative,** and **reflexive.**

A **relative** pronoun relates one part of a sentence to a word in another part of the sentence:

The apples **that** Janie bought at the market were bad.
Mr. and Mrs. Janson, **who** were recipients last year, will speak at the awards ceremony.

An **indefinite** pronoun does not point out a specific person or thing and is not preceded by an antecedent:

Whoever bought the donuts for PALs needs to be reimbursed.

Relative pronouns: who, whose, whom, which, what, that
Indefinite pronouns: another, everything, many, nobody, several, someone, everybody
Interrogative pronouns: who, whose, whom, which, what
Demonstrative pronouns: this, that, these, those
Reflexive pronouns: myself, himself, herself, itself, yourself, themselves, ourselves

Pronoun Tip:

Avoid ambiguous reference. Ambiguity occurs when two antecedents are possible for the same pronoun. Ambiguous reference may be corrected by (1) repeating the antecedent or (2) rewording the sentence.

I removed the plastic lids from the cans and threw *them* away. (ambiguous)
I removed the plastic lids from the cans and threw *the cans* away. (clear)

Dad suggested that **someone** take my college application to the post office.

An **interrogative** pronoun asks a question:
What do you want for lunch?
Which of the seminar books would you like to read?

A **demonstrative** pronoun points out the person or thing referred to without naming it. Such a pronoun may come before or after its antecedent:
That is the car of my dreams.
Look at the strawberries. **Those** are the perfect topping for cheesecake.

A **reflexive** pronoun reflects an action back upon the subject. It is formed by adding *self* or *selves* to certain personal pronouns:
The guests helped **themselves** to the Thanksgiving buffet.
Kelsey treated **herself** to new shoes for basketball.

Most pronouns have **antecedents**. An antecedent is the noun or pronoun that the pronoun refers to or replaces.

Adjective

An **adjective** is a word that modifies a noun or pronoun:
Large dogs make **good** pets for **patient** owners.

An adjective does not always come before the word it modifies:
The teacher, **caring** and **diligent**, corrected his young student's work.

Verb/Predicate Tip:

The *verb* shows action, condition, or state of being. The predicate is the part of the sentence that tells something about the subject. The complete predicate is the verb and its modifiers.

Verb

A **verb** expresses an action, a condition or a state of being. The two main types of verbs are **action verbs** and **linking verbs**.

Action Verbs:

The action that a verb expresses may either be *physical* or *mental*:

The car **raced** down the drive and out into the street. (physical)
The driver **wonders** which is the best way to go. (mental)

There are two types of action verbs: **transitive** and **intransitive** verbs.

Verb Tip:

The ***voice*** of a verb indicates whether the subject is acting (*active voice*) or being acted upon (*passive voice*). This issue will be addressed later, under issues of style. (See p. 17)

Transitive Verbs (*v.t.*):
A verb is **transitive** when the action it expresses is directed towards a person or thing in the sentence (that person or thing is called the *object* of the verb):
Bob **drove** his new Ferrari with special care. (Ferrari is the *object* of drove.)
Sarah **showed** her homework to the teacher. (Homework is the *object* of showed.)

Intransitive Verbs (*v.i.*):
A verb is **intransitive** when it does not have an object.
The school bus **arrived** on time. The skater **fell**.

Linking Verbs:

Intransitive verbs that help to make a statement, not by expressing an action but by serving as a link between two words, are called **linking verbs**. Linking verbs may either express a *condition* or a *state of being*:
The bass guitar **sounds** especially loud. (condition)
The bass **is** loud. (state of being)

Common verbs that express a *condition* are:
seem, grow, become,
taste, feel, sound,
appear, look, remain

Common verbs that express *state of being* (*"to be"* verbs) are:
is, am, are, was, were, be,
being, been

Some verbs can either be **action** or **linking** verbs:

Vinay **felt** a tug on his fishing line. (action)
The line **felt** taut. (linking)
Duong **looks** at Vinay's catch. (action)
The fish **looks** tired. (linking)

> Verb Tip:
> There is an easy way to test the difference between an **action** and a **linking** verb – If you can substitute *is, are, was,* or *were* for the verb, it is a linking verb.

Verb Variations:

A verb may vary in **number, person, tense,** or **mood.**

Verb Number:

A verb may be either *singular* or *plural.*

SINGULAR: Ismene **owns** three cars: a VW, a Toyota, and a Lexus.
PLURAL: Between them, the families **own** five horses.

> A common error is to mix the singular and plural within a sentence.

The verb and its subject must *both* be singular or they must *both* be plural. This is called **subject/verb agreement**.

> Verb Tip:
> When verifying **subject/verb agreement**, don't be confused by other words coming between the subject and the verb.

Verb Person:

A verb indicates whether the sentence subject is *singular* or *plural* as well as whether the subject is *first, second* or *third* person.

	Singular	Plural
First Person	I swim	we swim
Second Person	you swim	you swim
Third Person	she/he/it swims	they swim

Verb Tense:

The **tense** of a verb indicates *time.*

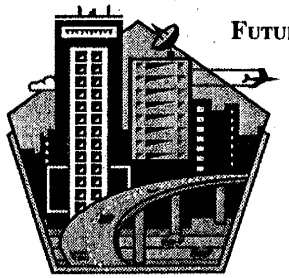
> A common error is to shift the tense of verbs within the same sentence.

PRESENT TENSE expresses action that is happening at the present time, or an action that happens continually, or regularly.

Freeways in San Diego County **are** busy during the morning commute.

PAST TENSE expresses action that is completed at a particular time in the past.

Last Friday, the commute **lasted** longer than usual when a truck **overturned**.



FUTURE TENSE expresses action that will take place in the future.

Friday wasn't the last time that trucks **will overturn** on San Diego's freeways.

PRESENT PERFECT TENSE expresses action that began in the past but continues or is completed in the present.

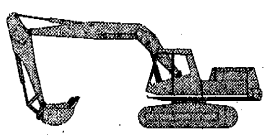
Indeed, commuters **have withstood** greater traffic snarls than Friday's snarl.

PAST PERFECT TENSE expresses action that began in the past and was completed in the past.

They **had supposed**, incorrectly, that freeway construction would keep up with population growth.

FUTURE PERFECT TENSE expresses action that will begin in the future and that will be completed by a specific time in the future.

By this time next year, officials promise that a new Express Lane **will have opened** on Interstate 5.



> Writing Tip:
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> When writing about literature, generally stick with present tense.
>
> When writing about history, generally stick with the past.

Writing Tip:

Sometimes using an exact and vivid verb is stronger for your writing than using adverbs.

Adverb Tip:

You can often identify adverbs by their frequent *–ly* ending.

Preposition Tip:

Prepositions may be *simple* (at, to, for, from, in, by, of, on, with), *compound* (without, inside, alongside), or *phrasal* (in spite of, on top of, aside from, because of).

The most frequently used **prepositions** in the English language are: at, to, for, from, in, by, of, on, with.

Verb Mood:
The **mood** of the verb indicates the *attitude* or *tone* with which the statement is made. The mood may be *indicative*, *imperative*, or *subjunctive*.

INDICATIVE MOOD states a fact or asks a question.

Is there a gas station coming up where we might stop for gas?
We can **stop** at the Arco that is twenty miles ahead.

IMPERATIVE MOOD gives a command or makes a request. The understood subject of all sentences in imperative mood is *you*.

Don't **tell** me that there's no gas for twenty miles.

SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD is used to express a wish or to refer to actions and conditions that are contrary to fact.

I **wish** that there were a closer gas station. If there **were**, we would not run out of gas.

Adverb

An **adverb** modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. An adverb tells *how*, *when*, *where*, *why*, *how often*, *to what extent*, and *how much*:

Today, the votes will be **completely** counted.
Rarely does an election certification last **so long**.
The canvass board looked **thoroughly exhausted** after their weeks of work.

Preposition

A **preposition** shows relationship or position. A preposition is a word (or group of words) that shows the relationship between its object (a noun or a pronoun that follows the preposition) and another word in the sentence.

A **preposition** never stands alone in a sentence; it is always used in a prepositional phrase with the *object* of a preposition (a noun or pronoun) and the modifiers of the object:

The golfer stood [**over** the *ball*] [**with** a focused *expression*] [**on** her *face*].
Standing [**on** the *green*], she consciously ignored the jeers [**of** her *rivals*].

Conjunction

Common **conjunctive adverbs** include also, besides, for example, however, in addition, instead, moreover, meanwhile, nevertheless, similarly, then, therefore, thus.

A **conjunction** connects individual words or groups of words:

The puffer fish is short **and** fat. It is **neither** tall, **nor** thin.

There are three kinds of conjunctions:

Coordinating conjunctions: and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet
Correlative conjunctions: either . . . or; neither. . . nor; not only . . . but also; both . . . and; whether. . . or; just. . . as
Subordinating conjunctions: after, although, as, as much as, as though, because, before, if, in order that, provided that, since, than, though, unless, until, when, where,whereas, while

Interjection

An **interjection** is a word or group of words that expresses *strong emotion* or *surprise*. Punctuation (often a comma or exclamation point) is used to separate an interjection from the rest of the sentence:

Gosh, the weather is bad today. **Oh no!** Here comes a tornado.

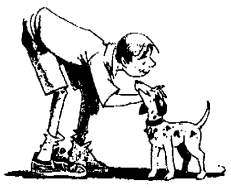
Clauses and Phrases

Clauses and phrases are the building blocks of sentences.

Clauses

A **clause** is a group of words that contains both a ***subject*** and a *predicate*:

Our ***puppies*** *squirm* and *wiggle* around their makeshift pen.



An **independent clause** can stand alone as a sentence:

Because our puppies are so cute, *our neighbors often come over to play with them.*

A **dependent clause** has a subject and predicate, but it would be an incomplete sentence by itself. A dependent clause contains a subordinating conjunction (e.g., *because*) and must be joined to an independent clause:

Because our puppies are so cute, our neighbors often come over to play with them.

> Clause Tip:
>
> Some clauses can stand alone as sentences; others must be grouped with other clauses to create a complete sentence.

Phrases

A **phrase** is a group of related words that work together as a single part of speech. A phrase is not a clause because it lacks a subject and/or a predicate. Because a phrase lacks a subject and/or predicate, a phrase cannot be a sentence.

Running the L.A. Marathon is a goal of many distance runners.

To win is the goal of a few competitors; *to finish* is the goal of most.

Essential and Nonessential Clauses and Phrases

Essential, or **restrictive**, clauses and phrases cannot be removed from a sentence without changing its meaning.

Drivers *who are overly nervous* are usually not good at freeway driving.

The principal's Jeep is the only one at school *that has our mascot on the tire cover.*

Nonessential, or **nonrestrictive,** clauses and phrases add information, but they are not necessary to the meaning of the sentence.

The new Tom Cruise movie, *which has a great soundtrack,* starts tomorrow.

My best friend Joe, *whom I love like a brother,* is moving tomorrow.

> Clause/Phrase Tips:
>
> Essential clauses or phrases usually begin with *that* or *who*.
>
> Nonessential clauses or phrases are set off by commas and usually begin with *which, whom,* or *whose.*

Beginning Sentences with Phrases and Clauses:

There are many ways to begin sentences when writing. Varying sentence beginnings adds style to writing.

Beginning with adjectives:

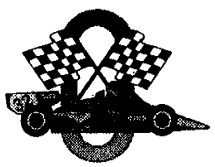
Aerodynamic and **sleek**, the PT Cruiser by Chrysler stunned the audience.

Exhausted, Sal the PT driver could barely crawl out of the car after the all-day demonstration

Beginning with adverbs:

Boisterously, the crowd yelled for the officials to get the Indy 500 started.

Indignantly and **arrogantly**, the Indy driver walked away from his smashed car.



> Punctuation Tip:
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> Use a comma after a long introductory phrase (four or more words).

> Writing Tip:
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> 
>
> Varying sentence beginnings adds style and interest to writing.

A common error is to write in either short choppy sentences, or in long unfocused ramblings. (See *Fragments, Run-Ons, and Comma Splices*, p. 20)

Verbal Tip:

A verbal is a verb from used as some other part of speech.

A **gerund** is a verb form that ends in *-ing* and that is used as a noun. Like nouns, gerunds can be used as subjects, direct objects, objects of prepositions, predicate nominatives, and appositives.

An **infinitive** is a verb form that is preceded by the word *to* and that is used as a noun, adjective, or adverb. Like nouns, infinitives can be used as subjects, direct objects, objects of propositions, predicate nominatives, and appositives.

A **participle** is that ends in *-ing* (present participles), *-d*, *-ed*, *-t*, or *-en* (past participles) and that modifies a noun or pronoun.

Noun Clause Tip:

To identify a noun clause, try substituting the word *someone, something* or *somewhere* for the clause.

Adverbial Clause Tip:

Adverbial clauses always begin with a subordinating conjunction (*after, although, as, before, when, where, while*, etc.).

Beginning with *prepositional phrases*:

During the summer we hang out at the beach almost everyday.

At the beach, our sandcastle competition can sometimes be stressful.

Beginning with *appositive phrases* (a noun and its modifiers that stand beside another noun to explain or identify it):

A pertinacious politician, the Senator-elect promised to always vote her conscience.

A experienced, cynical legislator, the outgoing Senator wished her luck.

Beginning with *verbal phrases* (A verbal phrase is a phrase that begins with one of the three types of verbals: gerund, infinitive, or participle.):

GERUND PHRASES BEGIN WITH A *GERUND* AND FUNCTION AS NOUNS.

Killing animals for food is abhorrent to vegetarians. (The phrase functions as the subject.)

INFINITIVE PHRASES BEGIN WITH AN *INFINITIVE* AND FUNCTION AS NOUNS, ADJECTIVES, OR ADVERBS.

The protestors chained themselves to the giant redwoods *to stop the lumberjacks' razing of old growth forest.* (The phrase functions as an adjective.)

PARTICIPIAL PHRASES BEGIN WITH A *PARTICIPLE* AND FUNCTION AS AN ADJECTIVE [E.G. *HIDING* TODDLER] AND MAY EITHER BE IN PRESENT OR PAST TENSE.

Present Tense:

Hiding from our mother, my toddler sister scooted under the clothes rack.

Remembering that she had a child, Mom searched the store for my sister.

Past Tense:

Purchased a few days ago, the elderly man's groceries were finally delivered.

Exhausted from carrying groceries, the unfit senior collapsed on the sofa.

Beginning with *noun clauses* (A noun clause is a subordinate clause that functions as the subject, direct object, indirect object, predicate nominative, or the object of a preposition):

Whatever you eat before the test is of little importance if you haven't read the material.

Beginning with *adjective clauses* (An adjective clause modifies a noun or pronoun and tells who, whom, whose, that, which):

The week *before finals* is a major review week in most classes.

Beginning with *adverb clauses* (An adverb clause describes how, what, where, when or why):

Before the game could start the referee broke her leg.

When the paramedics came they put her leg in a splint.

Building Sentences with Phrases and Clauses:

An independent clause is the simplest form of sentence. A variety of **sentence types** can be built by combining phrases and clauses. Using a variety of sentence types adds style to writing.

Simple sentences contain just one independent clause:
I hate brussel sprouts.

Compound sentences contain *two or more independent clauses* that are joined by a semicolon or a comma and a coordinating conjunction such as *and*:
I hate brussel sprouts; frozen brussel sprouts are the worst.
I hate brussel sprouts, **but** I do not mind broccoli.

Complex sentences contain an *independent clause* (underlined) and *one or more dependent clauses* (italicized):
Although I do not mind broccoli, I hate brussel sprouts.

Compound-complex sentences contain *two or more independent clauses* (underlined) and *one or more dependent clauses* (italicized):
Although I hate brussel sprouts, I do not mind broccoli and I like carrots.

Mechanics

Mechanics refers to written indicators of standard English grammar.

Punctuation

Comma:

Use a **comma** to separate adjectives that equally modify the same noun. (The comma takes the place of *and*):
A big, hairy monster ate my homework.

Use **commas** to separate words, phrases, or clauses in a series:
I've already packed jeans, sweatshirts, shorts, a camera, and maps for our trip.
Now I need to plan which shoes, socks, raincoat, and sleeping bag to take.

Use a **comma** before the conjunction (and, but, or, nor, for, yet, so) when joining two independent clauses:
I've never gone skydiving, but I plan to next month.

Use a **comma** after introductory words, a participial phrase, a series of prepositional phrases (or a single long one), or an adverb clause.
Introductory word: *Yes,* you may have two pieces of pie.
Participial phrase: *Waking late,* I jumped out of bed and flew downstairs.
Prepositional phrase: *Above the barn door,* the spider spun her web.
Adverb clause: *As soon as we finished dinner,* I had to wash dishes.

Use **commas** to enclose an explanatory word or a parenthetical expression.
Explanatory phrase: William Jefferson Clinton, *former President of the United States,* currently resides in New York with Senator Hilary Clinton.
Parenthetical expression: He will, *in my opinion,* play a supportive role in his wife's political career.

Use **commas** to enclose nonessential phrases and clauses. Nonessential phrases or clauses are not necessary to the basic meaning of the sentence. Essential phrases or clauses (those necessary to the meaning of the sentence) are not set off with commas.

Writing Tip:

Using a variety of sentence types adds style and interest to writing.

Mature writers use both a variety of sentence types and a variety of sentence beginnings.

A common error is confusing a sentence with a *compound verb* with a compound sentence:
I pulled my ripcord and screamed when my chute didn't open. (no comma)

A common error is the **comma splice.** This occurs when two independent clauses are only connected with a comma when a period, semicolon, or conjunction is required.

Comma splice:
To Kill A Mockingbird is a great book, I could hardly put it down.

Corrections:
To Kill A Mockingbird is a great book *and* I could hardly put it down. (add conjunction)

To Kill A Mockingbird is a great book; I could hardly put it down. (use a semicolon)

NONESSENTIAL: The English teacher, *whose work is never finished,* took Saturday to read a book.
ESSENTIAL: Any student *who plans to graduate from high school* must complete four years of English. (no commas)

Use **commas** to set off the exact words of the speaker from the rest of the sentence:

"Hey," Greg yelped. "Don't eat all the ice cream," he begged. "Save some for me!"

Use a **comma** to set off items in an address or a date:

710 Encinitas Boulevard, Encinitas, CA 92024
Friday, December 4, 2001

Semicolon

Use a **semicolon** to join two or more independent clauses that are not connected with a coordinating conjunction (*and, but, or, nor, for, yet, so*):

We will never win the Battle of the Bands; there are too many more experienced bands competing.

Use a **semicolon** *before* a conjunctive adverb (i.e., an adverb that acts like a conjunction to join two independent clauses). Also place a comma after the adverb:

Our Dad said that the embarrassment of getting a ticket is almost its own punishment; nonetheless, my brother was grounded after his first ticket.

Use a **semicolon** to separate groups of words that already contain commas:

Winners in the drama monster competition were Egor, first place; Godzilla, second place; Quasimodo, third place; and Dracula, honorable mention.

Semicolon Tip:
The clause on either side of the semicolon **must** be able to stand alone as a separate sentence.

Colon

Use a **colon** after the salutation of a business letter:

Dear Bill Gates:
Dear Senator Clinton:

Use a **colon** to introduce a list, especially after expression such as *the following* and *as follows:*

Santa Claus brought me everything I wanted for Christmas: world peace, an end to hunger, and gender equity.

Use a **colon** after a complete sentence that introduces an illustration, explanation, or quotation:

There are five ingredients in Mama Morris's Cranberry Conserve: cranberries, sugar, apples, mandarin oranges, and walnuts.
The superintendent made a declaration: "We shall have no school this Friday."

Colon Tip:
A **colon** in a sentence should only follow an independent clause:

Wrong: In elementary school, I loved: spelling, math, history, and reading

Right: In elementary school, I really loved all my subjects: spelling, math, history, and reading.

Hyphen

Use a **hyphen** to make a compound word or to join coequal nouns: *five-year-old, scholar-athlete,* or *father-in-law.*

Use a **hyphen** to join words in compound numbers from twenty-one to ninety-nine and with fractions: *two-thirds, sixty-seven,* or *thirty-one.*

Use a **hyphen** to divide a word at the end of a line, but **only between syllables.**

Use a **hyphen** to join a capital letter to a noun or participle: *T-shirt, T-bone steak, U-turn,* or *PG-rated.*

Technology Tip:
To create an *em dash* in publictions, hold down *alt* or *option* and strike the dash

Hyphen Tip:
One syllable words are never divided, and multisyllabic words may only be divided between syllables.

Use a **hyphen** to join two or more words that serve as a single adjective before a noun: *slow-moving car, world-renowned actress,* or *three-story house.*

In general, **do not** use a **hyphen** after standard prefixes (e.g., *anti-, co-, multi-, non-, pre-, semi-, sub-, un-, under-*): *antifreeze, underdeveloped, coworker, multilingual, nonjudgmental, semiliterate,* or *reinvent.*

Quotations

Quotation marks are used in pairs to indicate the beginning and the end of a quotation in which the exact words of another person or of a text are directly cited.

Use quotations to punctuate titles of songs, poems, short stories, lectures, courses, episodes of radio or television programs, chapters of books, unpublished works, and articles found in newspapers, magazines, or encyclopedias:

SONG: "We Are Family"
POEM: "Road Not Taken"
SHORT STORY: "The Scarlet Ibis"

Use quotations to distinguish a word that is being discussed, to indicate that a word is slang, or to point out that a word is being used in a special way.

"Ain't" is found in the dictionary, but is considered substandard English.
Ain't is found in the dictionary, but is considered substandard English. (See Technology Tip)

Technology Tip:
You may use italics in place of quotation marks that distinguish words, indicate slang, or point out special use of words.

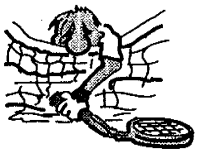
Dialogue

For **dialogue,** use **quotation marks** before and after the exact words of a speaker. Place the comma inside the quotation marks when the speaker tag (attribution) follows the quotation:

"You should eat a balanced diet," suggested the trainer to the tennis player.

Begin a direct quotation with a capital letter; the comma precedes the quotation marks when the speaker tag is first:

The tennis player complained, "But I *love* chocolate and french fries."

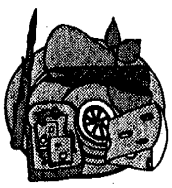


When a quoted sentence is divided into two parts by an interrupting expression or speaker tag, begin the second part with a lower case:

"I don't care what you love," the trainer replied, "you need to do what's good for your game."

A direct quotation is set off from the rest of the sentence by commas unless an end mark (question mark or exclamation point) is used instead. Place the end mark inside the quotation marks:

"Who came up with that food pyramid anyway?" asked the frustrated player.

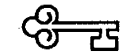


When writing dialogue with two or more persons conversing, begin a new paragraph every time the speaker changes:

"You should eat a balanced diet," suggested the trainer to the tennis player.

The tennis player complained, "But I *love* chocolate and french fries. They're my favorite foods."

"I don't care what you love," the trainer replied, "you need to do what's good for your game. The food pyramid, if followed, will make you a healthy person."



Punctuation Tip:
Periods and **commas** are always placed inside quotation marks.

Exclamation points or **question marks** are placed inside the quotation marks when they punctuate the quotation; they are placed outside when they punctuate the main sentence.

Semicolons or **colons** are placed outside the quotation marks.

Writing Tip:

Avoid overuse of the word *said.* There are myriads of options such as: whispered, cackled, yelped, croaked, giggled, suggested, wheezed. Such words add sensory appeal to your writing.

Punctuation Tip:

To omit words from a quotation, use an ellipsis (. . .) to signify the part left out. An **ellipsis** is three periods with a space before and after each one.

To indicate words that have been added to or changed in the quotation, use **brackets** [like this].

To punctuate a quotation within a quotation, use a pair of **single quotation marks**: "Wasn't his answer 'I don't recall'?" asked the attorney.

Who came up with that food pyramid anyway?" asked the frustrated player.

Using Quoted Material

For a **short quotation** - one that is four lines or fewer - work it into the body of the paper and put quotation marks around it.

For a **block quotation** - more than four typed lines on a page - indent one inch from the left margin only. Do not use quotation marks before or after the quoted material:

> In *Shakespeare the Invention of the Human,* Harold Bloom points out a distinction of Shakespeare's work:
>
> > In Shakespeare, characters develop instead of unfold, and they develop because they reconceive themselves. Sometimes this comes about because they *overhear* themselves talking, whether to themselves or to others. Self-overhearing is their royal road to individuation, and no other writer, before or since Shakespeare, has accomplished so well the virtual miracle of creating utterly different yet self consistent voices for his more than one hundred major characters and many hundreds of highly distinctive minor personages. (Bloom i)

Apostrophe

Contractions

Use an **apostrophe** to signify letter(s) left out of a word to form a contraction:

don't	*do not*
she'd	*she would*
it's	*it is*

A common error occurs when *it's* (the contraction for *it is)* is confused with the possessive pronoun *its*. The possessive pronoun *its* never has an apostrophe.

Use an **apostrophe** to signify one or more letters or numbers left out of numerals:

class of '04 *class of 2004*

Use an apostrophe to indicate where sounds are omitted in poetry or in dialects.

Make the best *o'* things, I *al'ays* tell *'em.*

Apostrophe Tips:

Remember that the word immediately before the **apostrophe** is the owner.

Possessive personal pronouns (hers, his, theirs, yours, ours, its) never use an apostrophe.

Don't use an apostrophe in the plural form of a year number; the correct usage is the *2020s*, and not the *2020's*.

Any punctuation that follows a word that ends with an apostrophe should be placed after the apostrophe.

Possessives

The possessive form of **singular nouns** is usually made by adding an apostrophe and an *s*. For the possessive form of plural nouns ending in *s*, add just an **apostrophe.** For the few plural nouns not ending in *s*, an apostrophe and *s* must be added.

SINGULAR NOUN	baseball player's mitt, James's notes
PLURAL NOUN ending in *s*	students' grades, the Lewis' car
PLURAL NOUN not ending in *s*	people's right, group's vote
COMPOUND NOUN	
singular	mother-in-law's pie
plural	mothers-in-law's recipes
TWO NOUNS, JOINT POSSESSION	
singular	Lewis and Clark's expedition
plural	fathers and daughters' ball
TWO NOUNS, INDIVIDUAL POSSESSION	
singular	Juan's and Maria's backpack
plural	father's and daughter's costumes

For the possessive form of a **compound noun** or an **indefinite pronoun,** place the

apostrophe and an s after the last word:

INDEFINITE PRONOUN	someone's wallet
INDEFINITE PRONOUN with *else*	everyone else's problem

For measures of **time** or **amount,** use the possessive forms of nouns:

SINGULAR	one day's time, one quarter's worth
PLURAL	two days' time, five quarters' worth

Use an apostrophe and *s* to form the plural of an individual letter, numeral, word referred to as a word, or an abbreviation containing periods.

A's 3's ahh's Mr.'s

Capitalization

Capitalize the first word of a sentence and a full-sentence direct quotation:

Break dancing is Mario's passion.

When Jorge broke his wrist, the crowd screamed, "Call 911!"

Capitalize the following geographical terms:

SECTIONS OF THE COUNTRY	the Midwest, the South
TOWNS, CITIES, STATES, CAPITALS, COUNTRIES, AND CONTINENTS	San Diego, Africa, Yugoslavia
STREETS, ROADS, HIGHWAYS	El Camino Real, Interstate 5, Highway 99
LAND FORMS AND BODIES OF WATER	Sierra Nevadas, Lake George, Baja Peninsula

Capitalize names of people and formal titles written before a name without a comma separating them.

Michael Jordan, Joan of Arc, President W. Wilson, Doctor Betsy Jones

Capitalize days of the week, months, holidays or holy days:

Thanksgiving is always on a Thursday. Halloween, while always on October 31st, changes day of the week annually.

Capitalize historical time periods, events in history, and special events:

Middle Ages, Desert Storm, Kentucky Derby, Junior-Senior Prom, Democratic Convention

Usage

Usage refers to the function of the parts of speech within a given sentence.

Titles of Materials

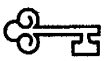
Underline or **italicize** the titles of works that are published or released by themselves: movies, books, record albums, CDs, magazines, newspapers, full-length plays, operas, pamphlets, book-length poems, lengthy musical compositions, legal cases, and the names of ships and aircraft.

PLAY	*Waiting for Godot*
TELEVISION SHOW	*Law and Order*
MOVIE	*Dead Poets Society*
MAGAZINE	*Seventeen*
NEWSPAPER	*L. A. Times*
PAMPHLET	*Quit Smoking Now*

Use **quotation marks** around the titles of short works that are likely to be published or released as part of a larger work: chapters of books; short stories;

Technology Tip:

Remember, spell check does not alert one to the misuse of a word, only its spelling. Always proof read.



Punctuation Tip:

While it is correct to either *italicize* or underline titles you should stick with **one** style in a piece of writing.

Technology Tip:
Remember, spell check does not alert one to the misuse of a word, only its spelling. Always proof read.

poems; songs; articles in a magazine, newspaper, or encyclopedia; and episodes of radio or television programs:

SHORT STORY	"To Build a Fire"
EPISODE FROM *THE COSBY SHOW*	"Partners in Crime"
MAGAZINE ARTICLE	"Dating Etiquette"

The *National Enquirer* article, "Space Aliens Land in Graceland," amused me.
"Rocky Raccoon" is my favorite song on the Beatles' *White Album.*

Dates and Time

Capitalize days of the week and months. Each of the following formats is acceptable for noting dates:

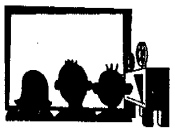
December 31, 2002 31 December 2002

When writing a date within a sentence, place a comma after the day of the week, after the date, and after the year:

On Wednesday, January 1, 2003, I will be eighteen years old!

Punctuation Tip:
When only the month and day or only the month and year are given, no punctuation is necessary:
We began rehearsals on December 10 but performed in January 2002.

When writing **times**, use the numeral and a colon between the hour and minutes. Write only the hour if there are no minutes. Indicate morning or evening with the abbreviations a.m. and p.m. Note that both abbreviations are lower case and that a period is placed after each letter:



Meet me at the mall at 7 p.m. because the movie starts at 8:10.

Writing Tip:

When **numbers** are *used frequently* in a piece of writing, such as in statistical and technical writing, you may express all measurements as numbers:
In 4 experiments of psychic phenomenon, 79 percent of the couples could predict the correct sum of money 2 out of 3 times.

When a *mixture* of **numbers** – some one or two words, some longer – are used together, they should be kept in the same style:
How could a team of 5 couples discover what an association of 2,250 scientists and economists could not?

You may use a combination of words and numbers for very large numbers:
1.6 million; 25 million dollars

Numbers

Spell out **numbers** of one or two words; numbers of more than two words are usually written as numerals:

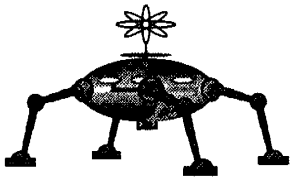
ten; twenty-five; fifty thousand 3 1/2; 101; and 2,020

Use **numerals** to express numbers in the following forms: dates, pages, chapters, decimals, percents, addresses, time, identification numbers, and statistics:

June 8, 1996	44 BC; AD 79	pages 287-89
chapter 7	Interstate 5	Spanish 7
3:30 p.m.	a vote of 23 to 4	1388 Country Road
34 mph	5 milliliters	2 percent

When a number begins a sentence, always spell it out:
Two hundred thirty people claimed to have seen UFOs in Alaska in 1996.
Nineteen ninety-two was an incredible year for tracking paranormal behavior.

If this rule creates a clumsy sentence, change the sentence structure:
CLUMSY: Eight hundred and ninety-five people say they have talked to aliens within the last five years.
BETTER: Within the last five years, 895 people say they have talked to aliens.



Words Often Misused

Spelling Tip:
Please note, the following are spelled correctly: always, altogether, already, almost.

a lot, alot • *Alot* **is not one word**; *a lot* (two words) is a vague descriptive phrase which should probably not be used too often.

You can observe a lot just by watching. —Yogi Berra

accept, except • The verb *accept* means "to receive or believe"; the preposition *except* means "other than."

It would be difficult to *accept* straight D's on his report card *except* he usually receives straight F's.

affect, effect • *Affect* means "to influence"; the verb *effect* means "to produce."

Young students are *affected* by an early school schedule, so the principal *effected* a change.

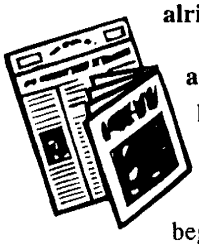
The noun *effect* means "the result."

The *effect* of the schedule change was a happy student body.

A common error is the misuse of *ie* and *e.g.*
ie means "that is"
e.g. means "for example"

allusion, illusion • *Allusion* is an indirect reference to something; *illusion* is a false picture or idea.

The person who makes many *allusions* to his strength tries to reinforce the *illusion* that he's strong.



alright, all right • *Alright* is the incorrect form of *all right.*

altogether, all together • *Altogether* means "entirely." The phrase *all together* means "in a group" or "all at once."

"There is *altogether* too much hyperbole in your statements to the press," complained the agitated Congressman. *All together* the independent voters are beginning to have an impact.

among, between • *Among* is used when speaking of more than two persons or things. *Between* is used when speaking of only two.

The argument was *between* Sasha and Earl. *Among* their classmates, there was concern that the two would never makeup.

Technology Tip:
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amount, number • *Amount* is used for bulk measurement. *Number* is used to count separate units. (See also *fewer, less.*)

The *amount* of food that the family prepared for Thanksgiving depended on the *number* of cousins who planned to attend the dinner.

beside, besides • *Beside* means "by the side of." *Besides* means "in addition to."

Besides the decisions regarding who would bring what to the potluck dinner, the organizer had to decide who would sit *beside* whom.

bring, take • *Bring* suggests the action is directed toward the speaker; *take* suggests the action is directed away from the speaker.

"When you *bring* your homework up to the front table, please *take* a new assignment sheet back to your seat."

can, may • *Can* suggests ability, while *may* suggests permission.

"*Can* you reach the vase on the top shelf?"

"I don't know. *May* I stand on one of your chairs?"

chose, choose • *Chose* (choz) is the past tense of the verb *choose* (chooz).

Technology Tip: Remember, spell check does not alert one to the misuse of a word, only its spelling. Always proof read.

Yesterday, I *chose* to go to the market. While I was there I couldn't *choose* which cereal to buy.

coarse, course: • *Coarse* means "rough or crude"; *course* means "a direction or path taken." *Course* also means "a class or series of studies."

If you take the *course* that is less traveled, you may encounter some *coarse* terrain.

compare with, compare to • Things of the same class are *compared with* each other; things of a different class are *compared to* each other.

Compared with the Sierras, the Rocky Mountains are far more craggy. But neither range can be *compared to* the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean.

complement, compliment • *Complement* refers to that which completes or fulfills. *Compliment* is an expression of admiration or praise.

Uncle Fred *complimented* Mom's ability to choose *complementary* side dishes for the meal.

continual, continuous • *Continual* refers to something that happens again and again; *continuous* refers to something that doesn't stop happening.

Your *continuous* complaints are responsible for my *continual* indigestion.

counsel, council • When used as a **noun,** *counsel* means "advice"; when used as a **verb**, *counsel* means "to advise." *Council* refers to a group that advises.

Our ASB used to be referred to as the Student *Council*, but the principal *counseled* them to change their name. When the students went to ASB camp, they were thankful for his *counsel* as no other group referred to itself as a *council.*

desert, dessert • *Desert* is barren wilderness. *Dessert* is food served at the end of a meal.

The hermit who had been in the *desert* alone for five years was awed by the remarkable *dessert* that Betty made to celebrate his return.

The **verb** *desert* means "to abandon"; the **noun** *desert* also may mean "deserved reward or punishment."

After one bite, Roy *deserted* his plans to return to his solitary life. He told Betty that the sweet life was his just *desert.*

different from, different than • Use *different from* in formal writing; use *either* form in informal or colloquial settings.

The work of e.e. cummings is as *different from* Charles Dickens's as Webster's pocket dictionary is from the OED (Oxford English Dictionary).

farther, further • *Farther* refers to a physical distance; *further* refers to additional time, quantity, or degree.

After the ten mile hike Antoine whined that he couldn't go any *farther.* Carlos cautioned him that he needed to *further* his conditioning regime.

fewer, less • *Fewer* refers to the number of separate units; *less* refers to bulk quantity.

If there are *fewer* people at Disneyland, then the park will be *less* crowded.

good, well • *Good* is an adjective; *well* is usually an adverb. (When used to indicate state of health, *well* is an *adjective.*)

Even when she isn't feeling *well,* Hannah does her homework *well.*

Mrs. Thompson always tells Hannah that she has a *good* attitude.

healthful, healthy • *Healthful* means "causing or improving health"; *healthy* means "possessing health."

Healthful exercise builds *healthy* bodies.

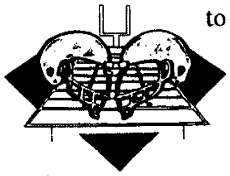
imply, infer • *Imply* means "to suggest or express indirectly"; *infer* means to draw a conclusion from facts." (A *writer* or speaker implies; a reader or listener *infers.*)

"Are you *implying* that I don't do my homework?" asked the agitated student.

"Well, I've *inferred* from your low test scores that something is amiss," replied the frustrated parent.

it's, its • *It's* is the **contraction** of "it is." *Its* is the **possessive** form of "it."

"It's amazing how long *its* gestation period is," mused the novice zookeeper as he stood by the elephant paddock.



later, latter • *Later* means "after a period of time." *Latter* refers to the second of two things mentioned. (Latte refers to coffee with milk.)

"Which game is *later,* USC vs. Notre Dame or Miami vs. FSU? I think it's the *latter,* but I'm not sure. Now, please pass the latte."

lay, lie • *Lay* means "to place." [*Lay* is a transitive verb.] *Lie* means to recline. [*Lie* is an intransitive verb.]

"I'm going to lie down for a bit. But before a I do, would you lay the down comforter back on the bed?"

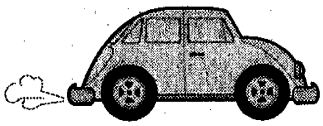
like, as • *Like* is a preposition meaning "similar to"; *as* is a conjunction. The conjunction *as* has several meanings. *Like* usually introduces a phrase; *as* usually introduces a clause.

Hector is nothing *like* his father, they are *as* different *as* night and day.

past, passed • *Passed* is a verb. *Past* can be used as a noun, as an adjective, or as a preposition.

How often has that same VW bug *passed* us? (verb)

I'm not sure, but the last time it went *past* us, there were only two people in the car. (preposition)



Well, things change. You can't rely on the *past.* (noun)

Don't wax philosophical. My *past* count has nothing to do with nostalgia. (adjective)

principal, principle • As an **adjective**, *principal* means "primary." As a **noun**, it can mean "a school administrator" or "a sum of money." *Principle* means "idea or doctrine."

The Unity of All Cultures club at our school counted on the *principal* to front them the *principal* for the new sound system. (noun)

But their advisor wasn't sure that that was a good idea.

Her *principal* concern is that they might have lost sight of their *principle* that "we earn the money that we spend." (adjective, noun)

quiet, quit, quite • *Quiet* is the opposite of noisy. *Quit* means "to stop." *Quite* means "completely or entirely."

Technology Tip: Remember, spell check does not alert one to the misuse of a word, only its spelling. Always proof read.

A common error is the misuse of *of* when using could, should, or would. Write *could have, should have,* or *would have.*

Although Louisa was able to *quiet* the kittens, she couldn't *quite* get them to *quit* their meowing altogether.

quote, quotation • *Quote* is a verb; *quotation* is a noun.
The teacher said, and I *quote*, "Your essay must make use of at least five *quotations* from the text."

real, very, really • Do not use *real* (adjective) in place of the adverbs *very* or *really*.

I am *very* tired this morning. We stayed up *really* late last night. But we made *real* progress on our project.

sight, cite, site • *Sight* means "the act of seeing." *Cite* means "to quote" or "to summon." *Site* means "location or position."

You should *cite* several sources when you write a research paper.
You can find additional resources at a *site* downtown called The Public Library.
A coherent bibliography is a beautiful *sight* to English teachers.

stationary, stationery • *Stationary* means "not movable"; *stationery* refers to the paper and envelopes used to write letters.

Naida sat perfectly *stationary* as she gathered her thoughts for the letter she planned to write on her new *stationery.*

than, then • *Than* is used in a comparison; *then* tells when.

If you think that you're a better singer *than* I am, *then* go ahead and prove it.

their, there, they're • *Their* is the possessive personal pronoun. *There* is an adverb used to point out location. *They're* is the contraction for "they are."

They're going over *there* to finish *their* biology lab.

A common error is the misuse of *try and* instead of *try to.*

Try and is a verb with a conjuction. *Try to* means to attempt.

to, too, two • *To* is a **preposition** that can mean "in the direction of." *To* also is used to form an infinitive. *Too* means "also" or "very." *Two* is the number.

"You *two* are just *too* cute!" exclaimed the proud aunt *to* her nephews.

who, which, that • *Who* refers to people. *Which* refers to nonliving objects or to animals. (*Which* should never refer to people.) *That* may refer to animals, people, or nonliving objects.

Which hamburger do you want?
You want *that* one, too?
Well, *who* else is going to eat it?

who, whom • *Who* is used as the subject of a verb; *whom* is used as the object of a preposition or as a direct object.

With *whom* do you plan to sit at the assembly?
I don't know. *Who* is sitting next to you?

Technology Tip:
Remember, spell check does not alert one to the misuse of a word, only its spelling. Always proof read.

who's, whose • *Who's* is the contraction for "who is." *Whose* is the possessive pronoun.

"*Whose* mittens are these and *who's* going to pick them up off the floor?

your, you're • *Your* is a possessive pronoun. *You're* is the contraction for "you are."

We don't have enough room. *You're* going to have to drive *your* car and meet us there.

Subject and Verb Agreement

Make sure that a verb agrees with its **subject** (singular or plural):

SINGULAR: The **motorcyclist** speeds down the highway.

PLURAL: The **motorcyclists** speed down the highway.

Use a plural verb with **compound subjects** connected with *and*:

Making the conserve *and* **sharing it with family** are requirements for the Cranberry Conserve extra-credit assignment.

Use a singular verb with these **singular indefinite pronouns**: each, either, neither, one, everybody, another, anybody, everyone, nobody, everything, somebody, and someone:

Everything is up-in-the-air about next year's schedule.

Everybody agrees that you should have won the award.

Some other **indefinite pronouns** (all, any, half, most, none, and some) may be either singular or plural depending on the noun in the modifying prepositional phrase. If the noun is singular, then the pronoun is singular. If the noun is plural, then the pronoun is plural.

Some of the *popcorn* was stale. (*Popcorn* is singular therefore *some* is singular.)

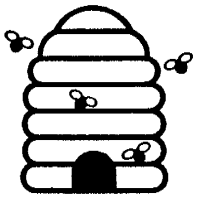
Some of the *kernels* were burned. (*Kernels* is plural therefore *some* is plural.)

Shifts in Verb Tense

Switching back and forth between present, past, and/or future tense creates awkward writing. Avoid this unnecessary shift in verb tense.

WRONG: The bees in the garden build their hive and made honey for the beekeeper to collect.

CORRECT: The bees in the garden build their hive and make honey for the beekeeper to collect.



Active and Passive Voice

Voice indicates whether the subject is acting or being acted upon. *Active voice* indicates that the subject of the verb is acting, or doing something. *Passive voice* indicates that the subject of the verb is being acted upon. A passive verb is a combination of a *be* verb and a past participle. Passive verbs make writing slow moving and impersonal.

PASSIVE: The bikes were assembled by the manufacturer.

ACTIVE: The manufacturer assembled the bikes.

PASSIVE: The cyclists were stopped by a deluge, but no bikes were damaged.

ACTIVE: A deluge stopped the cyclists, but damaged no bikes.

Pronoun Agreement

Make sure that a **pronoun** agrees with its ***antecedent*** in **number, person,** and **gender**. (The antecedent is the noun or pronoun that the pronoun refers to or replaces.)

When *Brian* plays basketball, **he** rocks the house.

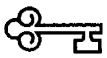
After *Samantha*'s third foul in a tough basketball game, **she** was benched.

A common error is to be confused by other words coming between the subject and the verb:

The **student** as well as her parents is invited to honors night.

A common error is to be confused by words coming between the pronoun and the verb:

Each of the new students was introduced at the assembly.



Agreement Tip:

Beware of inverted sentences (when the subject follows the verb, as in questions and in sentences beginning with here and there). Find the delayed subject; it must agree with the verb.

Writing Tip:

When writing about literature, generally stick with present tense.

When writing about history, generally stick with the past.

Voice Tip:

Any form of the helping verb be (be, am, is, are, was, were, being, been) is a clue that your sentence may be written in passive voice. **Avoid passive voice.**

A common error made when trying to avoid sexism is to combine singular pronouns into the plural *their.*

ERROR: Did either Maguerite or Simon bring their book to class?
CORRECT: Did either Maguerite or Simon bring her or his book to class?

Remember if the conjuction is *or* or *nor,* the pronouns must remain singular.

Use a **singular pronoun** to refer to such *antecedents* as each, either, neither, one, anyone, anybody, everyone, everybody, somebody, another, and nobody:

Not **everyone** can dunk his or her basketball.

When *a person* or *everyone* is used to refer to both sexes or either sex, choose to offer optional pronouns or rewrite the sentence:
OPTIONAL PRONOUNS: A person must listen to his or her parents.
REWRITTEN IN PLURAL FORM: Teenagers must listen their parents.

Two or more antecendents joined by *and* are considered plural; two or more singular antecendents joined by *or* or *nor* are considered singular.

Bob and *Bill* are working on **their** cars.
Neither *Bob* nor *Bill* has a clue what **he** is doing.

If one of the antecendents joined by *or* or *nor* is singular and one is plural, the antecendent is made to agree with the antecendent that is nearer.

Neither the coach nor the *players* were happy with **their** performance.

If one of the antecendents in the sentence is masculine and one feminine, the pronouns should be likewise masculine and feminine.

Parallel Structure

Unparallel structure occurs when the kinds of words or phrases being used changes in the middle of a sentence. Maintain **parallel structure** by expressing parallel ideas with the same tense or structure of words or phrases in a sentence:

WRONG: At my school, students pass the lunch hour talking to friends, doing their homework, and at the media center.
CORRECT: At my school, students pass the lunch hour talking to friends, doing their homework, and visiting the media center.

WRONG: Walking the dog no longer interests me as much as to teach him tricks.
CORRECT: Walking the dog no longer interests me as much as teaching him tricks.
WRONG: Surfing is much more fun than to go snowboarding.
CORRECT: Surfing is much more fun than going snowboarding.

Writing Tip: Readers expect the verbal phrase to directly precede or follow the subject or object it modifies. If the subject is missing, or distant, the meaning of the sentence may be unclear or absurd:

Barking at the door, the milkman was stopped by our dog Toby.

To fix the problem, include the subject or eliminate the phrase:

The milkman was stopped by our dog, Toby, barking at the door.

Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers

A **misplaced modifier** is a word or phrase that has been placed so far away from the word it modifies that the meaning of the sentence is unclear or incorrect:

MISPLACED: The fire was accidently started by two chemistry students in the waste basket.
CORRECT: The fire in the waste basket was accidently started by two chemistry students.
MISPLACED: Accused of murder, the policewoman wanted the suspect to confess.
Correct: The policewoman wanted the suspect, accused of murder, to confess.

A dangling modifier is a word or phrase that does not clearly modify anything in the sentence. It may also appear to modify the wrong word in the sentence:

DANGLING: Bouncing down the street, Eduardo followed the ball.
CORRECT: Eduardo followed the bouncing ball down the street.
DANGLING: Hoping to attend Stanford, a rigorous schedule was created.

CORRECT: Hoping to attend Stanford, Pierrè created a rigorous schedule.

DANGLING: After standing on her porch waiting for two days, the postal carrier delivered Zeda's refund check.

CORRECT: After Zeda stood on her porch waiting for two days, the postal carrier delivered her refund check.

Fragments, Run Ons, and Comma Splices

A **fragment** is a group of words written as a sentence but that is missing a subject, a verb, or some other essential part. The missing element causes it to be an incomplete thought:

FRAGMENT: Pets like to be involved with their owner's lives. Even chewing homework. (Sentence followed by a fragment. Correct it by combining the fragment with the sentence.)

SENTENCE: Pets like to be involved with their owner's lives, even if it's only by chewing homework.

FRAGMENT: While he was shopping. (This clause does not convey a complete thought. What happened?)

SENTENCE: While he was shopping, his wallet fell from his pocket and he lost all of his hard earned cash.

A **run-on sentence** is actually two sentences run together without adequate punctuation or a connecting word:

RUN-ON: Students think that teachers are inconsiderate when they assign work over the holidays while teachers think of vacation as an opportunity for students to spend focused time on their studies.

CORRECT: Students think that teachers are inconsiderate when they assign work over the holidays; while teachers think of vacation as an opportunity for students to spend focused time on their studies. (Semicolon has been added.)

A **comma splice** is a particular kind of run-on sentence in which two sentences are connected ("spliced") with only a comma. A comma is not enough; a period, semicolon, or conjunction is needed:

SPLICE: The weather had been stormy all week, many beaches had eroded taking some of the cliff face with them.

CORRECT: The weather had been stormy all week and many beaches had eroded taking some of the cliff face with them. (Conjunction *and* has been added.)

SPLICE: Shelter Cove is a secret paradise, nobody ever wants to leave.

CORRECT: Shelter Cove is a secret paradise; nobody ever wants to leave. (Comma has been changed to a semicolon.)

SPLICE: The drive is a natural barrier, Shelter Cove remains pristine.

CORRECT: The drive is a natural barrier; Shelter Cove remains pristine. (Comma has been changed to a semicolon.)

Writing Tip: When writing dialogue, fragments are not considered a mistake. They are even preferred because fragments actually reflect how people talk.

A common error is a rambling sentence that often results from the overuse of the word *and:*

The author worked to finish her book *and* never took a break *and* never saw her family *and* wondered if she would ever have a life again.

Technology Tip: Grammar check counts words to determine whether a sentence is possibly a run-on. A mature style may incorporate long, complex-compound sentences.

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Notes

Common Writing Problems

Identified in the SAT II Writing Exam*

Writing Problems	Sentence Illustrating the Problem
Being consistent	
Sequence of tenses	After he broke his arm, he is home for two weeks.
Shift of pronoun	If one is tense, they should try to relax.
Parallelism	She skis, plays tennis, and flying hang gliders.
Noun agreement	Ann and Sarah want to be a pilot.
Pronoun reference	Several people wanted the 30b, and he or she filled out the required applications.
Subject-verb agreement	There is eight people on the shore.
Expressing ideas logically	
Coordination and Subordination	Nancy has a rash, and she is probably allergic to something.
Logical comparison	Harry grew more vegetables than his neighbor's garden.
Modification and word order	Barking loudly, the tree had the dog's leash wrapped around it.
Being clear and precise	
Ambiguous and vague	In the newspaper they say that few people voted.
pronouns	He circumvented the globe on his trip.
Diction and wordiness	There are many problems in the contemporary world in which we live.
Improper modification	If your car is parked here while not eating in the restaurant, it will be towed away.
Following conventions	
Pronoun case	He sat between you and I at the stadium.
Idiom	Natalie had a different opinion towards her.
Comparison of modifiers	Of the sixteen executives, Meg makes more money.
Sentence fragment	Fred having to go home early.
Double negative	Manuel has scarcely no free time.

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